

Social networks and new technologies



OBRA

revista de comunicació

DIGITAL

ISSN 2462-6384

e-ISSN 2014-5039

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Social networks and new technologies

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EDITORIAL

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Abstract:

Social networks and new communication technologies increasingly influence different aspects of our lives. They shape the way we interact, learn and express ourselves. There is a need to contextualize the media phenomena according to the environment in which they work, since their application gives different results in different places because they are culturally sensitive.

KEYWORDS

Social networks, New technologies, Research, ICT.

Resumen:

Las redes sociales y nuevas tecnologías de la comunicación influyen cada vez más en distintos aspectos de nuestras vidas, y moldean la forma en la que nos relacionamos, aprendemos y expresamos. Necesitamos contextualizar los fenómenos mediáticos en función del entorno en el que se desempeñan, ya que su aplicación da resultados diferentes en lugares diversos, por ser culturalmente sensibles.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Redes sociales, Nuevas tecnologías, Investigación, TIC.

Social networks and new communication technologies have become part of the global social action in which many actors like common citizens, activists, non-governmental organizations, media, governments and others participate. (Shirky, 2011). These have been introduced into our lives and have modified our habits of media consumption and social interaction, giving new form to communication as we knew it until reaching what is defined as masspersonal communication, that concept that fuses mass communication with interpersonal communication (O'Sullivan and Carr, 2018).

The influence that these new technologies have on our lives is becoming stronger every day, taking great steps from those first studies on the social shaping of technology that MacKenzie and Wajcman (1999) referred to in the last millennium. These technologies have been invented, designed and implemented for the use of people in particular social contexts (Graham & Dutton, 2019). The new technologies and social networks offer organizations the possibility of accessing information flows that can lead to the introduction of changes in their knowledge management systems, which can lead to improvements in their performance (Nisar, Prabhakar, and Strakova, 2019). There are also challenges and threats that must be considered beyond the opportunities that obviously arise, so it is suggested to consider axioms such as those proposed by Berthon Pitt, Plangger and Shapiro (2012):

(1) social networks are always a function of technology, culture and government of a particular country or context; (2) local events rarely remain local; (3) global events are probably (re) interpreted locally; (4) the actions and creations of consumers also depend on technology, culture and government; and (5) technology is historically dependent. (p. 261)

Thus, it is necessary to contextualize the media phenomena and be clear about the reality of each environment in which they work. This nourishes and gives richness to the communicational phenomenon that does not behave in the same way in different realities, which opens up countless scientific possibilities to explore.

Great emphasis has been placed on the powerful effects that social networks can have on the different ways in which organizations connect with their clients and external stakeholders, in many areas of marketing and customer relationship management (Leonardi, Huysman, and Steinfield, 2013). This monograph of *Obra Digital* entitled "Social networks and new technologies in multidisciplinary lines", corresponding to the months of September 2019 to January 2020, intends to show some aspects of the implications that digital media have through six articles in diverse fields such as national football federations, Andalusian or Ecuadorian politics, participatory video and visual literacy, literary influencers or university internationalization. It allows us to glimpse how society, the media and education adapt to the challenges that social networks and new technologies present.

In this seventeenth issue, researchers from various latitudes present empirical results based on theoretical support that allow us to visualize how technological advances shape and impact political, social and cultural relations. It is not intended to make generalizations, but to present different perspectives in environments with specific technologies.

Social networks and new communication technologies will continue to affect our daily lives and the activities of companies and institutions that use them. Therefore, we are sure that this theme will continue to gain importance and

gain space in the public, academic and scientific debate.

Advertising in the written press and media consumption by millennials make up our miscellaneous section and complete this seventeen issue that, for the first time, is published entirely in Spanish and English.

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The literary influencer through YouTube: analysis of its communication strategy

El influencer literario a través de YouTube: análisis de la estrategia comunicativa

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ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: February 2, 2018 / ACCEPTED: November 28, 2018

Abstract

A new literary prescriber has recently emerged in the digital environment, the BookTuber. The objective of this article is to determine the communication strategy of this new figure. Through the identification of 10 relevant BookTubers in Spain, we analyze the organizational structure of the information, their social network strategy and the video content that get more visits and interaction. The results show that a structure of content that follows a similar pattern can be identified in the studied cases. The results also identify what contents are more relevant, allowing to establish a first conceptual framework on the content and communication strategies in social networks to impact a young target audience and promote the taste for reading.

KEYWORDS

BookTubers, young, influencers, reading, internet social networking.

Resumen

Surge en el entorno digital la figura del booktuber. El nuevo prescriptor digital literario en la red. El objetivo de este trabajo busca conocer la estrategia de comunicación de esta nueva figura. Identificando los 10 booktubers más relevantes en España, se analiza la estructura organizativa de la información, qué contenido consigue más visitas e interacción, así como la estrategia en sus redes sociales. Los resultados muestran que se puede identificar una estructura de contenidos, e identifica los más relevantes, pudiéndose establecer un primer marco de carácter conceptual sobre estrategias de comunicación que impacten en un público joven en donde se consiga fomentar el gusto por la actividad lectora.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Booktubers, jóvenes, influencers, lectura, redes sociales.

1. INTRODUCCIÓN

Nowadays, social networks have been established as the preferred channel for young people to interact, stay informed about current events and share or generate content. Many sources confirm the penetration data of social networks and the frequency of interaction of this audience in the digital environment (AIMC, IAB, The Cocktail Analysis, 2015).

In this sense, Ravettino (2015) points out that ICT and specifically the use of the Internet is promoting new practices and approaches to the world of literature and reading in particular. In the same context, Urresti (2008) refers to these virtual spaces where a connection is established between young people and where content is shared and generated. He calls this phenomenon “juvenile cybercultures”.

In this digital universe, one of the communities with the largest audience has been consolidated with more than one billion users: YouTube. And it is precisely under the protection of this network that a new figure known as BookTuber generates content. These are people of different ages, mostly young readers, who post comments about books on the web. This new figure stands as a possible new opinion leader whose main purpose is to share the pleasure of reading with a recognizable and plain language. Most of them are young teenagers that speak in front of a camera giving a personal opinion about the books they read.

The studied phenomenon acquires double relevance as an object of analysis. First, due to the importance of supporting the promotion of reading from the education sector and public administration, this is a key aspect in the edu-

cation of future generations. Second, the social reality before us reveals changes in access to reading in generations of young Spaniards. According to data from the Ministry of Culture, only 4,500 young people between 15 and 24 years of age read a book in the last year (MECD, 2015).

The main and specific objective of the work are described below. It offers a first approach to the emerging figure of a new influencer, the BookTuber, as a new literary prescriber and as a possible key figure in the development of a communication strategy that seeks the promotion of reading. Therefore, it is a matter of deepening the analysis of the structure and content of this new profile as a figure that promotes the habit of reading among an adolescent audience that usually manifests disagreement with the reading habit (Pindado, 2003).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 THE FIGURE OF THE INFLUENCER IN THE DIGITAL CONTEXT

The use of social networks by some users as an environment to share content of interest to a large number of followers has led to the figure of the influencer. Behind this phenomenon there is a process of social influence that can be interpreted from the classic communication model of Katz and Lazearfield (1966) on opinion leaders, but it should be adapted to a new scenario. Mason, Corren and Smith (2007) propose a redefinition of the processes of interpersonal influence taking into account the context of occurrence and a broad temporal perspective. The influencers would have social networks on the Internet as a scenario, a very open space with many more possibilities of personal inter-

connection compared to spaces of interpersonal relationships. At the same time, processes of interpersonal influence emerge, such as the perceived similarity, credibility or authority of the source. It is necessary to add the phenomena of Internet networks, such as the processes of influence that emerge through the closest or related individuals, the structuring of networks around groups with similar interests and social validation based on the number of followers.

The appearance of a community around the literary world where books are discussed on the YouTube platform is what has been called BookTuber and can be studied from this perspective of influence as a particular case of the influencer. The reach of interpersonal influence through social networks is supported by the IAB (2015). According to their latest data, 36% of Spaniards declare that they use the Internet to follow influencers. This use has the third place in the ranking of Internet activities.

The BookTuber phenomenon has its origin in the United States. While some sources put the appearance of these users in 2012 (Bluemagazine, 2016), other authors such as Goldfield (2015) consider their start in the video blog called "Vlog brother" created by two American brothers that currently have 3 million subscribers. As of 2013, it mainly extended to Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Colombia. In 2014, the first figures of BookTubers begin to emerge in Spain. These literary influencers make book reviews on their YouTube channels and share it with others. Most of the profiles studied meet the following criteria: most are women, adolescents, read books on topics directed to their age and almost all have made some review about the books of the Harry Potter saga. At the time of producing the content, they record themselves in video where they present comments on the books they read. They usual-

lly have high mastery of multimedia and the content is fun and addictive.

2.2. YOUNG PEOPLE, READING AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

Reading has always been such a natural exercise in adults that we tend to forget the time it took us to acquire this habit. There is also a tendency to believe that the reading habit always develops in the same way without taking into account the changes produced by the technological development in which we find ourselves (Vandendorpe, 2011).

