

OBRA DIGITAL

**Social media in communication:
a constant topic of discussion**



OBRA

revista de comunicación

DIGITAL

e-ISSN 2014-5039

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Does communication improve with the use of social networks?

¿Mejora la comunicación con las redes sociales?

A comunicação melhora com as redes sociais?

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Abstract:

The social networks seen from different spaces indicate that, beyond the problems that can arise due to their misuse, there are more benefits that they can bring to different communication spaces, for which certain processes and good practices must be taken into account. We must learn to use social networks for the benefit of social, commercial, public and private environments.

KEYWORDS

Communication, Social networks, Social Media.

Resumen:

Las redes sociales vistas desde distintos espacios nos indican que más allá de los problemas que se pueden presentar por su mal uso, son más los beneficios que pueden traer a distintos espacios de comunicación, para lo que se deben tener en cuenta ciertos procesos y buenas

prácticas. Es preciso que aprendamos a utilizar las redes sociales para beneficio de entornos sociales, comerciales, públicos y privados.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Comunicación, Redes sociales.

Resumo

As redes sociais vistas a partir de diferentes espaços indicam que para além dos problemas que podem surgir devido ao seu uso indevido, existem mais benefícios que podem trazer para os diferentes espaços de comunicação, para os quais determinados processos e boas práticas devem ser tidos em consideração. Precisamos aprender a usar as redes sociais para beneficiar os ambientes sociais, comerciais, públicos e privados.

PALABRAS-CHAVE

Comunicação, Redes sociais.

Social networks are part of the daily life of millions of people around the world (We are social, 2020) and their use has been studied not only at an interpersonal (Candrasari, 2020) or community level (Chan et al., 2020; Haşıloğlu et al., 2020), but also at the business level. In this area, it has been found that they have a positive impact on relationships within companies, on the performance of their employees (Chen & Wei, 2020) and in the relationship with their clients, stakeholders and community (Guo et al., 2020; Hila et al., 2020). On the other hand, the consequences of abuse in the use of social networks (de Pedro & Martín, 2018), unethical practices (Eckert, 2017; Oksanen et al., 2020), or the infodemic, characterized by the abundance of information on a specific topic, have also been studied. An example of this latter is presented around COVID-19 and its association with mental health problems such as depression or anxiety (Gao et al., 2020), among other.

With all this, the need to integrate good practices and regulations that allow a better use and optimize the benefits that social networks can have in different areas of society comes to light, beyond communication in informal spaces to commercial and public spaces (Dwivedi et al., 2020; Lovari & Bowen, 2020; Lovari & Valentini, 2020).

Issue 20 of *Obra Digital* addresses different spaces in which it is demonstrated that social networks can, in effect, contribute to better communication and even solve problems caused by their misuse, as can be seen in the article on the effects of misinformation on the brand image and the reaction of three com-

panies in the food sector to a communication crisis. The importance at a business level of the use of more informative social networks to the detriment of the more conversational ones is also highlighted in a study of the structure of social networks in IBEX 35 companies.

On the other hand, different promotional strategies are analyzed on Instagram in a competition scenario on two continents. It is clear that many Chilean companies do not promote true communication with their interlocutors on Facebook, but rather limit themselves to one-way communication that does not generate engagement.

In other settings, we see that social networks open up new spaces for integration and conservation of traditions among unschooled Kurdish women, while the use that university students give to social networks during periods of academic mobility is also analyzed.

An article is also presented on the social perceptions of the Chilean national soccer team as a brand that has a high symbolic degree capable of uniting a fragmented society. Finally, we present a study on internal communication as a strategic area for innovation through change management and organizational happiness.

In this way, *Obra Digital* 20 corresponding to the period from February to August 2021, presents eight articles sent from three countries (Chile, Spain and Turkey) with representation from three continents. It is published in its original versions in Spanish and English, as well as a full version in English. We hope it is of your interest.

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Social media in communication: a constant topic of discussion

Las redes sociales en la comunicación: un tema de discusión constante

Mídias sociais na comunicação: um tema constante de discussão

INTRODUCTION

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Resumen:

Las redes sociales se han apoderado del sector empresarial, el ámbito publicitario y, además, del área deportiva. Han tenido un impacto en la forma en que nos comunicamos y ahora se han convertido en una parte integral de nuestras vidas. Las redes sociales permiten a las organizaciones llegar a sus clientes, independientemente de los límites geográficos, para crear una conciencia de marca, pero también llegar a los usuarios para proporcionar noticias poco fiables. La influencia de las redes sociales ha dado lugar a un género diferente de comunicación, donde las conversaciones son rápidas y la información se transmite fácilmente, por esa razón, las redes sociales son un tema constante de discusión.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Comunicación, Redes sociales, Investigación, Sociedad.

Abstract:

Social media have taken over the business sector, the advertising field and, in addition, the sports sector. They have had an impact on the way we communicate and have now become an integral part of our lives. Social media allows organizations to reach their customers regardless of geographical boundaries to create brand awareness, but they also reach users to provide unreliable news. The influence of social media has led to a different genre of communication where conversations are fast and information is easily transmitted, for that reason, social media are a constant topic of discussion.

KEYWORDS

Communication, Social media, Research, Society.

Resumo

As redes sociais dominaram o setor empresarial, o campo da publicidade e, além disso, o se-

tor esportivo. Tiveram um impacto na maneira como nos comunicamos e agora se tornaram parte integrante de nossas vidas. As redes sociais permitem que as organizações alcancem seus clientes, independentemente das fronteiras geográficas, para criar consciência de marca, mas também alcançar os usuários para fornecer notícias pouco confiáveis. A influência das redes sociais tem levado a um gênero

diferente de comunicação, onde as conversas são rápidas e as informações facilmente transmitidas, por isso as redes sociais são um tema constante de discussão.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Comunicação, Redes sociais, Investigação, Sociedade.

Social networks have become today the main means of communication and information for many contemporary societies, one of the main sources of leisure and one of the greatest sources of wealth and power in society. These have taken over various sectors such as business, advertising, education or sports. They have had a direct impact on the way we communicate and have therefore become an integral part of our daily lives. Social networks allow organizations to reach customers to offer promotions, products, among others, regardless of geographical limits. This allows them to create brand awareness, but also thanks to these networks it is possible to reach users to provide unreliable news and information (fake news).

False information is not new, however, it has become a hot topic for a few years now. The Internet has enabled a completely new way of publishing, sharing and consuming information and news with very little regulation or editorial standards. Information overload and a general lack of understanding of how the Internet works by people have also contributed to an increase in fake news or stories.

The influence of social networks has created a different genre of communication, where conversations are fast and information is easily transmitted, for that reason, social networks are a constant topic of discussion.

Number 20 of *Obra Digital* magazine provides the reader with different views on communication on social networks, some of them positive and others that tell us about false news. Its articles show that social networks can contribute to improving communication and solving problems, but also to misinform with fake news. To a large extent, the authors of the articles seek to reflect on this discussion about social networks and put their reflections into consideration.

This issue is made up of eight articles. In the first text entitled *Interactive Communication of Chilean Companies on Facebook: A Comparative Study With Latin American Companies*, by the author Ileana Zeler from the Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Spain), it is analyzed how Chilean companies manage interactive communication with their audiences on Facebook. A comparative study was carried out with Latin American companies where 29,000 posts from 135 company profiles were analyzed, the results indicate that the dissemination of information is mainly one-way and not very interactive. The study also shows that companies in Chile and Latin America promote visibility instead of managing interactive communication on the social network.

In a second article entitled *Social perceptions of the Chilean National Soccer Team as a brand*, by the authors Cristóbal Benavides, Juan Ignacio Brito, Juan Ignacio Guerrero and Francisco Ta-

gle from the Universidad de los Andes (Chile), we can see that the sporting successes achieved by the Chilean National Soccer Team in 2015 and 2016 make it possible to distinguish the changes in the perceptions of Chileans regarding “La Roja”. From the consideration of this team as a brand, it is concluded that it has a high symbolic degree in terms of a unifying element of Chilean society, which is considered as fragmented. For this study, 2,410 surveys were conducted in Santiago de Chile to people between 10 and 80 years of age, segmented based on the socioeconomic groups that make up the country.

Inmaculada Martín-Herrera and Juan Pablo Micalletto Belda, from the San Isidoro University Center (Spain), present an interesting reflection in *Effects of Disinformation on the Brand Image and the Reaction of Three Companies in the Food Sector to a Communication Crisis: Starbucks, Mercadona and Burger King*. This study investigates the communication strategies developed by three companies in the food sector: Starbucks, Mercadona and Burger King, with the aim of managing an image crisis caused by the dissemination of false or confusing information on the Internet. The authors have carried out a descriptive analysis that helped to determine that the keys to this management were the preferential use of social networks, the speed and transparency of the responses, and the repeated use of the word “false” to disprove the deception related to these companies.

The article titled *New Media Meets Unschooled Women: A Qualitative Analysis of the Use of New Media by Unschooled Kurdish Women* by Mehmet Sebih Oruç and Hediye Aydoğan from the Akdeniz University (Turkey) aims to answer how and why illiterate or unschooled women use new media. Information on media use was ob-

tained through in-depth interviews with Kurdish women. Here it is shown that the media becomes an important part of women's daily life and gives them a new space to do things that they could not do before. They do not make them more secular or modern, nor do they change their main attitudes and perspectives on life, yet they help them preserve some of their traditional activities threatened by recent capitalism and urbanization.

In *The Structure of Social Networks in IBEX 35 Companies*, by Francisco Leslie López del Castillo Wilderbeek from Pompeu Fabra University (Spain), the author has drawn up a complete map of the structure of social networks accepted by the companies of the IBEX 35 index. From an exploratory perspective, he has investigated the way in which these companies include social networks in their communication policy, from presentation on official websites to the possible correlation between economic size and channel selection. The main conclusion of his study indicates that the marketing function is predominant for these companies and that the economic size has a positive correlation with the selection of more informative social networks to the detriment of the most conversational.

The authors Juan Martín-Quevedo from the Rey Juan Carlos University (Spain), Erika Fernández-Gómez from the International University of La Rioja (Spain) and Francisco Segado-Boj from the Complutense University of Madrid (Spain), present *The Promotional Strategy of Netflix and HBO on Instagram in a Competition Scenario. Analysis of Their Profiles in Spain and in the US*. This study analyzes the resources and strategies used by the US and Spanish Instagram profiles of HBO and Netflix. For this, the year 2017 was taken as a reference for being a pe-

riod marked by the arrival of HBO in Spain. The content analysis of the 731 messages collected reflects a high internal consistency on the part of Netflix compared to HBO.

The authors Guillermo Echaury and Mónica Figueras-Maz, both from the Pompeu Fabra University (Spain), present *Temporary Migration and the Use of Social Media by International University Students in Catalonia*. International students represent a type of migration characterized by aspects such as the temporality of their transnational movements. As young people, their approach to digital technologies, including social media, is often intense. This article describes some aspects of the experience of international university students in the use of social networks during their periods of academic mobility in the city of Barcelona. An analysis was carried out through an ethnographic approach on topics such as the elements that make up the publications that students make during their stay in the city, the changes they experienced in the use of their social networks from their movements between borders or the perception and appearance of national cultural differences regarding the use of platforms such as WhatsApp.

We do not want to close this presentation without inviting Obra Digital readers to consult the miscellany article that is part of our number 20. In *Internal Communication as a Strategic Area for Innovation Through Change Management and Organizational Happiness*, the authors Andrea Castro-Martínez from the University of Málaga (Spain) and Pablo Díaz-Morilla from EADE University Studies and University of Malaga (Spain), examine from different perspectives and from the internal communication approach the link between communication with innovation and corporate culture, and the influence that

organizational happiness can have on them. The results indicate that it constitutes an essential strategic directive area for the innovative ecosystem by influencing the identification, loyalty, creativity, productivity, well-being and happiness of the workforce, the transmission of knowledge, and legitimization of leadership. The practical implications are valuable in associating effective internal communication management with superior innovation performance.

This publication will be of benefit to researchers, professionals and students. We hope that you will find in each of the articles a new incentive to expand your knowledge of social networks, whatever your field of action or your environment.

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Interactive communication of Chilean companies on Facebook: a comparative study with Latin American companies

Comunicación interactiva de las empresas chilenas en Facebook: un estudio comparativo con las empresas latinoamericanas

Comunicação interativa das empresas chilenas no Facebook: um estudo comparativo com as empresas latino-americanas

1

ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: June 06, 2020 / ACCEPTED: August 6, 2020

Abstract

The objective of this study is to analyze how Chilean companies manage interactive communication with their audiences on Facebook. 29,000 posts from 135 company profiles were analyzed through a comparative study with Latin American companies. The selected categories were the communication approach, information resources, interaction level and interaction rate. The results show that the dissemination of information is mainly unidirectional and not very interactive. The study shows that companies in Chile and Latin America promote visibility instead of managing interactive communication in this social network.

KEYWORDS

Corporate communication, Social networks, Interactivity, Companies, Facebook.

Resumen

El objetivo de este estudio es analizar como las empresas chilenas gestionan la comunicación interactiva con sus públicos en Facebook. A través de un estudio comparativo con las empresas latinoamericanas, se analizaron 29.000 posts de 135 perfiles de empresas. Las categorías seleccionadas son el enfoque de comunicación, recursos de información, nivel de interacción y tasa de interacción. Los resultados arrojan que la difusión de información es principalmente unidireccional y poco interactiva. El

estudio pone en evidencia que las empresas de Chile y América Latina promueven la visibilidad en lugar de gestionar la comunicación interactiva en la red social.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Comunicación corporativa, Redes sociales, Interactividad, Empresas, Facebook.

Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo é analisar como as empresas chilenas fazem a gestão da comunicação interativa com seus públicos no Facebook. Através de um estudo comparativo com as empresas latino-americanas, foram analisa-

dos 29.000 posts de 135 perfis de empresas. As categorias selecionadas são a abordagem de comunicação, recursos de informação, nível de interação e taxa de interação. Os resultados mostram que a difusão de informação é principalmente unidirecional e pouco interativa. O estudo mostra que as empresas do Chile e da América Latina promovem a visibilidade em vez de gerenciar a comunicação interativa na rede social.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Comunicação corporativa, Redes sociais, Interatividade, Empresas, Facebook.

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital field and social networks have become key tools for companies to communicate with their audiences. The possibility of generating dialogue and interaction with users allows organizations to use digital platforms to establish and strengthen relationships with their publics by maintaining an active presence, creating content of interest and fostering digital conversations. Academics and communication specialists agree more than ever that social networks are changing the communication of organizations and institutions (Cordón-Benito & González-González, 2016; Valdez & Guerrero, 2019; Wright & Hinson, 2017), and Latin American professionals prefer digital channels to communicate with their audiences (Moreno et al, 2015).

The maturity of social networks, especially Facebook (the social network with the highest penetration and popularity), and the consolidation of the digital consumption habits of the publics have caused companies to recognize the potential of the social network and include it in their communication and public relations

strategies (DiStaso & McCorkindale, 2013; Lee, 2016; Neill & Moody, 2015). Facebook facilitates content sharing and enables dialogue and interaction between organizations and the publics. Compared to other social networks, the number of users of this social network has grown significantly in recent years. A study on the state of social networks in Latin America confirms that there was an exponential growth of social networks in the region, with Facebook being the social network with the highest social participation (Castro & Vega, 2018).

Although Facebook is presented as a new professional opportunity, the management of corporate communication in this social network continues to be one of the greatest challenges at a professional level, since it requires planning the content that is disseminated and the communication resources that are used in order to promote interaction with users. Despite the strong potential of social networks to develop relationships with the publics, some authors highlight the need to establish a roadmap to manage the way in which the actions of organizations are communicated on social networks (Chung et al., 2017).

To guarantee the bidirectionality of communication, organizations must not only interact with the publics, but must also show a predisposition to dialogue, listen, know their needs and desires (Taylor & Kent, 2014). In contrast, studies indicate that communication management continues to be asymmetric (Wissen, 2017), focusing more on the dissemination of unidirectional information than on conversations with users.

The main objective of this research is to analyze the interactive communication of the main Chilean companies on Facebook based on a comparative analysis with the companies of the main Latin American countries.

2. INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION ON FACEBOOK

Social networks changed the way communication is managed in the organizations, becoming a key instrument for dialogue and interaction. This new communication model replaces personally limited forms of human interaction, opening the possibility of forming virtual communities (Castells, 2001). Several authors (Kim et al., 2014; Losada-Díaz & Capriotti, 2015; Waters et al., 2009; Wissen, 2017) argue that the basis of communication management in social networks is based on the principles of dialogic communication. Dialogic communication is the basis for building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their audiences through the Internet (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Through interactive and dialogic communication, companies can understand their audiences, promote their activities and increase their virtual notoriety and reputation (González Pereira et al., 2014).

Dialogic theory suggests that organizations should not only disseminate information, but are also expected to be willing to interact and converse with their audiences. In this sense, two main communication approaches in social networks are identified. In the first approach, where the tools used are unidirectional and the level of interactivity is low, the main objective is to disseminate information to increase digital visibility and influence the image of companies. In the second approach, where the tools used are bidirectional and the degree of interactivity is high, the main objective is to build relationships through dialogue and interaction between the organization and users.

Bortree and Seltzer (2009) and Diga and Kelleher (2009) emphasize that social networks promote dialogic communication. The great popularity and penetration achieved by social networks (specifically Facebook) and the consolidation of the digital consumption habits of the publics are causing organizations to lean towards dialogue and interaction on Facebook. It is important to emphasize that for dialogue to take place it is necessary to share content that favors interaction, since messages that promote interaction and dialogue generate greater engagement with the publics (Abitbol & Lee, 2017).

Dialogical communication on Facebook depends on different types and degrees of interaction: likes, shares and comments. For example, a like requires less effort and commitment, while shares and comments require more (Brubaker & Wilson, 2018; Capriotti et al., 2019). Likes suggest that users (in some way) appreciate the content posted on the social network, albeit in a passive way. Recently, Facebook has introduced other features to its popular like function, such as emoticons that allow showing different feelings: "Love", "Care", "Haha", "Wow", "Sad", "Angry". On the other hand, when users

share third-party posts on their profile, they become volunteer spokespersons. Finally, the comments are those that explicitly manifest the conversation on the social network. Through the fluid exchange of information, comments facilitate dialogue (Cho *et al.*, 2014).

The results of the *Social Media Benchmarks Report* show that there is no positive correlation between the number of posts made by companies and the interactions generated in the posts (Devaney, 2015). In other words, posting more does not necessarily mean increasing the level of interactions. In order to increase the level of interactions, it is necessary to share content of interest that promotes interaction and dialogue with the publics.

On the other hand, the data obtained from other studies show that even though there is a high predisposition on the part of users to interact on the contents that promote communicative exchange (Cho *et al.*, 2014), organizations continue to promote one-way communication on Facebook (Aced-Toledano & Lalueza, 2018; Capriotti & Losada-Díaz, 2018; Huang *et al.*, 2016; Rivallo, 2018; Sundstrom & Levenshush, 2017; Wissen, 2017). In this sense, Facebook becomes a useful platform for dialogic communication, in other words, an ideal space to share content of interest and dialogue with the publics.

The communicative function in an organization is not only to disseminate information, but also to promote dialogue with the publics. Safko and Brake (2009) explain that to generate conversations it is first necessary to attract users, and this is achieved through the creation and dissemination of content that promotes dialogue with the publics. For this, organizations have at their disposal different information resources on Facebook that can be combined with each other.

Social networks allow the creation and dissemination of interactive content in different formats that can be combined with each other: images, texts, links, hashtags, emoticons, user tags, audio-video and animated images (GIFs). These resources can be grouped into three groups: graphic resources (photo/image, text and emoticon), interactive resources (user tag, link and hashtag) and audiovisual resources (audio-video and GIF) (Capriotti & Zeler, 2020; Capriotti *et al.*, 2019). Although each social network has its own characteristics that allow one or more resources to be highlighted, currently all have graphic, interactive and audiovisual resources.

Several studies (Invodo, 2016; Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Quintly, 2016) suggest that disseminating content that includes various information resources on social networks contributes positively to achieving greater reach and interaction. Among the different resources available, videos are considered a valuable element for strategies in social networks because they require a higher level of commitment (Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). According to studies, 7 out of 10 users in the Latin American region watch videos on the main social networks (Valentine, 2017), to which the ComScore *Digital Future 2017* study adds that video consumption in Latin America has increased the last year (Fosk, 2017). According to Valentine (2017), these results are accompanied by the new functions related to the audiovisual impulse that social networks made available to users to get on the digital trend.

Despite the fact that research is indicating that there is an exponential growth in the use of audiovisual resources on Facebook (due to the increase in connection speeds and technological improvements of mobile devices), images continue to be the most used resource in the social network profiles (Brubaker & Wilson,

2018; Cohen, 2016; Fosk, 2015; Luarn et al., 2015). This shows that organizations are using the resources available on Facebook (mainly through graphic resources) although they are wasting other possibilities offered by Facebook to increase the level of interaction with users through interactive and audiovisual resources.

3. METHODOLOGY

The object of study of this research are the main companies in Chile. To identify the companies, those with the best reputation in Chile and which are present in the annual study prepared by MERCO (MERCO companies) were taken as a reference, since they are considered benchmarks in matters of strategic management of corporate communication (Capriotti et al., 2019). Thus, the first 35 companies in the ranking that were present for two consecutive years were taken.

The list of the top 35 companies in the rankings of Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Peru and Colombia prepared by the same MERCO (MERCO companies), also present for two consecutive years, was taken as a reference to comparatively evaluate the management of communication on Facebook of Chilean companies with companies from the rest of Latin America.

Of the total number of companies selected, those that have official corporate fan pages on Facebook nationwide were taken. The profiles were identified by popular Internet search engines and the official websites of the companies. Those profiles that could not be verified were discarded. The final sample included 135 Facebook profiles: 19 profiles from Chile and 116 profiles from Latin America (23 from Argentina, 19 from Mexico, 27 from Colombia, 25 from Brazil and 22 from Peru).

The analysis was carried out over 12 months: from January to June 2015 and from July to December 2016. In both periods, 2 weeks per month were taken: the odd weeks in 2015 and the even weeks in 2016. Finally, a total of 29,078 posts was obtained.

The general objective of this research was to analyze the interactive communication of the main Chilean companies on Facebook based on a comparative analysis with the companies of the main Latin American countries. For this, 3 research questions (RQ) were established:

RQ1: What general communication approach does content disseminated by companies have on Facebook?

RQ2: What information resources are included in the posts of the companies?

RQ3: What level of interaction does the content disseminated by companies on Facebook generate?

RQ4: What interaction rate is obtained from said content disseminated on Facebook? What interaction rate is obtained from said content disseminated on Facebook?

To answer the research questions (RQ), the content analysis methodology was used and 4 categories of analysis were defined. These categories were developed and tested in previous studies (Capriotti et al., 2016; Capriotti et al., 2019).

The communication approach (RQ1) analyzes the strategy of the disseminated publications from 2 aspects: (a) an informative approach that refers to the creation and presentation of informative content (said content is descriptive/expository and encourages unidirectional communication), and (b) an interactive approach that refers to the creation and dissemination of

content intended to trigger conversations and the exchange of information.

Information resources (RQ2) refer to the different resources used to disseminate content to users. Thus, 3 graphic resources were defined (image, text and emoticon), 3 interactive resources (link, hashtag and user tag), and 2 audiovisual resources (audio-video and GIF). More than one resource can be included in this analysis category.

The level of interaction (RQ3) allows to analyze the volume of reactions generated in the content disseminated by the companies. To study the level of interaction, 3 dimensions were defined: (1) Support Level (SL), obtained from the average number of likes per company and post; (2) Viralization Level (VL), obtained from the average number of shares per company and post; and (3) Conversation Level (CL), obtained from the average of comments per company and post.

The interaction rate (RQ4) allows analyzing the volume of reactions generated by the content disseminated in relation to the number of followers of the companies. For this category, three dimensions were defined: (1) Support Rate (SR) obtained from dividing the total number of likes per post in relation to the total number of followers of the companies and multiplied by 100; (2) Viralization Rate (VR) obtained from dividing the total number of shares per post in relation to the total number of followers of the companies and multiplied by 100; (3) Conversation Rate (CR) obtained from dividing the total number of comments per post in relation to the total number of followers of the companies and multiplied by 100. Combining the three dimensions, the General Interaction Rate (GIR) was obtained. The GIR is the result of the sum of SR+VR+CR (Kaushik, 2011; Narayanan et al., 2012).

The Fanpage Karma monitoring tool, available on the Internet, was used to collect the publications. The information obtained was gathered and coded in an Excel template designed specifically for this research.

4. RESULTS

The study reveals that companies in Chile and those in Latin America (LatAm) have a majority presence on Facebook. More than 80% of the companies studied have fan pages on the social network. Also, companies publish content quite frequently. Although Chile is one of the countries with the least number of companies present on Facebook (19 out of 23 companies analyzed), it is the country with the highest level of activity on the social network (reaching almost 2 posts per day per company).

Regarding the communication approach of the posts of the companies (RQ1), the results show that the companies of Chile and LatAm tend broadly towards the dissemination of content with a purely informative approach on Facebook. In other words, more than 70% of the posts are created to disseminate content and inform users about the activities of companies. In contrast, posts with an interactive approach are less than 30% (Table 1).

Table 1

Communication approach of companies on Facebook (%)

	Informational approach	Interactive approach
Chile	71,6	28,4
LatAm	74,5	25,5

The difference is very insignificant between companies in Chile (71.6%) and those in LatAm (74%), since in both cases the informational approach is predominant.

Table 2*Information resources of companies on Facebook*

Total		Graphic			Interactive			Audiovisual
		Text	Image	Emoticon	User tag	Hashtag	Link	Audio-video/ GIF
Chile	N	5914	4635	1044	442	2323	3226	838
	(%)	98,3	77,1	17,4	7,3	38,6	53,6	22,0
LatAm	N	4503	3571	494	832	1897	2183	787
	(%)	97,7	77,5	11,0	18,4	40,9	47,9	21,6

The analysis of the information resources included in the content disseminated by Chilean companies on Facebook (RQ2) reveals that graphic resources are the most used. Almost all of the posts disseminated include a main text (98.3%), which is mostly accompanied by one or more images or photographs (77.1%). Few cases use emoticons (17.4%). This reveals that companies are not exploiting this resource much, which allows them to empathize with users and make communication more friendly (Table 2).

On the other hand, among the least used resources are audiovisual resources (22%). Of the total of posts that include audiovisual resources, 9% correspond to videos and 13% to GIF. This data shows that there is a great waste of this resource at the communicational level, which allows increasing the level of commitment by requiring more attention from the user.

Interactive resources are also included, mainly links (53.6%) and hashtags (38.6%). The user tag is rarely used (7.3%). This means that at least half of the posts have at least one interactive resource. Unlike audiovisual resources, interactive ones are more included in the posts of companies in Chile, but their use continues to be less than graphic resources (Table 2).

When comparing companies in Chile and the rest of LatAm, little significant differences are found. LatAm companies also use text and image as basic resources to create and disseminate content, and include audiovisual resources less frequently than interactive resources. However, it should be noted that LatAm companies use emoticons less (11%) and that at least half tend to use more than one interactive resource in their posts. The results of the analysis show that almost 20% of the posts have user tags, 40% include hashtags and almost 50% contain links.

The results of the level of interaction (RQ3) reveal that the level of interaction generated in the content of Chilean companies is mainly determined by the large volume of likes obtained by the posts, compared to shares and comments (Table 3). The average number of likes is 316 per company and post, shares are 23.2 per company and post, and comments are 49.3 per company and post. In percentage, these results show that SL represents 81.3%, VL 6% and CL 12.7% of all interactions received in company posts.

Table 3*Level of interaction of companies on Facebook*

		SL	VL	CL
Chile	(Average company/post)	316,0	23,2	49,3
	(%)	81,3	6,0	12,7
LatAm	(Average company/post)	1.599,7	133,9	62,1
	(%)	89,1	7,5	3,5

The differences between companies in Chile and the rest of LatAm are significant. Although they share as a result the large volume of likes received in the disseminated content, the volume of likes of Latin American companies is much higher than that of those in Chile. This exceeds 5 times the average number of likes per company and post in Chile (1,599.7). The LatAm SL represents 89.1%, that is to say that almost all the interactions of LatAm companies are likes. Another significant difference is that LatAm companies receive more shares than comments on posts. The average number of shares per company and post (133.9) is twice as high as the average number of comments per company and post (62.1). In percentage terms, the VL constitutes 7.5% and the CL represents 3.5%. Both add up to 11% of the total interactions.

Although the results of the level of interaction show that the average number of interactions per company and post is high, it must be taken into account that companies have a large volume of followers. The average of Chilean companies is 432,974 fans per company and the average of LatAm companies is 2,696,614 fans per company. In relation to this average number of fans per company, the results of the interaction

rate (RQ4) show that the interaction generated is low. The data obtained from companies in Chile indicate that the SR is higher than the rest (11.6% per year), with the like button being the interaction instrument most used to interact with the contents of the companies. The SR far exceeds the VR (0.8% per year) and the CR (1.8% per year). The sum of the three interaction instruments presents a GIR of 14.2%, demonstrating once again that the total interaction generated is low (Table 4).