The dynamics of the literary market, which is in a moment of expansion, joins this belief. The publication of works grows; however, this phenomenon has not been accompanied by a similar movement in the number of average readings per person. More books are published exponentially than the reading activity grows. It could be said that this phenomenon is due to the emergence of new means of expression and more effective spaces from the communicative point of view (Cordón, 2016).

In addition, there are various public and private sources that collect data related to the appearance of these new digital spaces and analyze the participation of young Spaniards in social networks. These confirm the dimension of the interactive phenomenon in this population sector. These data will help us to understand the rise of figures like the BookTuber in digital media.

The population segments between 16 and 24 years old and between 25 and 34 years old are the most frequent Internet users with 96.2% and 89.9%, respectively. The figures for the use of social networks are even higher in the same segments, reaching 98.5% among young people aged 16 to 24 years and 96% among users between 25 and 34 years old (ONTSI, 2015).

According to The Cocktail Analysis (2015), the penetration of Internet users in social networks has been stable since 2011. 90% have at least one active profile in a social network and each user maintains an average of 2.3 active accounts. Another aspect of interest that the study provides is the change that is taking place in the interaction between the user and the social network where a more immediate, frequent and shallow model is imposed.

A reflection of this is the use of icons and the actions of retweeting or giving a like/favorite, which have a bigger perception of value for the user along with the greater consumption of audiovisual content. In this sense, it is worth highlighting the universal use of YouTube as a social network that has become a satellite platform that provides content to other social networks.

If we analyze the activity of these young people in the web (ONTSI, 2015) the following stand out: participate in social networks, download software, consult wikis and searches related to education or training.

Another important aspect in understanding what makes a publication more attractive for this audience is their perception of content as authentic (43%), relevant (32%) and transparent (23%) (Elite Daily's; Millennial Branding, 2015).

All these data corroborate that social networks have become an active space for encounter and content consumption, where users frequently generate, share and comment on topics. Within this profile, it is interesting to see the distinction between two types of behavior. The behaviors of a proactive user and a passive user. Understanding that an active user writes at least one post every week, comments or responds to others, shares links, uploads photos,

etc. While the passive user reviews emails, watches videos, listens to music, etc.

3. OBJECTIVES

Recent studies on the phenomenon of this new influence profile have identified formal aspects of the language used in their critical discourse on the literary content of the books they recommend. In this sense, it is worth mentioning the study conducted by Beatriz Domínguez (Domínguez, 2016), which highlights aspects such as the close and familiar language (such as they were addressing a friend), the use of wild-card phrases, the lack of depth in the analysis, the control of body language in front of the camera, etc. Important aspects that help us to understand the formal aspects of the phenomenon of influence and connection in young people, but that leave aside the analysis of other variables that complement knowledge about the success of certain contents over others.

This research focuses on the analysis of these variables based on the main objective of determining the content strategy developed by BookTubers, taking into account their organizational structure.

The study is limited to the most popular BookTubers in Spain that publish their contents in Spanish.

4. METHODOLOGY

This descriptive study on the structure and content generated by this new literary prescriber used non-probabilistic sampling, delimiting

the universe of study to the most relevant cases in Spain. The study was limited to the 10 BookTubers with the largest number of subscribers in their channels until the completion of the field study. The analysis was conducted from November 2016 to January 2017. For the analysis of content, an average of 50/60 videos were reviewed in each channel.

The objectives sought in this work revolve around the following points:

- Analyze how they structure the contents in their channel.
- Determine the networks linked to their YouTube channels.
- Conduct a content analysis of the videos that generated a greater number of views and interactions.

The BookTubers selected from the data provided by Marquina (2016) are: (Table 1)

A worksheet capable of collecting first-hand data through navigation in each of the profiles was designed to analyze the structure. The application allowed to determine the date of creation of the channel, the linked networks and the number of subscribers.

Content analysis seeks to find the meaning of the video with the greatest number of visualizations. This analysis seeks to reveal what underlies and the unpublished message (Raigada, 2002). (Table 2)

Table 1. Classification of BookTubers based on number of followers.

BookTuber Name	Followers*
1. El coleccionista de mundos	190.763
2. Javier Ruescas	170.805
3. Fly like a butterfly	165.674
4. Andreo Rowling	112.500
5. May R Ayamonte	90.287
6. LibrosPorLeer	76.728
7. Never be Hopeless	74.998
8. Nube de palabras	73.944
9. MartitaraBookVlogs	58.092
10. Little Red Read	42.235

Number of followers up to January 2017

Table 2. Content analysis worksheet

Worksheet	
Date of creation of the channel	
Linked social networks	
Number of followers	
Highest number of views	
Content of the most visited video	
Number of interactions	

5. RESULTS

The analysis of the content structure of the studied cases reveals a great convergence in the number of sections created and how they are called. It emphasizes the use, in almost all the cases, of Anglicisms to classify them. The sections and what they represent under each denomination are described below:

- TBR o “to be read”: short pieces where they announce what they are going to read.

- “Book hauls”: content that is made at the end of the month about the books read in that period with a brief explanation of why they bought it.
- “Book Review”: Booktubers express their opinion on a book with an informal tone, what they liked most or least.
- “Book tags”: they develop questions to suggest books that deal with the same topic.
- “Wrap up”: pieces of short duration where they comment the experience with the books read.
- “Unboxing”: they seek to create expectation in this section since the content revolves around showing the book they have acquired without opening it.
- “Questions and answers” section: videos where they respond to questions that their followers send them.
- “Book shelf tours”: it is the most sporadic video since the content revolves around showing the libraries with the books they bought over the months.

The analysis of the channel of the BookTuber taking the content with more views as reference, allows us to determine what topic and structure of message is being more attractive. For this purpose, we have developed some worksheets that include the profile of the BookTuber and the basic data of the analyzed pieces.

5.1. GENERAL CONTENT

(Table 3). The BookTuber “El coleccionista de mundos” has the largest number of followers at the time of this analysis. The piece that has achieved the greatest number of visualizations in its channel is not related to any book review but focuses on exposing what is reported when

reading, that is, the benefits of reading from an emotional level. A text with motivating and inspiring short messages appears through a simple succession planes of image, accompanied by library music. The piece barely reaches the 4 minutes of duration, which facilitates its visualization. (Table 3)

5.2. HUMORISTIC CONTENT

(Table 4). In the case of Javier Ruescas, the video with more visualizations is of a humoristic type and is related to a literary character, Harry Potter. Other BookTubers are added to the video, which he invites to know at the end of the piece. The content follows the easy-humor type of videos that work well on the web, with the ability to relate it to a character from the literary world and to a scene from the Harry Potter movie. There are more pieces of this type in his channel that have reported a large number of views. (Table 4)

5.3. CONTENT BY LITERARY GENRE

"Fly like a butterfly" and "Andreo Rowling" are the two BookTubers that are part of this classification. The first presents a ranking of her 10 favorite romance books. The second focuses on the recommendation of the Harry Potter fantasy saga, of which she claims to be an active fan. In both cases, the type of the recorded piece is simple and they address their audience in a simple and close language, typical of adolescents or young people (Table 5)

5.4. SUGGESTION FOR SIMILARITY CONTENT

The last case analyzed is distinguished from the rest by not focusing on any gender but by basing the recommendation on the "empathy" of the book. The BookTuber speaks to the ca-

Table 3. Content analysis worksheet

Worksheet of "El coleccionista de mundos"	
Date of creation of the channel	September 1, 2012
Linked social networks	Facebook, Instagram, Google+, Twitter
Number of followers	190.763
Highest number of views	206.545 views
Content of the most visited video	Why read?
Number of interactions	372 comments

Table 4. Content analysis worksheet

Worksheet of "Javier Ruescas"	
Date of creation of the channel	September 1, 2012
Linked social networks	Facebook, Instagram, Google+, Twitter
Number of followers	170.805
Highest number of views	206.545 views
Content of the most visited video	Harry Potter dragees Challenge
Number of interactions	356 comments

Table 5. Content analysis worksheet

Worksheet of "Fly like a butterfly"	
Date of creation of the channel	March 25, 2010
Linked social networks	Facebook, Instagram, Google+, Twitter
Number of followers	165.674
Highest number of views	550.308 views
Content of the most visited video	Young adult romance books
Number of interactions	667 comments

mera and shows the book that she liked and the book that by theme approaches this by similarity of plot and content. The criticism she makes differs from the press literary criticism. She simply highlights the moments that most hooked her from the story or the characters, always using plain and simple language.

Table 6. Content analysis worksheet

Worksheet of "Andreo Rowling"	
Date of creation of the channel	October 14, 2012
Linked social networks	Facebook, Instagram, Google+, Twitter
Number of followers	112.500
Highest number of views	202.063 views
Content of the most visited video	My Harry Potter collection
Number of interactions	589 comments

Table 7. Content analysis worksheet

Worksheet of "May R Ayamonte"	
Date of creation of the channel	June 5, 2011
Linked social networks	Facebook, Instagram, Google+, Twitter
Number of followers	90.287
Highest number of views	179.365 views
Content of the most visited video	Book recommendation, "if you like this ... you'll like ..."
Number of interactions	480 comments

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this initial study on the incipient phenomenon of the profile of the BookTuber manifest the consolidation of this new influencer in the universe of social networks. These young readers, far from becoming literary critics as we know them today, seek to transmit the passion they have for reading by commenting on the latest titles they have acquired and giving a close and very personal view of their reading. With a frequency of at least one video per week, they share everything they read, when they read it and how they read it.

In general, the communicative opportunity offered by YouTube channels makes it easy to share and follow the generation of content. The dissemination strategy followed by these BookTubers to achieve a greater number of visualizations is to share each new video at the same time in the linked social networks. All the analyzed cases use the following platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Google+; always having the YouTube platform as the content generating source.

The number of followers, although distant from other consolidated youtubers in this great social network, begins to have interesting figures of subscribers and content views. Something that is being undoubtedly used by some publishers in the launch of some titles. But above all, it will have to be taken into account by the public administration and the Ministry of Education as a key means to establish their communication strategy on the need to achieve a change in the tendency of reading habits towards which the youngest audience is heading today.

Although this study reflects the analysis of a first exploratory phase, conclusions can already be drawn about the classification of its tree

of contents clearly inspired by the Anglo-Saxon BookTubers. The model seems settled but humorous content as the analyzed in the case of Javier Ruescas makes us think of a strategy that, following other YouTube content, becomes the most shared.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the persuasive communication tone used by these influencers. Their language is based on a direct, sim-

ple, honest, flat and always passionate tone that approaches and impacts the consumption target of the social network. This tone and the authenticity of the commentaries on the literary works, will surely make them gain credibility in their discourse and will be reflected in the number of followers, an aspect that confirms the studies mentioned throughout the article.

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Social media communication management in football national federations

Gestión de la comunicación en las redes sociales de las federaciones de fútbol nacionales

2

ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: October 30, 2018 / ACCEPTED: April 03, 2019

Abstract

Social media have become a main means of interaction for the communication departments of national football federations, improving the loyalty of their supporters. In this study, the management of official accounts in social media of five national football federations were analyzed. The methodology has been based on the observation and content analysis, taking into account the communication department of each federation as a content issuer. The results show great differences in the management of communication according to the issuer and the social media, which is very useful to improve

the strategic management of digital communication in this type of entities.

KEYWORDS

Content analysis, communication, sports, football, social media.

Resumen

Las redes sociales se han convertido en un medio principal para los departamentos de comunicación de las federaciones nacionales de fútbol, mejorando la fidelización de sus simpatizantes. En este estudio se ha analizado la gestión de las cuentas oficiales en redes sociales

de cinco federaciones de fútbol nacionales. La metodología se ha basado en la observación y el análisis de contenido, teniendo en cuenta al departamento de comunicación de cada federación como emisor de contenido. Los resultados muestran grandes diferencias en la gestión

de la comunicación según el emisor y la red social, lo que resulta de gran utilidad para mejorar la gestión estratégica de la comunicación digital en este tipo de entidades.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Análisis de contenido, comunicación, deporte, fútbol, redes sociales.

1. INTRODUCTION

Football is the most universal of sports and involves a multitude of social derivations. Antezana (2003) emphasizes that football develops inside and outside the court because it is an uninterrupted and multifaceted spectacle (p.88). Studies focused on the analysis of communication, sports and football have grown exponentially in recent years. In this sense, it should be noted that the media and sports as objects of study in the area of communication are two research trends that have not stopped growing (Alonso and Avalos, 2013). The loyalty of supporters or followers is one of the objectives of the entities of the football world. Thrassou, Vrontis and Kartakoullis (2012) agree that football executives are called to develop and use the possibilities offered by marketing and communication to ensure that customers (followers and supporters) revive a holistic experience of football as a product.

1.1. UTILITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL FEDERATIONS

Communication always played an important role in the national football federations and significant progress has been made in recent years in the field of the Internet, specifically in social media. They have become a fundamental tool to get more support from fans, generate

confidence and increase media reach in society. Lobillo and Muñoz (2016) emphasize that social media are very useful for entities related to football as in any other organization and they are used as an organizational communication tool. In addition, they point out that new technologies are constantly used by sports organizations, allowing them to interact immediately and effectively with their audience.

The management of social media represents an important part of the work in the communication departments of football federations. Castillo, Fernández and Castillero (2016), postulate in relation to the importance of the presence of entities in social media that the entities with the highest income in the world develop a 2.0 communication strategy for most of the existing social media. In general, they show adequate adaptation to the creation of social media and digital communication platforms.

Abeza, O'Reilly and Reid (2013) agree that social media represent an important opportunity for the management of sports brands and their relationship with internal and external audiences. Currently, any sports organization can exchange messages with their audience using social media.

In relation to the management of communication in the world of football, Costa (1999) stresses that "these sports entities need to transfer their image to society in order to achieve their

goals, like any other organization, company or institution; so they must resort to communication "(As cited by Olabe, 2010, p.95).

Social media provide various ways to reach audiences. Lobillo and Muñoz (2016) point out that these allow football entities to easily reach a very important audience, not only by quantity but by loyalty. These entities have profiles in the main social networks to communicate with these audiences and their followers. In this way, football entities have already established social channels as communication tools more or less uniformly.

Facebook is the social media that brings together more followers and supporters, that is why the presence of football entities in this leading social network is discussed. The analyzed teams reached an approximate of 50 million fans in this social network at the end of January 2012 (Sotelo, 2012).

On the multimedia integration of these entities, the YouTube social network can offer different content. Entities can offer information and entertainment content to their followers with this network (Ginesta, 2010).

1.2. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN NATIONAL FOOTBALL FEDERATIONS

It is important to have defined communication strategies for any sports entity for the proper performance of their communication departments. Olabe (2015) establishes that the directive function of the communication management of the national football federations is specific to the director of communication (dircom). The Dircom is responsible for the transparency policy of the organization as a way to transmit values and manage digital resources

that were not contemplated to date. These management needs have increased the relevance of the Dircom figure, integrating it into the management structure of the organization and marking the communication strategies for their subsequent execution. The Dircom must perform three basic functions as coordinator of this specific department that is detached from the press office: the journalistic function, the public relations function and the marketing and advertising function.

According to Pronschinske, Groza and Walker (2012), the strategy conditions the participation of users. The national football federations must have a communication plan established to manage their virtual press rooms and official accounts on social media. Salazar and Prieto (2015) emphasize that any institution that wants to achieve effective communication on Twitter must develop a communication plan that defines the objectives and communication actions that will be carried out. In this sense, Arceo (2003) points in his research of professional football clubs that only two of the ten studied organizations have a communication or public relations plan, six have plans on some occasions and two have no plans.

On the content of football on YouTube, Ginesta (2010) indicates that streaming off the platform is common on almost all the websites of the clubs. In this way, while the clubs that have developed their own television service use the web to broadcast their own videos, others post the videos given by the television stations or directly by the owner of the television rights of the teams. Offering webpages in several languages is one of the internationalization strategies that football entities use in marketing and communication. Ginesta (2010) points out that the Internet is essential when it comes to in-

ternationalizing the image of the organization, since most of the analyzed clubs have another language as an option in their official websites.

Content categories are important in the management of virtual press rooms and official accounts in social media of national football federations. These refer to matches, press conferences and interviews. In this sense, Castillo et al. (2016) clarify from the communicative structure of the football entities that the activities generated in the social networks mainly include the games played, press conferences and interviews with players and the coach. These are the most followed entries with the greatest media coverage. This means that the football media industry needs continuous and daily activities to maintain their media presence.

Another category of content in professional football clubs and national football federations is institutional content. On the success of institutional communication, Olabe (2010) indicates that the effectiveness and success of institutional communication is also measured by the degree of involvement and consideration that the directors of the organization give to this tool.

1.3. RELATIONSHIP OF THE ISSUERS FROM FOOTBALL ENTITIES WITH THE PUBLIC IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

The public relations in the management and use of virtual press rooms and social media by the responsible department of communication in the national football federations should be taken into account. One of the most important objectives of the entities of the world of football in the 21st century is the loyalty of followers and supporters. In this sense, social networks play an essential role to accomplish this objective. There are sectors of fans and followers that are opposed to the implementation of new te-

chnologies as tools to improve the relationship between the institution and the fans. Hutchins (2016) identifies protests of this type at Philips Sport Vereniging NV, one of the most followed football clubs in the Netherlands. There were similar protests to sports entities and clubs in Spain, England, Italy, Germany, France, Brazil, Uruguay, Romania, Norway, Czech Republic, Slovakia, the United States and Australia.

Xifra (2011) emphasizes that all organizations maintain relationships with different audiences. According to this author, the environments of the organizations are composed of a mixture of audiences on which the organization has or can have consequences and vice versa, regardless of the stability of such relationship. There are types of audiences that relate more to organizations and other types of audiences with fewer participation. In most cases, the public with the greatest relationships are the workers, the media, the local community, customers and consumers.