Table 4*Interaction rate of companies on Facebook*

	SR	VR	CR	GIR
	(%) anual			
Chile	11,6	0,8	1,8	14,2
LatAm	11,6	1,1	0,7	13,5

When comparing the results of Chile with LatAm, some significant differences are found. Although both obtain a SR of 11.6% (due to the large volume of likes obtained per post and company), VR and CR together represent 1.8% of the total. In other words, the VR plus the CR of the LatAm companies mean a third less than the VR and the CR of the Chilean companies together (2.6%). In Table 4 it can be seen as a result of the sum of the SR, VR and CR, that the GIR obtained in LatAm companies is 13.5%. This result shows that, despite the fact that LatAm companies have a volume 5 times higher than Chile's fans, the LatAm GIR is lower than the Chile GIR. In other words, companies in Chile receive more interaction than companies in the rest of LatAm as a whole.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The study carried out reveals that the presence of Chilean companies on Facebook is the majority, while their activity is quite frequent. Comparing the results of Chile with LatAm, the first is the one with the least presence, but still the most active in the social network.

The analysis of the communication approach (RQ1) shows that a mainly informative approach is maintained. Less than a third of the total posts that are disseminated in Chile and LatAm promote interaction, that is, invite the audience to carry out some type of specific action (participate, comment, subscribe, etc.). Among the interactive actions that are promoted, participating in contests, events and other activities is what is most included in the publications. On a few occasions, users are invited to share their opinions on the topics that companies discuss. In this sense, companies are wasting one of the opportunities offered by communication on Facebook in relation to the possibility of knowing the needs and desires of the publics based on the opinions of users (Taylor & Kent, 2014).

On the other hand, the contents that companies disseminate are mostly created with information resources (RQ2) that are not very interactive. The findings showed that mainly companies in Chile and LatAm use graphic resources in their publications. Only half of the posts (or less in the case of LatAm), include an interactive resource in the posts or audiovisuals (around 20% of the total). This indicates that companies are largely wasting the possibility of further promoting interaction in the social network through the use of interactive and/or audiovisual resources, the latter being key elements to generate greater interaction since they imply a level of commitment greater than the rest (Costa-Sánchez & Túnñez-López, 2019;

Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Quintly, 2016).

Analyzing the results of RQ1 and RQ2, two connection points between them are detected. On the one hand, the findings allow us to affirm that companies are managing their communication for the dissemination of information, since the communication approach is mainly informative and the resources that are most used are not very interactive. On the other hand, it can be observed that, although there is a significant number of companies that include interactive and audiovisual resources in the disseminated content, few are those that promote interaction.

Finally, the level of interaction obtained in corporate content (RQ3) indicates that there is a high volume of interaction. However, the highest percentage responds to the likes received in companies in Chile, in the same way that happens in companies in LatAm. In contrast, shares and comments receive a much lower volume. Undoubtedly, the level of likes does not have the same interactive value as the level of shares and comments (Cho et al., 2014). Thus, the interaction rate (RQ4) obtained is low. This suggests that there is a poor percentage of users who interact with the content disseminated by companies, which allows us to make a series of reflections. On the one hand, it may be that the content disseminated by companies generates little interest for users. On the other hand, it may be that companies have little interest in dialoguing with users on the social network, despite the fact that the authors emphasize the potential of social networks to generate dialogue (Kim et al., 2014; Losada-Díaz & Capriotti, 2015; Waters et al., 2009; Wissen, 2017).

As a conclusion of this study, it can be affirmed that the communication management

of Chilean companies (as well as those of the rest of LatAm) on Facebook is mostly one-way. Chilean companies are quite active in the social network, but the contents have an informative communication approach. The resources they use to create content are not very interactive too. This directly affects the low interaction rate generated. According to the *Latin American Communication Monitor* study, the majority of professionals in Latin America evaluate the level of interaction of users in the networks based on positive comments towards the organization and active communication with the organization (Moreno et al., 2017). However, it is important to keep in mind that the level of user interaction depends on the interaction management that organizations carry out on Facebook. In other words, if companies use social networks as a one-way communication channel, users are likely to generate a lower level of interaction than if companies use social networks as a dialogical communication channel.

The inclusion of Facebook in communication strategies implies a professional commitment to use the tool to maintain mutually beneficial relationships with audiences on a digital level. Thus, maintaining an active presence and properly promoting interaction are key aspects to achieve successful communication management on Facebook. For this, companies in Chile and LatAm should use this social network more as a communication channel to generate dialogue and not so much as a dissemination channel to obtain greater digital visibility.

This study was developed under a specific methodology that allowed the analysis of communication management on Facebook, which was adapted to a specific object of study (companies). To assess whether the trend and the results continue to be replicated today, it should be applied to other types of organizations and/or sectors, as well as other countries and/or regions. This would allow to deepen the study from an academic point of view and contribute to the improvement of communicative practices at the digital level of organizations from a professional point of view.

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Social perceptions of the Chilean National Soccer Team as a brand

Percepciones sociales de la Selección Chilena de Fútbol como marca

Percepções sociais da Seleção Chilena de Futebol como marca

2

ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: August 10, 2020 / December 02, 2020

Abstract

The sporting successes achieved by the Chilean National Soccer Team in 2015 and 2016 allow us to distinguish the changes in the perceptions of Chileans regarding La Roja. Based on the consideration of this team as a brand, it was concluded that it has a high symbolic degree in terms of a unifying element of Chilean society, which is considered fragmented. For this study, 2,410 face to face surveys were conducted in Santiago de Chile with people between 10 and 80 years of age, which were segmented based on the socioeconomic groups of the country.

KEYWORDS

Chile, National Soccer Team, Brand, Perceptions, Aaker.

Resumen

Los éxitos deportivos alcanzados por la Selección Nacional de Fútbol de Chile en los años 2015 y 2016 permiten distinguir los cambios en las percepciones de los chilenos respecto a La Roja. A partir de la consideración de este equipo como una marca, se concluyó que posee un alto grado simbólico en cuanto a elemento de unión de la sociedad chilena, a la que se considera como fragmentada. Para este estudio se

realizaron 2.410 encuestas cara a cara en Santiago de Chile a personas de entre 10 y 80 años, que fueron segmentadas a partir de los grupos socioeconómicos que conforman el país.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Chile, Selección Nacional de Fútbol, Marca, Percepciones, Aaker.

Resumo

Os sucessos esportivos alcançados pela Seleção Chilena de Futebol em 2015 e 2016 permitem distinguir as mudanças nas percepções dos chilenos em relação a La Roja. A partir da consideração desta equipe como marca, concluiu-se que ela possui um alto grau simbólico em termos de um elemento unificador da sociedade chilena, que é considerada fragmentada. Para este estudo, foram realizadas 2.410 pesquisas presenciais em Santiago do Chile com pessoas entre 10 e 80 anos, as quais foram segmentadas com base nos grupos socioeconômicos que compõem o país.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Chile, Seleção Nacional de Futebol, Marca, Percepções, Aaker.

1. INTRODUCTION

Chile's qualification for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil marked a milestone in national sport. For the first time in history it was possible to attend a World Cup consecutively without having the advantage of being the host. In this way, an insurmountable barrier was broken for the Chilean team. This historical fact not only encompassed a sports dimension, but also attracted a high degree of attention in Chilean society. Thus, the degree of engagement, a relationship built on the basis of a series of attributes and positive experiences that allow the development of strong ties of commitment (Belair-Gagnon et al., 2019) and loyalty towards a product or services (Brodie et al., 2013), transformed it into one of the most recognized brands in the country (Tapia, 2019).

According to the statistics of the South American Football Confederation¹, La Roja (as the national team is called locally), was the team that brought the most public to the stadiums during the last qualifying rounds with 351,440 spectators. An average of 43,930 people per match left behind the figures of Colombia, Uruguay and Argentina in the ranking. This social phenomenon that has awakened the Chilean team in the country has been studied from different perspectives and dimensions. Some authors studied it from nationalism (Santa Cruz, 2010), others from politics (Hite, 2004; Matamala, 2001), others from marketing (Feller Villanueva, 2006), and even from an economic point of view (Sertsios, 2007).

This research studies the different public perceptions regarding the sporting successes achieved by the national team between 2015 and 2016, the most successful time in its his-

tory. This period offers the possibility of distinguishing and recognizing different age and socio-economic impressions regarding the personality of this brand. It is also interesting to study this successful national team as a symbol of cohesion between the different socioeconomic groups in a Chilean society that, despite the notable advances in recent decades in poverty reduction, is considered unequal both socially and economically (UNDP, 2017) and with a deep discomfort towards the elites (CEP, 2016; Peña, 2020).

For this, 2,410 people belonging to the different age and socioeconomic segments of the country were surveyed face to face. All this, a few months after La Roja won the Copa América Centenario championship held in the United States of America, a tournament that was held to celebrate 100 years of this competition and in which the best teams on the continent participated.

2. LA ROJA AS A BRAND

As Anderson (1993) points out, nations are imaginary communities united by ties that give their citizens a sense of belonging and identity and make them feel part of a whole. As Santos (2003) and Alabarces (2003) confirmed, one of the generators of such ties in Latin America is the national soccer teams.

Soccer, the stadium, the game itself and everything that happens around it before, during and after the moment of competition generally takes on a ritualistic and, according to some, almost religious meaning (Acuña & Acuña, 2016). As Villena (2003, p.26) points out, soccer "acts as a public arena" in the process of building social and cultural identities of different origins and levels.

¹ <https://www.foxsports.com.mx/news/125153-la-roja-la-que-llevo-mas-publico>

For this reason, a range of dimensions is opened by which a national team of a country can be studied, one of them being to understand it as a brand.

The personality of the brand plays a fundamental role when making a choice (Hernández et al. 2018) and can be vital in the success or failure of a product, service or entertainment activity, since it allows consumers to connect and build ideally long-lasting relationships that are difficult to break (Doyle, 1990; Rather et al., 2018).

One of the first researchers to study the importance of the brand from the psychological point of view was Allport (1961), who made a parallel between a brand and a person. Thus, the characteristics of the brand and its behaviors could be easily recognized by consumers. The relationship between the two would depend on the identification that they were able to establish over time. Aaker and Biel (1993), along the same lines, affirm that an organization can have and maintain good relationships with its clients if it manages to work its personality well with the aim of gradually improving its valuation and recognition in the market. Blackett (2009) goes a step further by arguing that the most powerful brands are those built from the foundation of trust that comes from the consumer experience.

For Plummer (2000), the personality of the brand is not something purely physical or functional, but rather that brands can represent values and acquire characteristics of human personality. They can then be described as young, close, modern, etc. Even authors such as Sundar and Noseworthy (2016) establish that these characteristics of the brand personality can positively affect different aspects of the consumer.

This situation is relevant in the case of sport and, especially, in football, the essence of which

depends to a large extent on intangible feelings. These sensations at the same time are associated with a series of symbols, names and people that represent a country or a certain team (Gladden et al., 1998). Furthermore, the relationship between fans and their favorite teams or clubs is based on identity and belonging (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007). That is, many of them describe themselves as belonging to the community due to their participation in the group (Demiray & Burnaz, 2019). This means being part of a crowd that seeks the same goals and results, but it also means differentiating themselves from a simple spectator (Groeppe-Klein et al., 2008), since becoming a fan is having deeper connections with the team of choice (Gray & Wert-Gray, 2012; Zillmann & Paulus, 1993).

One of the greatest exponents in the field of brand personality is Aaker (1997), who developed a theoretical frame of reference in which he determined the number and nature of the dimensions of a brand that would be valid to compare, study and analyze its effects in a methodical and scientific way. Currently, there are more than 7,500 academic papers that have used this methodology in different products and services around the world.

The instrument of Aaker (1997) allows to identify five dimensions (sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness), which group a series of features (Figure 1) that make it possible to establish the interaction between the brand and the consumer through the attribution of personality features (Escobar & Mateluna, 2016). Furthermore, the model of Aaker (1997) highlights the importance of building powerful brands based on identity and how it can be developed.

This list of variables makes it possible to measure different aspects in a systematic way and

allows to determine the correlations between personality, preference and use by consumers. Study the emotions that a certain brand evokes in people allows to know, for example, if the levels of trust and loyalty increase or decrease (Chernatony, 1997; Fournier, 1994).

According to Aaker (1997) this learning would contribute to a general understanding of the symbolic use of brands, since it would provide a vision of the variables that influence the personality of the brand (Escobar & Mateluna, 2016).

A study by Carlson et al. (2009) on sports brands discovered that the dimensions associated with health and success are associated with the identification that people have with their team, since once the consumer is recognized as part of a team, the associated expenses (i.e. merchandising) tend to increase. While Pan and Phua (2020) confirmed that the good performance of the team produced positive effects on the trust and loyalty of the club's sponsoring brand.

last qualifying matches for the 2018 World Cup, which Chile finally did not qualify for.

After applying the conceptual framework of Aaker (1997), Braunstein and Ross (2010) reached the conclusion that knowing the personality of the brand allows sports organizations to establish differentiating strategies from competitors and, in this way, allocate resources towards promotion in those dimensions that need changes or strengthening of certain aspects. Likewise, it allows to know if the sponsorships to which the sports organization intends to associate have the desired connection.

Lee & Cho (2009) explored which brands and sporting events fit the best. The results included nearly 400 people and showed that the brand pairing of "honesty" and "diligence" produced the best relationship between the brand, the event and the consumers. While Karjaluoto et al., (2016) established that the identification of ice hockey fans is related to loyalty and years of relationship. In fewer years, the personality of the brand becomes more relevant.

Kin et al., (2012) after studying brands and sports concluded that a better understanding of brand personality allows sports organizations to more successfully monitor their effectiveness and market positioning in order to know how consumers evolve and in that way move with them. Förster (2011) highlights the importance of this union because it is the only way to create a solid identity that allows it to be recognized by people, with the challenge that the fans of that team or club get actively involved with the brand (Tsordia et al., 2018).

Couvelaere and Richelieu (2005) conclude that the development and implementation of a brand strategy in the case of soccer teams are correlated with the sporting results they obtain, but that variables such as proximity and engagement are also relevant. For this reason, thouthou-

Figure 1

Brand Personality Model



Note: Aaker (1997)

The same happens with the transmission of events that achieve a larger audience. This can be clearly observed in Chile, given that when the National Soccer Team plays, the television channels manage to obtain their highest ratings. During the last Confederations Cup played in Russia in 2017, the broadcasts were around 60 points (Time Ibope) as well as the

sands of fans can be seen in football stadiums cheering on their team regardless of whether it is losing or not at the top of the standings.

3. CHILE AND ITS SOCIAL REALITY

With the opening of the economy and since the return of democracy in the early 1990s, Chile has experienced remarkable development with a GDP per capita that is the highest in Latin America and exceeds USD 20,000 (World Bank, 2019). This has allowed a notable decrease in poverty, which currently reaches 10% of Chileans, with only Uruguay being the country in the region that shows the best results in this area (ECLAC, 2019).

At the institutional level and according to Freedom House (2018), Chile not only ranks as one of the Latin American countries with the greatest political and civil freedom, but also, and according to Transparency International (2019), is the second country in the region after Uruguay with the lowest perception of corruption, positioning it among the 30 nations with the best results worldwide in this regard. Chile joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2010, considered as the body that groups developed countries, being the first South American nation to do so.

These achievements at the economic and institutional level must be contrasted with the high levels of socioeconomic inequality that still persist in Chilean society (World Bank, 2019). As UNDP (2017) points out on inequality in Chile:

In Chile, saying that the country is unequal is obvious. Inequality is part of its historical physiognomy, a structural feature of the social order from its beginnings to the present day. For the inhabitants it is an essential element

of how they understand the country where they live and the position they occupy in society. (UNDP, 2017, p. 17)

These differences translate, for example, into the fact that 77% of Chileans believe that the conflict between rich and poor is strong or very strong; 77% indicate that they do not trust other people (Latinobarómetro, 2017). As the report by the Centro de Estudios Públicos (2016) explains, this inequality has resulted in constant discomfort among the population, not only with the country's institutions, but also among Chileans.

4. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to investigate what perceptions Chileans have regarding their national team and what explains the great interest and connection that the public had immediately after they won the two Copa América titles. Likewise, the symbolism of La Roja was analyzed as a unifying element of Chilean society, which is considered as fragmented.

Through a survey designed and based on the personality model of Aaker (1997), it was sought to identify and evaluate the attributes with which the Chilean public recognized the national team in its period of greatest sporting success. This research is based on the following questions:

Q1: The image of the Chilean soccer team is better than the image of the country.

Q2: The lower socioeconomic groups feel more represented by the Chilean soccer team.

Q3: Children and young people are more optimistic that the Chilean soccer team will always have better results.

In this way, 2,410 people between 10 and 80 years of age located in the Metropolitan Region and belonging to different socioeconomic segments according to AIM distribution were surveyed face-to-face. This number was weighted according to the specific weight of each segment in the population (see Table 1 and 2).

Table 1

Population by age in the Metropolitan Region

Age group		Man	Woman
Children	13-18	287.968	278.790
Youngsters	19-25	393.930	381.997
Young adult	26-40	854.643	858.526
Adult	41-65	1.056.156	970.897
Elderly	66-70	111.436	305.517
		2.704.133	2.795.727

Note: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (2018)

Table 2

Segmentation by commune

Communes representative of the socioeconomic segment		% of total population
ABC1	Prov - LC - Vitacura	9%
C2	La Florida - Maipú - San Miguel	20%
C3	San Bernardo - Est. Central - Cerrillos	33%
D	Prov - Ñuñoa	32%
E	La Pintana	6%

Note: AIM

Participation in this study was voluntary and it was not necessary for people to provide their personal or contact information. Therefore, it was impossible to later identify or individualize their responses. Neither was any payment made. The participation of minors was in the presence of their parents and/or an adult.

Only the researchers in charge had access to the data and the results were kept on a compu-

ter with a password to which no one who was not part of this project had access.

The interviewers asked their questions using mobile devices that were loaded with software that allowed the information to be stored directly in a data cloud, which could only be accessed with a specific username and password in order to protect the confidentiality of these and to avoid later errors in the tabulation process.

The people who carried out the survey received training on how to handle the devices and the software. In addition, this program had a tutorial that could be consulted online.

Before starting the survey, it was piloted among university students to corroborate the understanding of the questions, that the objectives were met and that the technical process was adequate and worked correctly.

The questionnaire based on the dimensions of Aaker (1997) and that has been used in different investigations in Spanish (Martínez et al., 2005; Petroll et al., 2008), consisted of 20 questions with a Likert scale from 1 to 7. This scale facilitates responses in Chile because it is the same scale that is used for grades in school and higher education (university and technical).

5. RESULTS

The results presented below must be understood from the fact that there is a high identification of the sample with the Chilean team. Over 70% of all socioeconomic groups and more than 80% in group D indicated that they felt represented with the soccer team (Table 3).

Table 3

"When the National Team plays, do you feel represented?"
Affirmative answers.

Socioeconomic group	
ABC1	71%
C2	71%
C3	73%
D	84%
E	73%

This same representation also occurs according to age ranges. From children to older adults, they showed an important identification with the national team in all cases in more than 70% (Table 4).

Table 4

"When the National Team plays, do you feel represented?" Affirmative answers.

Age group	%
Adulto mayor	76
Adulto	75
Adulto joven	78
Jóvenes	78
Niños	79

It is this high identification, both of the socioeconomic and age groups, which allows establishing certain associations between the country and the National Team. Successful, efficient, hard-working, authentic, leader, strong and tough were the main features, of the 15 that the Aaker (1997) model contemplates, with which the total sample identified Chile and La Roja (Table 5).

In general, it can be seen that the image of the country and the national team are similar, but there is a stronger brand recognition in the national team. In addition, it can be established that although the images are similar, a difference of 24 percentage points is found with respect to honesty. Something similar happens between the image of Chile and the Chilean team with the adjectives successful, leader and efficient with 28, 18 and 17 points of difference, respectively.

This information answers the question posed regarding the image of the Chilean soccer team being better than that of the country. This is reflected, as mentioned above, in the massive attendance at soccer matches and in the high rating of the match broadcasts. In contrast, the image of the country has become more unstable in recent years. Since 2013, there has been a significant decline in those who believe that the country is progressing (UC-GFK, 2018) (Figure 2).

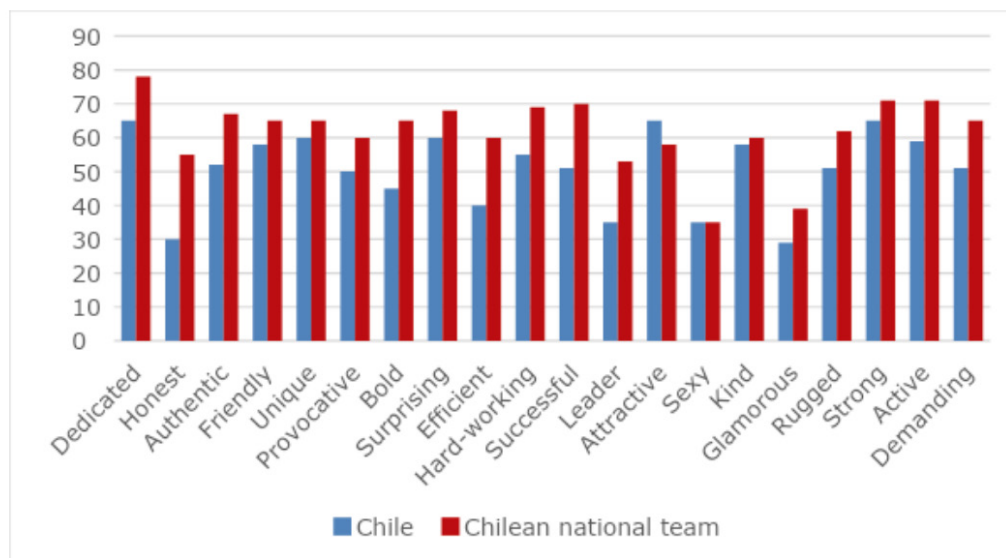
Table 5

Main personality traits of Aaker applied to Chile and their national team

	ABC1	C2	C3	D	E
Country Personality	Successful	Efficient	Hard-working	Hard-working	Strong
	Leader	Authentic	Dedicated	Successful	Rugged
National Team Personality	Dedicated	Efficient	Efficient	Hard-working	Successful
	Leader	Leader	Leader	Leader	Leader

Figure 2

Country image vs. Chilean soccer team image



Among the different socioeconomic groups there was consensus in characterizing the national team as a leader, a feature that only the ABC1 group considered also applied to Chile. This could be related to the fact that this segment identified its socioeconomic situation with the sporting successes of the national team. This is also the case with the appreciation of the C2 group, who considered both the country and the team efficient.

On the other hand, it can be noted that the lower income socioeconomic group used characteristics typical of an adversity environment to rate the country, although it maintained an appreciation of the national team as successful. Different was what happened with group D, which characterized both Chile and the team as "hard-working".

A Chi-squared test was performed for each pair of variables from Chile and the Chilean national team, the result was significant in each of the cases.

Another personality trait consulted was with which animal the soccer team was identified. There was agreement that the dog better represented the qualities of La Roja. The choice of this animal can have a double explanation. The first, regarding the fact that one of the most important players on the team, and who has a biography of self-improvement, is nicknamed The Pitbull. The second, and also plausible, is the symbolism of the stray dog that must manage daily to survive and is commonly called as *quiltro*, which means dog in *Mapudungún*. Other animals that also stood out were two of the fiercest predators in nature, the lion and the tiger.

It can be established that these personality traits associated with the national team are a reflection of its sports performance in recent years. Thus, groups such as ABC1 and C3 believe

that the national team will always win (Table 6).

Table 6

"When the national team plays we think that it will always win." Affirmative answers.

Segment	%
ABC1	56
C2	38
C3	52
D	38
E	48

This is because current Chilean society is more optimistic about this team than others in the past, especially the new generations. According to Table 6, the children of all socioeconomic groups are the most optimistic with the current national team, which can be explained by the fact that they did not experience the defeats of previous periods (Table 7).

This optimism translates into the groups that have only lived through this winning stage of the national team were the most confident that the team would reach the final of the 2018 World Cup (Table 7). Children and young people, with 31% and 22% respectively, had more favorable expectations about the future results of the team, while adults and elderly, with 16% and 19% respectively, had lower confidence.

Figure 3

"Are you more optimistic today than before about the performance of the national soccer team?" Percentage of affirmative answers according to socioeconomic group and age.

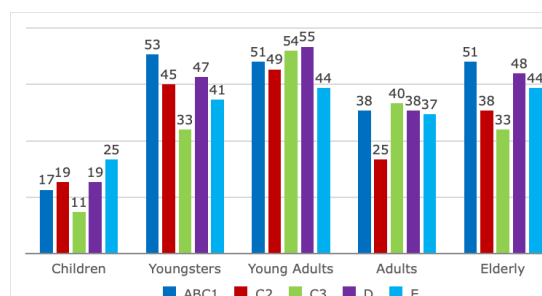
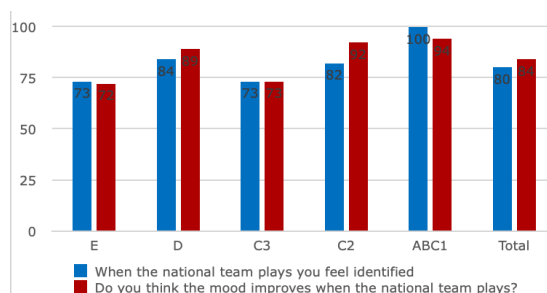


Table 7*Expectations of the national team for the World Cup.*

	Does not classify	First round	Round of 16	Quarter finals	Semi-final	Final
Elderly	25%	29%	24%	20%	20%	19%
Adult	19%	24%	18%	21%	16%	16%
Young adult	10%	10%	9%	13%	15%	12%
Youngster	22%	22%	23%	27%	25%	22%
Children	24%	15%	26%	18%	24%	31%

Regarding the second research question, if the lower socioeconomic groups feel more represented by the Chilean soccer team, this showed negative results. The highest socioeconomic group is the one that feels more represented by the national team, followed by group D and those that feel less represented are groups E and C3 (Figure 4). In general, it can be seen that all socioeconomic groups claim to feel represented by the national team. The same trend occurs on whether they believe that the mood improves when the national team plays. Again, the ABC1 group is the one that agrees most with this statement (Figure 4). When performing a Chi-squared test, it can be seen that for both questions the differences are statistically significant at 95% confidence ($p < 0.05$).

Figure 4*Representation and mood by socioeconomic group*

When analyzing the third research question on whether children and young people are more optimistic that the Chilean soccer team will always have better results, it can be verified through the following results.

Children and youngsters, with 41% and 45% respectively, are the ones who most considered that the 2015 Copa América champion team has been the best in the history of Chilean football. It should be noted that older adults also considered the team that ranked third in the 1962 World Cup, which was held in the country, as one of the best (Table 8).

When asked when the Chilean team plays, you have the same answer, the rival will always win. It was found that people's expectations are statistically different depending on age ($P < 0.05$, $T = -2.019$). The youngest have higher expectations about the national team than the older ones. When we consulted them about optimism compared to their parents, it was found that the differences were not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$, $T = -0.228$), that is, there are no statistically significant differences according to the age of the people when faced with the phrase "Your parents were more optimistic than you".

Table 8*"What has been the best soccer team in Chile?"*

	1962 World Cup	1974 World Cup	1982 World Cup	1987 Copa Amé- rica	1998 World Cup	2010 World Cup	2014 World Cup	2015 Copa Amé- rica	2016 Copa Amé- rica
Elderly	27%	2%	4%	2%	7%	9%	8%	29%	12%
Adult	10%	4%	6%	1%	4%	8%	11%	36%	23%
Young adult	7%	2%	3%	1%	5%	7%	15%	42%	18%
Youngs- ters	4%	1%	2%	2%	4%	8%	16%	45%	18%
Children	4%	2%	1%	1%	3%	13%	14%	41%	21%

Table 9*"Do you think that when the Chilean team plays, it does not matter the rival, they will always win?"*

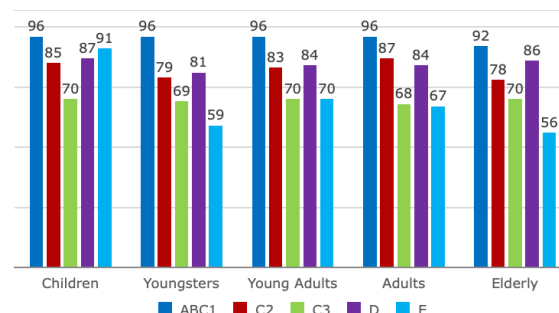
		N	Mean	Standard deviation
Age	Sí	1036	34,8	20,3
	No	1374	36,5	20,4

Table 10*"Were your parents more optimistic than you?"*

		N	Mean	Standard deviation
Age	Sí	970	35,7	20,3
	No	1439	35,9	20,4

This sporting confidence regarding the national team can be taken to social levels, considering that it serves as a bond between the different socioeconomic and age groups. 79% of those consulted answered yes to the question of whether "the national team unites us as a country". However, there was a considerable difference between the more distant socioeconomic groups. In all the age ranges of the ABC1 group, it was considered that national team unites us by more than 90%, while in group E the percentages were lower, reaching less than

60% in young people and older adults, except in children who exhibited a percentage similar to ABC1.