According to Capriotti (2009), the main efforts of the organizations in the institutional part have focused on the issuer and have left aside the study of the receiver and the public.

The national football federations present large numbers of audiences. Regarding the communication cabinets of football entities and their relationship with different types of public, Olabe (2010) emphasizes that these departments give importance to carrying out communicative actions for external, internal and intermediate publics, although the media are the most important audience of these institutions for their status as channels for the rest of target audiences. In this sense, the communication departments seek to adapt the agenda of the media, their routines and contents with the use of communication tools and techniques adjus-

ted to their needs of press conferences, press releases, conclusion of interviews, reports and the use of the corporate website with daily content update.

The relationship of sports entities with their public has changed since the appearance of new communication technologies. The media are external public to which the national football federations are directed. Regarding the relationship with the media, Castillo (2010) points out that relations with the media have been presented as the fundamental activity in the field of external public relations. Although true, it is not in its entirety because relations with the media are one of the most important aspects in communication but not exclusive or the end of it.

The football entities are related in the digital environment with different groups of receivers. On the impact of issuing messages to large groups of people, Cancelo and Almansa (2013) show in their research that the universalization of the possibility of being a transmitter of messages that reach large groups through the Internet has caused the rupture of the traditional scheme of emitter-receiver. This is the case of social media. Due to the volume of participants and the control conditions over the message, it seems to be an ideal tool to gain supporters and to promote the direct relationship between entities and their audiences.

1.3.1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FOOTBALL FEDERATIONS AND THE PUBLIC ACCORDING TO THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL OR POLITICAL IDENTITY

The message content of the national football federations may vary depending on the identity

of their recipients to help achieve the objectives. Among these recipients are the followers or supporters.

The geographical link with the football federations can have a very important influence on the content of the messages and their follow-up relationships. "One of the elements that seems to have the most influence in the identification with a football team is the geographical link. Then, the familiar and social environment appear and in third place is the interest since childhood" (Llopis, 2013, p.242). According to Rowe (2003), sporting events have a significant political content with great scope beyond what happens on the field.

It should be taken into account that: "Football, as a cultural fact, represents local identities in some way". (Benítez, López and Cid, 2015, p.83).

"The feeling of belonging to a certain region can also influence a person to be follower or supporter of a certain football entity" (Llopis, 2013, p.248).

On the comparison between football entities in relation to the claim of the nationality of a certain community, González (2008) points out that we must take into account that the football scene is set by national clubs and is composed of different National teams. In this sense, globalization processes have contributed to add elements that make this increasingly multicultural scenario more complex in terms of the scope of national and international club competitions.

On the other hand, Xifra (2008) relates the concept of civil religion with Fútbol Club Barcelona and the Catalan nationalist community as a social phenomenon, promoting changes in the local and regional values of the community to which it belongs. This author points to Fútbol Club Barcelona as a new constituted religious form.

In this sense, national federations may have similarities with what the researcher proposed for a football club.

2. METHODOLOGY

The techniques used in this study have been observation and content analysis. It is important to clarify with respect to the content analysis that “it involves systematically applying previously fixed rules that serve to measure the frequency with which the elements appear and study some of the aspects that seem useful according to the purposes of the investigation” (Berganza & Ruiz, 2005, p.213). Observation becomes a scientific technique when it serves a formulated research objective. It is planned systematically and is related to more general theories in such a way that it does not remain as a set of curiosities. It is controlled and tested with criteria of validity and reliability (Ruiz, 2012).

The social networks analyzed in the research were Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. The analysis was conducted from April 1 to April 30, 2015. The purpose of this study is to analyze the management of the social networks of the national football federations from CONMEBOL and UEFA. The selection criteria of the football federations in this study was made according to the ranking of historical results of the federations of each confederation.

Three UEFA federations have been selected: Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio (Italy), The Football Association (England) and Real Federación Española de Fútbol (profile of the Spanish National Football Team). Two federations of the CONMEBOL were chosen following the same criteria of selection: Asociación del Fútbol Argentino y Confederação Brasileira de Futebol (Brazil).

The access to each page, profile or official account on social media has been obtained from the official website of each federation:

- Asociación del Fútbol Argentino: <http://www.afa.org.ar>
- Confederação Brasileira de Futebol: <http://www.cbf.com.br>
- Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio: <http://www.figc.it>
- Real Federación Española de Fútbol: <http://www.sefutbol.com>
- The Football Association: <http://www.thefa.com/England>

The research methodology has followed the following analysis template:

The amount and type of content of each official Facebook page, official Instagram profile, official Twitter account and the official YouTube channel of each federation have been analyzed. A questionnaire was established to determine the types of content generated by each football federation in each account as variables. The variables in this case will be classified based on the type of content of each publication that is shared in the analyzed social media.

For registration, the title, URL, date and time of emission of certain content in the corresponding analysis sheet have been recorded.

The content of each social network analyzed has been classified in the following categories:

- “Institutional”: Information on events with the presence of the board of the national football federation. Public relations with professional football clubs or other national football federations, participation in campaigns with the image of the national football federation, relations with other public or private com-

panies or institutions, public statements by the president or directors, corporate social responsibility, publications related to the stadium or venue and historical events.

- “Training”: Information related to the training or organization of the work of the national teams. Content related to recovery and injury information is included in this category.
- “Pre-match”: Informative publications prior to a match, previous announcements and promotion, matches prior to the season, raffles of the competition or travel plans for a specific match. In addition, information related to the rival team is included in this content category.
- “Match”: Informative content related to the development of a match. Includes description of plays, goals, faults, warnings or other incidents of matches played by national teams.
- “Post-match”: Publications that deal with the analysis of a finished match. The photo galleries and video summaries of the disputed matches, classifications and statistics of the played matches are included.
- “Press conference”: Declarations of the staff members and technical staff of the national teams at the official press conferences.
- “Interviews”: Statements that are not given in the previous category. Includes interviews through social media.
- “Players”: Information related to the members of the staff of the national team. It includes information on international calls, signings, public events and individual awards received by players or members of the coaching staff with statistics or special data about them.
- “Youth Categories”: Informative content referring to the coaching staff and players of the

youth categories of each national football federation.

- “Fans”: Content about followers. Informative publications on the sale of tickets for matches and trips to accompany the national team to a match as a visitor are included.
- “Marketing”: Publications related to sponsors and commercial commitments of the national football federations.
- “Retweets”: This category refers to publications that are a copy of the content issued by another user. This category only exists in the case of analysis of the content categories in the official Twitter accounts.

3. RESULTS

First, the obtained results are presented in relation to the followers that the federations have in the social media analyzed.

The official Facebook pages of the national football federations have the following “likes” according to the data collected on the date of analysis: Asociación del Fútbol Argentino 1,946,491 followers, Confederação Brasileira de Futebol 7,141,727 followers, Real Federación Española de Fútbol (Spanish National Team) 2,258,450 followers, The Football Association 4,767,069 followers and Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio 3,247,489 followers.

The official Instagram profiles of the national football federations have the following numbers of followers: Confederação Brasileira de Futebol 347,390 followers, Real Federación Española de Fútbol (Spanish National Team) 121,154 followers, The Football Association 119,069 followers and Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio 54,794 followers. The data of the

federations from Argentina and England could not be verified.

The official Twitter profiles of the national football federations have the following numbers of followers according to the data collected on the date of analysis: Asociación del Fútbol Argentino 1,019,428 followers, Confederação Brasileira de Futebol 2,352,129 followers, Real Federación Española de Fútbol (Spanish National Team) 978,325 followers, The Football Association 580,150 followers and Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio 283,239 followers.

The official YouTube channels of the national football federations have the following numbers of followers according to the data collected on the date of analysis: Asociación de Fútbol Argentino 2,296 followers, The Football Association 139,277 followers and Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio 41,369 followers. There was no access to the data of the Confederação Brasileira de Futebol and the Real Federación Española de Fútbol (Spanish National Team) (Table 1).

3.1. MANAGEMENT OF OFFICIAL ACCOUNTS ON FACEBOOK

Below is the data of the social network Facebook. The official Facebook page of the Asociación del Fútbol Argentino has used the different content categories as follows: "Institutional" 3 publications, "Training" 2 publications, "Pre-match" 3 publications, "Post-match" 4 publications, "Youth Categories" 7 publications, "Players" 23 publications and "Fans" 1 publication. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The Confederação Brasileira de Futebol has used the different categories of content as follows: "Institutional" 6 publications, "Pre-match"

Table 1. Followers in social media of the official accounts of football federations.

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Youtube
Asociación del Fútbol Argentino (CONMEBOL)	1,946,491	-	1,019,428	2,296
<u>Confederação Brasileira de Futebol</u> (CONMEBOL)	7,141,727	347,390	2,352,129	-
<i>Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio</i> (UEFA)	3,247,489	54,794	283,239	41,369
Real Federación Española de Fútbol (UEFA)	2,258,450	121,154	978,325	-
<i>The Football Association</i> (UEFA)	4,767,069	-	580,150	139,277

Source. Official accounts in social media of football federations.

2 publications, "Post-match" 1 publication, "Youth Categories" 2 publications, "Players" 2 publications and "Fans" 1 publication. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The official Facebook page of the Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio has used the different content categories as follows: "Institutional" 5 publications, "Post-match" 2 publications, "Interview" 1 publication, "Youth Categories" 11 publications and "Players" 6 publications. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The Real Federación Española de Fútbol (Spanish National Team) has used the different con-

Table 2. Content management in Facebook of the official accounts of football federations.

	Asociación del Fútbol Argentino (CONMEBOL)	Confederação Brasileira de Futebol (CONMEBOL)	Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio (UEFA)	Real Federación Española de Fútbol (UEFA)	The Football Association (UEFA)
Institutional	3	6	5	5	3
Training	2	0	0	1	0
Pre-match	3	2	0	1	0
Match	0	0	0	0	0
Post-match	4	1	2	2	2
Press conference	0	0	0	0	5
Interview	0	0	1	1	0
Players	23	2	6	6	4
Youth categories	7	2	11	28	27
Fans	1	1	0	0	0
Marketing	0	0	0	3	10
Total	43	14	25	47	51

Source. Official accounts in social media of football federations.

tent categories as follows: "Institutional" 5 publications, "Training" 1 publication, "Pre-match" 1 post, "Post-match" 2 publications, "Interview" 1 publication, "Youth Categories" 28 publications, "Players" 6 publications and "Marketing" 3 publications. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The official page in this social network of The Football Association has used the different categories of content as follows: "Institutional" 3 publications, "Post-match" 2 publications, "Press conference" 5 publications, "Youth Categories" 27 publications, "Players" 4 publications and "Marketing" 10 publications. The rest of the content categories have not been used (Table 2).

3.2. MANAGEMENT OF OFFICIAL ACCOUNTS IN INSTAGRAM

In this section, the data from the social network Instagram is presented. The Asociación del Fútbol Argentino has used the different categories of content as follows: "Institutional" 3 publications, "Pre-match" 1 publication, "Post-match" 4 publications, "Youth categories" 9 publications, "Players" 26 publications and "Fans" 3 publications. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The Confederação Brasileira de Futebol has used the different categories of content as follows: "Institutional" 9 publications, "Youth Categories" 7 publications and "Players" 2 publications. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio has used the different content categories as fo-

Table 3. Management of Instagram content in the official accounts of football federations.

	Asociación del Fútbol Argentino (CONMEBOL)	Confederação Brasileira de Futebol (CONMEBOL)	Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio (UEFA)	Real Federación Española de Fútbol (UEFA)	The Football Association (UEFA)
Institucional	3	9	4	2	1
Entrenamiento	0	0	0	0	0
Pre-partido	1	0	0	0	0
Partido	0	0	0	0	0
Post-partido	4	0	2	1	2
Rueda de prensa	0	0	0	0	2
Entrevista	0	0	0	1	1
Jugadores	26	2	4	6	3
Categorías inferiores	9	7	6	8	2
Afición	3	0	1	0	1
Marketing	0	0	0	1	1
Total	46	18	17	19	13

Source. Official accounts on Instagram of football federations.

llows: "Institutional" 4 publications, "Post-match" 2 publications, "Youth Categories" 6 publications, "Players" 4 publications and "Fans" 1 publication. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The Real Federación Española de Fútbol (Spanish National Team) in its official account in the analyzed social network has used the different content categories as follows: "Institutional" 2 publications, "Post-match" 1 publication, "Interview" 1 post, "Youth Categories" 8 publications, "Players" 6 publications and "Marketing" 1 publication. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The official Instagram account of The Football Association has used the different content categories in the following way: "Institutional" 1 publication, "Post-match" 2 publications, "Press conference" 2 publications, "Interview" 1 publication, "Youth categories" 2 publications, "Players" 3 publications, "Marketing" 1 publication

and "Fans" 1 publication. The rest of the content categories have not been used (Table 3).

3.3. MANAGEMENT OF OFFICIAL ACCOUNTS ON TWITTER

Below are the results obtained from the official accounts in the social network Twitter. The Asociación del Fútbol Argentino has used the different content categories in the following way: "Retweet" 4 publications, "Institutional" 9 publications, "Pre-match" 18 publications, "Match" 40 publications, "Post-match" 11 publications, "Press conference" 8 publications, "Interview" 5 publications, "Youth categories" 95 publications, "Players" 468 publications and "Fans" 2 publications. The rest of the content categories were not used.

The Confederação Brasileira de Futebol has used the following content categories on the social network Twitter: "Institutional" 45 publica-

tions, "Pre-match" 18 publications, "Post-match" 29 publications, "Interview" 1 publication, "Youth Categories" 41 publications, "Players" 1 publication, "Marketing" 6 publications and "Fans" 2 publications. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The official account of Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio on the social network Twitter has used the different content categories as follows: "Retweet" 6 publications, "Institutional" 20 publications, "Pre-match" 14 publications, "Post-match" 17 publications, "Press conference" 2 publications, "Interview" 3 publications, "Youth categories" 77 publications, "Players" 45 publications, "Marketing" 3 publications and "Fans" 1 publication. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The Real Federación Española de Fútbol (Spanish National Team) in the social network Twitter has used the different categories of content

as follows: "Retweet" 1 publication, "Institutional" 13 publications, "Training" 5 publications, "Pre-match" 17 publications, "Post-match" 13 publications, "Press conference" 1 publication, "Interview" 5 publications, "Youth categories" 85 publications, "Players" 49 publications, "Marketing" 14 publications and "Fans" 9 publications. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The Football Association in the social network Twitter has used the different categories of content as follows: "Retweet" 31 publications, "Institutional" 30 publications, "Pre-match" 8 publications, "Post-match" 5 publications, "Press Conference" 11 publications, "Interview" 35 publications, "Youth categories" 241 publications, "Players" 44 publications, "Marketing" 59 publications and "Fans" 25 publications. The rest of the content categories have not been used (Table 4).

Table 4. Management of content on Twitter of the official accounts of football federations.

	Asociación del Fútbol Argentino (CONMEBOL)	Confederação Brasileira de Futebol (CONMEBOL)	Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio (UEFA)	Real Federación Española de Fútbol (UEFA)	The Football Association (UEFA)
Institutional	9	45	20	13	30
Training	0	0	0	5	0
Pre-match	18	18	14	17	8
Match	40	0	0	0	9
Post-match	11	29	17	13	5
Press conference	8	0	2	1	11
Interview	5	1	3	5	35
Players	468	1	45	49	44
Youth categories	95	41	77	85	241
Fans	2	2	1	9	25
Marketing	0	6	3	14	59
Retweet	4	0	6	1	31
Total	660	143	188	212	489

Source. Official Twitter accounts of football federations.

3.4. MANAGEMENT OF OFFICIAL CHANNELS ON YOUTUBE

The results obtained from the official channels of the federations in the YouTube social network are presented in this section. The Asociación del Fútbol Argentino has not published content on the dates that the investigation was conducted.

The Confederação Brasileira de Futebol has used the different categories of content as follows: "Institutional" 34 publications, "Post-match" 13 publications and "Youth categories" 2 publications. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio has used the different content categories in the following way: "Institutional" 10 publications and

"Players" 1 publication. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The official YouTube channel of the Real Federación Española de Fútbol (Spanish National Team) has used the different content categories as follows: "Institutional" 2 publications, "Interview" 3 publications, "Youth categories" 31 publications and "Players" 1 publication. The rest of the content categories have not been used.

The Football Association has used the different content categories in the following way: "Institutional" 5 publications, "Pre-match" 1 publication, "Post-match" 34 publications, "Press conference" 1 publication, "Interview" 3 publications, "Youth categories" 16 publications, "Players" 10 publications and "Fans" 2 publications. The rest of the content categories have not been used (Table 5).

Table 5. Content management on YouTube of the official channels of football federations.

	Asociación del Fútbol Argentino (CONMEBOL)	Confederação Brasileira de Futebol (CONMEBOL)	Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio (UEFA)	Real Federación Española de Fútbol (UEFA)	The Football Association (UEFA)
Institutional	0	34	10	2	5
Training	0	0	0	0	0
Pre-match	0	0	0	0	1
Match	0	0	0	0	0
Post-match	0	13	0	0	34
Press conference	0	0	0	0	1
Interview	0	0	0	3	3
Players	0	0	1	1	10
Youth categories	0	2	0	31	16
Fans	0	0	0	0	2
Marketing	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	49	11	37	72

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Social media are used differently by national football federations. Of the networks studied in the analyzed period, the social network with the most publications issued by the national football federations is Twitter with a great difference over the rest of the social networks. It has been observed that the social network that had the least amount of content published was YouTube.

The issuers, which in this case are the national football federations, publish different content. The content of the Asociación de Fútbol Argentino has been highlighted in this study.