Figure 5*"Does the national soccer team unite us as a country?" Percentage of affirmative answers.*

70% of the sample estimated that the national team allows to put aside social differences. When crossing the socioeconomic groups with the age ranges, the result was that ABC1 was the segment that believed the most that the national team allows to set aside social differences at all ages. While the adults in group D had a more negative position regarding this question (Figure 6).

Figure 6

"Does the national soccer team put aside social differences?" Percentage of affirmative answers.

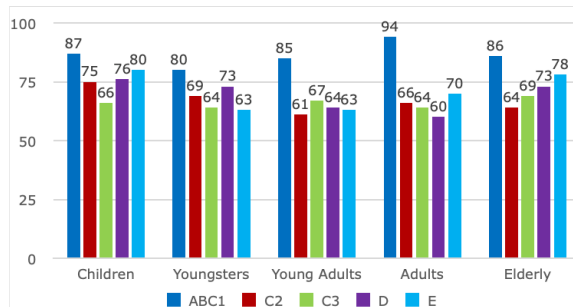
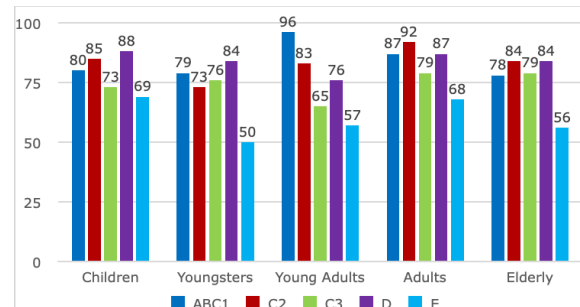


Figure 7

"Does the national soccer team put aside social differences?" Percentage of affirmative answers.



It is important to note that both in the question of whether the national team unites the country and in the one that asks if it leaves aside social differences, it was the ABC1 group in all age ranges that showed a greater positive trend, while in the others groups was lower despite the fact that there was significant approval of these items.

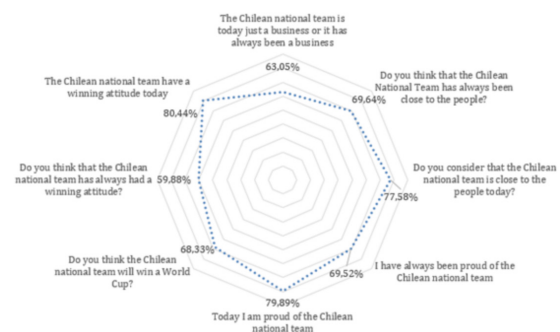
The social importance of the national team also leads to symbolic aspects related to the identity of the country being associated with it. Generally, the teams of the national soccer teams sing the national anthem before starting the game. 79% of those surveyed answered yes to the question of whether this produces emotion. However, when crossing the answers of socioeconomic groups with the age range, group E at all ages indicated less emotionality with this song, reaching only 50% in young people. Among the different causes that could explain this last piece of information, for example, could be the youth's detachment from tradition, an issue that does not properly concern this research (Figure 7).

Regarding a series of attitudes and according to the total sample, it was possible to notice that the soccer team has generated positive attitudes towards it. Chileans feel prouder of La Roja and consider it closer to the people than before. Likewise, the national team was consi-

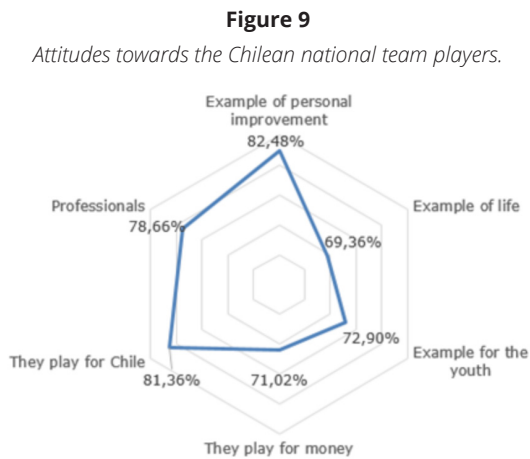
dered more successful than the previous ones: 80% considered it more successful today, while 59% indicated that it had always been successful. This optimistic vision of the national team is reflected in the fact that 68% believe that one day they will win the Soccer World Cup. The negative aspect was that a high percentage, as in the past, still consider it as a business.

Figure 8

Attitudes towards the Chilean national team.



By personalizing the National Team in its players, the appreciation of the total sample was positive. Thus, 72% considered them as role models for the youth, 82% considered them as examples of self-improvement and 81% believed that they play for the country. On the other hand, although 71% considered that they play for money, 78% say that they are professionals.



In a high, but lower proportion, 69% see them as examples of life.

Two variables were created when investigating the sensations generated by the Chilean soccer team. The positive variable is the sum of the variables: passion, happiness, pleasure, love for the country, trust and admiration. The negative variable is the sum of the variables: anger, discontent, sadness, fear, shame, and nerves. This adds the values on the scale from 1 to 5, that is, if a person strongly disagrees with the 6 adjectives, he will have a sum of 6 in the created variable. On the contrary, if a person strongly agrees with all the adjectives, he will have a sum of 30. In the minimum and maximum we see that there are people who strongly disagreed with all the adjectives (they summed 6) and others who strongly agreed with all (they summed 30). The mean for the positives is 22.3 and for the negatives 17.6. This means that the people surveyed

affirm that the national team produces more positive adjectives than negative adjectives be-

Table 11

Sensations generated by the Chilean soccer team

	N	Mini-mum	Maxi-mum	Mean	Standard deviation
Posi-tive	2331	6	30	22,3	4,8
Nega-tive	2339	6	30	17,6	4,4

cause the closer the average is to 30, the more people agreed with the adjectives.

Table 12 shows the correlation between the variables created and age. We see that in both cases the correlation between the variables is negative, however, it is very weak as it is close to 0. When observing the significance we see that it is greater than 0.05, therefore we fail to reject

Table 12

Sensations by age

		Age	Posi-tive	Nega-tive
Age	Pearson correlation coefficient	1	-,032	-,035
	Significant. (bilateral)		,122	,088

our null hypothesis and we see that there is not a linear relationship between the positive and negative variables with age.

6. DISCUSSION

The results obtained in this research reveal the strength as a brand that had the most successful national team of all time among Chileans. Although there are some differences between socioeconomic groups and age groups, the general evaluation of La Roja and the emotions it arouses is enormously positive, which differs

from the image that most of those surveyed have about the country. This is demonstrated by what is stated by Blackket (2009), which establishes that the most powerful brands are those that are built on the basis of trust and experience.

As mentioned, Chile was the country that proportionally brought the most audience to the stadium. It can be said that the high demand and interest in living the experience of seeing the national team live goes hand in hand with the results obtained in this research.

The fervor generated by the Chilean soccer team and the positive aspects and feelings demonstrated in this research could explain why different social and commercial actors seek to associate with this brand. An example of this is the millionaire contract signed in 2017 to acquire their commercial rights, for which 20% more was paid compared to the previous agreement signed five years earlier (Contreras, 2017).

In particular, the study revealed that each socioeconomic level identified the national soccer team and the values it promotes from its particular place of origin, making its positive significance something flexible that corresponds to the reality of each group.

Regarding the age ranges, it was possible to observe that the optimism of each cohort is related to the negative or positive previous experiences. It is for this reason that children and young people are more optimistic, since they have seen and experienced almost exclusively favorable results from the national team. The same does not happen with the older generations, who saw La Roja fail again and again in different competitions (qualifiers, world championships, Copa América, etc.).

Likewise, it was possible to verify that the national team unites Chileans and is a rare element

of social cohesion in today's coexistence. In this sense, and taking into account the high levels of inequality and mistrust in Chile, La Roja must be understood not only in what concerns merely sports, but as a brand that promotes good coexistence and is a bond between classes, social and age groups of the country.

These favorable attributes carry over to the players as well as they are perceived as role models. The meritocratic aspects of their lives are highlighted, this dimension being a relevant aspect for Chilean society since meritocracy has been established as a relevant aspect for social cohesion (Siles, 2018).

7. CONCLUSIONS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

From the research questions on which this research was based, it is concluded:

1. It is possible to establish that the image of the country and the national team are similar, but there is a stronger brand recognition in the team. This can be explained, on the one hand, by the successes of La Roja between the years 2014 to 2016, and on the other, to the negative views of the country and its progress in recent years.
2. Although the difference is small, it is the higher socioeconomic groups that feel most represented by the national team. This could be explained by a kind of assimilation of the team's success with that of their own financial achievements.
3. Children and youngsters are more optimistic about the national team and its triumphs. This is because the new generations have only witnessed the achievements of this team without having in mind the de-

feats of the past teams, as it happens with the older groups.

Undoubtedly, specifying the perceptions of the Chilean population regarding the most popular soccer team in the country allows establishing a series of practical applications:

1. Regarding public policies, understanding the perceptions that La Roja generates in society opens the door to use it to promote or develop proposals in sports or healthy living, among other areas. In this sense, the study allows targeting these future policies according to age range and socioeconomic level, improving their precision.
2. Regarding brand, the sponsors of the national team will have access to a more limited profile of the perceptions generated by the team, being able to orient their advertising campaigns in order to achieve greater impact. From the inverse perspective of the national team as an institution, having knowledge of its scope in the age and socioeconomic groups allows it to know its value as a brand.
3. Regarding social phenomenon, for countries with high degrees of economic inequality and distrust such as Chile, having symbols

of union such as the soccer team allows them to generate socio-cultural policies aimed at improving coexistence and trust among citizens.

In future research and as part of its limitations, the sample of participants could be expanded to more regions of the country to verify if the feelings generated by La Roja are similar in other cities. Likewise, a comparison could be generated of whether the perception changes when the team is sportingly successful to when it is no longer so. The sample can also be extended to local soccer teams, to find out if the attributes of these individual brands are similar to those of the so-called “everyone’s team”.

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Effects of disinformation on the brand image and the reaction of three companies in the food sector to a communication crisis: Starbucks, Mercadona and Burger King

Efectos de la desinformación sobre la imagen de marca y reacción de tres empresas del sector alimentario ante una crisis de comunicación: Starbucks, Mercadona y Burger King

Efeitos da desinformação sobre a imagem de marca e reação de três empresas do setor de alimentos frente a uma crise de comunicação: Starbucks, Mercadona e Burger King

3

ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: June 24, 2020 / ACCEPTED: December 02, 2020

Abstract

This study investigates the communication strategies developed by three companies in the food sector: Starbucks, Mercadona and Burger King; in order to manage an image crisis caused by the dissemination of false or confu-

sing information on the Internet. A descriptive analysis was carried out using a sheet of own elaboration as measure source. The results determined that the keys to this management were the preferential use of social networks, the speed and transparency of responses and

the repeated use of the word “false” to deny the deception with which these companies had been related.

KEYWORDS

False information, Crisis management, Communication, Corporate image, Internet, Social network.

Resumen

Este estudio indaga en las estrategias de comunicación desarrolladas por tres empresas del sector alimentario: Starbucks, Mercadona y Burger King, con objeto de gestionar una crisis de imagen provocada por la difusión en Internet de información falsa o confusa. Se ha realizado un análisis descriptivo, empleando una ficha como instrumento de medida. Los resultados determinan que las claves de esta gestión fueron el uso preferente de las redes sociales, la rapidez y la transparencia de las respuestas y el empleo reiterado de la palabra “falso” para desmentir el engaño con el que se había relacionado a estas compañías.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Información falsa, Gestión de crisis, Comunicación, Imagen de marca, Internet, Redes sociales.

Resumo

Este estudo investiga as estratégias de comunicação desenvolvidas por três empresas do setor alimentício: Starbucks, Mercadona y Burger King, com objetivo de gerenciar uma crise de imagem provocada pela difusão na Internet de informação falsa ou confusa. Se realizou uma análise descritiva, utilizando uma ficha como instrumento de medida. Os resultados determinam que as chaves desta gestão foram o uso preferente das redes sociais, a rapidez e a transparência das respostas e o uso reiterado da palavra “falso” para desmentir as informações falsas com o que se havia relacionado estas empresas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Informação falsa, Gestão de crise, Comunicação, Imagem de marca, Internet, Redes sociais.

1. INTRODUCTION

During the years 2016 and 2017, the terms post-truth and fake news were designated as the words of the year by the Oxford English Dictionary. The rise of the internet, together with social networks, is helping these concepts to acquire a new dimension and a new meaning for all kinds of companies and institutions. The growing social complexity, together with the current technological revolution, favor the appearance of these phenomena that, among other things, deteriorate the credibility of business and institutional organizations. In these scenarios, crisis situations are generated that can put the financial stability of corporations at risk, de-

teriorating their structures and slowing down their social and business projection. Image and reputation, understood as the most important assets that organizations have, can be seriously affected (Capriotti, 2009; Carrió, 2013).

The object of study of this research is the analysis of three cases of crisis communication within the food sector that were marked by the dynamics of disinformation and post-truth. These cases, which had a notable impact on the Internet, affected the companies Starbucks, Mercadona and Burger King.

Regarding the term disinformation, the European Commission (2018) not only refers to false content, but to everything that is devoid

of context and that has the intention of serving certain purposes through the production, propagation and consumption of inaccurate or misleading information that seek to cause public harm. This misinformation can occur through memes, captures, videos, audios, etc. (Maldita.es, 2019).

According to the academic literature consulted on the subject, during the next few years more and more companies will see their image and reputation compromised due to the proliferation of false content. As an example of this situation, the consulting firm Gartner (2017) points out that in the year 2022 there will be more false than true publications circulating on the Internet and that there will be no material and technological capacity to erase them. In addition, he has warned that companies must be prepared to defend themselves against disinformation.

Regarding its dissemination, some studies show that “fake news” spreads faster on the web than real news, especially through social networks like Facebook and Twitter (Martens et al., 2018). In this sense, the First Study on the Impact of Fake News in Spain (Europa Press, 2017) indicates that 86% of Spaniards have difficulties in determining the veracity of different information.

False content represents a concept that, in recent times, has been mainly linked to political activity. A fact that can be observed in recent events such as the electoral victory of Donald Trump in the United States or the triumph of Brexit in the United Kingdom (McNair, 2018). However, there is growing interest in the business world in tackling the wave of misinformation affecting all private organizations. The review of the existing business literature shows an adequate theoretical foundation of the reputation of companies from a traditional pers-

pective, focused on conventional media. However, crisis management of online reputation is a relatively new topic, so it is necessary to promote its knowledge and application (Álvarez & Murillo, 2018).

For this reason, it is of interest to know the effects of these phenomena in the business world, as they can cause serious damage to companies. To do this, this research sets the following objectives: a) identify real cases of companies affected by false news, b) study the origin and reasons for these messages, c) investigate the impact that this information generates on the brand image of these companies, d) determine in each case the communication actions developed, in order to establish the key elements that are part of proper crisis management. It seeks to find out if there have been some common determining parameters for solving them that could allow companies to fight against misinformation.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CRISES

Crisis communication, from a business point of view, has been the object of study by various researchers (Del Pulgar, 1999; Fita, 1999; Luecke, 2005; Saura, 2005). For Piñuel (1997) this concept represents:

An unexpected change between two situations, a change that endangers the image and the natural balance of an organization because between the two situations (the situation before and the situation after the crisis) a sudden event occurs against which an organization has to react by compro-

mismanaging its image and its internal balance (as an organization) and its external balance (as an institution) in front of its public. (p. 167)

Each crisis has its own nature. Therefore, there are no two identical crises that can affect companies in the same way (Costa-Sánchez and López-García, 2020). However, most of the crises exhibit a series of common elements: unfavorable impact on the brand image, direct involvement of the media, positive image of the victims, events develop quickly, the information in their beginnings is scattered and insufficient and the image and reputation of the organization are questioned (Cervera, 2008; Westphalen & Piñuel, 1993).

In relation to this last aspect, business reputation, identity and image are intangible assets that have a decisive influence on the financial capacity of companies. Currently, these terms are used without distinction, a fact that has led to some confusion around them. The reputation of companies is structural in nature. While the image has a more perishable nature. Another difference is that "the identity is built by the company as an integral part of the brand. On the contrary, the image is the result of the corporate effort that results in the public's perceptions of the brand" (Orozco & Ferré, 2013, p. 74). Ultimately, reputation is the end result of the continued conservation and construction of a positive brand image projected to the public (Álvarez & Murillo, 2018), in which perceptions about the brand, the company, its products or its most important performances are registered (Orozco & Roca, 2011).

2.2 ONLINE CRISES

The rise of the internet has caused companies to lose control of communication. Any user, who knows how to handle web 2.0 fluently, can

spread messages through social networks that, in record time, "generate a possible image crisis for the company" (Enrique, 2013, p.117; Rodríguez-Fernández, 2019).

The Internet has a transcendental role in crisis management, because as a medium, it can be used by various groups to present different points of view about an organization. At the same time, it is a very important tool for organizations immersed in a crisis (Neil, 2000). Companies are forced to check and monitor all aspects that are related to the online reputation of their brands against the potential damage that false information can cause. It is necessary to design strategies that allow foreseeing future reputational incidents (González, 2018).

According to Contreras (2006), some companies consider that communication crises cannot be planned before they occur as they are unexpected and poorly structured events. However, the author adds that multiple studies show that if preventive measures are taken before the crisis occurs, many of its consequences can be avoided. Once they have occurred, following what Villafañe (2013) said, online crises can be measured from a qualitative perspective (who says something) and a quantitative perspective (how many people say it).

Regarding its origin and diffusion, an online reputation crisis can originate in the physical world, "affecting events and creating versions on the Internet about this fact" or in the virtual environment, "which are those resulting, above all, from the use of digital communication strategies by people or groups interested in destabilizing the reputation of the company, such as rumors and orchestrated campaigns" (Victor, 2017, pp. 300-301).

2.3 HOW COMPANIES SHOULD REACT TO FALSE INFORMATION

The phenomenon of disinformation, together with the role of social networks in the dissemination of content, is forcing the communication directors of companies to develop strategic containment plans to prevent and combat the reputational damage caused by publications or advertising campaigns based on fake news (Pardo Baldeón & Pardo, 2018).

The main objective of business communication “in the event of a breach of balance, is to seek the brake of the crisis as soon as possible and gain control of the information, in order to minimize the loss of credit and capital in image by the company” (Gil, 2013, p.28). Cortés (2019) explains that to manage a crisis marked by disinformation, it is necessary to set up a crisis committee, prepare a diagnosis of the situation, and draw up the strategy to follow. All these actions are intended to strengthen the affected company, and allow it the timely development of strategies to improve its positioning and levels of trust, credibility and reputation with its audiences (Martín, 2006; Salazar et al., 2016).

In more concrete terms, companies must face the crisis by promoting a transparent and fluid dialogue with their different audiences (González, 2018; Saura, 2005) through channels such as social networks, which allow the dissemination of all kinds of content on the organization (Cano, 2019). These tools have enormous potential in a crisis context, as they allow an immediate response to stabilize a dangerous situation (Calleja-Reina et al., 2018).

The response they adopt cannot arise spontaneously and uncoordinated. It is necessary to design accessible information channels that are continuously updated (Martínez-Solana et al., 2017). Micaletto-Belda et al. (2016) consider

that organizations affected by a crisis should govern their communication actions through the following principles: take the initiative, repeat the position over and over again, communicate frequently, generate credibility and trust, assume responsibility, avoid any form lie, avoid distracting attention, avoid silence, do not blame the victims, communicate widely, speak with one voice and be present at the scene.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted around three concepts: misinformation, branding, and crisis communication. From these, other more specific aspects and problems are studied, such as the effects of false messages on the brand image and the reaction of companies to stop or remedy a reputational crisis caused by this type of content.

Regarding the methodology, the article presents a case study (Valles, 2000) based on qualitative content analysis (Abela, 2002); a technique that, according to Sánchez (2005), consists of:

Systematically apply previously established rules that serve to measure the frequency with which elements of interest appear in the set of a mass of information that we have previously selected to study some of the aspects that seem useful to us regarding the purposes of our research. (p. 213)

To collect the data, an analysis sheet was designed as a measurement instrument that is composed of the following fields: affected company, country and date on which the events take place, headline and keywords that summarize and identify the case, channel and support of the information disseminated, source of the news, target to which it is addressed, effects or con-

sequences on the company's brand image and action plan or communication strategies adopted to manage the reputational crisis.

A directed sample was used (Glaser et al., 1968; Vinuesa, 2005). In this way, the study units were selected based on the objectives and the object presented, since one of the initial purposes was the identification of real cases where there was the problem of threat or damage to the brand image. Specifically, the sample consisted of three crisis communication situations derived from the public dissemination on the internet of false or unclear information in three companies from the food sector. The selection criteria for the sample were the two factors of having been affected by a disinformation process and belonging to the food sector. Two of these cases took place in Spain (Mercadona and Burger King) and the third (Starbucks) in the United States. As a whole, they constitute a field of study of special interest to the population, since they involve companies directly related to nutrition and people's health.

4. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Following the methodology described above, three real cases were analyzed where the post-truth phenomenon negatively affects the brand image of a company, altering its normal activity and forcing it to act accordingly. In all these events, a communication plan was put into place with the intention of denying and stopping the spread of false information and avoiding a possible identity crisis.

4.1 THE STARBUCKS CASE IN THE 2019 EDITION OF THE OSCARS

Founded in 1971 in Seattle (United States), Starbucks is the world's largest international chain of coffeehouses with more than 17,000 stores in 50 countries, as detailed on its website. Starbucks sells coffee and other hot beverages, as well as snacks, whole-bean coffee, and merchandise such as mugs and thermos.

A recent post-truth case that affected the company was caused by a fake new published on social networks (Table 1).

Table 1

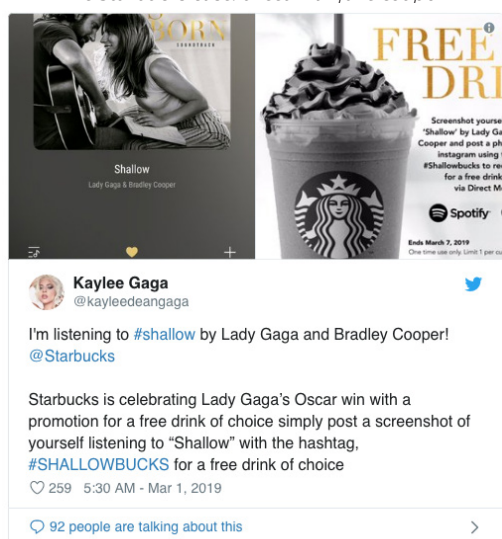
The Starbucks case in the 2019 Edition of the Oscars

The Starbucks case in the 2019 Edition of the Oscars	
Company	Starbucks
Country	United States
Date	February 2019
Headline	Lady Gaga fans create a Starbucks scam to boost the song Shallow on Billboard Hot 100 Music Charts
Keywords	Shallowbucks, Starbucks, coupon, free drink, Lady Gaga
Channel / Support	Messages on Twitter
Source	Little Monsters: Lady Gaga fan club
Target	Internet users
Effects on the image	The company is forced to apologize and deny a false promotion
Communication strategy	Denied by messages on Twitter

Following the Oscars ceremony held on February 25, 2019, a fake poster (Figure 1) was posted on Twitter advertising a free drink in exchange for a photo where users showed that they had heard the song *Shallow* by Lady Gaga (Oscar winner) on Spotify or Apple Music, followed by the hashtag #shallowbucks. The tweet went viral and there were users who went to Starbucks stores to exchange the photo for the promised prize.

Figure 1

The Starbucks case: tweet with fake coupon



As reported by the American news portal BuzzFeed, focused on monitoring viral content, this tweet was a campaign promoted by fans of Lady Gaga in order to raise the song *Shallow* to the top of the Billboard Hot 100 chart of musical hits. To make this fake news even more convincing, some of these fans published direct messages with a coupon on their social networks that were supposedly sent from Starbucks to users, but those were equally false (Mack, 2019).

Faced with this situation, which the US media described as fraud and deception (Hannan, 2019; Mack, 2019; Maicki, 2019), the company

reacted quickly. For this, Starbucks used the same channel and the same format of the false news: messages on their social media profiles of their Twitter accounts @starbucks and @starbucks_help, clarifying that said promotion was fictitious and that it was not valid in any of its shops. Likewise, the company interacted with users, apologizing and answering their questions about the false promotion. Some of the messages were:

- "Of course, #Shallowbucks is not real and Starbucks is not complying with the fake promotion."
- In response to a user (@enigmapopstr) (Figure 2): "Hello, I'm so sorry for any confusion, but this is not a valid Starbucks offer. This post is completely false. We are investigating to determine how this fake post was created and circulated. Thank you."

Figure 2

The Starbucks case: tweet with denial



In conclusion, it can be said that the brief messages published on Twitter by Starbucks were a quick and direct strategy to stop the circulation of the false news and make users see that it was a hoax that they should not pay attention.

4.2 MERCADONA CASE IN RELATION TO THE ORIGIN OF ITS PRODUCTS AND SUPPLIERS

Mercadona, a family-owned company, is one of the main physical and online supermarket companies in Spain. Founded in 1977 by the Cárnicas Roig Group, it currently has 1,629 stores throughout Spain and a staff of 85,800 people.

During the years 2015 and 2016 it had to face a hoax, according to which Mercadona had transferred purchases or suppliers out of Spain (Table 2).

Table 2

*Mercadona case in relation to
the origin of its products and suppliers*

Mercadona case in relation to the origin of its products and suppliers	
Company	Mercadona
Country	Spain
Date	2016
Headline	Mercadona eliminates more than 1,800 Spanish products for other low-quality foreign products
Keywords	Mercadona, hoax, products, origin, suppliers, oil, milk
Channel / Support	Messages on social networks, forums and blogs
Source	Unknown origin
Target	Real and potential clients of Mercadona
Effects on the image	Denies one of the main values of the company: its commitment to national products
Communication strategy	Denied: report published on the web and messages on its Facebook profile

It was accused of having diverted the production abroad of 1,800 products, including oil, oranges and potatoes. According to the allegedly false news, they now came from Morocco, Argentina and Israel, respectively. This information belied one of the main values of the company: its commitment to national production. Consequently, it negatively affected its brand image, positioned as one of the best valued by Spanish citizens (Metroscopia, 2017). The message was distributed, shared and viralized through different digital platforms: forums (ForoCoches or the forum area of the Meristation website), social networks (Facebook and Twitter) and blogs (boycott market, imagine65 ...).

Following one of the maxims in creating and maintaining a good corporate reputation, the company did not ignore this information. On the contrary, it opted for communication and transparency, publishing on its website a complete report aimed at consumers on the commitment to Spanish products where it explained who manufactures the articles of its private brands such as Hacendado or Bosque Verde. As presented by the newspaper El País, along with the denial it also provided “a panel with the brands of the integrated suppliers and details about the origin of products questioned because they have a new origin such as oil or milk” (2016).

The initial fragment of this statement is: “Sometimes the rumor circulates through social networks that Mercadona eliminates Spanish products in favor of foreign products in Mercadona or that Spanish products are withdrawn from Mercadona. If you have also heard this, we assure you that this information is completely false. We disassemble this hoax product by product in the publication on the commitment to Spanish products in Mercadona”. And it continues: “This information is completely FALSE. We show you with facts”.

The company “is usually sparing in its press releases” (El País, 2016), but on this occasion, and with the clear intention of dealing with these fake news, it was prolix in figures and specific data regarding the number of manufacturers and providers it works with. Likewise, this information is expanded with extensive studies published on its website on the traceability of the origin of purchases made for olive oil and milk from its Hacendado brand. Being these two of the products whose origin is in doubt in the “false messages” published in social networks.

It is worth highlighting the development of specific non-textual material for this crisis communication campaign. Specifically, we highlight a graphic (Figure 3) that represents and summarizes the panel of products mentioned in the report and a photographic montage (Figure 4) with the message “This is false” in red on the text of the alleged hoax published on the Internet.

Figure 3

Mercadona case: report graph



Figure 4

Mercadona case: photo montage



One of the achievements of this communication campaign aimed at avoiding an image crisis was to get a good number of headlines to echo the denial disseminated by Mercadona. So these media, including El País, ABC, El Correo, La Vanguardia, etc., published the statement as a

news item where the company is presented as the victim of a hoax that is dismantled based on the data that was supplied by the company itself. Ultimately, the verdict is favorable, the marketing and communication strategy worked well, and the company managed to stop this news and most of the associated comments. Proof of this is that as of the year 2017 there are very few references to this topic on the internet, with some exceptions such as the Alerta Digital (2017) web portal.