A different behavior of content emission from the federations was also observed according to the used social network. The issuer that published most frequently on Facebook was The Football Association, while the one that least published content was the Confederação Brasileira de Futebol. Regarding Instagram, the federation that published the most was the Asociación de Fútbol Argentino, while the one that published the least was The Football Association. On Twitter, it was observed that the number of publications was much greater than in the rest of analyzed social networks with a

quite remarkable difference. The analyzed issuer that published more in this network was the Asociación de Fútbol Argentino. In contrast, the federation that had the least number of publications was the Confederação Brasileira de Futebol. In YouTube, the federation that shared the most publications in its channel was The Football Association, while the one that least published was the Asociación de Fútbol Argentino. This did not use its official channel during the analyzed period, showing a behavior very different in relation to the rest of the analyzed media.

The study shows that the most commonly used content categories were "Players", "Youth categories" and "Institutional". After breaking down the content categories by social networks analyzed, those that had the highest level of use by the issuers were "Players" on Instagram, "Institutional" on YouTube, "Youth categories" on Twitter and "Players" on Facebook. The contents with the lowest level of use were "Training", "Fans" and "Marketing".

The analyzed official accounts use different categories of content at the time of publication in each analyzed network. The Asociación de Fútbol Argentino stands out as the great issuer of the content category "Players", while it has barely used "Training", "Match" and "Marketing".

The Confederação Brasileira de Futebol stands out in the use of institutional contents.

The Real Federación Española de Fútbol and the Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio were the only federations that published content in all the social networks. Both issuers stand out in the use of informative content about their youth categories. The Football Association stands out in the management of content on Facebook and YouTube, emphasizing the content of their younger players like the federations of Spain and Italy.

New research lines could be opened to deal with the areas around the analysis of the hearings of national football federations according

to the classification of Webster (1998) and citing Berganza and Ruiz (2005) or in relation to the effects on the recipients of the content that is issued according to the classification of Berganza and Ruiz (2005). All this can be done taking into account the social networks Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube as communication means according to the classification of Berganza and Ruiz (2005), considering the content issued and sorted into categories according to the classification of Igartua and Humanes (2004) and taking into account the results of this research.

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The internationalization of Valencian universities through Twitter

La internacionalización de las universidades valencianas a través de Twitter

3

ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: February 02, 2019 / ACCEPTED: June 05, 2019

Abstract

Internationalization policies are becoming very important in the institutional communication strategies of Spanish universities. Social networks are presented as the best channel to build the brands of universities in search of students and researchers to increase their international projection. This research analyzes how the five public universities of the Valencian Community take advantage of corporate communication through Twitter to increase their internationalization policies. The study shows that actions related to knowledge transfer and innovation dominate the institutional communication of the examined universities on Twitter.

KEYWORDS

Internationalization, institutional communication, university, ICT, social networks, Twitter.

Resumen

La internacionalización está cobrando gran importancia en las estrategias de comunicación institucional de las universidades españolas. Las redes sociales se revelan como el mejor canal para construir la marca en busca de estudiantes e investigadores, a fin de aumentar la proyección a nivel internacional. Esta investigación analiza el modo en que las cinco universidades públicas de la Comunitat Valenciana aprovechan la comunicación corporativa a través de Twitter para profundizar en sus políticas de internacionalización. El estudio demuestra que las acciones relacionadas con la innovación y la transferencia de conocimientos dominan la comunicación institucional en Twitter de las instituciones examinadas.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Internacionalización, comunicación institucional, universidad, TIC, redes sociales, Twitter.

1. INTRODUCTION

University institutions are paying more attention to the management of their corporate image since having a strong corporate brand is an asset that reports great benefits to these higher education centers by allowing the institution's competitiveness to increase (Takaki, 2015). In addition, institutional communication is one of the most important tools in the design of university internationalization policies, in which the messages produced and spread by the institution must be focused from a global perspective that justifies its realization as part of a broader communication strategy; always according to their objectives, institutional policies and values (Reina Estevez, Fernández Castillo & Noguer Jiménez, 2012).

The Working Group responsible for drafting the Estrategia de Internacionalización de las Universidades Españolas 2015-2020, promoted by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, indicates that the concept of internationalization:

goes beyond mere student mobility and signing of international agreements. It should consider aspects of internationalization such as training curricula, circulation of minds, internationalization of research, joint or multiple international degrees with foreign partners, internationalization at home, development of transnational campuses, creation of international quality control systems, accreditation, verification, competition for the best students, international rankings of universities

(ranking), development of international alumni associations (“alumni”), exchange of experiences, good practices, employability and entrepreneurship. (MECD, 2014: 4)

The internationalization of higher education is one of the most important contemporary trends and had its greatest expression in the Bologna process. It generates profits and benefits to universities, promoting the diversity of capacities necessary for the development of countries. Within the framework of these policies, the primary objective is focused on the attraction of foreign students and teachers and the training of nationals abroad (Rama, 2012), a purpose for which the visibility and communication capacity of universities is key.

In the last two decades, the University has undergone a huge transformation and, undoubtedly, ICTs have played a crucial role in this process (Sangrà & González Sanmamed, 2004), since traditional communication strategies do not cause the same impact on new generations than they did some years ago. The entry of the Internet into our societies has modified our environment. Due to the development of the web, new communicative, informative and development possibilities for higher education have been opened (Baelo & Cantón, 2010).

Web 2.0 has been a huge boost in the exchange and dissemination of information (González-Díaz, Iglesias-García & Codina, 2015). This communicative revolution is largely due to the changes in computerization that society has undergone, allowing organizations to interact with their audiences and communicate at a new level without temporal or spatial limitations (Reina Estevez, Fernández Castillo & Noguer Jiménez, 2012).

The irruption of social networks has changed the way in which communication between

the actors of society is conceived. These tools have evolved the available means for communication, adding new channels, replacing some pre-existing protocols and opening a new scenario that the university, as the main institution in the field of formation and development of society, must be aware of in order to adapt to it (Reina Estevez, Fernández Castillo & Noguer Jiménez, 2012). With the new generation lead by the so-called “millennials” (Moya Camacho & Orozco Ramírez, 2017), we are in the presence of a new type of user, the prosumer. This user has become the central element of the communicative process by ceasing to be a mere observer (Macías-Alegre, 2016) because new technologies have given him/her the power to share, create, inform and communicate, making them an essential element in his/her life (Gómez, Roses & Farias, 2012). For this reason, corporate communication strategies and universities in the digital field should be focused on this type of user and should not be limited to the generation of content but should take into account the opinions of these actors and their contributions.

The use of ICT as a whole, in addition to positioning and disseminating the image of the institutions, plays an important role in the internationalization of the study and research models of the higher-level educational centers. These are powerful tools for the marketing or international relations departments of universities, although the presence of these entities in social media must respond to objectives aligned with the identity and strategic plan of each institution (García García, 2018).

Spanish institutions are a benchmark for internationalization through digital media, establishing among their main objectives the dissemination of the “Study in Spain” brand that is included in the Internationalization and Modernization Plan for Spanish universities. Along

with this, the network of higher education institutions also agrees to observe the mobility of students, young researchers, professors, administration and service staff as the engine for the internationalization of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This is a task in which the European institutions are working to facilitate and boost the arrival of foreigners belonging to such groups and promote their subsequent mobility among the Member States of the Union (MECD, 2014).

In Spain, the Campus of International Excellence (CEI) program is promoted by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports and it encourages the development of internationalization strategies in Spanish universities through the following actions (MECD, 2014):

1. Cross-border campus development.
2. Establishment of international agreements with transnational mobility of learning and knowledge.
3. Establishment of world class centers of excellence abroad.
4. Organization of international events in Spain.
5. Participation in international projects, associations and networks in higher education, research and innovation.
6. Development of programs and institutional strategies for international learning, knowledge and employment mobility.

This same ministerial plan indicates that the following actions are the priority internationalization practices and strategies in the Spanish university system:

1. Exchange of students, teachers and administrative staff as a growing aspect of internationalization.

2. Development and contrast of academic standards and quality assurance.
3. International collaboration in education, research and innovation.
4. Internationalization of management structures.

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

This research focuses on the actions carried out by the five public universities of the Valencian Community (Universitat de València, Universitat Politècnica de València, Universitat Jaume I, Universitat d'Alacant and Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche) in order to promote their internationalization in the social media sphere. It was carried out through the analysis of the strategies and the means used, mainly the use of ICTs, taking the official profiles of these five institutions on Twitter as a reference for the study since it is one of the social networks with the largest number of users currently. According to García García (2018), Twitter is the most important platform for Spanish universities followed by Facebook and LinkedIn. Simancas-González and García-López (2017) also point out that the institutional profiles on social networks, especially Facebook and Twitter, are the second most cited media by communication managers of Spanish universities as the main internal and external communication channel after the institutional web. The following objectives have been set in the development of this work:

General objective: Evaluate the importance that Valencian public universities give to internationalization through their institutional communication via Twitter.

Specific objective 1: Measure which internationalization factors are a priority in university communication through Twitter.

Specific objective 2: Observe the dominant formal characteristics in those tweets aimed at promoting university internationalization (language used, incorporated elements, links, hashtags, etc.).

Specific objective 3: Examine the authorship of tweets aimed at the internationalization of the institution.

Specific objective 4: Analyze the feedback generated by those tweets of the university institution that seek to promote internationalization.

The data analyzed correspond to the months of June, July and September 2018. These are key dates in the university internationalization strategies because the first two months correspond to the stage of completion of the period of studies and the last one corresponds with the beginning of the regular program. The month of August was not taken into account because it is a period in which the Spanish university is not providing services.

A total of 1,581 publications made by these institutions were analyzed in the indicated period in order to meet the objectives. The criteria of section 4 of the "Estrategia para la internacionalización de las universidades españolas 2015-2020" document prepared by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (2014)¹

¹ Factors 4.2 (Recognition of study periods and qualifications), 4.3 (Accreditation of teaching and research staff) and 4.4. (Accreditation of programs) included in the ministerial document have not been taken into account in the design of the codification tool since these are administrative actions difficult to translate into communication.

were followed for codification according to internationalization factors, differentiating four categories:

- a) Entry and exit mobility. Talent gathering.

The mobility of students, young researchers, professors, administration and service staff has been considered as the engine of internationalization. According to the data collected in the ministerial report, the number of mobile students is expected to grow to 7 million by the end of the 2010-2020 decade. For the analysis of this category, three sub-levels were established. The first sub-level corresponds to actions aimed at student mobility. Entry mobility is considered to be all publications that promote degree programs, master's degrees of the university and short courses of maximum 3 months. The publications that encourage students and teachers to make short or long stays in higher education centers different to the institution that generates the message were taken into account as exit mobility. Along the same lines, the second sub-level is designed to classify mobility actions that target teaching staff, researchers, administration and service staff.

The third sub-level includes publications related to Research and International Doctorate (factor 4.5 of the ministerial document). It focused on the messages linked to the incentive of doctoral programs in the development of international mobility measures either towards the university (entry) or aimed at doctoral students who wish to make short stays outside the institution (exit) with the support of mobility programs from universities, national support or the EU support.

- b) Knowledge and innovation transfer.

In correspondence with section 4.6 of the Ministry document regarding the Knowledge and Innovation Transfer, this category focused

on enhancing the international leadership of Spanish universities will be applicable to those publications that promote the transfer of knowledge and technologies between academic and business fields in open and flexible environments of collaboration in R+D+i, including the interaction, dissemination and adoption of shared models of new ideas, in addition to the commercialization of R+D+i results and the strengthening of entrepreneurial activity born in the university.

Two subfactors are considered for the analysis of this category. On one hand, the International Relations factor related to collaboration agreements between universities (national or foreign), R&D Centers and Companies. Each of these subcategories is mutually exclusive for statistical analysis. On the other hand, the subfactor of the Promotion of results, classifying them as internal (publications referring to results of research carried out by university staff in collaboration with staff from other universities or 100% of the institution; events, congresses, workshops and achievements of university staff such as students, professors or researchers) or external (publications related to research results from outside the institution that are interesting or attractive for the research lines of internal or adjunct staff).

- c) Employability

It corresponds to factor 4.7 of the ministerial report that relates to the potential to get the first job and adapt to the changes that may occur in the future. This category will codify those publications that promote employment, including aspects of labor insertion in mobility programs and aspects that foster international cooperative programs with the industry and the business sector with the use of different mechanisms such as lectures in companies, internships, stays in companies for professors and

researchers, recruitment of visiting professors from the industry and training of international entrepreneurs. It will also take into account publications that contain job offers or refer to them, classifying them into national or foreign.

- d) Cooperation in education with other regions

It corresponds to factor 4.8 of the Ministry document and is related to cooperation in education with other regions of the world. Much of the mobility involves knowledge and dissemination of information about the possibilities offered by Spain and its university system. This category will include publications made by the public universities studies in order to disseminate the Spanish language and culture, increasing the demand for studies in Spanish. This is because knowledge of the language and the interest in Spanish culture are usually some of the main reasons that move students when choosing Spain as their destination for studies. These students and their families later become diffusers of Spanish culture and promoters of all kinds of relations with Spain.

Based on the review of these four internationalization factors and the objectives outlined above, a coding template was designed to analyze quantitative content and extract data to contrast the activity on Twitter of the five institutions of the study. The coding of the analysis units was carried out based on five variables: correspondence with internationalization policies, presence of internationalization factors, formal characteristics of the tweet, authorship and feedback.

3. DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

3.1. TWEETS RELATED TO INTERNATIONALIZATION POLICIES

Of the 1,581 analyzed publications, 628 are tweets where strategies linked to internationalization policies are identified, representing 40% of the total messages analyzed. This value was exceeded in some of the universities, the Universitat Jaume I (UJI) showed a higher percentage of tweets linked to observable internationalization objectives in 42% of its publications. On the other hand, the University of Valencia (UV) reported the lowest percentage with 35%, slightly below the global average (Figure 1).

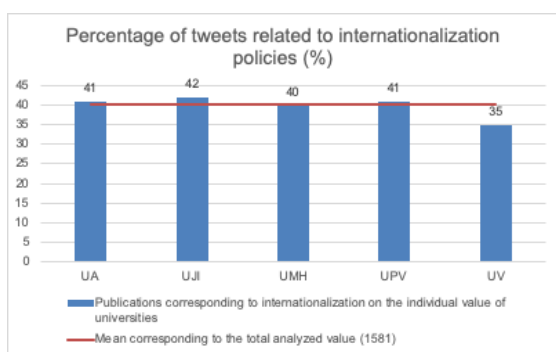


Figure 1. Values corresponding to the total publications on internationalization.

3.2. DOMINANT INTERNATIONALIZATION FACTORS

3.2.1. ENTRY AND EXIT MOBILITY. TALENT GATHERING

One of the factors of internationalization with greater importance for universities is the mobility of staff and the attraction to the campus of researchers and students through messages such as the one in Image 1. This factor represents 32% of publications related to strategies of internationalization with a total of 201 tweets (see Figure 2), this value was exceeded

by the communication on Twitter of the UV, UJI and Miguel Hernández de Elche (UMH) universities. In this sense, the Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV) and the Universitat d'Alacant (UA) were left behind, the latter with a discrete 20% (Figure 2 and 3).

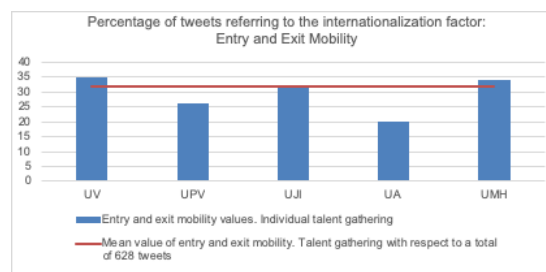


Figure 2. Values of the total of publications on the entry and exit mobility factor. Talent gathering.



Figure 3. Example of publication with internationalization factors. Entry and exit mobility. Talent gathering (UV degree program).

3.2.2. KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION TRANSFER

Regarding the contents of their profiles on Twitter, it can be seen that Valencian universities give great importance to the dissemination of their scientific activity in accordance with the importance given to innovation and the internationalization trend of all Spanish universities (García García, 2018).

Knowledge and innovation transfer in Valencian public universities is reflected in 62% of

the total of 628 tweets linked to internationalization policies. The hegemony of this factor is in accordance with the national trend observed in 391 publications of the corpus. In this trend, innovation emerges as a key issue as it is a clear meeting point between the university and society (García García, 2018). In this case, the behavior of each university was variable. Three of the analyzed institutions reported values above the global average, highlighting the University of Alicante (UA) with 74% of its publications dedicated to this section. On the other hand, the UJI and UMH universities were slightly below the global average with 57% and 55%, respectively. Figure 4 shows the behavior of this indicator for each of the institutions analyzed with respect to the general average. Figure 5 shows an example of this type of publication, this case corresponds to the promotion of own results. (Figure 4 and 5).

3.2.3. EMPLOYABILITY AND COOPERATION IN EDUCATION WITH OTHER REGIONS

The sections of Employability and Cooperation in Education with other regions represent almost null values. In fact, together they account for approximately 6% of the total of publications with 35 tweets, which is why they are jointly presented in this subsection. The low presence of these factors is due to the fact that the efforts of higher education institutions seem to be focused on the promotion of research results and the incentives to attract talent towards their university centers as the main internationalization strategies. Individually, each university handles these issues very differently (see Figure 6). While in the UV these values represent 2% of tweets (see Figure 7), the UJI dedicates 11% of the messages of internationalization strategies published in its profile on Twitter. (Figure 6 and 7).

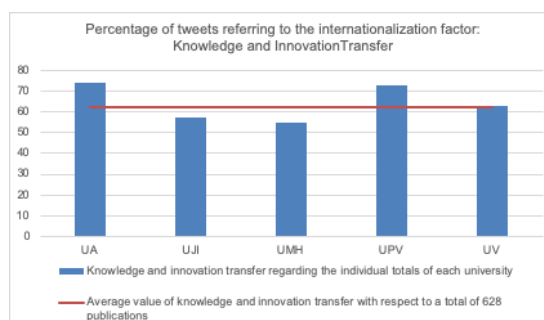


Figure 4. Values of total publications on the knowledge and innovation transfer factor.