4.3 BURGER KING CASE: FALSE JOB OFFER IN A MARKETING CAMPAIGN

In December 2017, the fast food chain Burger King in Spain faced an image crisis whose origin was a false job offer published on its Facebook profile (Table 3) and on the back cover of the newspaper 20 Minutos.

Tabla 3
Caso Burger King:
campaña de marketing con falsa oferta de empleo

Caso Burger King: Falsa oferta de empleo	
Empresa	Burger King
País	España
Fecha	Diciembre de 2017
Titular	Falsa oferta de empleo perjudica la imagen de marca de Burger King
Palabras clave	Oferta de empleo, falsa, Burger King, repartidor, salarios, campaña, publicidad, broma
Canal / Soporte	Redes sociales / medios de comunicación
Órgano emisor	Usuarios particulares / Comisiones Obreras / medios de comunicación
Target	Usuarios de internet
Efectos sobre la imagen	Críticas negativas hacia la campaña / críticas negativas hacia las condiciones laborales de la empresa
Estrategia de comunicación	Declaraciones en medios / mensajes en redes sociales / canal de atención al cliente

With this advertisement (Figure 5), delivery men were requested who, in addition to the necessary driving licenses, needed to have knowledge of literature, mathematics, politics, and even “video game skills” or “musical skills”; that they would have to demonstrate in a placement test. This was not actually an actual offer, but was part of a company marketing campaign titled “Play for the Whopper,” as indicated in a small-print disclaimer at the bottom of the image. It would be a case of what has been called “fake advertising news” (Jiménez, 2017), which in an “advantageous-opportunistic” way seek to attract the attention of the user and make noise in the face of a statement or action of the company, while promoting the brand.

Figure 5

False job offer in a Burger King marketing campaign



Hundreds of users, not realizing the falseness of the message or not understanding its humorous intention, felt offended. And they manifested this by publishing multiple messages on their Twitter and Facebook profiles, where they criticized or made fun of the working conditions of Burger King workers, as can be seen in the following examples:

- Is this ad to work at Burger King or to be a sociocultural entertainer at NASA? (@mariorm86)
- They ask more to work at Burger King than to be a politician (@ranadictadora)
- Living with the fear of having a college education and not being hired even by Burger King (@Ana_sabe_volar)

The politicization of the issue was one of the factors that contributed to magnifying the crisis. We refer to the fact that Iñigo Errejón, a deputy for the Podemos party at that time, and the Comisiones Obreras union joined in the criticism, believing that it was a real job offer. In the case of Errejón (Figure 6), his tweet where he demanded that the company begin to “pay living wages” was shared 2,000 times, received 3,000 “likes” and accumulated almost 600 comments. For its part, Comisiones Obreras issued a statement demanding that Burger King stop its “mockery of the precariousness that prevails in home delivery”.

Figure 6

Iñigo Errejón's tweet about the Burger King campaign



In order to avoid controversy on issues as sensitive to public opinion as wages and respect for employees, the company was quick to clarify that it was a false message and an advertising campaign, and that the real hiring requirements are different from those exposed. In addition, the company considered that the reactions of users would not have a negative impact on its brand image and assured that they were responding, through their customer service channels, to all the people who had believed that it was a real advertisement. They even said they were happy with the results. Thus, in statements to the *Verne* supplement of the newspaper El País (Sánchez, 2017), the head of Marketing for Burger King Iberia, Bianca Shen, pointed out that the ad “is causing noise and was what we expected. We are trending topic and it is going fairly good”.

Despite these explanations, the ad went viral and continued to generate interactions, some of which contained a clear negative sentiment towards the company and the aforementioned advertising:

- The Burger King thing was indeed a campaign that I suppose was trying to be funny. The conditions of its workers are not (@Guille_UHP).
- Just because it's marketing doesn't mean it's not insulting (@julianlopezz).
- What kind of creative applauds that no one understands their campaign and that it also creates a reputation crisis for the brand? Explain it to me, please (@Zurdo).

Even the politician Iñigo Errejón joined a Twitter thread related to this controversy with the following message: It is not important because it is part of an advertising campaign but because it actually happens. Both at the curricular and salary level (@ierrerjon).

The media themselves published critical comments about the campaign considering that this action had turned against them (Álvarez, 2017), and that it could end up doing a disservice to the business (La Vanguardia, 2017). They also described it as dishonorable for “playing to tell jokes” at the cost of job insecurity or “using the clumsiness of readers to build a viral campaign” (Jiménez, 2017).

On the contrary, there were other users who praised on Facebook and in cybermedia the creativity, the wisdom and the sense of humor of those responsible for this campaign like the example of Figure 7 that expresses: What a good marketing strategy! What they wanted was advertising and they have had it at a reduced price. Congratulations to the director of the company.

In most cases, the firm's community manager responded to these comments.

Figure 7

Opinion published in La Vanguardia



Ultimately, Burger King reacted quickly to the image crisis generated by the false job offer. In order to stop negative comments about their wages and working conditions, it offered the corresponding clarifications through the media, contacting the unions and resolving the doubts of users through its customer service channels. However, the firm did not give explanations on social networks but instead replied to the comments humorously but indirectly, with somewhat ambiguous responses as can be seen in the examples from Figure 8 translated below:

- Alberto Hernández Sánchez: April Fools' Day is not December 28? There are more requirements to enter here than to be part of GEOS! To which it was replied: GEOS are not as cool as BK.
- Rodrigo Andrés Puebla: Let's be honest, all those who meet these onerous requirements aspire to have a better job than being a motorcycle delivery man for a fast food chain and apart from that, being fooled as my colleagues say. There is still a lot for the 28 of this month. To which they replied: Now, being a Burger King delivery guy is going to be cool.

Burger King responded in a way that it did not encourage the proliferation of these messages, but neither did it try to stop them in order to create conversation and publicity around the brand, the campaign and its home delivery service, in particular.

Figure 8

Burger King Facebook Posts and Responses



5. CONCLUSIONS

After having analyzed three real and recent cases of companies in the food sector affected by the publication of hoaxes, fake news or confusing information on the internet, we present below the conclusions of this work.

The existing literature on crisis communication is quite extensive and abundant (Álvarez & Murillo, 2018; Castillo, 2010; Del Pulgar, 1999; Enrique, 2013; Fita, 1999; González, 2018; González Herrero, 1998; Luecke, 2005; Saura, 2005; Villafañe, 2013; Victor, 2017). The documentary review has made it possible to understand that in those works that study online crises, marked by the dynamics of disinformation, it is appreciated that the variables to control in the Internet environment are more numerous and difficult to manage. Smolak and García (2020) point out that, due to the rise of Social Media, online communication crises are acquiring a greater role in conventional media. However, "it is considered a marginal field within the academic, media and professional world" (p.18); despite the communicative, social and economic damage that they can acquire in companies.

In relation to another of the key concepts of the study, for the Royal Spanish Academy, post-truth is the deliberate distortion of a reality that

manipulates beliefs and emotions in order to influence public opinion and the attitudes of citizens. It is common to identify this concept with politics and social issues. However, it also involves the business sector, as this study shows. A false, malicious and strategically published and viralized news on the Internet can damage the public image of a company with corporate grievance and the economic losses that this entails.

Based on the objectives, it is detected that the origin and distribution of false news are located on the internet, with different sources being: the media, the users themselves, associations (such as a fan club in the Starbucks case), organizations (a labor union in the Burger King case) or even of unknown origin (Mercadona case). While in all the cases analyzed, the recipients of these messages are the general public present on the Internet, therefore, the actual or potential consumers of these brands.

For its part, the impact of this information on the brand image is manifested in different aspects such as being involved in a deception (Starbucks case), denying the company's values (Mercadona case) or receiving negative criticism around the company's working conditions (Burger King case).

The main interest of the study has focused on knowing the communicative actions developed by companies, which has made it possible to meet the objective of identifying common patterns of action in the face of the threat posed by false information circulating on the internet. In the analyzed cases, the firms Starbucks, Mercadona and Burger King reacted by publishing content that denied or clarified the false information with certain speed through a transparent dialogue with their public, as recommended by authors such as Saura (2005) or González (2018). For this, different channels and formats were used. Starbucks posted mes-

sages on their Twitter accounts, and also interacted with users apologizing for the confusion and telling them they were being scammed.

The situation described determines that social networks play a transcendental role in the massive transmission of false information and also in its control and neutralization by the affected companies, which use them as an effective communication channel (Martínez-Solana et al., 2017) to generate responses that allow stabilizing the situation (Calleja-Reina et al., 2018).

The communication strategy of Mercadona was broader and more elaborate. In addition to the messages on its Facebook profile, it also published a detailed report on its website in order to stop the spread of information and dismantle the hoax about the foreign origin of its products. This document was addressed to consumers and to the media as a press release that was finally published by several Spanish cybermedia.

In contrast, Burger King did not use social media to resolve the confusion generated by posting a false job offer. Its tools for this were press releases and customer service channels. In its networks, the community manager replied with discretion and humor to the comments of the users, taking advantage of the situation to promote public conversation about the brand and thank the favorable opinions.

Regarding the content, the repetitive use of the words false or fake is appreciated in order to categorically deny the deception with which these firms had been related. The term is even written in capital letters, taking into account its connotation on the internet as it is identified with screaming. In relation to style, it is a direct and precise communication that addresses the controversy with messages that are directed to the user or consumer whom they greet and approach in a more personal way. Both strate-

gies are present in the external communication of the studied companies as noted in the Mercadona report: "This information is completely FALSE. We show you with facts." And also in the Starbucks messages published on Twitter: "Hello, we are sorry for any kind of confusion (...). The message is completely false." Finally, considering the non-textual content, a specific material in the form of a graphic and a photographic montage is prepared in the Mercadona case to address the falsity of the hoax.

Another of the guidelines detected is the transmission of positive and reassuring messages in order not to lose the trust of the public and not to provoke an alarm or controversy around the firm or brand. This was the case from Burger King, even pointing out that the campaign was "going quite well", just as they expected. In addition, the communications of these companies were based on data and arguments to justify their actions and support their defense against attacks from public opinion or the media. This is what Mercadona did with its report and Burger King in its press statements.

In the cases analyzed, the communication campaigns worked in such a way that the responses of the companies managed to stop the spread of false information and diverted public attention from the words deception, fraud, falsehood and mockery; undoubtedly damaging to their brand image. As proposed by Xifra (2020), these companies managed crisis communication clearly, directly, quickly and efficiently.

Finally, despite having achieved the objective of identifying guidelines in the action plans of the companies studied, the limitations of working with a small sample were understood. And in this sense, it is suggested to continue analyzing similar and recent situations with the intention of guaranteeing a greater extrapolation of the data.

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New media meets unschooled women: A qualitative analysis of the use of new media by unschooled Kurdish women

*Los nuevos medios se encuentran con mujeres no escolarizadas: un
análisis cualitativo del uso de los nuevos medios por parte de las mujeres
kurdas sin educación*

*Novas mídias encontram mulheres não escolarizadas: uma análise
qualitativa do uso das novas mídias por mulheres kurdas não
escolarizadas*

4

ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: October 10, 2020 / ACCEPTED: February 05, 2021

Abstract

This study is aimed to answer how and why illiterate and/or unschooled people use new media through in-depth interviews with 15

unschooled Kurdish women about general observations regarding city, media and people. It shows that these become an important part of people's daily life, and give them a new space

to do things they could not do before. These do not make them more secular or modern, nor do they change their main attitudes and perspectives on life. However, these new media help them to preserve at least some of their traditional activities that are now under threat from recent capitalism and urbanization.

KEYWORDS

New Media, Social Media, Unschooled Women, Privacy, Daily Life.

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo responder cómo y por qué las personas analfabetas y / o no escolarizadas utilizan los nuevos medios a través de entrevistas en profundidad con 15 mujeres kurdas no escolarizadas sobre observaciones generales sobre la ciudad, los medios y las personas. Los resultados muestran que estos medios se convierten en una parte importante de la vida diaria de las personas y les brindan un nuevo espacio para hacer cosas que antes no podían hacer. Estos no las hacen más seculares o modernas, ni cambia sus principales actitudes y perspectivas sobre la vida. Sin embargo, estos nuevos medios les ayuda a preservar al menos algunas de sus actividades

tradicionales que ahora están amenazadas por el capitalismo y la urbanización recientes.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Nuevos medios, Redes sociales, Mujeres no escolarizadas, Privacidad, Vida diaria.

Resumo

Este estudo tem como objetivo responder como e por que as novas mídias estão sendo usadas por pessoas analfabetas e / ou não escolarizadas por meio de entrevistas em profundidade com 15 mulheres curdas não escolarizadas sobre observações gerais sobre a cidade, a mídia e as pessoas. A pesquisa mostra que eles se tornam uma parte importante da vida cotidiana das pessoas e lhes dá um novo espaço para fazer coisas que não podiam fazer antes. Não os tornam mais seculares ou modernos, nem mudam suas principais atitudes e perspectivas de vida. Elas, entretanto, os ajudam a preservar pelo menos algumas de suas atividades tradicionais agora sob a ameaça do capitalismo e da urbanização recentes.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Novas mídias, Mídias sociais, Mulheres não escolarizadas, Privacidade, Vida diária.

1. INTRODUCTION

With a population of 82 million people, Turkey hosts nearly 60 million Internet users with a penetration rate of 72%. With a total of 52 million active social media users, 44 millions of them access social media platforms on mobile devices according to the Report "Digital in 2019: Turkey" by We Are Social and Hootsuite (2019, p. 15). Therefore, it would not be wrong to refer

to Turkey as a "social media lover" country (Ali-kilic & Atabek, 2012).

Research suggests that people in Turkey spend an average of seven and a half hours of their time on the internet per day (We Are Social and Hootsuite, 2020, p. 43) and almost three hours of these are spent in social media activities (We Are Social and Hootsuite, 2020, p. 92). WhatsApp and Facebook are the most popular social media platforms in Turkey and the country ranks first in the usage of Instagram, with num

ber of users equal to 57% of its total population (We Are Social and Hootsuite, 2020, p. 126). Nonetheless, there are times when people approach social media cautiously. In this sense, We Are Social and Hootsuite (2020, p. 67) reports that 58% of the total population in Turkey has some concerns regarding privacy and the misuse of their personal data. These concerns may hinder them from using social media as they may find it difficult to trust it.

After all this is considered, the following questions arise: What are people in Turkey doing on social media platforms while spending much of their daily time there? Can being unschooled and illiterate affect the use of social media? Does being an unschooled woman change how and why social media is used? In line with these questions, our study attempts to reflect on the social media usage of the unschooled women in the Eastern part of Turkey¹ by carrying out in-depth interviews with fifteen unschooled Kurdish women.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Though it has been questioned in previous years, there are still “prevailing stereotypes of the silent, passive, and suppressed Muslim woman in the Middle East” (Schäfers, 2018, p. 4). But recently, this is changing with more comprehensive approaches. Still, when it comes to media and the issue of Muslim women, most of the studies (Gonzalez-Quijano, 1999; Maimuna, 1994; Purwaningwulan et al., 2019; Wellman &

Rainie, 2013) are either about social media and politics, or social media and economy. The general idea and conclusion that many academics reach about the women of the Muslim World and their social media usage is that new media has enabled these women participate more into social and civic life, and has empowered them by blurring the lines between public and private (Norton, 1999). However, the question on how these technologies affect these women’s daily and social life and what they make of it is not really asked.

In such a scarcity of these kind of research, Elisabetta Costa’s Book titled *Social Media in Southeast Turkey: Love, Kinship and Politics* (2016) has been important for this study. The book is based on 15 months of research during which Costa lived, worked and interacted with people of Mardin, a very similar city to the one addressed here, Dogubeyazit. Most of Costa’s book is about issues like social media and youth, politics, romance, etc., but it pays little attention to what we are trying to find out with this research. However, it still contains insightful information. Therefore, we decided to use Costa’s book to find about remaining and changing topics as almost 4 years have passed over her research. It also enabled us to determine parallels and changes.

3. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research approach was used to answer the questions formulated in the introduction section. This approach was understood as an interpretive humanist paradigm and was based on the understanding and interpretation of reality (Creswell, 2007). A total of 15 in-depth interviews (with the approval from the institutional review board) with unschooled women were conducted using the purposive sampling method during the ‘religious feast

¹ While the rate of the female illiterate people aged 15 or more is 17.2 % of the global population in 2020 (We Are Social and Hootsuite, 2020), it is 6.1 % of the total population of Turkey (TurkStat, 2018), located in the Southern Europe region with a high female literacy rate of 98% among women aged 15 and over (We Are Social and Hootsuite, 2020). This rate of illiterate female population in Turkey corresponds to 85.2% of the illiterate population in total.

(Eid)' in 2019 through a semi-structured interview form based on Costa's study with adaptations to the scope of this research. Given the interpretative approach of the qualitative study, it allowed us to descriptively analyze experiences of the women interviewed, their use of social media and the effect of it on their daily life; which was not addressed before in the literature. Regarding the interviewees, the age range of the women interviewed was from 28 (youngest) to 53 (oldest), and the mean age was 35 years. Most of them were married (73,3%) and were acquainted with the first author in informal talks before the study in order to get general observations. He also informed them of the data protection throughout the research and publication process.

3.1 SATURATION POINT OF THE RESEARCH

Glaser and Strauss define "saturation" in their ground-breaking work as the point when a researcher *"sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated"* (1967, p. 65). Although it was developed for grounded theory, it is also useful for other qualitative researches (Townsend, 2013). The original idea was to carry out a total of 30 interviews in order to cover the different sensibilities, practices and topics. However, at the 11th and 12th interviews, we noticed that the information began to be repeated. Thus, we decided to continue until the 15th interview to confirm the repetition of the data.

3.2 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT CITY, LIFE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Doğubayazıt is in the eastern part of Turkey and has borders with Iran. Although it cannot be officially proven because different ethnicities

are not recorded in Turkey, it is a well-known fact that the local inhabitants are all Kurdish. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). Only governmental officials, some of the civil servants and military officials are from other parts of Turkey. Doğubayazıt has a new city life, which emerged especially in the last two decades as a part of the recent urbanization of eastern cities in Turkey and as a result of its increasing usage of new technologies (Costa, 2016).

When it comes to social media, it is easy to see that there is a clear division between old people and young people in their opinions about social media and its effects. The anxiety and suspicion about social media are very common among the middle-aged and elderly people in the city. They strongly believe that both male honor and female modesty are under threat as social media has become an inseparable part of the life of the new generations. As it was also observed by Costa in Mardin, some local events (like some hackers sharing women's "inappropriate" photos on the Internet) made many people stop using it (Costa, 2016). That explains why many women still do not use platforms like Instagram and Facebook, and are late-starters among the current users. For Doğubayazıt as well, the reason behind these ideas and less usage of social media has to do with some rarely seen events, among many other things. Three months before the researcher was there, a woman in one of the villages left her family to meet a stranger she contacted on social media while her husband was working in İstanbul. These kinds of events created tension, gossip and had strong repercussions in the perceptions of social media and its uses.

Referring to these events, many elderly and middle-aged men had strong and strict views about social media. "I would never, ever let my son marry a woman who uses the Internet", uttered one of those men. Some stated that

these new technologies have made the new generation of girls more “unchaste”. Probably because of this opinion, WhatsApp was the only application used by twelve of those interviewed. On the other hand, young men and women, secular or religious, perceive social networks as something that should be used. It has become a very important part of their life. WhatsApp is the most common and popular among different ages. Young and middle-aged people usually use Facebook and Instagram. As for the participants in this study, they all use WhatsApp, three of them also use Instagram and two participants also use Facebook.

3.3 THEMES AND USAGES

After collecting data, we were able to identify the most important topics to analyze the in-depth interviews. We did not start with a prepared list of topics and tried to let it come out of the interviews. Some new questions were added to the interview as we discovered new topics and issues on the development phase. Though different thematization could be possible, we believed that the following topics were clear and insightful enough when we examined the interviewees: family and friends, daily life, ceremonies, new spaces, privacy and religion, gossiping and show-off.

3.3.1 FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Not surprisingly, family and friends were the most important reasons why these women used new media. The most frequently cited answer to our question “Why and how did you start to use social media?” was “because I have family members and friends far away from me”. In fact, the oldest of the participants stated that the only reason why she uses mobile internet was because she wants to see her children and grand-children. That is also among the reasons why they use and like WhatsApp.

The use of platforms that usually form smaller and more private groups like WhatsApp and WeChat has been rising, especially in recent years. However, their impact has usually been underestimated and less studied, at least when compared to platforms like Facebook or Twitter (Miller, 2016). Definitely, the reasons why these platforms become popular and/or the way they are being used varies from culture to culture. For the Kurdish Community in Turkey, it is definitely because people do not want to lose family bonds.

Moving from rural areas to the urban areas and/or to big cities like Istanbul and Izmir, which increased during the late 1900s and early 2000s, contributed to the weakening of kinship solidarity and made many Doğubeyazities lose connection with their relatives. The reason why WhatsApp is so important for them is because it enables them to be in touch with a higher number of distant relatives such as first, second or third cousins and/or old friends. Here is a reply of one of the participants to the question “Why and how did you start to use social media?”:

During the early 2000s, I lost connection with many of my cousins and neighbor friends as they had to move to Istanbul. I was very happy when I was able to have a video conference with my dearest friend with whom I spent my childhood. That moment was great, I saw her children and we have been talking almost every day since then. That is something I could not imagine. WhatsApp is just wonderful. (K6)

Similar statements were repeated over and over again. Not only women, but also young boys stated that new media platforms are great because they can stay in touch with old friends and cousins. In short, what Costa obser-

ved about the people of Mardin is equally true for Doğubeyazities “So, while kinship networks are weakened in some respects, the impact of social media has been to strengthen such ties” (2016, p. 88).

The participants were literally fans of WhatsApp, and it is not so easy to find out specifically why it is the platform that they use the most. Costa argues that “WhatsApp conveys a sense of immediacy and privacy that is not provided by Facebook” when she tries to explain why it has become more popular among the Mardinetts (2016, p. 97). It was easy to realize that relationships among group members are quite emotional and intense since they spend hours every day in interactions like sharing voice messages and pictures, and WhatsApp makes it possible for them. The participants usually informed that they like WhatsApp because it is very easy to use. The oldest woman of the study, K1 (53), started to use it four months before the interview in order to see her grandsons and granddaughters who live in Istanbul. She expressed: “I don’t know much about the phone. First, I did not need it as my young girl was with me and she was showing me what I wanted, but when she got married, she taught me how to use it before she left home. I thought I would not be able to use it as I cannot read or write, but then I realized it is easy. Within time I learned some words”.

Being a member of a WhatsApp group of cousins was something they usually mentioned. The size of WhatsApp groups is usually small, sometimes consisting of only sisters or nuclear family members, but in some cases including male and female cousins. Among these groups, “groups of female cousins only” seems to be the most important one for them. When asked what they talk about in these groups their answers were:

In the groups of female cousins only, everything is spoken. They ask questions, send holy Friday (religious gifts) messages, send their children’s videos and pictures. Everything ... gossip, food, marriage, beauty... (K6)

Generally religious things, sometimes home labor or something else. If there is an engagement, a wedding or something. It’s usually about singles, marriage and related things... that is what we are talking about. Everyday. (K11)

Showing their ability to cook well is also an important motivation here. They told the researcher that some days they just write and ask each other in the group to start a conversation by saying “Ok, let’s share today’s menu!” and everybody in the group share the menu. This sounds like a competition and the traditional border between public and private is crossed. They do it although they admit that it is not a good act to show what you eat in the Islamic and Kurdish culture. So, it is clear that traditional values are not strictly followed.

Spending time to check people’s profile updates and pictures is very common as well. They aim to know more about the lives of their cousins, nieces, nephews, and, in case they use it, uncles and aunts. The interviewed woman (K8), who spends two or three hours a day on WhatsApp, was asked why she spends such long hours on the app and she stated that it was because her group mates keep sending voice messages and pictures and because she “does not want to miss anything about her relatives”. Staying updated is crucial and they urge each other to stay always updated.

One of the most interesting findings of the field study was the discussion about “taking out of the group” some of their cousins because they do not get involved in group talks. One of the

interviewees was threatened with being removed from the social media group and she was questioned about it. She was very shy and was not that beautiful to all people by the standards of the city and also of her distant relative. She was very upset about it. When she was asked why she does not participate, she responded: "I do not have a lot of time and I do not want to take photos and share them" That shows another face of these platforms: they create a new type of discrimination based on beauty and technology usage. These findings show that more studies are necessary to better understand private groups and related platforms.

In general, the online spaces enable these women to have certain nostalgias about family and friendship. When the researcher asked why they ask each other what they have in the menu for the particular day, the reply was standard: "because we were doing it back when we were living in the same neighborhood." It also gives a sense of intimacy. Seeking suggestions about new clothes or what to wear at a wedding ceremony or special days like Bayram (festive holiday) is also a very common practice, especially on WhatsApp and exactly as it was before internet when they were able to meet face to face. So, when it comes to family and friendship, social media not only reconnects these people, but it also creates a space to do much loved and missed practices.

3.3.2 GOSSIPS AND SHOW-OFFS

When the researcher was doing his field study and talking to people about social media, it was not so difficult to understand that gossiping is an important issue that has off-line effects. Although gossiping is considered both sinful and inappropriate in Doğubayazıt, it is actually very common and everybody admits this. No matter what is the status, education or age, it is a part

of people's lives, especially of those who do not have a job. Still, nobody would be willing to confess it. Therefore, as it may be expected, women did not want to talk about it (only three of them said it is one of their practices). However, it was very easy to understand that they do it secretly and that they use WhatsApp for it. For example, one of them (K3) said that they had to create a different group because their older aunty became the member of existing group, which means that they cannot speak about other (especially older) people. Part of another participant's answer to the question "What do you usually do?" was: "A little gossip (we do). We even set up separate groups for this"

Constant discussions, accusations and gossip cross the online space and affect their offline social life. Some women stop speaking with each other because of gossips, rumors and accusations from WhatsApp chats. In one case, even some relatives had a crisis because a woman has forwarded an audio message by other women to a third woman (who is accused or badly spoken about), and it had caused members of two families to stop seeing and communicating with each other. Therefore, it can be put forth that this usage has significant psychological and social side effects.

Behaving ostentatiously to impress other people is among the most important reasons why these women use social media. That means that social media creates an environment to show off, which is quite difficult for these women to attain as they live in a male dominated environment. Among other social media platforms, WhatsApp is crucial here again because creating other social media accounts is still considered to be inappropriate for married women and the traditional boundaries between private and public life are still strictly controlled and monitored.

WhatsApp groups also offer a space for these women to share images that portray moments from their most personal and domestic lives, which have been private until now. Some of these women said, almost through the same sentences and the same body language (laughing), that they sometimes ask their “group friends” “to share a picture of them immediately, showing what they are doing and how they look”. When asked if group members do it, they answered “most of the time”. Therefore, it is clear that spontaneity is quite important but it is difficult to understand why. From what was observed, two motivations are clear and are also the most important ones. First, it makes them feel close. So close that they can see their immediate situations, and by this, they demonstrate that they give importance to their relationships. Secondly, photo-sharing and “basic” interactions make these acts more important. The fact that something is shared is enough to think that it is important, if not valuable.

These examples indicate how social media has transformed domestic and private daily life into an object of show-off. It has also opened, at least partially, these spaces to the gaze of others. However, there are still certain limits that no one breaks. Anything that might be related to sexuality is not considered appropriate to share.

3.3.3 WEDDINGS

Traditionally, weddings have been notable (if not the most) public events that men and women attend together and interact. They also create a space for women where they can be attractive. That is why, as Costa notes for Mardin, “Weddings were one of the very few occasions when women showed themselves in public to be chosen as brides by men or men’s mothers, aunts or older sisters” (2016, p. 51). That is true for Doğubeyazıt as well. Nevertheless, since many

people have migrated to big cities like Istanbul and Izmir, the traditional role of weddings in society has changed. Some of the Doğubeyazities organize their wedding ceremonies in Istanbul because they want their relatives to participate, while some still choose their home city. However, this has caused a problem for these women because they are either looking for girls to help their singles get married or they are simply curious about what other people look like at the ceremony. However, how could they see other girls and the bride they wonder a lot about if the ceremony took place in Istanbul? Of course, via WhatsApp! Some of these women have downloaded WhatsApp only for that purpose: to see how people were dressed at the wedding ceremony, especially the bride.

The most conservative participant (K5) among them told the researcher that she did not like WhatsApp before, but she has now allowed her daughter (they use the phone together) to download it until she was convinced that it is the easiest and fastest way to see these pictures. So, like Mardin, “the reproduction of the wedding environment in these online spaces has been happening just when weddings are losing their social role in the offline world” (Costa, 2016, p. 51). One of the participants (K8) stated, “I usually look at the photos (on Instagram) because I have a brother for whom I want to find a girl to marry and I actually made him meet with the daughter of one of my distant relatives, but they did not agree (laughs).” Therefore, this clearly indicates that they use new media to perform some of the traditional activities: marriages are arranged via these platforms.

The word for wedding is among the most used words when we analyzed all the interviews. If there is a wedding that all group members know, there are long discussions regarding whether the bride is beautiful or not, whether the groom is handsome, young or looks elderly,

who was the most beautiful one among girls, etc. These wedding discussions are so long that it is one of the few occasions when they share completely. Here are some examples:

... I rarely share. A wedding, or a special day of kids, etc. (K14)

If it is a wedding day, then there will be many audio messages in the group on that day that I will listen to.... We talk about brides, mothers-in-law, girls, grooms... (K12)

If there is an engagement, a wedding or something like that, we talk a lot about them. It's usually about singles or something like that (Laughs) ... (K11)

At that time, the wedding is the only issue. If anybody has gone to the wedding, we ask who was the most beautiful or whether the groom is a stranger. We ask about him and ask for their photos as well. (K7)

What these responses really show is that new media has changed people's lives, not by making them abandon their traditional activities and practices, but by changing the platform and the means. This is actually the case for many cultures and for many ancient/traditional practices (Miller, 2016). In fact, it has made some of the functions of these traditional activities (like finding a partner for their brothers, etc.) easier. So, contrary to what many people think (that new technologies make people more modern and that traditions lose their power as new technologies are being used more etc.) new media help these people to preserve and maintain many of their traditional practices in a time where they are under threat from uncontrolled and rapid urbanization.

3.3.4 PRIVACY AND RELIGION

We paid special attention to changes caused by social media on "the culture of privacy (mahremiyet, in Turkish)" The word mahremiyet, which is originally Arabic and means "forbidden", refers to "privacy, secrecy, intimacy, and domesticity". This is why it is difficult to find an exact word in English for it. It "always denotes confidentiality that the insider is expected to preserve and an outsider is expected not to violate" (Sehlikoğlu, 2015, p. 2). In short, anything that should be closed to a foreigner's gaze and knowledge is mahram (private). That means, at least in the eastern part of Turkey, anything that happens inside a house (like what you cook or what is the color of your curtain, etc.) is private. Thus, taking its broader meaning, we tried to see how social media changed the daily life of these people in general but specifically their private life.

Costa argues that "social media have to do with the redrawing of the boundaries between private and public in all these different domains of people's lives" (2016, p. 166), but what we will argue is that it has made people redefine the public and private. Something that is believed to be private in the offline world could be considered quite public in online world. Privacy is constantly redefined and remade on the basis of new normativity. The same people who do not let the smell of their barbecue reach the noses of their neighbors, because if they do not have it that will be inappropriate and it is not religiously right, see no problem in sharing it on WhatsApp. In fact, the questions "When do you share photos mostly?" and "What do you usually talk about?" led mostly to answers related to food:

We usually talk about what we have to eat, menu, where we go etc.... (K7)

If you have a special meal, a picnic or something... they are shared on groups, especially the group of old friends. (K2)

New clothes, a wedding, and an interesting place I went to, an interesting meal I made, my children... (K1)

If I had a nice, special meal or a visit to a relative... (K6)

These examples show how social media changed domestic and private daily life, and transformed it into an object of show-off.

Among the most debated topics on social networks is that of man-woman relationships. Some extreme events such as a woman who eloped with a stranger she met on social media or a video of a woman in which she is naked that went viral when she tried to send it to her secret lover but accidentally sent it to another man, have caused that everyone in town is extremely suspicious about any kind of conversations between men and women online. There was no point of asking such questions regarding whether they have conversations with a foreign man or something as they would get offended and would not be very frank. However, we still were able to get some information about how they address this issue. For example, two participants (K6 & K11) asserted that they created a different WhatsApp group around 6 months ago with around 50 members, all of whom were first cousins. All cousins, in her words, "who lived next to each other back when they were children but are now scattered across Turkey, so they can get back together". But just one week later, women created a new group with only female cousins, as they realized that they were not comfortable enough in the previous group and especially because they had to send audio messages since they are illiterate.

Furthermore, they stated that their all-female group was very active, while mixed groups were rarely used. However, this incident actually shows something strange: new media creates an even more rigid sex divide. This is because in the offline words, none of them would have any problem with talking to their male cousins. Nevertheless, as Costa also has elicited in her study, "gender segregation is even stricter in the images posted online than in behavior offline" (2016, p. 67). They are so afraid that even when they are all women, they fear that some of them might show their photos to men, which would not be very likely considering the general moral codes of the city. In this context, social media has multiplied the opportunities for producing new realities, but at the same time, it has intensified their vulnerability; something that has made many people suspicious of any type of use of new media. For instance, although not included into this research as they do not use any of these platforms, some women were proud to express that neither they nor their daughters use any kind of Internet platforms. A neighbor of the first author said, "Am I mad to let my children use these stupid things? We know what happens to girls who use it. Never ever!".

When it comes to religion, there are two important issues. The first one is about how often and in which ways religion or related issues are being spoken about. The second one is about how religion affects the use of these platforms. Four of fifteen participants stated that they "usually share religious stuff". This religious stuff can be a meme, a photo, a verse from Qur'an or some narrations from the prophet. Among all, a very interesting practice is to ask the ideas of others on religious matters. As one of the participants said, "Sometimes they ask questions like 'what do you guys think about this religious issue?', and everyone expresses their

opinion. Sometimes they argue because some women do not accept what Mulla says, and others say that we have to obey... We discuss a lot about 4-time-marriage. What would you do if it happened to you? Nobody wants that... (Laughs)...like this." That is actually interesting as it initiates discussions of religious issues in a more democratic way. Before new media, as it is well known and true for all Muslim countries, talking about religious matters and expressing one's own ideas were the privileges of men versed in Islamic studies. However, this has radically changed with the Internet and new media. This is not exclusive to women, but a social phenomenon of the Islamic world in general: traditional roles and interpretations are being challenged:

Accessible and cheap communication technologies and mass education feed the appetite for new media. Authoritative interpretations of Islam, long the preserve of learned men ('ulama'), are now in many hands. Indeed, some of the most creative thinking on Islam in recent years has been done by Muslim men and women with little or no formal training in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) or other specialties of the conventionally trained 'ulama. (Norton, 1999, p. 21)

Costa says about Mardin that "In conservative and less educated families, access to the internet is often prohibited to wives and daughters" (2016, p. 109), and "Not even educational purposes motivate parents to allow their daughters to use the internet" (2016, p. 109). Most probably, that was the situation in Doğubeyazıt back then (2016) as well. But now, we can say that it has changed, especially for more conservative families. The husband of one of the participants (K4) was a quite strict religious old man and his daughter used social media on a dai-

ly basis. She told the researcher that she had problems with her husband at the beginning because she and her daughter really wanted to have a smartphone, but her husband used to see it as a threat. But now, he has got used to it thanks to the fact that they showed him that "Internet can be used for religiously informative purposes like easily finding the meaning of the verses of Qur'an or listening to religious speeches and speaking with grandchildren". In general, religion is among the most spoken issues among these women.

When it comes to how religion modifies the way they use these platforms, it is hard to know if it is religion or tradition that has the power to affect them. Taking this into consideration, we will use the term tradition to refer to the traditional understanding of religion. As it is usually accepted, a new "visio-sexual culture" emerged in the lives of the religious women in Turkey, especially with the emergence of new middle and upper class religious people, neoliberalism and new media (Sehlikoğlu, 2015, p.14). These women combine new western trends and luxury living with Islamic beliefs and dresses.

Presentation of the self in online spaces differs among religious women, especially between more moderate and ultra-religious ones. Almost all of them use social media to show off their new clothes, luxury goods, etc., but only to certain people. Nevertheless, this shows something new about public visibility of women in Turkey. WhatsApp has given these women a new opportunity through which they can show off and obtain the appreciation of at least one group of people, even a small group, without any sin and without turning their body into a showplace.

However, sharing photos on any online platform is believed to be inappropriate. None of them posts photos on Instagram or Facebook

and sharing photos on WhatsApp is performed with caution. In this context, social media has multiplied the opportunities for producing new realities, but at the same time it has intensified people's vulnerability; something that has in turn given rise to many concerns over morality, including the morality of using these new online spaces (Costa, 2016, p. 79). Religion and family honor are the determining factors.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Social media platforms serve several interests of people in their daily lives and the characteristics, beliefs and ways of living of these people can change how and why they use or don't use social media. Based on Costa's (2016) book on the usage of social media in the eastern part of Turkey, this study tries to reveal what has changed and stayed the same in terms of motivations, opinions and concerns of social media use in a similar city, Doğubeyazıt, while adding a new dimension into the core: being an unschooled woman. This study found that unschooled women use social media platforms, especially WhatsApp, not for new practices, but to perform old and lost practices.

Theoretically, the findings of this study are in parallel with Miller and Slater's argument about new media, particularly the concept of "expansive realization". Their argument can be summarized as follows: "people usually start to use new social media because they realize that they can do things that they wished to do but were not able. The Internet allows for an expansion of communication, but in this case, it is used to repair a discrepancy, thereby helping communities and people to come closer to a realization of who they already feel they "really" are." (2000, p. 178). It really seems to be the case for these women and explains why they love social

media so much: it allows them to do some of their most beloved and forgotten practices that they were once able to do but were later frustrated due to rapid urbanization and capitalism. But, to what extent do they carry out these lost practices and what are the limits? That is a question for further studies.

Also, contrary to the well-known argument that modern technology brings new ways of life and modern perceptions, these people use new media in order to continue to do traditional activities, even though they have to use different means from previous generations for that. As we tried to show clearly, social media saved these traditions and connections. New media also help these women to build bridges with previous generations, continue their practices and preserve their functions. But the famous technological determinist question is still not answered: Does the use of a new medium change the "nature" of these activities and their meaning? This is a question that many speculations can be made about. This study showed that these people do not seem to be thinking that new media has changed the nature of their activities. One thing is clear, modern technology in general and social media in particular do not change their general approach to privacy and religious issues. The use of new media and new technologies does not lead to a more secular and modern perception of life.

Being one of the few studies on social media and their use by unschooled women, this research is expected to inspire more studies on how different groups in society (with some specific characteristics) use social media in other contexts and how the use of social media can affect their lives and points of view. This type of study will show the different uses of new media and their relationship with user groups, which will help us overcome unproven generalizations.

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The structure of social networks in IBEX 35 companies

La estructura de las redes sociales en las compañías del IBEX 35

A estrutura das redes sociais nas empresas do IBEX 35

5

ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: December 04, 2020 / ACCEPTED: January 29, 2021

Abstract

This research has developed a complete map of the structure of social networks accepted by the companies in the IBEX 35 index. From an exploratory perspective, the way in which these companies include social networks in their communication policy was investigated from their presentation on official web pages to the possible correlation between economic size and channel selection. The main conclusion indicates that the marketing function is predominant for these companies and that the economic size has a positive correlation with the selection of more informative social net-

works to the detriment of the most conversational ones.

KEYWORDS

Social networks, Blogs, Ibex 35, Interactivity, Conversation, Capitalization.

Resumen

Esta investigación ha elaborado un mapa completo sobre la estructura de redes sociales aceptadas por las empresas del índice IBEX 35. Desde una perspectiva exploratoria se ha indagado la forma en la que estas empresas incluyen las redes sociales en su política de comunicación, desde la indicación en las páginas

web oficiales hasta la posible correlación entre tamaño económico y selección de canales. La principal conclusión indica que la función de marketing es predominante para estas empresas y que el tamaño económico tiene una correlación positiva con la selección de redes sociales más informativas en detrimento de las más conversacionales.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Redes sociales, Blogs, Ibex 35, Interactividad, Conversación, Capitalización.

Resumo

Esta pesquisa produziu um mapa completo da estrutura das redes sociais aceitas pelas empresas do índice IBEX 35. Numa perspec-

tiva exploratória, investigou-se a forma como essas empresas incluem as redes sociais em sua política de comunicação, desde a indicação em páginas oficiais da web até a possível correlação entre tamanho econômico e seleção de canais. A principal conclusão indica que a função de marketing é predominante para essas empresas e que o porte econômico tem correlação positiva com a seleção de redes sociais mais informativas em detrimento das mais conversacionais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Redes sociais, Blogs, Ibex 35, Interatividade, Conversação, Capitalização.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, and thanks to technology, the communication function is strategic in the sense that it is capable of adding value to the business project of each organization (Castelló Martínez, 2013). As indicated by Klewes et al. (2017), the increase in connectivity on a global scale is a trend related to digital transformation. This phenomenon represents a challenge for the management of strategic communication of organizations since it forces to reorient the relationship with both external and internal target audiences, recognizing the existence of channels in which both are in a situation of equality (Túñez López & Altamirano, 2015), both in private organizations and in public entities. For example, the recent work by Alonso and López (2019) observed that for city councils, despite potentially limited resources, social media is in the upper zone of the options chosen to communicate with their audiences, providing a two-way dimension to the management of the communication. For this reason, the training

and preparation of the communication director must take into account the new technological scenario, including the management of “digital media, corporate portals and social networks” (Costa, 2016, p.174).

The dominant paradigm until the advent of the 2.0 scenario was based on unidirectional communication channels with which organizations transferred information to their interest groups (Macnamara, 2010). As argued by Miller and Skinner (2015), the appearance of social networks has generated a significant loss of control over the areas of informational influence of organizations, especially when compared with traditional tools such as press releases or institutional statements.

The exhaustive literature review by Lei et al. (2019) concluded that organizations strategically use social networks for two main purposes, on the one hand, the dissemination of relevant information and, on the other, the generation of conversations with their audiences (Okazaki et al., 2020; Wang and Yang, 2020). Both activi-

ties are framed in the strategic communication of companies due to their intentional sense, focused on objectives and planned by professionals (Hamid, 2020). As Postman (2009, p.14) reflects: “a key aspect of success in the corporate use of social networks is to link communication initiatives to business strategy”. The adequate harmonization between both elements could represent a determining correlation between communicative objectives and corporate objectives according to previous literature (Enke & Borchers, 2019; Kick, 2015). However, recent empirical studies have detected that the informational aspect continues to be hegemonic compared to the possibility of generating conversations with target audiences in the Spanish business landscape (Aced Toledano, 2017; Durántez-Stolle, 2017; Paliwoda-Matiolanska et al., 2020).

In any case, the potential offered by social networks and the 2.0 scenario in general are extensive for organizations to successfully achieve their communication objectives both in the field of public relations (Allagui & Breslow, 2016) and in the field of advertising (Alalwan, 2018). On the other hand, the corporate dimension of communication in social networks is of vital importance since there is empirical verification according to which messages on these platforms can affect the perception investors have of organizations (Bartov et al., 2018; Cade, 2018; Chen et al., 2014; Tom et al., 2018; Yang & Yang, 2017).

The model developed by Aichner and Jacob (2015) to evaluate the use of social networks by organizations is an example of the interest that these new channels have generated in their corporate environment. Their work was oriented towards evaluating the level of corporate activity on the different social platforms available. A relevant contribution of their proposal is based on the categorization of the different

platforms according to their impact on the business of companies. Specifically, their work segmented the 2.0 scenario into 13 types of platforms and applied a degree of impact on each one according to the corporate function involved. Numerous studies have recognized this categorization (Barris, 2019; Korzynski et al., 2020; Poppel, 2020; Uttrup, 2017; Visser & Sikkenga, 2017). For example, the study by Flores Vizcarra (2019) analyzed the generation of content on social networks by four telecommunications companies in Peru.

This research has set two main objectives. In the first place, the preparation of a complete map of the digital communication channels that are part of the strategy of the companies that belong to the IBEX 35¹ (benchmark stock market index that measures the joint behavior of the 35 companies on the Spanish Stock Exchange with the highest capitalization, liquidity and volume traded). Social networks and blogs have been considered as digital communication channels, despite the fact that these have an eminently more informative and unidirectional nature. The inclusion of blogs on equal terms with social networks is due to the fact that their similar consideration by the analyzed companies and their dissociation from the information offered on official web pages have been empirically verified. Based on this observation, the digital communication structure of the set of IBEX organizations has been converted in terms of the corporate functions involved by applying the proposal of Aichner and Jacob (2015) in the form of coefficients.

1 Sorted by capitalization from highest to lowest: Inditex, Iberdrola, Banco Santander, Amadeus, Telefónica, BBVA, AENA, ENDESA, Naturgy, Ferrovial, REPSOL, Cellnex, Caixa-bank, IAG, Arcelor, Grifols, ACS, Siemens Gamesa, Red Eléctrica, Mapfre, ENAGAS, Colonial, Merlin, Acciona, Bankinter, Banco Sabadell, Bankia, CIE, Acerinox, Más Móvil, Viscofan, Indra, Melia, Mediaset, Ence (Retrieved January 22, 2020, from: <https://bit.ly/2M5GKmA>)

The second objective established had the purpose of extracting relevant findings regarding the existing relationships between the inclusion of social networks in the communication strategy and other company data. For this, the crossing of external variables such as the sector in which it operates, the size of the companies and the number of visits to its corporate website was applied.

Despite the fact that this study has used an eminently exploratory approach, some relevant questions may be raised from the start. First, if the IBEX companies consider social networks as one-way or conversational channels to communicate with their audiences or if there is a correlation between the economic size of a company and the use of social networks as a corporate communication channel.

2. METHODOLOGY

This work was based on content analysis to observe the presence of IBEX 35 companies on the different available social platforms. Data extraction was carried out by taking dichotomous qualitative variables (presence / non-presence) and nominal qualitative variables (presence, but without mention on corporate website / presence, but not with a corporate perspective). These data were quantified in spreadsheets both for the correlation between them and for the conversion into corporate functions according to the proposal of Aichner and Jacob (2015). This conversion was carried out by weighting the ratios provided by these two authors according to the value that the use of a certain social network has for organizations. Specifically, the assessment was made by multiplying the use of each social network according to whether it was not important (0), not very important (0.25), moderately important (0.5), highly important (0.75) or very highly important

(1) in each of the corporate functions that these authors delimited: R&D, Marketing, Customer Service, Sales, Human Resources and Organization.

The detection of the social media channels integrated in the corporate communication strategy was carried out in the first place by analyzing the content of the official websites of each company², and secondly by consulting the aforementioned social platforms³. From this first query, data was extracted from the channels that are hegemonic at a quantitative level: Twitter (number of followers), Facebook (number of "likes"), LinkedIn (number of followers) and Instagram (number of followers)⁴.

The data on the size of each of the companies was consulted by accessing the website of the Madrid Stock Exchange and taking as a reference the market capitalization (share price per number of shares in circulation)⁵. The sectoral categorization of each company was carried out using as a reference the structure proposed by the Madrid Stock Exchange⁶. Finally, the quantification of the number of visits to the website of each company was obtained thanks to the Alexa web traffic measurement platform⁷. The

2 In all cases the information and access link were found on the home page except on the Mediaset website where it was necessary to go to a second level of navigation. Retrieved January 22, 2020.

3 Direct consultation on social platforms was carried out after quantifying the total of quantitatively hegemonic channels on the home pages of the 35 companies. The platforms consulted were: LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. A web search engine was used to verify the existence of official blogs related to each company.

4 Retrieved January 22, 2020.

5 Retrieved January 23, 2020, from <https://bit.ly/2NfTast>

6 1. Oil and energy, 2. Basic Materials, Industry and Construction, 3. Consumer Goods, 4. Consumer Services, 5. Financial Services, 6. Technology and Telecommunications, 7. Real Estate Services.

7 Retrieved January 23, 2020, from <https://www.alexa.com/siteinfo>

results obtained can be consulted in detail in Annex 1.

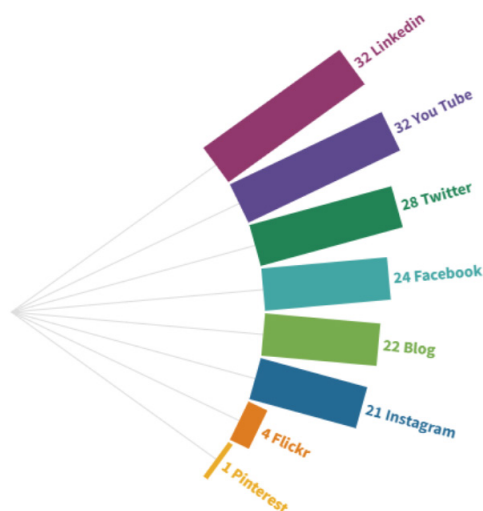
Graphic representations were made on the final results obtained and data visualization was applied. This activity has the mission of obtaining a global understanding of relationships and patterns that are not accessible in any other way through the graphic observation of a set of data (Torres Ponjuán, 2010).

3. RESULTS

3.1 SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS ACCEPTED BY IBEX 35 COMPANIES

As previously mentioned, the first approach was made with descriptive objectives. The total number of social media channels and blogs that are part of the communication channel structure of each of the IBEX 35 companies were identified through content analysis. This observation, in which each company is considered to have the same value or weight, converted into a graphic representation, leads to Figure 1.

Figure 1



Note: Quantitatively organized radial graph of the social networks used by IBEX 35 organizations.

As can be seen in the graph, if the weighting of the IBEX 35 companies is the same, the order of importance of each social platform is: LinkedIn and YouTube (tied), Twitter, Facebook, Blogs, Instagram, Flickr and Pinterest. In this way, LinkedIn is at the top of social media channels for corporate use, serving the total number of IBEX companies that recognize it as their own communication channel with a total of 32 companies out of the 35 in the sample. This result undermines a presumed correlation between the number of total users of each platform and business or institutional use, since LinkedIn is in the eighth position in the ranking of social networks according to the volume of active users during 2020. An element that reinforces this disconnection occurs when the Reddit platform (social bookmarking website) that has a greater number of users is not recognized as an appropriate channel to be used by the analyzed companies. On the other hand, the predominant position of YouTube, the platform with the highest corporate use of the sample together with LinkedIn, would partially correspond to the number of users since the social video platform is the second most important worldwide when this data is taken as a variable.

These results empirically corroborate, albeit indirectly, the recent work by Durántez-Stolle (2017) in which it was concluded that the dialogic component of social networks is not the one that prevails in the use of corporate-type social networks in comparison with the unidirectional emission component of the information. The harmony between both arguments is found in that the two platforms most used by the IBEX 35, according to the data of this study, were YouTube and LinkedIn and were the ones with the lowest interactivity ratio compared to Facebook. The measurement based on daily activity places Facebook with a higher ratio (50% of

users use it more than once a day) compared to YouTube (28%) and especially LinkedIn (13%).

On the other hand, the quantification of channels accepted by IBEX 35 companies can be put into context thanks to a study that took data from 2014 and also observed the number of social media channels in IBEX 35 companies. The doctoral thesis of Aced Toledano (2017) indicated that 17 companies had at least one blog (compared to 22 found in 2020), 26 had a Facebook page (compared to 24), and 30 had a Twitter profile (compared to 28).

The comparison in the use of these three channels from 2014 to now is conditioned by the change in the companies that make up the stock index. However, it can be said from a general perspective that there has been a broadening of horizons in the acceptance of social networks by large companies during these six years. This statement is due to the increase in blogs and Facebook, on the one hand, and because the alleged decrease in Twitter channels is potentially influenced by two factors. In the first place, due to a small variation in the applied methodology (this research has observed a corporate or recognized use on the official website) and secondly, due to the advent of technological alternatives such as the WhatsApp business API that was launched in 2018. This platform allows an interaction focused on customer service (a non-main function that Twitter also has) and currently has an acceptance of 84% as a channel of interaction with users in medium and small companies according to February 2020 data provided by Hootsuite.

Another relevant issue that is observed through the description of the accepted channels from a corporate perspective indicates that a significant number of companies use certain platforms as their own, but do not advertise any of them on their official website. This fin-

ding is the result of the application of two levels of detection of social networks, a first based on their inclusion on the home page of each website and a second through a direct search on the hegemonic platforms at a quantitative level: LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Blogs.

It was observed that, with the exception of Facebook and Twitter, there is a proportionally high trend towards non-recognition of the use of one or more social media channels on the corporate website. When reviewing the activity of the companies in the sample, it was detected that 83% of the IBEX 35 companies omit the use of at least one social media channel or blog on their official website. For example, 44% of the IBEX 35 companies that have a YouTube channel do not indicate its existence on their website; similar percentages can be observed with other channels such as Instagram (38%) and LinkedIn (31%). The most striking empirical evidence is produced when analyzing the results of all companies that have a corporate blog, but do not advertise it directly on their official website. The application of two levels of scrutiny indicated that 77% of the IBEX 35 companies that post content through an institutional blog did not indicate this channel on their official website. Curiously, a large part of the companies that do clearly indicate this belong to the financial sector and use this channel to offer information on economic trends and reports on corporate social responsibility.

This largely veiled perspective is reinforced when the formats used in the blogs that were not directly recognized tend to avoid the promotional presence of each of the entities that are organizers and generators of the content. For example, the same titles used on each website offer signals about a dissociation with respect to purely corporate or promotional use (for example [Talensostenible.acciona.com](https://www.talensostenible.acciona.com)

in the case of Acciona or jubilacióndefuturo.es in the case of BBVA) without actually owning a fraudulent sense (flog). Therefore, it can be said that there is a general trend towards the explicit non-disclosure of corporate blogs as institutional channels compared to more interactive spaces such as social networks.

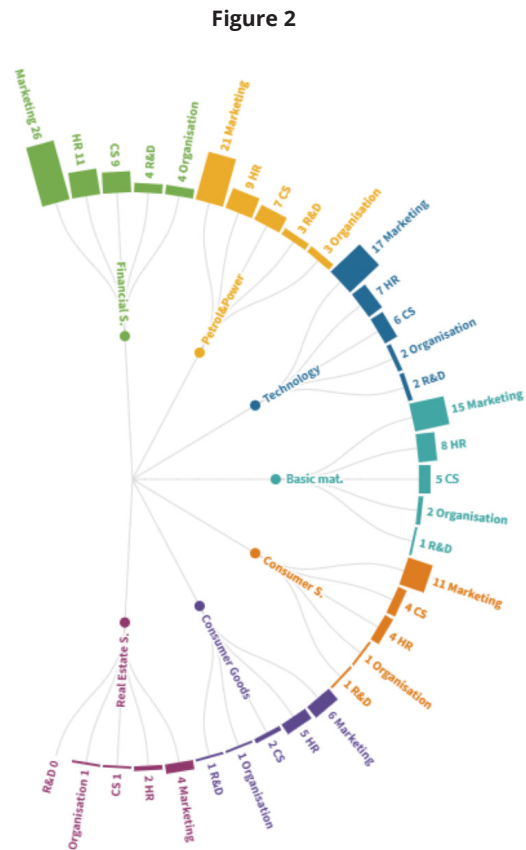
3.2 CONVERSION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS INTO CORPORATE FUNCTIONS

As indicated in the methodology, the work of Aichner and Jacob (2015) evaluated the social platforms and blogs used by companies. Within their study, they carried out a weighting⁸ of each type of social platform regarding the impact on the corporate function of organizations. In this way, and categorizing the degree of connection, a weighting of the corporate functions related to each of the social platforms used by IBEX 35 companies has been applied (Figure 2).

As Figure 2 clearly indicates, the marketing function appears to be the most important in relation to the type of social networks used by IBEX 35 companies. In second and third place would be human resources and talent management activities, and customer service using social media.

3.3 CAPITALIZATION AS A DETERMINING FACTOR IN THE USE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL NETWORKS

Although there is a large bibliography on the relationship between size of organizations and use of social networks, especially in the case of



Note: Radial graph distributed by sectors with weighting of corporate functions in relation to the use of social networks by IBEX 35 organizations.

small and medium-sized companies (Ahmad et al., 2018; Behan, 2014; Karimi & Naghibi, 2015; Meske & Stieglitz, 2013; Roy et al., 2014; Srinivasan et al., 2016) there are no studies that directly correlate the economic dimension with the greater or lesser use of social networks. To give a partial answer to this dilemma, this research has extracted the market capitalization data and has been combined with the acceptance or non-acceptance of each of the social networks that are part of the digital environment of these organizations.

Taking the companies from the IBEX 35 group as the sample, the introduction of the economic component partially subverts the obtained results in which the different companies

⁸ As commented in the Methodology section, the importance ratio in each corporate function was applied following the proposal of Alchnar and Jacob (2015) as follows: 0 (no importance), 0.25 (low), 0.5 (medium), 0.75 (high) and 1 (very high).

are pondered with the same weight. As can be seen in the following figure, if the market capitalization of each of the companies in the sample is quantified, there is a relevant change in the hegemony of the most important social platforms used in the IBEX 35 (Figure 3).

When introducing a weighting by capitalization of the companies, it can be seen that YouTube stands out alone as the social network with the highest corporate use followed at a short distance by LinkedIn, and in a lower range are Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Blogs and finally, with a residual presence, Flickr and Pinterest.

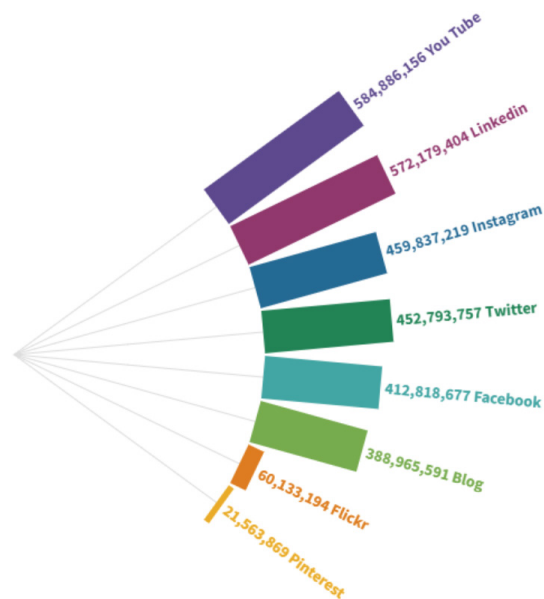
The most relevant issue that emerges in the inclusion of the capitalization variable suggests the growing commitment of the largest companies to the use of Instagram, since the weighting by capitalization places this platform in third place despite having a significantly lower number of companies that bet on this channel (Figure 1). Therefore, there is a correlation between the size of the companies and the acceptance of the use of Instagram as a means of communication.

In order to evaluate these results in greater depth, these were ordered by quartiles⁹ of market capitalization and other variables that were quantitatively measurable. Grouping into quartiles allows the categorization of a subset of data in relation to the total population of data. In this way, as Díez and Moulines (2008) indicate, a scientific concept of a metric (quantitative) type allows to obtain a concept of a comparative (qualitative) type and this in turn allows a classificatory (qualitative) concept.

The variables that were quantified and grouped into quartiles, in addition to the aforementioned financial dimension, were the number

9 Division of a numerically ordered data set into four equal parts.

Figure 3



Note: Radial graph organized quantitatively according to accumulated capitalization in thousands of euros of the social networks used by IBEX 35 organizations.

of visits to the official website¹⁰, the number of followers on Twitter, the number of “likes” on Facebook, the number of followers on LinkedIn and the number of followers on Instagram. These data were included within the same data structure and were visualized thanks to an alluvial graph¹¹ (Figure 4).

As can be seen, the first level corresponds to the order by capitalization in which the first group, despite being uniformly distributed, absorbs the weight of the market capitalization of a large part of the IBEX 35 stock price. The following orderings based on quantitative variables maintain a hegemonic hierarchy without major changes in which the companies with the highest capitalization tend to be those with the highest number of visits on their official website (second level ranking according to Alexa ran-

10 Measured according to the ranking attributed by the web traffic portal Alexa.

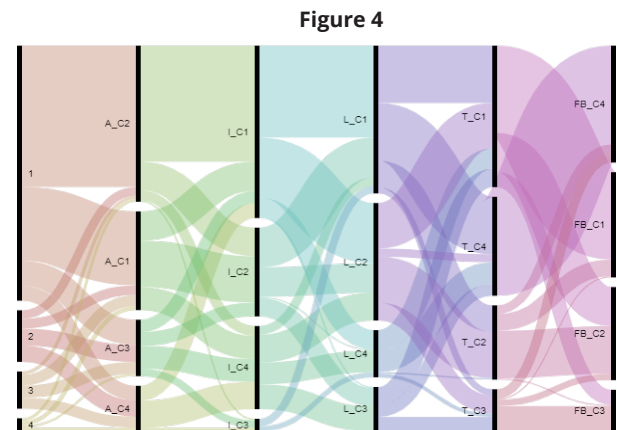
11 Flow diagram representing changes in a network structure as it passes from one phase to another.

king), followers on Instagram (third level) and followers on LinkedIn (fourth level). If the focus is placed on the fifth level (followers on Twitter), a change in trend can be noted since there is a negative correlation between the number of followers on Twitter and capitalization. The group of companies with the least number of followers on Twitter (or that do not use this platform) is in the second level of importance according to its market capitalization.

This same dynamic, but even more significant, occurs in the sixth level organized by the number of Facebook users. The companies that have a lower number of followers or that do not accept this platform within their communication policy have a higher capitalization than all other groups of companies, including those with a greater number of users. This phenomenon contravenes the common nature in the rest of the parameters, according to which companies with greater financial mass also obtain better ratios in web visits and followers in social networks.

In turn, the distribution of Facebook and, to a lesser extent, of Twitter are more revealing when the accumulated capitalization between these two platforms and Instagram is barely unbalanced, as can be seen in Figure 3. That is, although there are no major differences in cumulative capitalization of these three channels, the ordering by quartiles indicates a clear positive correlation between followers and capitalization in the case of Instagram and a negative correlation in the case of Facebook (and to a lesser extent in Twitter).

The provisional conclusion that can be taken from this phenomenon suggests that, once again, there is a policy of large companies (and within these the most economically important) to bet on channels with a greater unidirectional dimension to the detriment of the conversa-



Note: Alluvial graph ordered according to accumulated capitalization of the companies that are part of each quartile. #: Capitalization quartile, A_C#: Alexa quartile, I_C#: Instagram quartile, L_C#: LinkedIn quartile, FB_C#: Facebook quartile.

tional perspective. This indication is based on the fact that Facebook is the channel with the highest interaction if this is measured as access by active users more than once a day¹² (50-43% of users). Twitter would be in second place in terms of interaction with respect to the platforms included in the organization by quartiles with 27% access, followed by Instagram with 24% and LinkedIn with 13%. Therefore, there is an inverse correlation between the level of interactions on the platform (conversational dimension) and acceptance by companies with the highest capitalization (economic dimension).

This argument is due to the fact that LinkedIn and Instagram maintain a structure that in the first quartile by number of users is also the largest grouping by capitalization, although in the third and fourth quartiles they have exchanged positions. In the case of Twitter, the first quartile by number users continues to be correlated with greater capitalization, although the quartile with fewer users obtains a second order of importance by capitalization. Finally, the quar-

¹² Retrieved February 20, 2020, from <https://bit.ly/2Kupb-fv>

tile that contains the accounts with the lowest number of users on Facebook or that does not directly recognize this platform has the highest accumulated capitalization, taking as a sample the IBEX 35 companies, which are in turn those with the highest equity value in Spain.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This research proposed an observation of the ecosystem of social networks of IBEX 35 companies, both those promoted on their official website and those only recognized to a greater or lesser degree (social networks or blogs).

The conclusions can be stated through several key points. On the one hand, as previous studies focused on companies in this stock index have outlined (Aced Toledano, 2017; Durán-tez-Stolle, 2017) there is a wide acceptance of social networks within the communication policy of these companies. Even a slight increase in recent years is recognizable if the evolution of technology and the change in the methodological framework are assessed.

On the other hand, the explicit non-recognition of corporate blogs is a generalized phenomenon and represents a policy that coincides with the same format of websites in which a non-obvious promotion of the image of the company is sought. Blogs, according to the sample analyzed, were used as parallel routes to communication activity before the appearance of the 2.0 scenario, but avoiding an obvious visibility of the promoter companies. This characteristic can be related to its eminently one-way perspective compared to social networks.

According to the data from this research, the marketing function is preeminent if the use of social media platforms is converted into cor-

porate functions according to the proposal by Aichner and Jacob (2015). This question tangentially reaffirms the logic according to which large companies, such as those that belong to the IBEX 35, maintain a vision of information transfer over a conversational approach. This conclusion is based on the fact that the conversion of Aichner and Jacob's (2015) proposal to coefficients leaves the Customer Service function at a clearly lower level¹³.

Finally, the economic dimension valued in this research empirically confirms the conclusion of the studies by Aced Toledano (2017) and Durán-tez-Stolle (2017). In the works of these two authors it was concluded that large companies make use of social networks from a more informative perspective than as a space for the generation of interactions and dialogue. Although the analyzed sample is based only on large companies, this work has coincided in this finding since within this same range it can be observed that Facebook, as the social network that generates more daily activity, is the most important in number of followers for companies that have a smaller capitalization. On the contrary, two platforms with a clearly lower interaction, LinkedIn and Instagram, are at the top in number of users for the companies with the highest capitalization.

In this way, this study provides a significant indication based on verifiable data and that corroborates previous conclusions obtained using other methodologies. It should be noted that this research has been based on a sample limited to the companies with the largest capitalization in Spain at a given time. In the same way that this question avoids the formulation

13 Always in third place after the functions of Marketing and Human Resources, except in the sector of IBEX companies classified as Services in which it is only below Marketing.

of generalizations, it opens the door to future works that confront the category of the companies analyzed with companies of different places or characteristics, such as emerging companies.

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ANNEX 1: Data obtained in the investigation

Table 1

Name	Alexa Ranking	LinkedIn Followers	Instagram Followers	"likes" on Facebook	Capitalization
Inditex	87.825	917.839	68.003	0	96.709.712
Iberdrola	57.390	219.083	33.674	38.738	60.159.753
Banco Santander	3.015	783.193	20.416	233.000	59.442.996
Amadeus	2.447	222.909	0	70.908	33.431.929
Telefónica	49.494	8.025	25.890	843.000	32.539.089
BBVA	3.939	467.363	165.687	5500.000	31.325.731
AENA	37.007	38.743	11.122	18.829	25.462.500
ENDESA	621.249	151.279	47.926	25.940	24.590.000
Naturgy	64.454	89.516	8.732	74.138	22.546.238
Ferrovial	266.079	253.375	6.606	79.248	21.563.869
REPSOL	166.515	475.456	34.428	171.322	20.772.586
Cellnex	2.849.154	19.070	0	0	16.861.889
Caixabank	1.561	97.474	97.262	182.000	16.149.883

IAG	477.690	0	0	0	15.015.942
Arcelor	65.558	401.112	0	0	14.537.601
Grifols	392.050	114.733	0	0	13.457.179
ACS	808.686	0	0	0	10.604.197
Siemens Gamesa	337.394	295.470	5.957	22.156	10.595.185
Red Eléctrica	570.290	32.531	0	3.605	9.728.618
Mapfre	35.130	296.791	20.255	1.900.000	7.424.803
ENAGAS	1.078.202	49.114	0	1.278	6.298.241
Colonial	8.793.564	6.939	1.067	0	5.980.511
Merlin	8.793.564	4.134	0	0	5.942.600
Acciona	116.808	477.674	134.102	450.000	5.556.979
Bankinter	9.012	49.141	10.085	105.000	5.465.106
Banc Sabadell	3.569	105.380	6.786	66.141	5.459.281
Bankia	4.823	32.647	0	36.502	5.278.043
CIE	1.187.248	16.106	0	0	2.714.160
Acerinox	598.471	6.208	0	0	2.595.079
Más Móvil	81.213	3.508	4.419	133.000	2.522.334
Viscofan	151.559	7.262	0	0	2.309.190
Indra	216.322	497.455	4.049	21.602	1.950.265
Melia	27.472	34.257	110.003	873.000	1.873.204
Mediaset	174.876	0	20.663	157.589	1.747.194
Ence	4.304.427	21.514	0	2.775	934.850

Note: quantitative data of the main social networks of the IBEX 35 companies grouped by capitalization of each company. Alexa ranking, number of followers on LinkedIn, number of followers on Instagram, number of "likes" on Facebook and market capitalization (in millions of euros).

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The promotional strategy of Netflix and HBO on Instagram in a competition scenario. Analysis of their profiles in Spain and in the US

La estrategia promocional de Netflix y HBO en Instagram en un escenario de competencia. Análisis de sus perfiles en España y en EE. UU.

A estratégia promocional de Netflix e HBO no Instagram em um cenário de concorrência. Análise de seus perfis na Espanha e nos EUA

6

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RECEIVED: August 15, 2020 / ACCEPTED: January 26, 2021

Abstract

This study analyzes the resources and strategies used by the US and Spanish profiles of HBO and Netflix on Instagram. For this, the year 2017 is taken as a reference because it is a period marked by the arrival of HBO in Spain. The content analysis of the 731 messages collected reflects a high internal consistency on the part of Netflix, while on HBO both channels differ significantly. An effort is appreciated by the Spanish profiles to adapt to the Spanish social reality by resorting to social causes or by emphasizing the dimension of the conflict.

KEYWORDS

Instagram, ANOVA, HBO, Netflix, *Streaming*, Social media.

Resumen

Este estudio analiza los recursos y estrategias utilizados por los perfiles estadounidense y español de HBO y Netflix en Instagram. Para ello se toma como referencia el año 2017, período marcado por la llegada de HBO a España. El análisis de contenido de los 731 mensajes recogidos refleja una alta coherencia interna por parte de Netflix, mientras que en HBO ambos canales se diferencian notablemente. Se

aprecia un esfuerzo por parte de los perfiles españoles para adaptarse a la realidad social española recurriendo a las causas sociales o a poner el acento en la dimensión del conflicto.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Instagram, ANOVA, HBO, Netflix, *Streaming*, Redes sociales.

Resumo

Este estudo analisa os recursos e as estratégias utilizadas pelos perfis norte americanos e espanhol da HBO e da Netflix no Instagram. Para tanto, toma-se como referência o ano de 2017, período marcado pela chegada da HBO à Espanha. A análise de conteúdo das 731 mensagens coletadas reflete uma alta coerência interna por parte da Netflix, enquanto na HBO os dois canais se diferem significativamente. É apreciado um esforço por parte dos perfis espanhóis para se adaptarem à realidade social espanhola recorrendo a causas sociais ou para enfatizar a dimensão do conflito.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Instagram, ANOVA, HBO, Netflix, *Streaming*, Redes sociais.

1. INTRODUCTION

Spain presents a mature market in terms of the use of social networks (IAB Spain & Elogia, 2020). With a penetration of 87%, 31.7 million users between the ages of 16 and 65 use this medium, firstly, to chat and send messages and, secondly, to watch videos and listen to music. The most followed sector in networks is entertainment, culture and media. Instagram is the second most used network and it has shown progressive growth in recent years (IAB

Spain & Elogia, 2020). This network is also chosen to follow influencers.

Thus, social networks also play a relevant role for the television industry. Not only do they make watching the small screen a more pleasant experience (Segado et al., 2015) but they also help increase the audience (Cha, 2019). A phenomenon familiar to the digital platforms of conventional television channels or those offered through processes on the network (Over The Top -OTT-), such as Netflix or HBO, which have opted for social networks to get subscri-

bers. These last paid platforms are those that have special relevance since in Spain there has been a constant increase in the penetration of services offered by digital platforms on demand (VOD) (Arrojo & Martín, 2019).

The introduction of video on demand in Spain has been a slow process (Clares-Gavilán & Medina-Cambron, 2018). Netflix arrived in October 2015, opening a new stage in the way of consuming content in the national market together with the telephone operator Movistar+, its main rival during that year (Castro & Cascajosa, 2020). At the end of November 2016, the American cable network HBO joined the streaming subscription offers, and Amazon Prime Video joined in December 2016 (Barlovento Comunicación, 2016). We would have to wait until November 2019 to know the Apple TV Plus offer and March 2020 for Disney+.

Five years after the arrival of Netflix in Spain, OTTs achieved for the first time a greater reach of individuals than traditional payment platforms (Barlovento Comunicación, 2020). Netflix was the most consumed platform, reaching 14.1 million people out of the 16,395,000 who use any platform in this market.

In this ranking is Movistar+ (13.4% of the total) followed by Netflix (12.5% of the total). HBO ranks fifth (2.9% of the total) despite its undeniable importance since, by being the owner of the most viewed series, it has boosted the consumption of paid content in this country (Garza, 2017). In addition, Netflix and HBO are reaching new households that have never had pay TV, complementing and even replacing the paid services of another operator (Kantar Media, 2019).

The boundaries between television channels, telecommunications operators and OTT services are difficult to draw. From the perspective of the audience, the differences between in-

dustries are irrelevant since what they are looking for is the best audiovisual content (Medina et al., 2019).

In this way, the struggle to get subscribers is transferred to social networks, where companies are forced to abandon their traditional corporate discourse rejected by the user (Maciá, 2015). In this scenario, companies must have a strategy that generates content of interest to followers and encourages conversation, avoiding using social networks as another one-way and promotional channel (Pereira-Villazón & Portilla, 2020).

In this sense, Instagram is a useful tool in the communication strategy of television networks to the extent that its success among its users lies in its ability to share images and videos, to which different filters can be added (Lara-Navarra et al., 2018). Likewise, the social network has become one more platform for the distribution of content especially valued by younger audiences (Zeko et al., 2019), in addition to being part of the transmedia universes of serial fiction (Castelló-Martínez, 2020; Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2019).

Understanding the strategies and tactics that these paid platforms employ is of special interest to the audiovisual industry (Del Pino & Aguado, 2012; Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018a; Ojer & Capapé, 2012; Pérez-Latre & Sánchez-Tabernero, 2016). Competition from Netflix and HBO has forced traditional actors to introduce changes in the creation, production and distribution of audiovisual content (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2019). So digital, and specifically social networks, play a fundamental role. In the American case, networks tend to increase the use of social networks to promote and interact with the audiences of their programs (Smith, 2019; Wang, 2016). And although Instagram is one of the platforms to reach younger

audiences and promote and create content, its use is still limited on traditional televisions (Ferguson & Greer, 2016).

1.1 MARKETING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Communication in social networks requires a publication strategy to obtain the proposed goals. When publishing, whatever the format, the content originally generated by the brand is the key (Sánchez, 2015; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021). In this sense, the main challenge that global brands must face is to connect with customers in different markets around the world and, for this, a deep knowledge of the target market is required (Llopis, 2015; Wayne & Castro, 2020).

Previously, communication between brand and consumer was based on highlighting the characteristics or benefits of the product or service. The new communicative context that companies face requires that the focus is on the user and on the emotional relationships that can be established (Segarra-Saavedra et al., 2019). To foster this relational factor, brands must take advantage of new languages, tools and platforms, among which is Instagram (Marfil-Carmona et al., 2015).

As noted in the introduction, Instagram is a social network that continues to grow in number of users. Although in its origins it was considered a channel especially linked to the fashion sector (Segarra-Saavedra & Hidalgo-Marí, 2018), the use by younger audiences has meant that more companies have opted to open a profile on this network.

Instagram is the preferred social network for users between the ages of 13 and 17 (Generation Z). According to the Google study *"It's lit, a*

guide to what teens think it's cool" (2017), Netflix is the favorite brand for young people in the US, so it is not surprising that the platform and its rival have opened an account on this network. In addition to Generation Z, millennials are another of the target audiences for subscription-on-demand services (Guerrero et al., 2018; Smith, 2019).

From the academic point of view, there is still little research that addresses the relationship between television and this social network, since Twitter has been the most frequently studied platform in terms of television strategies (Segado et al., 2015).

1.2 NETFLIX AND HBO COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The interest in knowing Netflix's strategy lies in its own content distribution model (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018a). In addition, it has become a benchmark from the promotional point of view, since the classic strategies for promoting television series do not serve online streaming services (DeCarvalho & Cox, 2016).

In the US, Netflix has won an award for its social media practices. Its strategy in this country is based on entertainment and humor, as recent studies on the brand in Spain have confirmed (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018a; Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b).

The Spanish Netflix account has already shown that it has a strategy for creating its own content, promoting and reporting on its fiction series and adapting to the language of this social network (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b) in a coordinated manner with the American account (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018a). Therefore, it is of interest

to know if it also has a distinctive but integrated strategy in Instagram, the channel to connect with younger audiences.

On the other hand, the interest of the North American cable channel lies in its ability to create a strong brand identity through its fictions (Bourdaa, 2014; Cascajosa, 2006; Lasier, 2012). Thus, HBO's star products, such as the *Game of Thrones* series, are the basis of its communication on Instagram (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez & Segado-Boj, 2019). However, we still know little about its strategy in social networks, with the exception of the aforementioned article and the work developed in Spain by Ortega and Santos (2020). The study by Tron (2016) stands out, in which the American network is approached indirectly, as it develops the promotional strategy of Netflix and compares it with that of HBO. Thus, comparative studies are useful for understanding the communication of the audiovisual industry in social networks.

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This article seeks to identify the common points of the strategy of paid television platforms on Instagram, as well as to point out the particular strategies of each of the accounts considered. This general objective is specified based on the following research questions:

P1. What resources are commonly used between the Instagram accounts of HBO and Netflix?

P2. What resources are commonly used between the Instagram accounts of these platforms in Spain and the United States?

P3. What resources are specific to each of the Instagram accounts analyzed?

For this, the characteristics of their publications are analyzed and the frequency with which their publications on the social network present the different characteristics analyzed is compared.

The authors manually collected the posts published by HBO and Netflix in the United States and Spain accounts over a period of six months: between May 16, 2017, the start of the activity of the HBO Spain profile, and November 16, 2017. The sample was made up of a total of 731 messages. The comparison between the USA and Spain profiles responds to a double reason. On the one hand, it makes it possible to compare the Spanish market at a very specific time point marked by the arrival of a very relevant new actor with an already consolidated market in which the communication strategies of both platforms were already established. And on the other hand, it allows checking the location of the messages by both companies and if they adapt to the particularities of the Spanish market as a strategy to achieve the interest of the audience, a tactic already used in other Spanish-speaking countries (Cornelio-Marí, 2020).

This sample was subjected to a quantitative content analysis whose variables and categories are listed in Table 1. Two of the authors of the article carried out the coding. To calculate the reliability between the coders, both authors coded 10% of randomly selected messages. From this initial coding, Cohen's kappa was calculated in each category. The values obtained range from "very good" (0.82) to "low" (0.26 in the case of "entertainment") (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Since the dependent variables (number of likes and number of comments) showed a non-normal distribution according to the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p < .001$ in both cases), a non-parametric test was carried out. Specifically, an ANOVA test

Table 1
Categories and variables analyzed

Categories	Variables	Notes
Objectives of the message	1. Inform (0.82), 2. Promote the platform (0.82), 3. Promote specific content (0.82).	Adapted from: Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo (2018a)
Post topic	1. Specific content: 1.1. Own content (0.8), 1.2. Acquired content (0.82).	The messages were classified according to the origin of the product (produced by the platform itself or purchased from third parties)
Message orientation	1. Instrumental: 1.1. Ask for an opinion (0.82), 1.2. Ask for suggestions (0.82), 1.3 Request information (0.82), 1.4. Give opinion (0.60), 1.5. Give suggestions (0.77), 1.6. Give information (0.8); 2. Positive socio-emotional expression: 2.1. Show agreement (0.82), 2.2. Tension relaxation (0.82), 2.3. Show solidarity (0.05); 3. Negative socio-emotional expression: 3.1. Disagree (0.82), 3.2. Shows tension (0.82); 3.3 Shows antagonism (0.82).	Adapted from: Lin and Peña (2011)
Formal aspects	1. Links to other social networks (0.82), 2. Hashtags (0.82), 3. Emoticons (0.62).	Adapted from: Fernández-Gómez and Díaz-Campo (2014); Auverset and Billings (2016).
Personalization	1. Use of the second person (0.82), 2. Use of the third person (0.82), 3. Use of the imperative (0.82).	Adapted from: Lin and Peña (2011)
Images	1. Diegetic (for example, frames of a series) (0.8); 2. Extra-diegetic (actors off set): 2.1. The actor (0.82), 2.2. The actor characterized as the character 0.8); 3. Memes (0.8); 4. Faces/ Close-ups (0.82).	
Virality	1. Unexpected/surprising (0.8), 2. Elite (0.82), 3. Entertainment (0.26), 4. Humor (0.82), 5. Human interest (0.8), 6. Sexuality (0.77), 7. Children (0.8), 8. Sadness (0.67), 9. Anger (0.57), 10. Fear (0.77), 11. Conflict/violence (0.62).	Adapted from: Al-Rawi (2017).

was carried out using the IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0 statistical package to find significant differences in the most used resources among the messages published by each of the analyzed accounts. This test calculates the significance of the differences between the means of the different sets of messages. It is considered that when the significance is equal to or less than 0.05, there are significant differences in the frequencies of certain resources used by each account analyzed. The tables that can be found at <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.13386707>

show the result of the significance test, the differences in means between the compared groups and the error deviation in each case. In the cases in which a significant difference is identified, the TukeyHSD and Bonferroni post hoc tests have been carried out.

Table 2 shows the description of the analyzed sample according to each of the accounts included in the study.

Table 2*Frequency and percentage of characteristics of the analyzed messages*

	HBO SP		HBO US		Netflix SP		Netflix US	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Content	404	99,02	123	77,36	78	82,98	60	88,24
Own content	240	58,82	103	64,78	77	81,91	57	83,82
Acquired content	108	26,47	19	11,95	1	1,06	4	5,88
INFORMATION	340	83,33	58	36,48	39	41,49	23	33,82
HBO OR NETFLIX PROMO	24	5,88	41	25,79	16	17,02	7	10,29
CONTENT PROMO	413	101,23	116	72,96	77	81,91	70	102,94
OPINIONS	64	15,69	13	8,18	0	,00	3	4,41
SUGGESTIONS	145	35,54	0	,00	1	1,06	0	,00
SOLIDARITY/EMPATHY	0	,00	70	44,03	54	57,45	25	36,76
DISAGREEMENT	0	,00	0	,00	0	,00	1	1,47
TENSION	0	,00	13	8,18	12	12,77	0	,00
ANTAGONISM	0	,00	3	1,89	2	2,13	0	,00
SOCIAL MEDIA LINK	0	,00	78	49,06	18	19,15	32	47,06
HASTHAG	398	97,55	151	94,97	74	78,72	16	23,53
EMOTICON	20	4,90	9	5,66	7	7,45	13	19,12
MEME	6	1,47	0	,00	0	,00	3	4,41
IMAGE	676	165,69	81	50,94	60	63,83	52	76,47
Diegetic	235	57,60	34	21,38	26	27,66	12	17,65
Faces/Close-ups	198	48,53	1	,63	0	,00	2	2,94
VIDEO	99	24,26	79	49,69	33	35,11	15	22,06
Preview	6	1,47	7	4,40	4	4,26	1	1,47
Trailer	29	7,11	7	4,40	6	6,38	0	,00
Promo	56	13,73	42	26,42	21	22,34	11	16,18
Positive content	35	8,58	122	76,73	65	69,15	50	73,53
Unexpected or surprise	87	21,32	20	12,58	8	8,51	10	14,71
Celebrities	56	13,73	30	18,87	9	9,57	8	11,76
Entertainment	210	51,47	36	22,64	3	3,19	4	5,88
Social magnitude	15	3,68	30	18,87	1	1,06	4	5,88
Humor	25	6,13	55	34,59	36	38,30	36	52,94
Useful	8	1,96	34	21,38	27	28,72	7	10,29
Conflict	52	12,75	11	6,92	14	14,89	2	2,94
YOU	114	27,94	25	15,72	27	28,72	10	14,71
HE/SHE	41	10,05	37	23,27	15	15,96	9	13,24
THEY	32	7,84	23	14,47	3	3,19	7	10,29
IMPERATIVES	103	25,25	0	,00	2	2,13	0	,00

3. RESULTS

3.1 RESOURCES COMMONLY USED BY HBO AND NETFLIX

Regarding the objectives of the posts, there is a clear difference between HBO and Netflix. On the one hand, there is no common strategy between the profiles of HBO Spain and the United States, both differ completely in the volume of posts to report (significance of 0.00), to promote the platform (0.00) or the content (0.00). These being the three most present aspects in the communication in social networks of these profiles. This is a clear sign of a lack of cohesion in the strategies of both profiles. For their part, the two Netflix profiles, Spain and the United States, do show high levels of agreement in terms of reporting (0.987), but not so much in terms of promoting the platform (0.540), and much less in content promotion (0.098).

The same phenomenon occurs with respect to the promotion of self-produced content or purchased content. Netflix follows the same guidelines both in Spain and in the United States (0.994 in promoting its own content and 0.849 in purchased content), but more marked differences appear on HBO. Although they are not significant when promoting their own content, they do exist in terms of posts of acquired content where the divergence is absolute (significance 0.00).

There are fewer divergences in terms of message orientation. As in the previous case, the two Netflix profiles show a notable homogeneity without appreciable differences in the different sections (0.998 for suggestions and 0.870 for positive content). Regarding HBO, the messages are not oriented in a significantly different way, although it is the case with those aimed at making suggestions for new content (significance 0.00) or expressing positive emotions

(0.00). Again, much of this difference is due to the promotional strategy of HBO Spain, focused on *Game of Thrones*, in which an emotional tone of drama and the generation of intrigue predominate.

There is less homogeneity in terms of the formal aspects and resources used in the message. Both in the case of Netflix and HBO, there are substantial differences between their US and Spanish profiles in the use of links to social networks (significance of 0.00 in both cases). At this point, as will be seen later, the nationality of the profile weighs more than the platform. On the other hand, there is a relatively homogeneous strategy in HBO about the use of hashtags between its two profiles (0.687), inversely to what had been observed in other parameters. This changes in Netflix, in which there is a total mismatch between Netflix United States and Netflix Spain (0.00). The guidelines to maintain consistency between the two profiles seem to focus more on content than on formal aspects.

Regarding personalization, the only appreciable divergence is between the profiles of HBO Spain and the United States in the use of the third person and imperatives (significance 0.00), while among the Netflix profiles the cohesion is much greater. This could again point to a personal style difference between the respective Community Managers, in the absence of a coherent strategy.

On the other hand, there are differences between the two HBO profiles in the use of images (significance 0.00), but great internal coherence between the Netflix profiles (0.976). Not only that, but the images used also vary. There is no match between the HBO profiles in the use of diegetic images (0.00), use of faces and close-ups (0.00). This could respond to the greater access that HBO U.S. has to extradie-

getic images, especially in spaces of own production. The hypothesis is reinforced because, although with more internal coherence, the coincidence between Netflix profiles is far from perfect in terms of the use of diegetic images (0.525).

In terms of virality, there are also divergences between the HBO profiles in the use of positive content (0.00), entertainment (0.00), social magnitude (0.00) and humor (0.00). For their part, Netflix profiles do present similarities in all sections.

3.2 COMMON RESOURCES BETWEEN THE ACCOUNTS OF EACH COUNTRY

The differences between profiles from different countries appear mainly on HBO. Regarding the objectives of the posts, there is a high coincidence between the US profiles of HBO and Netflix at the time of informing (0.987), but an absolute divergence between the Spanish profiles (significance 0.00). Curiously, Netflix Spain has more in common with HBO United States (0.898) and Netflix United States (0.820) than with HBO Spain.

HBO differs from all the others in terms of promoting the platform itself. The US profile shows its divergence from HBO Spain (0.00), Netflix United States (0.04) and Netflix Spain (0.145). For its part, HBO Spain only presents coincidences with Netflix United States (0.711). The same dynamic appears in the promotion of content: HBO United States moves away from the other American profile (0.02) and the Spanish profiles do not coincide with each other (0.18).

This differentiation of HBO Spain seen in previous sections is more noticeable in relation to the orientation of the message. Specifically in terms of suggestions, the two US profiles completely coincide in their strategy (1.00) and also

to a large extent with Netflix Spain (0.996 for HBO United States and 0.998 for Netflix United States). On the other hand, HBO Spain does not present any coincidence with the rest of the profiles (0.00 in all cases). The same phenomenon occurs in terms of positive content: while HBO Spain is totally different from the rest of the profiles (0.00), they present a high similarity to each other (0.870 or higher in all cases).

Regarding the formal aspects, these divergences are especially marked in the use of links to social networks. While the US profiles of HBO and Netflix largely coincide (0.972), the Spanish profiles differ completely (0.00) both with each other and with the Americans. An explanation for this can be found both in the language and in the impact of the North American accounts. Therefore, the trend is to dispense with these types of resources.

Regarding the use of hashtags, as noted, the only consistency exists between HBO accounts (0.687). All the other profiles act in a totally different way, without presenting any other similarity (0.00 in all cases).

Regarding personalization, there are no clear correlations in the use of the third person. Although HBO United States is very different from HBO Spain (0.00), it does not have similarities with Netflix United States (0.183) or Netflix Spain (0.360). For their part, the Spanish profiles are not very similar either (0.437). The opposite occurs in the case of the imperative: HBO United States presents a high coincidence with both Netflix United States (1.00) and Netflix Spain (0.960). However, HBO Spain is totally different from the rest of the profiles, regardless of nationality (0.00).

Regarding the use of images, there are clear similarities between the two US profiles (0.795), and of these with Netflix Spain (coincidence of 0.955 with HBO United States and 0.976 with

Netflix United States). HBO Spain differs notably since it does not match any other profile (0.00). The phenomenon is repeated, although to a lesser extent, in the specific use of diegetic images: a 0.944 coincidence between US profiles, and somewhat lower with Netflix Spain (0.724 with HBO United States and 0.525 with Netflix United States). For its part, HBO Spain is, again, totally different from all the others (0.00). The same happens with the use of close-ups or images of faces: HBO United States, Netflix United States and Netflix Spain coincide with each other with at least 0.962, while HBO Spain is completely different from all other profiles (0.00).

Regarding virality, the American profiles show a fairly high coincidence (0.927), while the Spanish ones are totally different (0.00). In entertainment there are no notable coincidences either between the US profiles (0.39) or the Spanish profiles (0.00). The figures are even lower in the case of humor (coincidence of 0.004 among North American profiles and 0.00 among Spanish profiles). However, in terms of social magnitude, there is little coincidence in the American profiles (0.002), but much higher in the case of the Spanish (0.788).

3.3 SPECIFIC RESOURCES FOR EACH ACCOUNT

Regarding the specific resources of each profile, the HBO profiles stand out due to the absence of use of certain resources. HBO Spain stands out precisely for the lack of posts dedicated to informing (0.00), while these have a high presence in the other accounts. The same occurs with respect to the objective of promoting the chain, which is absent from HBO United States (0.00), despite having a significant presence in the other profiles.

Regarding the topic of the post, something similar happens with the promotion of content. Although the self-produced promotion is approached by all platforms with relative frequency, the differences appear in terms of the content acquired: Netflix United States and Spain (0.849 in both cases) and HBO United States (0.676) use it much more often than HBO Spain (0.00), which seems to have renounced this resource. The same is true for the orientation of the message. HBO Spain seems to have renounced the use of posts dedicated to giving suggestions (0.00) or that use positive content (0.00), the use of imperatives (0.00) and the use of images (0.00), whether diegetic (0.00) or close-ups (0.00); resources that are present in the rest of the profiles. All this speaks of a very basic and not very varied Instagram strategy.

As mentioned before, links to social networks are an exclusive resource of US profiles, while they are completely absent in Spanish profiles (0.00 in both cases). A similar division occurs with the use of hashtags, which are specific resources of HBO profiles, while no use of them is seen in Netflix (0.00).

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Although each of the profiles analyzed started from a different position in their respective media market, they did not cease to belong to a common company, HBO and Netflix. However, their capacity to establish a common and cohesive strategy at the international level was very different. Netflix, which has stood out to a great extent for its ability to create its own style in social networks regardless of specific content (Pereira-Villazón & Portilla, 2020), was the one that maintained a more homogeneous communica-

tion in its profiles both in the topics chosen as in the resources used.

HBO was marked by unfavorable circumstances. On the one hand, the American profile is a consolidated chain that has been reconvered over the decades but maintains enormous prestige. The Spanish profile, on the contrary, had to publicize a new platform in the country, while the American profile focused on promoting its content. Furthermore, HBO Spain still did not have a prominent community of followers around it, which is evidenced by the low response levels of its initial posts. The advantage of Netflix over HBO was to have a consolidated brand community, a fundamental element to achieve the trust and loyalty of users (Coelho et al., 2018), which helped ensure that the arrival of the new pay television operator did not cause a transfer to the new profile. This lesson has been learned by Disney+, which has chosen to launch a mass communication campaign that will promote the creation of this community even before its official arrival in Spain and the start of broadcasts, aware of the importance of having a strong start in a much more contested market for OTTs such as that of 2020 (Puro-marketing, 2020).

Another of the fundamental conditioning factors for this different behavior of HBO Spain was the smallness of its initial catalog. The selection of available content was much smaller in Spain than in the United States, which forced the Spanish profile to focus its efforts on the product that worked best: *Game of Thrones*, as well as classic HBO series such as *The Sopranos* or *Rome*. These are products that have a markedly adult tone, inherited from the media scene in which they were conceived precisely to move away from the familiar tone of the mainstream media of the 2000s (Winter, 2016). For this reason, they impose a communicative strategy based on highlighting moments of tension

more than nostalgia, the exotic or children and humor, resources that work very well to reach the general public and that are present in some of the most successful series from Netflix.

In addition to the deficiencies of the HBO Spain catalog, a scarce variety of resources must be added. It focused on diegetic images and screen captures of the series or films in question, leaving aside other resources that contributed variety to the message, although they were not the majority in the rest of profiles. All this shows a strategy that is still vague and poorly directed by HBO Spain.

On the other hand, Netflix Spain also had to face some difficulties derived from its specific catalog in the country, especially the challenge of developing an effective strategy to promote contents that are originally produced by the American company but whose broadcasting rights in Spain are totally or partially in the hands of other platforms, such as Orange is the New Black and Movistar+.

Despite this, the differences between the Netflix profiles of both countries focused on the content to be promoted rather than on strategies or resources. This was not the case with HBO, in which the Spanish profile appeared to have little support from the US profile. Thus, it had much less localized audiovisual material for the Spanish market. This could be partly due to a lack of efforts to translate and adapt material from the US profile to Spanish. On Netflix, both the texts and the voices came from the Spanish versions or were translated into Spanish. In HBO, it was decided to keep the original audio of the videos and add subtitles in Spanish. This could explain why images and videos were used in almost equal measure in HBO United States, while HBO Spain used still images up to 3 times more than videos (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez & Segado-Boj, 2019).

This difficulty of Spanish profiles to access resources in English was also manifested in the lower frequency of the use of the link to social networks than the US accounts of both HBO and Netflix, but they were frequently used to connect with famous actors or the pages of the series. To a large extent, this is due to the low production of both platforms in Spain at that time. In the period studied, almost the entire catalog was of American production and this made it easier for North American profiles to connect with them both by language and by visibility. Later, the Spanish productions were included (*Las chicas del cable*) or the rights were bought to include them in the catalog (*Velvet*). Almost all the material regarding the profiles of the series is in English, which again makes it difficult to connect with other profiles, especially since they would answer these mentions in English.

Definitely, there were certain strategies that define the imprint of the mother brand represented by the profile in the US, more in the case of Netflix than of HBO. However, new markets also require an adaptation of both resources and strategies, sometimes due to market peculiarities and other times as a way to overcome an initial offer that is more precarious than that of the parent company. This was the case of Netflix Spain, which in February 2019 had a million followers on Instagram, far from HBO Spain (100,000 followers), and even close to HBO United States (2.2 million).

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Temporary migration and the use of social media by international university students in Catalonia

Migración temporal y uso de redes sociales por parte de estudiantes universitarios internacionales en Cataluña

Migração temporária e uso de redes sociais por estudantes universitários internacionais na Catalunha

7

ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: August 03, 2020 / ACCEPTED: February 18, 2021

Abstract

International students belong to a type of migration characterized by aspects such as the temporality of their transnational movements. As young people, their approach to digital te-

chnologies such as social networks is usually intense. This article describes some aspects of the experience of using social networks by international university students during their periods of academic mobility in the city of Barcelona. Through an ethnographic approach, topics

such as the elements that make up the publications that students make during their stay in the city, the changes they have experienced in the use of their social networks based on their movements across borders or the perception and the appearance of national cultural differences regarding the use of platforms such as WhatsApp.

KEYWORDS

International students, Digital technologies, Temporary migration, Social media usage, Youth and technologies.

Resumen

Los estudiantes internacionales conforman un tipo de migración caracterizada por aspectos como la temporalidad de sus desplazamientos transnacionales; además, como jóvenes, su acercamiento a tecnologías digitales entre las que se incluyen las redes sociales suele ser intenso. Este artículo describe algunos aspectos de la experiencia de uso de redes sociales por parte de estudiantes universitarios internacionales durante sus periodos de movilidad académica en la ciudad de Barcelona. A través de un enfoque etnográfico, se exploran temas como los elementos que conforman las publicaciones que los estudiantes hacen durante su estancia en la ciudad, los cambios que han experimentado en el uso de sus redes sociales a partir de sus desplazamientos entre fronteras o la percepción y aparición de diferencias cul-

turales nacionales respecto al empleo de plataformas como WhatsApp.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Estudiantes internacionales, Tecnologías digitales, Migración temporal, Uso de redes sociales, Jóvenes y tecnologías.

Resumo

Os estudantes internacionais constituem um tipo de migração caracterizada por aspectos como a temporalidade de seus movimentos transnacionais; além disso, como jovens, sua abordagem às tecnologias digitais, incluindo redes sociais, é frequentemente intensa. Este artigo descreve alguns aspectos da experiência de uso de redes sociais por estudantes universitários internacionais durante seus períodos de mobilidade acadêmica na cidade de Barcelona. Por meio de uma abordagem etnográfica, se exploram temas como os elementos que compõem as publicações que os alunos fazem durante sua estada na cidade, as mudanças que vivenciaram no uso de suas redes sociais desde seus movimentos através das fronteiras ou a percepção e o surgimento de diferenças culturais nacionais quanto ao uso de plataformas como WhatsApp.

Palavras-chave

Estudantes internacionais, tecnologias digitais, migração temporal, uso de redes sociais, jovens e tecnologias.

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic attention of university students (including those who participate in periods of international mobility) tends to rest on the implications of their school commitments (Choi, 2005; Figueras-Maz et al., 2017) and not so much on other aspects as their extra-acade-

mic activities or their digital experience. Consequently, this article aims to examine some aspects of the impact that the temporary migration that international university students go through in Catalonia has in relation to their digital practices during their stay in Spain, particularly in their approach to social networks.

International students, understood as those students who have crossed a national border for educational purposes and have enrolled in an educational institution outside their country of origin (UNESCO, nd), are an example of voluntary and temporary migration as they choose to move freely and have an established return date (King, 2002).

To contextualize the analyzed phenomenon, it is worth mentioning the situation at the national and local level in Spain and Catalonia. The most recent data available reveals that there are approximately 75000 international students enrolled each year in the country (OIM, 2018). Likewise, Spain tends to be the main recipient of students enrolled in the Erasmus+ program (European Commission, 2018a). Madrid, Catalonia and the Valencian Community top the list of the autonomous communities with the highest presence of foreign students in their universities (Ibáñez, 2018). In the particular case of the Catalan university system, students from the United States, Italy and Germany make up the majority of students who carry out some period of mobility in the region (ACUP, 2019).

In Barcelona, public universities such as the Pompeu Fabra University, the Polytechnic University of Catalonia or the Autonomous University of Barcelona stand out with regard to the Spanish universities with the largest number of foreign master's or doctoral students (Olivella, 2016). In addition, the Catalan capital can be considered a cosmopolitan and multicultural city since the Barcelona municipal register for 2019 shows a panorama in which one in every five residents of the city is of foreign nationality and 179 different nationalities appear in the register (Barcelona City Council, 2019).

On the other hand, the information provided by the Pew Research Center (2019) contributes

to a better understanding of the contemporary situation in which digital technologies practically become omnipresent in the lives of young people such as university students. The aforementioned statistics show that young adults make up one of the groups with the highest participation in social media, since 90 percent of people between 18 and 29 years old use a social network, 8 out of 10 use Facebook and 67% use Instagram. Meanwhile, the European Union points out that some of the most common activities carried out by young Europeans on the internet are participating in social networks (with 82% registered) and uploading content of their own creation (with 47% of young people involved in this practice) (European Commission, 2018b).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The intense relationship with digital technologies and transnational displacement are two of the characteristics that define young people today (Feixa et al., 2017; Sleeman et al., 2016). Based on this idea, a panorama can be drawn on the characteristics of contemporary youth. According to Martín-Barbero, "it is a generation whose empathy with technological culture is made not only of ease in relating to audiovisual and computer equipment but also of cognitive complicity with their languages, fragmentations and speed" (2017, p. 31). Feixa (2014) complements these arguments by suggesting that a paradigmatic case of youth cultures is linked to the expansion of transnational movements of people because young people tend to be pioneers of this type of mobility, bringing their social and symbolic worlds with them across borders.

In the case of international students, they not only depend on their personal contact networks when getting involved in experiences abroad (Beech, 2015), but also on their socio-digital networks in which, among other things, they find emotional support throughout their periods of academic mobility (Rocha et al., 2015). Consequently, it is possible to consider that the migratory processes of international students not only imply physical mobility, but also a change in their social dynamics.

Based on the approaches of Bourdieu (1997, 2007), Igarashi and Saito (2014) examine the role of cosmopolitanism in education as a form of cultural capital. According to this perspective, cosmopolitanism such as that acquired by international students throughout their displacements becomes a stratification factor at a global level since it is found more frequently in the upper classes. For their part, although they avoid calling it that way, Basaran and Olsson (2018) propose a subgenre of symbolic capital that is linked to the addressed phenomenon: international capital. This works as a marker of social relations and hierarchies and, like the rest of the types of capital, it is not equally accessible to all.

Regarding the general link between people and their technologies, we must first present the idea that the infosphere is established as the environment in which existence takes place as a consequence of the extensive incorporation of digital technologies in the different areas of life (Floridi, 2014). This infosphere is the world understood in informational terms in which a transition from analog to digital takes place. All this results in the integration of the online environment with physical reality, what Floridi calls the onlife experience. In addition, Floridi (2014) suggests the advent of a hyperhistoric

era in which society depends on information and communication technologies. Thus, hyperhistory brings with it an era of hypermemory, since all information stored on devices or in the cloud can be accessed with great ease (Floridi, 2015). However, it is important to note that a constant approach to communication technologies such as the one that life in hyperhistory implies carries risks such as those foreseen by McLuhan, for whom the extensions of the physical and psychic capacities of *homo sapiens* completely alter the perception of reality, given that “man is fascinated by any extension of himself in any material other than himself” (1994, p. 41).

As a sample of the opportunities open in hyperhistory for personal expansion, different concepts appear such as *lifestreaming* (Wargo, 2017), *transmedia identity* (Elwell, 2014), *online self-presentation* (van Dijck, 2013) or *visual public intimacy* (Miguel, 2016), all of which refer to personal digital narratives that allow young people to consolidate an expanded presence on digital platforms.

Based on all of the above, Bourdieu (1997, 2007) can be retrieved again to relate it to the use of social networks by university students. In this sense, the study by Ellison et al. (2007) affirms that there is a positive relationship between some uses of Facebook and the creation and maintenance of the social capital of students. Similarly, the research by Hua (2018) or Shanne-Simpson et al. (2018) suggest that the use of social media has a considerable positive effect on the social capital of university students, including international students.

Furthermore, studies such as the one by Gomes et al. (2014) have found that networks such as Facebook become indispensable for inter-

national students to successfully navigate their social spaces during the temporary migration they experience. However, it can be hypothesized that the transition when migrating affects the approach that young people have with respect to their social media and other communication technologies. In this sense, the research by Gordano and Ros (2016) about young Spanish-speaking adults recently arrived in London indicated some challenges that young migrants face, such as the need to adapt their mobile technologies when having to change their mobile phone plan to acquire one from the destination country. The authors define these needs as technological adjustments of immigrants.

Finally, in an environment marked by the fast pace of digital technologies, these tools quickly become mundane (Horst & Miller, 2012a). Thus, a relevant aspect of the digital culture in which university students are involved lies not so much in the speed of technical innovation, but in the speed with which society accepts and adopts these inventions, which generates normative conditions for its use. To achieve this norms, apart from acceptance, moral incorporation is required by learning what is accepted and what is not in the use of each technology (Horst & Miller, 2012b). Consequently, “what is experienced is not a technology per se, but a culturally inflexible immediate genre of use or practice” (Horst & Miller, 2012b, p. 108).

3. METHODOLOGY

Framed within a broader research on international students and digital technologies, the content of this paper aims to describe the impact that periods of mobility in Barcelona, Catalonia, have on international university students

when approaching social networks. For the purposes of this research, ethnography was the ideal methodological approach because it allows exploring practices and experiences that are not necessarily observable without investigative action (Scolari, 2018), which makes it an optimal way to understand the meanings that make up the social processes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

The execution and design of the ethnography carried out has integrated perspectives from different models, mainly from Beneito-Montagut's expanded ethnography, which “implies following the users and extending the field of research to all the communication technologies that they use daily in their interpersonal communications.” (2011, p. 731) and short-term ethnography (Pink & Morgan, 2013) which, in the face of the more intensive approach to the investigated people, forces to develop the research in shorter periods.

The search for participants was carried out by sending invitations through the distribution lists of some offices in charge of welcoming international students at the university in Barcelona where the study was carried out. The first stage of the ethnography consisted of conducting three focus groups with exploratory purposes about the use that students gave to their social media and other technologies during their stay in Barcelona. A total of 18 students participated in the 3 groups, 5 in the first, 9 in the second and 4 in the last. Of these, 13 were women and were 5 men with an average age of 21.2 years. Table 1 presents the participants of all the focus groups identified by a pseudonym.

Table 1
Research participants

Research participants		
Name	Age	Country
Olivier (man)	20	Belgium
Dominik (man)	21	Germany
Clara (woman)	20	England
Marina (woman)	24	Bulgaria
Megan (woman)	19	Scotland
Shannon (woman)	21	England
Xia (woman)	21	China
Yasemin (woman)	23	Turkey
Halima (woman)	21	England
Colin (man)	23	Scotland
Tania (woman)	21	France
Gianna (woman)	20	Italy
Anjali (woman)	21	Wales
Laura (woman)	23	Germany
Antonia (woman)	23	Chile
Josefina (woman)	20	U.S.
Carlo (man)	24	Italy
Paolo (man)	21	Italy

Next, eight participants were selected (Olivier, Dominik, Clara, Yasemin, Halima, Colin, Gianna and Antonia) to continue with the next stages of the study. The choice of these eight students was due to the intention of complying with the greatest possible diversity in terms of age, sex, place of origin and characteristics of their use of social networks.

The next step was a participant observation of the online activity of the eight selected participants, this lasted four weeks and consisted of observing and recording the activity of the informants on Facebook and Instagram.

The first round of semi-structured interviews served to deepen the knowledge of the individual activity of each of the eight students cho-

sen in terms of their interaction through social media and other aspects of their life in Barcelona. The second round of interviews took place in the bedrooms or departments of the participants. Each of the interviews began with a photo-elicitation activity, in which the participants were shown one or more photographs that they could have published on one of their social media and were asked questions about them. Then, they were asked to recreate the use of one of their social media, that is, to show and explain to the researcher how they navigate on Facebook, Instagram or WhatsApp. Next, a series of particular questions was made for each student based on their testimonies from previous meetings. Finally, questions of a general nature were asked for seven students, since Halima did not continue with her participation.

Finally, the qualitative software NVivo was used for the analysis of the obtained data, which allowed establishing a series of main categories for the presentation of the results.

It is worth mentioning that at each stage of the research, the participating students have signed a consent form on confidentiality in the treatment of the information provided and those who participated in the entire ethnography received a financial compensation of 20 euros in total. It is also worth mentioning that, since the ethnography was conducted in Spanish, it was essential that the students who collaborated were able to speak this language fluently. However, they were offered the possibility to express themselves in English if they had problems expressing some ideas during the course of the investigation.

4. RESULTS

4.1 POSTS IN BARCELONA

Regarding the posts made during their stay in Barcelona, the students emphasize the desire to show aspects of their life that are different from those of everyday life in their usual places of residence. The publications also focus on highlighting the international life experience that young people acquire during their stay in Catalonia. As an example, Clara details the image of herself that she wishes to project through her posts:

But I think it's an image of a person, I don't know, more international, with more life experiences, that's what I want to show.

Clara explains the elements of Barcelona that she has wanted to share on her social media:

I think interesting things about Spain and Catalonia that we don't have in England, like flags, demonstrations, food, places, things like that.

Along the same lines, Olivier points out that the photographs of his life in Barcelona acquire more value for him than those of his daily life in Belgium because "it is not the same as saying that I am in Barcelona". Among the young participants, there is a prevalence of the idea that their publications on social media revolve around their life in Barcelona during their stay abroad. Gianna's testimony allows us to appreciate how the value that some participants give to the city of Barcelona is transferred to the way they present their lives in social media posts:

Well let's say on Instagram, I think I present a lot how much I like the city, because it is my favorite city in the world, I think you can see that. And also the

beauty of the city, everything I like, always the same theme.

As explained, the students try to show interesting aspects about their daily life in the city and the elements of their life that are different from what they experience in their countries. All this allows them to build a type of digital memory about their period in Catalonia. What Antonia expressed can summarize this perception:

Instagram is like a memory of my travels, I publish about two photos a day, I have many stories and it is like to remember the exchange, right now that is its function, to remember what I am living.

4.2 CHANGES IN THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The main change registered in the use of social media by international students since their arrival in the Catalan capital is related to the decision to use networks that they previously did not use or, on the contrary, to choose not to use anymore some previously preferred networks. Halima details that "in England I didn't have Instagram or Snapchat, I only had Facebook and Twitter", but now "I use Instagram and Snapchat to show my colleagues what I'm doing". Meanwhile, Clara wanted to start using Snapchat:

Because I knew I was going to have a very exciting year, at Oxford life is very normal and I don't want to share everything that I'm doing, but yes, I knew I was going to have an exciting year and I wanted to show it, and it's a way to keep in touch with friends without speaking personally to them.

On the other hand, during his stay in Barcelona, Colin decided to close his Instagram and Snapchat accounts:

I don't have to have Instagram or Snapchat to enjoy my experience here, so if I don't need Instagram or Snapchat, I don't need this. Technologies are much more, I don't know, useless, not important.

Another important alteration is associated with greater use of their social media due to the novelty that their life in Spain implies. In this sense, Laura shares that:

I use them more because there was not so much to do, you were already in the same place for years and years, so now if you are going to do something it is new every time, it also encourages you.

Consequently, higher usage can translate into higher frequency of posts. "I think I post a lot more of photos here," says Yasemin after reflecting on the changes she has experienced in the use of her social media since her arrival in Spain.

Other more subtle differences relate to the language and cultural context of the posts. There are those who have begun to share more elements related to Catalonia in their networks and others who now adapt the language of their publications to facilitate their understanding among their new contacts. Like Gianna, who comments that:

Maybe I have posted more articles about Catalonia or songs in Catalan on Facebook than before, clearly because I did not listen to music in Catalan or know much about the political situation in Catalonia.

4.3 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Several differences appear in the use of technologies related to the cultural context of the students. For example, Clara was struck by the lesser relevance that Facebook has in Spain compared to England:

There are many people who do not have Facebook here and it surprises me because it is a necessity in England, in my university everything is organized on Facebook. They don't use Snapchat here, not much. And I think Instagram is just as popular as in England, possibly more popular here.

Antonia mentions that the use of emojis is very common among her Chilean friends and not so much among the international friends she has made in Barcelona:

I mean, yes there are differences in the way they write, besides the obviousness of the language sometimes in English or Spanish. I have people who do not occupy any emoji and in Chile, for example, if you texted and did not use a face or anything it could sound rude.

On the other hand, students like Colin deny that there are differences in what their contacts in their countries and those they have met in the Catalan capital share, they only allude to the difference in the language of the publications:

People my age who are in Spain or Scotland put the same kind of things on social media or Instagram and everything.

The main cultural differences registered in the research on the use of digital technologies emerge in the use of WhatsApp. The mere use of WhatsApp appears as a cultural difference,

especially in the case of British students, for whom the use of this application has been a novelty because they are more used to using services such as Facebook Messenger. Colin describes the differences in the use of WhatsApp between Scotland and Spain:

Well, in Scotland hardly anyone uses WhatsApp. It is more common to communicate by texts or Facebook, or Instagram for messages. But hardly anyone uses WhatsApp, really. Here it is as if you do not use WhatsApp you are not Spanish, it is like all the people use WhatsApp here.

However, young people in the United Kingdom are not the only ones for whom the use of WhatsApp has been a novelty when they start living in another country. Olivier explains that the use of WhatsApp is not common in Belgium:

In Belgium, WhatsApp is hardly used at all. It is completely the opposite of here, much more mobile messages and much less WhatsApp, and here the opposite.

Regarding the resources that WhatsApp offers, the use of voice notes is perhaps the main difference promoted by the cultural contexts of international students. They are also British students who are less used to this element, as revealed by Colin:

Yes, here when I see people on their mobile recording a voice message, for me it is very strange because in Scotland we do not do it, it is as if someone does this in Scotland it would be very, very rare.

Meanwhile, for Gianna from Italy, sending voice messages is a common practice for the comfort she finds to communicate:

I do it too much, it is super comfortable for me. You can do things, you can send them and do other things in the meantime. It works well, I recommend it.

4.4 INTEGRATION OF THE PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL FIELDS

The testimonies of the informants unanimously demonstrate the idea that their life experience in Barcelona would have been very different and much more complicated if they did not have their social media and the rest of the digital technologies they use on a daily basis. Among the main aspects cited about the difficulties that would have emerged in an international experience without social networks are the impossibility of maintaining continuous contact with family and friends in the country of origin, the problems in organizing activities with friends they have met in their new city or follow-up on matters related to their academic experience. The following comment from Colin sums it up:

It would have been much more difficult, much, much more difficult because like I said, I like to be in contact with my friends in Scotland using Facebook and everything, and if I did not have this link with my life there it would be much more difficult because you do not have this support. Do you know? Being in another country is very difficult, sometimes you feel very disoriented, it's like not knowing how to do anything here, but your family and friends can support you, they can be there supporting with "it will be fine, maybe you can do this." If I didn't have my social media or the technology, everything would be much more difficult.

Consequently, the consensus among the informants is that, both before and during their periods of mobility, the constant approach to their social networks contributes to the fact that physical and virtual reality tend to join or overlap in multiple moments and areas of life, but no matter how much they can be integrated, these spaces will always be something distinct and well differentiated. Students like Dominik point out that “a face-to-face conversation is very different from a Messenger or WhatsApp conversation”. Meanwhile, Clara refers to the continuity that exists between the conversations that she has with her friends in person and through social media:

Yes, sometimes I am talking to my friends and we continue the conversation that we have had on Facebook as if it were a face to face conversation, we do not differentiate them and there are so many features, things that can be done in Facebook Messenger to make it more like real life. You can send voice messages, videos and photos; those things are making Facebook and WhatsApp more like real life.

The participants accept and incorporate the idea of the deep and continuous integration of both spaces, although they are aware that there is a marked separation between them. Antonia thinks that “right now we can be in this conversation, but we know that a world is happening out there, in the networks, but I think it is possible to separate them”. On her part, Gianna recognizes that the conjunction of the material and digital fields occurs at every moment of her life, but she also clarifies that the border between the two is permanent:

Well yes, of course they intermingle. In the end you are, I don't know, in the subway, but you are talking to someo-

ne who is in another country and of course, you are in the real but also in the virtual. Or also if you speak, they always intermingle in the end but they are not the same things.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the first place, the posts that students make throughout their stay in Barcelona can be explained through the notion of cosmopolitanism as cultural capital (Igarashi & Saito, 2014) or the idea of international capital as a subgenre of symbolic capital. (Basaran & Olsson, 2018). The fact that the participants enjoy publishing elements of their life in Spain that they would not find in their countries, try to show themselves as individuals with an international experience or wish that the contacts in their places of origin follow their activity in Barcelona highlights the prestige associated with studying in the Catalan capital, perceived both by the students themselves and by other people. Thus, the cosmopolitanism associated with the idea of living in a different country and getting to know a new culture in their study abroad experience serves to increase the reputation of young people among their circle of acquaintances through their display on social media. Also, the fact that their mobility takes place in a world famous city like Barcelona has a direct influence on increasing the international capital associated with the international experience in their digital activities.

In addition, the hypermemory that Floridi (2015) talks about is evident in some of the comments of the participants about the publications made throughout their time in Barcelona. For example, the students mention that the photographs they share on Facebook or Instagram serve them to build a kind of digital log of their

experience in Barcelona that can later help them relive their experiences and remember their most important moments. Based on what was expressed by the informants, it is feasible to describe a panorama regarding this issue in which university students delegate on social networks the preservation of visual elements that may be useful to recall with greater clarity and precision the special moments of their life, such as those lived during their stay in Catalonia.

In general terms, the description that the participants make about their posts on social media coincides with concepts such as *lifestreaming* (Wargo, 2017), *transmedia identity* (Elwell, 2014), *online self-presentation* (van Dijck, 2013) or *visual public privacy* (Miguel, 2016). With some exceptions, international students have no problem showing a good part (especially the positive part) of their experience abroad, as a kind of narrative about their own person in which they participate intensely by sharing elements different than those they find in the normality of their countries of origin or aspects about the city that may be striking for their contacts. All this is intended to also negotiate relationships with other people, such as the notoriety they can acquire in their social circles through their publications about Barcelona.

Although the results of this paper do not delve into the mediated interactions of the students, the fact that several of the participants use their social media more frequently since they moved to Barcelona allows us to suppose that, in most cases, the use of social networks has the potential to increase the social capital of university students (Ellison et al., 2007; Hua, 2018; Shane-Simpson et al., 2018).

On the concept of technological adjustments for immigrants proposed by Gordano and Ros (2016), the results show that international students tend to exercise a particular type of ad-

justments during their stay abroad that is more related to the use of new applications to adapt to the forms of communication of the site. In this sense, this research proposes the existence of technological adjustments of a social nature, that is, they are not motivated by technical needs nor do they require deeper adaptations of technological tools as occurs with telephone lines, but are promoted by social demands. The clearest example of this idea among the results obtained is that of the cultural differences in the use of WhatsApp, especially in the case of students for whom the use of WhatsApp has been a novelty since their arrival in Catalan territory.

The need to participate actively and satisfactorily in social activities in Barcelona is what motivates students to include WhatsApp in their media repertoire if they did not use it before. The findings show that, in certain cultural contexts other than Spanish, the use of Messenger or SMS messages prevails over WhatsApp. Consequently, once university students make this technological adjustment of a social nature that does not involve difficulties, they can engage in more interactions and expand their circles of friends by communicating with them on a common platform whose use predominates in the host site.

Contact with other cultures during their stay abroad works for students to perceive other differences in the approach to digital technologies that appear between people of different nationalities. For example, as a consequence of the integration of WhatsApp in the communication practices of some international students, the use of voice notes emerges as an important cultural difference in the use of social media of the informants. The irruption of messages of this type usually represents a moment of strangeness for some young people, which is a demonstration that the cultural context still

determines the nature of the relationship that young people establish with and through their digital technologies, although many times it can be easy to think that technology platforms are global products with features deployed worldwide. Despite the broad similarities between them in terms such as age or educational level, their origin affects what technologies they use and how they use them.

Thus, this type of clearly established national distinctions reveals the existence of normative parameters regarding the use of technologies in different national contexts (Horst & Miller, 2012b), which would help to understand why some students observe a lower importance of Facebook in Spain compared to their place of origin or why British participants have had to adapt to the use of WhatsApp during their stay in Barcelona.

The integration of the physical and the digital in a single field on which Floridi (2014, 2015) insists is recognized by international students to a certain degree. The consensus among them is that online and offline overlap not only in contact with and through their social media, but in practically every moment of life. At the same time, they insist that these continue to be differentiated areas. In this way, the existence of an onlife environment, as proposed by the aforementioned author, is recognized by young people, although not as a permanent and absolute experience, but as a gradation in the level of integration that they perceive between the two spaces, the analog and the virtual.

When they were questioned about how their experience abroad would have been without having their social media and other digital technologies available, the participants referred to hypothetical scenarios in which they would have suffered difficulties of different kinds. These results are reminiscent of the approach of Gomes et al. (2014) that social networks become an essential tool for international students throughout their migration processes. These findings are also related to the scenario of a hyperhistoric life in which digital technologies become essential at different levels of existence (Floridi, 2014) or to the idea that the media are extensions of a person with which it is established a bond of subordination because the human being is fascinated by his own extensions (McLuhan, 1994).

As participants in a youth culture defined by the approach to digital technologies or transnational movements (Feixa, 2014; Martín-Barbero, 2017), the experience of students in the use of social media is defined in terms of migration and its temporality. Although broader factors are involved, such as connectivity that defines contemporary society, what lately gives its most essential characteristics to the addressed phenomenon is the transnational mobility that students go through. This happens in such a way that in their use of social networks two realities converge, that of the place of origin and that of Barcelona; further stimulated by the knowledge that the stay abroad is only temporary.

In short, the use that international students make of their social media depends on their experience at the host site. Whether they share posts about their activities in Barcelona or have had to start using WhatsApp to successfully navigate their new environment, their situation in Catalonia is what largely determines how they use their networks throughout their mobility periods.

The results show a panorama in which the relationship of young people with their social media is quite intense and extended during their experience of life abroad. In addition, the use of social media contributes in a decisive way to consolidating their temporary identity as international students and expanding their personal identity both in geographical and social terms. Additionally, the very action of using social networks to keep a record of their international experience or communicate through new ways, such as through voice notes, is placed as one of the most important activities for international students during their temporary migration.

FUNDING STATEMENT

The doctoral research within which the results presented in this paper are incorporated has been possible thanks to the support of the National Council of Science and Technology (Mexico) through grant number 438362 for postgraduate studies abroad.

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OBRA DIGITAL

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STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Internal communication as a strategic area for innovation through change management and organizational happiness

La comunicación interna como área estratégica para la innovación a través de la gestión del cambio y la felicidad organizacional

A comunicação interna como área estratégica para a inovação por meio da gestão da mudança e felicidade organizacional

8

ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: September 12, 2020 / ACCEPTED: January 29, 2021

Abstract

This academic research approached innovation from different perspectives, as it is an essential phenomenon for long-term business survival. Its link with innovation, corporate culture and the influence that organizational happiness can have on them was examined from the internal communication approach. The results indicate that it constitutes an essential strategic directive area for the innovative ecosystem by influencing the identification, loyalty, creativity, productivity, well-being and happiness of the workforce, the transmission of knowledge and legitimation of leadership. The practical implications are valuable in associating effective internal communication management with superior innovation performance.

KEY WORDS

Internal communication, Strategic communication, Organizational communication, Innovation, Change management, Happiness at work.

Resumen:

La investigación académica ha abordado la innovación desde diferentes perspectivas, pues es un fenómeno indispensable para la supervivencia empresarial a largo plazo. Este artículo de revisión examina desde el enfoque de la comunicación interna su vinculación con la innovación y la cultura corporativa y la influencia que en ellas puede tener la felicidad organizacional. Los resultados indican que constituye un área directiva estratégica indispensable para el ecosistema innovador al influir en la identificación,

fidelización, creatividad, productividad, bienestar y felicidad de las plantillas, la transmisión de conocimiento y legitimación del liderazgo. Las implicaciones prácticas son valiosas al asociar la gestión eficaz de la comunicación interna con un rendimiento superior de la innovación.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Comunicación interna, Comunicación estratégica, Comunicación organizacional, Innovación, Gestión del cambio, Felicidad laboral.

Resumo

A pesquisa acadêmica tem abordado a inovação sob diferentes perspectivas, pois é um fenômeno indispensável para a sobrevivência empresarial a longo prazo. Este artigo de revisão examina a partir da abordagem da comunicação interna sua conexão com a inovação e a cultura corporativa e a influência que a felicidade organizacional pode exercer sobre elas. Os resultados indicam que se constitui em uma área diretiva estratégica essencial para o ecossistema inovador por influenciar na identificação, lealdade, criatividade, produtividade, bem-estar e felicidade da força de trabalho, transmissão de conhecimento e legitimação de lideranças. As implicações práticas são valiosas ao associar a gestão eficaz da comunicação interna com desempenho superior de inovação.

Palavras-chave

Comunicação interna, Comunicação estratégica, Comunicação organizacional, Inovação, Gestão da mudança, Felicidade laboral.

1. INTRODUCTION

Innovation has become a permanent imperative for organizations in today's market that is characterized by being globalized, highly dynamic, competitive and homogeneous, in which

products and services are relatively easy to replicate. Along with creativity, innovation contributes to the survival and long-term competitiveness of companies (Colakoglu et al., 2019), which are forced to develop strategies to enhance them.

In this continuous process, the organizational culture plays a crucial role in ensuring the cohesion of internal audiences and their full understanding of both the objectives of the brand and the constant need for adaptation to which they are subjected. Internal communication (IC) is responsible for aligning the objectives of the employees with those of the brand so that it is possible to create a strong company culture (Verčič et al., 2012).

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The object of study of this research focuses on the processes and contexts that can favor innovation within the entities (Boer & During, 2001; Danneels, 2004). The purpose is to examine the link between innovation and IC in organizations through the role they play in creating corporate culture. For this, the relevant factors that contribute to its creation were explored, especially the management of change and the happiness of the workforce, as well as the possible implications that may arise from these elements for internal audiences. The general objective is to determine if there is a relationship between the innovation capacity of an organization and the management of its communication with internal audiences. To achieve this, the following secondary objectives were established:

- Explain the concept and scope of internal communication in organizations.
- Analyze the importance of internal culture and organizational climate as factors that favor innovation.
- Determine if there are links between the happiness of the employees of an entity and their capacity for innovation.

This review article (Day, 2005) collects the different theoretical perspectives and previous works that have addressed the importance of managing internal communication, happiness and well-being in organizations and puts them in relation to those others that have deepened under conditions that promote innovation. Through the compilation and documentary review of more than 250 academic publications, a critical analysis was developed paying attention to aspects such as the scope of the study, the methodology used, the relevance obtained or the novel contributions to assess the results and conclusions that they raise. Thus, this study was developed from the perspective of internal public relations and its relationship with innovation. Definitions of relevant concepts such as organizational change, corporate culture, well-being or happiness were also incorporated.

This work aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing an unusual perspective from a theoretical point of view since, despite its importance for organizations, research on IC and innovation is relatively scarce.

3. INNOVATION IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT

Technological advances and the transformation of the world of work that is heading towards Industry 4.0 have caused an acceleration in economic and social changes (Castellanos & Escott, 2020) that make innovation essential, since it makes a difference in terms of the survival of a company in the long run. While it is true that information and communication technologies have led to digital transformation, facilitating new business models and boosting various sectors (Riemke-Gurzki, 2017), they have also posed a great challenge for companies in terms of its adaptation and digitization.

Innovation is a complex process that allows companies to survive in the long term by reinventing themselves to maintain their competitiveness (Fierro et al., 2017) and that can be applied to products, ideas, systems or ways of operating (Pinchot, 1999, as cited in Garzón & Ibarra, 2013). In terms of Drucker (1986, p.3) "it is the means through which the entrepreneur creates new wealth-generating resources or endows existing resources with greater potential to create it".

According to the Green Paper on Innovation of the European Commission (European Union, 1995, p.4) innovation is understood "as a synonym of producing, assimilating and successfully exploiting a novelty, in the economic and social spheres, in a way that contributes unprecedented solutions to problems and thus allow us to respond to the needs of people and society".

Sánchez et al. (as cited in Cilleruelo, 2007, p. 94), in their analysis of definitions of the concept elaborated by authors such as Gee, Pavón, Goodman, Nelson, Machado, Hidalgo or Perrin, define innovation as:

The original successful result applicable to any area of society, which involves a non-incremental quantum leap, and is the result of the execution of a non-deterministic process that begins with an idea and evolves through different stages; generation of knowledge, invention, industrialization and commercialization, and that is supported by a favorable organizational paradigm, in which technology plays a leading role, and the social context in which investment in knowledge creation is valued as a necessary condition. (p.94)

The phenomena linked to it are ambiguous and intangible (Colakoglu et al., 2019) and constitu-

te a great challenge for organizations since they must develop a culture of innovation (Viki et al., 2017) that makes them evolve while managing their current business. Along these lines, Rao and Weintraub establish six dynamically linked aspects that they call "The Six Building Blocks of an Innovative Culture" (2013, p.30) that break down into: resources, processes, values, behavior, climate and success.

In addition, internal audiences are one of the main stakeholders (Freeman, 1984) of organizations and employees are one of the most important sources of innovation (Linke & Zeffass, 2011), since their ideas can contribute to developing it while becoming a benefit for them (Dedahanov et al., 2017, p.234).

In this sense, many brands have implemented reconfiguration strategies of their organization to orient themselves towards innovative approaches. However, the Academy has also worked with the aim of understanding in depth the complexity of this process and to provide resources and tools that enhance its implementation.

Research on innovation, although it is an area with an established path (Quinn, 1985; Tushman & Nadler, 1986; West & Farr, 1989), has been approached in recent times from a multidisciplinary perspective, highlighting the approaches of areas such as business management, technology, human resources or economy. General aspects have been studied, such as the legitimacy of new ventures (Kurtko et al., 2017), the influence of organizational routines on innovation (Lin et al., 2020) or the effects of use in the supply chain of the 9000 quality management system of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (Shi et al., 2019).

Specific fields have also been taken into account such as the public sector (Aher and Luoma-Aho,

2017), journalistic organizations (Valero-Pastor & Carvajal, 2019), the creative industry linked to small and medium-sized companies in the tourism sector (Prima et al., 2020), the banking sector (Aboramadan et al., 2019), the effects of the knowledge and information society on educational technological innovation (Pérez et al., 2018) or the effects of variables such as the expenses of R&D, R&D personnel, subsidies or characteristics of enterprises in the results of technological innovation in different high-tech industries in China (Zhu et al., 2019).

In the same way, the aspects that were studied range from the microenvironment of innovative processes, SMEs (Hernández-Palma et al., 2016) and microenterprises (Pérez, 2019) or the influence of organizational identity in family businesses (Szymanska et al. al., 2019) to studies on innovation and organizational culture in specific regions, such as the one carried out by Rueda-Barrios et al. (2018) in the Valencian Community.

The wide and varied scientific production around innovation accounts for the interest that the field arouses in the current context, which is not limited to its practical management by the business and productive group.

4. MANAGEMENT OF INNOVATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

Innovation must always be aligned with the strategic objectives of organizations. However, there is no single model to manage it due to the large number of internal and external actors that interact in the specific case of each organization (Luna, 2016). Drucker considers innovation as a corporate function that must be managed and proposes that it can occur regardless of the age or size of an organization,

since the important thing is that at the center of the activity that it develops is placed “the effort to create intentional and focused change on the economic or social potential of a company” (Drucker, 1986, p.3).

The Oslo Manual, proposed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), collects four related types of innovation: product, process, organization and marketing (Fierro et al., 2017). Manufacturing flexibility has effects on product innovation when combined with process innovation or organizational innovation (Torres & Augusto, 2019). For its part, innovation in workplace organization and business practices are positively associated with company performance (Phan, 2019). However, innovation in management is complex because it is related at the micro level to overcoming consolidated organizational routines and the establishment of new ones (Lin et al., 2017).

Because “human capital is a source of innovation” (Garzón & Ibarra, 2013, p.47), not only procedural and environmental elements converge in the organizational capacity to innovate, but also human aspects, so this capacity is affected by five determinants: leadership, support, communication, culture and learning (Montreuil et al., 2020).

Kuratko et al. (2014) recognize the difficulty of most companies to apply innovation successfully and point out four key issues that influence its success: understanding the type of innovation that is intended, coordinate management functions, apply operational controls effectively, and properly train and prepare employees.

In this way, the participation of workers promotes innovation and competitiveness (Ruck et al., 2017) and external knowledge contributed by other actors such as suppliers, clients, consultants and commercial laboratories is

also important in new innovation practices in the workplace (Simao & Franco, 2018). “New knowledge, new skills, and new perspectives that reside in human capital are of crucial importance for radical innovation” (Nguyen, 2018, p.149). In addition, performance measurement positively affects the innovation capacity of organizations (Saunila et al., 2014).

For Dedahanov et al. (2017), innovative behavior mediates the links between centralization, formalization and the performance of organizational innovation, although in turn the relationship between the capacity of information technology and the performance of open innovation is affected by absorption capacity (Wu et al., 2019). Therefore, a creative organizational climate promotes innovations and the resilience of entities (Mafabi et al., 2015), while a good strategy aimed at knowledge exchange is vital (Jack & Lehaney, 2001).

Although there are authors who maintain that it is human resource practices that mediate the ideation process through training and knowledge transmission (Iqbal et al., 2020), general business culture and organizational commitment have a great influence on innovation by internal audiences (Nguyen et al., 2019) and these are linked to IC.

Finally, it is relevant to remember that innovative processes must be developed bearing in mind Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In this way, they will become a competitive advantage that is extended to all its stakeholders and that also has a positive impact on society and the environment, and not only on businessmen or shareholders (Canizales, 2020). In addition, IC influences the perception that members of an organization have about CSR (Duthler & Dhanesh, 2018) and an adequate human resources policy allows developing sustainable

organizations that achieve participation in the CSR program (Podgorodnichenko et al., 2020).

4.1 THE ROLE OF LEADERS IN INNOVATION

The importance of transformational leadership, compared to authoritarian or transactional leadership that does not work, lies in the fact that being positive, constituting a point of reference, caring about the needs of employees and dedicating resources to their training from a human perspective, not only improves professional development, but promotes positive attitudes at work and improves job happiness (Salas-Vallina et al., 2017).

There is a positive relationship between the transformational leadership of a CEO and product innovation performance through their key role in fostering the culture of innovation and organizational learning (Sattayaraksa & Boonitt, 2018; Zuraik & Kelly, 2019), as well as in their legitimizing role. CEOs who maintain receptive and assertive communication styles positively influence the relationship between the employees and the organization (Men, 2015).

One method to keep the performance level of managers high is to promote their happiness and well-being within organizations (Hosie & Sevastos, 2009), which also has beneficial effects on their subordinates. This is because the displays of happiness of a leader improve the creative performance of his followers, although regardless of the type of task, happy leaders are more effective in global terms (Visser et al., 2013).

5. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND THE CULTURE OF INNOVATION

Communication plays an important role in the development of innovation as an intermediary and facilitator of change through its empowerment, making the initiatives of change and innovation survive and increasing the daily communicative exchanges and relationships between the members of the company (Leeuwis & Aarts, 2011).

For Lawson and Samson (2001, p.377) the “innovation capacity” of an entity has seven components: “vision and strategy, use of the competence base, organizational intelligence, creativity and management of ideas, organizational structures and systems, culture and climate, and technology management”. In all of them, internal communication plays an essential role. This is due to the fact that knowledge flows that cross the internal limits of the company contribute decisively to innovative performance (Leendert & Dolfsma, 2015).

This means that communication and knowledge flows positively influence the creation of a work environment that promotes innovation and the receptive attitude of employees towards it, although this is attenuated when production processes are developed by part of outsourced personnel (Ortega-Egea et al., 2014). On the other hand, proper communication management, especially with regard to frequency, positively affects innovation, while it can negatively affect innovation if communication is characterized by great formality (Ebadi & Utterback, 1984).

Internal relationships and trust in them have a positive influence on innovation results and, together with external relationships, are amplified by the advancement of information technology that promotes increased confidence in the performance of new ideas (Cabrito et al., 2020).

The IC objective related to organizational culture is based on the construction of one's self-identity, common values, norms, standards, and team spirit (Rogala & Bialowas, 2016, p.70). For Segredo et al. (2017) communication itself constitutes a dimension of the organizational climate and is operationalized through four categories: stimulus to organizational development, contribution to organizational culture, feedback process and communication styles.

It must be taken into account that the internal communication media and the messages issued to the workforce are key to transmitting the philosophy of innovation, so those responsible for IC should aim to guide employees towards their identification in order to address the findings appropriately (Linke & Zeffass, 2011).

IC tools must be combined and adapted to encourage each of the audiences, especially the laggards, to participate in the culture of innovation (Strategic Direction, 2012), since it may be the case that not all are in the same phase of the innovation process or that certain groups advance at different speeds.

In relation to innovation, some of the trends in IC for the coming years consist of the use of new technologies, the development and design of open workspaces that enhance communication flows between the members of the organization and the increase of transparency and

agility through work with leaders (Castro-Martínez & Díaz-Morilla, 2019).

Reciprocity in communication with managers and the transmission of the importance of innovation through internal means are positive elements, while the tensions derived from the obligation in front of the option to innovate or the lack of influence of the employees in the processes limit commitment (Gode et al., 2019).

The physical collaboration spaces also represent organizational support for external innovation and for internal innovation through multifunctional teams, since the relationship between expectations and experiences on these spaces influences the ability of employees to perform a job that can be deteriorated if they perceive the space as a complex and insulating element instead of as a laboratory for creation (Ungureanu et al., 2020).

On the other hand, practices on digital platforms among networked employees and the culture of innovation are elements that contribute to moral, instrumental and relational legitimacy within organizations where, as already mentioned, leadership plays an important role.

For all these reasons, internal communication fosters cohesion, commitment, satisfaction, the feeling of belonging and loyalty of employees (Becker, 2020; Capriotti, 1999; Eaglebarger, 2017; Karanges et al., 2015; Men & Yue, 2019; Raj, 2020; Ramos, 1991; Tiwari & Lenka, 2019; Villafañe, 2000), which affects productivity and performance (Mainardes et al., 2019; Rogala & Bialowas, 2016). In addition, it maintains organizational learning and participation in a way that supports a corporate culture that encourages creativity and innovation (Recalde & Glaría, 2015).

5.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION, JOB HAPPINESS AND INNOVATION

Communication “is the basis of a good work environment, which shows that productivity increases as workers feel more satisfied and happier with their tasks in a space dominated by a pleasant interpersonal environment” (Oliván, 2017, p.1536).

This is because the positive attitude is linked to physical, mental and social health, to the improvement of work performance and social relationships, so that organizations that are capable of promoting happiness within them could improve satisfaction, creativity and productivity of their employees (El-Sholkamy & Fischbach, 2019).

Creative and innovative employees are much more involved with the organization than those who do not appreciate their work (Kamel et al., 2017). Therefore, happiness derived from the work environment is related to creativity and innovation. In fact, for authors like Usai et al. (2020, p.1229) “happiness, together with creativity, encourages both entrepreneurship and intellectual property”.

Symmetric communication and receptive leadership communication promote a positive emotional culture (Men & Yue, 2019) since IC makes employees feel valued and participants in corporate culture (Berceruelo, 2011), so the voice of employees is a significant predictor of innovation (Rasheed et al., 2017). There is a strong effect of both organizational culture and performance of leaders on participation, trust, and job satisfaction (Meng & Berger, 2019). In

relation to this, Weman and Kantanen (2018, p.57) suggest that “leadership communication is crucial for innovation management because creative thinking and commitment enable innovation.”

Since happiness at work (Salas-Vallina et al., 2017; Warr, 2007) is “a global construct that consists of the traits ‘job satisfaction’ and ‘organizational commitment’” (Fisher, 2010, as cited in De Waal, 2018, p.126). Internal communication is of great importance in its promotion within organizations (Castro-Martínez & Díaz-Morilla, 2020).

Sustainable work places the workforce at the center of the processes, generating happiness, well-being and recognition in a way that encourages ideation and creativity by producing work that makes sense for employees and contributes to the development of culture (Bolis et al., 2014, as cited by Brunoro et al., 2020). Therefore “there is a positive relationship between innovation in the workplace, the performance of the organization, the well-being of employees and the interactions with others” (Rahman et al., 2016, p.9).

Consequently, if organizations expect high levels of commitment and motivation, they have a duty to develop a brand that promotes the well-being of employees (Raj, 2020, p.1083), for which IC is very useful since it fulfills objectives at the relational, operational, motivational and attitudinal levels (Capriotti, 1998).

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In order to fully understand the phenomenon of innovation, it is necessary to study it at its multiple levels, since it does not occur only in organizations with a specific configuration or belonging to a given sector. In addition, a multidisciplinary approach is convenient, since much of its approach is carried out from the technological aspect (Hernández et al., 2017; Schilling & Shankar, 2019) or the economic aspect (Robert & Yoguel, 2010; Johnston and Marshall, 2016), limiting the heterogeneity that characterizes this process, which can be reductionist. Thus, delving into internal communication processes is vital to achieve business objectives (Kalla, 2005; Kitchen & Daly, 2002).

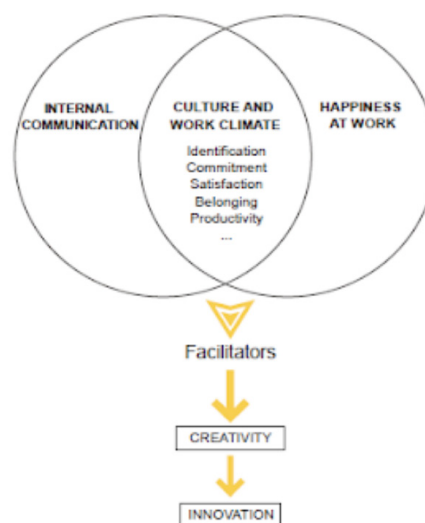
IC constitutes a strategic management area that enables change management (Leeuwis & Aarts, 2011) and the implementation of a culture of innovation within organizations (Cabrito et al., 2020; Recalde & Glaría, 2015). The literature indicates that it has an important influence on identification, loyalty, creativity and productivity (El-Sholkamy & Fischbach, 2019; Mainardes et al., 2019; Men & Yue, 2019; Raj, 2020; Rogala & Bialowas, 2016). It is also essential due to its role as a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge (Leendert & Dolfsma, 2015), as well as in the legitimation and effectiveness of leadership (Gode et al., 2019; Men, 2015). On the other hand, it is an element that directly affects

the well-being and happiness of the workforce (Castro-Martínez & Díaz-Morilla, 2020; Hosie & Sevastos, 2009), which in turn have an impact through creativity, involvement and performance (Kamel et al., 2017) in the innovation capacity of an organization (Usai et al., 2020; Weman & Kantanen, 2018).

This research achieves its objectives by determining the relationship between internal communication and innovation and defining some of the elements on which this link is based, such as culture, climate and happiness in organizations. It was found that internal communication as a management strategy based on a two-way system and on the construction of a positive organizational climate that fosters the happiness of the workforce is beneficial in the development of an innovative ecosystem. Thus, an internal communication operating scheme is proposed as a facilitating element of innovation and creativity that is based on the creation of a corporate culture that enhances commitment, participation, happiness and well-being of the employees (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Relationship between internal communication and innovation through corporate culture and organizational happiness.



The value of this document lies in providing a global perspective on the impact that internal communication management has on innovation through its role as a facilitator of organizational change and happiness. The practical implications of this work are valuable to organizations for showing the benefits of implementing an effective IC system and offering some guidelines for their development, which can contribute to superior innovation performance.

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