Figure 5. Example of publication of the internationalization factor. Knowledge and innovation transfer. (Promotion of the institution's own results).

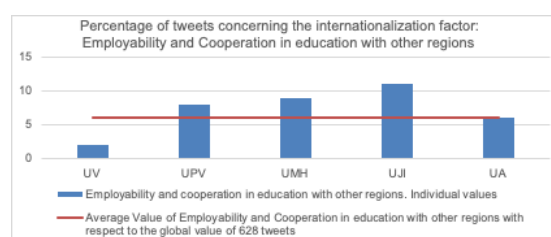


Figure 6. Comparison of the global average and the values of Employability and Cooperation Factors in education with other regions.



Figure 7. Publication related to the Internationalization Factors. Employability and cooperation in education with other regions.



Figure 8. Publication related to the Internationalization Factors. Employability and cooperation in education with other regions.

3.3. COMPOSITION OF TWEETS ON INTERNATIONALIZATION: MAIN FEATURES

3.3.1. USE OF IMAGES AND AUDIOVISUAL ELEMENTS

The composition of the tweets is homogeneous in the analyzed universities. There was a wide use of images in combination with texts, the use of videos was very poor and did not exceed 2% of the total publications. The images are widely used and are present in 76% of tweets with respect to the total of publications related to internationalization factors. Analyzing each university separately, it can be seen that the majority exceeds the threshold of 70% in relation to the use of images as a component of their tweets, except the UPV that only used them in 59% of the times (see Figure 9). An example of this text-image combination can be seen in Figure 8.

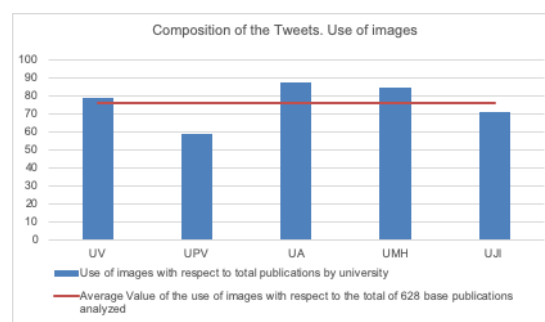


Figure 9. Composition of tweets. Use of images in publications.

3.3.2. USE OF LINKS

A widely used composition is the inclusion of links in publications. These can redirect users to the institution's web portals and in some cases to other websites in order to expand the information disseminated in the publications. The links pointed to the institutional website in 80% of cases, attracting traffic to the university. Two of the five universities exceeded this average, the UJI with 93% and the UPV with 87%. The UMH used this resource less, present only in 66% of its messages. Figure 10 shows the difference in its use among universities. Image 4 shows an example of the use of links to the institutional website in a tweet accompanied by an image.

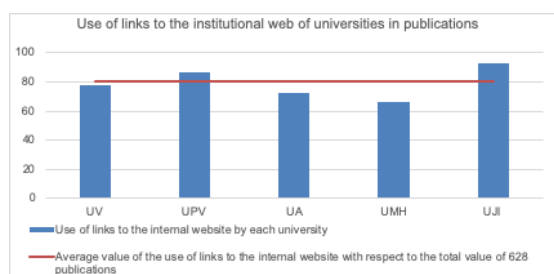


Figure 10. Behavior of the links to the institutional web compared to the average.

The rest of the percentages correspond to links to national domain sites (.es) in 6%, 4% redirect web traffic to other domains on the Internet. The remaining 10% corresponds to publications where no link was used. This last option varied from one university to another, the UMH published tweets that did not include any link more frequently.

3.3.3. LANGUAGE USED

The followers of these profiles are diverse and from different places, so language is a very important factor in communication. The general composition is given by the alternative use of Spanish and Valencian, although several universities choose to publish in one or another language. An example of this is the UJI that has two profiles on Twitter, one with news written in more than 95% in Valencian and another profile in Spanish. Both share similar news, but the first has the largest number of followers. Another example is the UA that also has two independent profiles in different languages with similar news. In general, it can be seen that although the Valencian is widely used in the official profiles of the universities as a co-official language of the Valencian Community together with the Spanish, the highest percentage at global level of messages of the institutions analyzed through Twitter is disseminated in Spanish (50% of tweets), followed by Valencian (present in 40% of publications) and to a lesser

extent in English (present in 10% of tweets that have been encoded as messages aligned with internationalization strategies).

Analyzed individually, there is some variation in the data according to the university. The institutions with the highest use of Valencian over Spanish are UV and UJI with 83% and 76%, respectively. The rest of the publications are written in Spanish. On the other hand, the Twitter profiles of the UA (96%), the UMH (93%) and the UPV (80%) have the greatest use of Spanish in their publications. The first two used English in their tweets with 1% and 2%, respectively. The following table shows this relationship: (Table 1)

University	Spanish	Valencian	English
Universitat de València	17%	83%	0%
Universitat Politècnica de València	80%	23%	0%
Universitat d'Alacant	96%	3%	1%
Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche	93%	5%	2%
Universitat Jaume I	24%	76%	0%

Table 1. Use of Spanish, Valencian and English in publications made by universities regarding to the internationalization factors.

3.3.4. USE OF HASHTAGS

Hashtags are some of the most popular concepts because of their extensive use in both personal and institutional profiles. These allow classifying and categorizing the theme of the messages that are published on social networks, especially Twitter (Castelló Martínez, 2013). Even so, its use by the universities of the Va-

lencian Community is reduced. In general, they were used in 43% of the 628 analyzed publications, this value varies depending on the analyzed institution. The UA (see Image 12) and UMH are the only ones that exceed that value with 68% and 76%, respectively. The rest does not reach 40%. The UJI made use of hashtags in 38%, followed with 20% of the UV and the one with the least values reported was the UPV with 8%. (Figure 11 and 12).

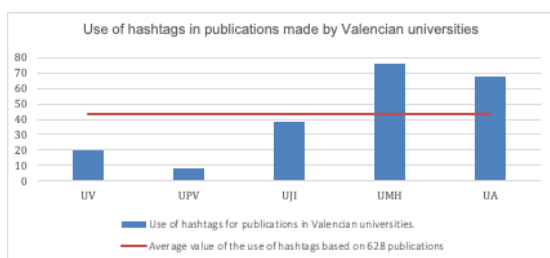


Figure 11. Use of hashtags in the publications on internationalization of Valencian universities.



Figure 12. Use of hashtags in the publications corresponding to the internationalization factors.

3.4. AUTHORSHIP OF TWEETS RELATED TO INTERNATIONALIZATION

The tweets that were framed in publications related to internationalization factors were classified into originals, generated by the institution that spread them or retweets. Most publications (93%) of the 628 tweets analyzed were categorized as originals. This hegemony is similar in each of the analyzed universities. Four universities show values equal to or higher than 90%, only the UMH has a lower value with 81% as shown in the following graph:

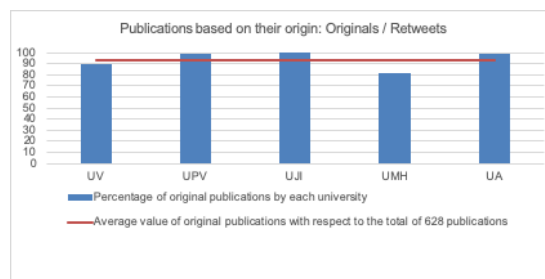


Figure 13. Original authorship of the analyzed tweets

3.5. FEEDBACK IN TWEETS RELATED TO INTERNATIONALIZATION POLICIES

With respect to the interactions recorded in publications related to internationalization policies, all universities achieved some kind of reaction in the tweets either by likes, comments or retweets. The amount of interactions of one type or another depends largely on the multimedia resources used, as shown by the correlation of the data obtained from the presence of images and audiovisual elements with the coded response of Twitter users. Thus, those publications that included images obtained greater feedback than those that only contained text. As a general average, 13 likes, 0.2 comments and 6 retweets were obtained for each post. The following table shows the average interaction in each publication made by the universities. (Table 2).

University	Likes	Comments	Retweets
Universitat de València	13	0.2	6
Universitat Politècnica de València	13	0.2	7
Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche	10	0.2	6
Universitat Jaume I	4	0.06	2
Universitat d'Alacant	14	0.4	8

Table 2. Average of interactions received by each publication related to internationalization.

4. CONCLUSIONS

After the study and analysis of the tweets that make up the corpus, it can be said that the public universities of the Valencian Community attach great importance to the projection of their internationalization policies, following the direction of the strategies designed by the Ministry and endorsed by the efforts that are observed through their institutional communication using their profiles on Twitter.

This emphasis on internationalization policies is within the framework of the strategy defined by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of Spain in 2014 for the period 2015-2020. The communication of actions related to innovation and knowledge transfer, a priority for Valencian public universities stands out. This prevalence places this commitment as one of the basic pillars of university communication activities and as a meeting point between university and society for its capacity of placing these institutions in the international sphere as dynamic and attractive centers. Secondly, the examined institutions also show a high interest in boosting entry and exit mobility and talent gathering actions. Together, both factors represent 93% of all the publications analyzed.

As has been appreciated, the Valencian public universities give greater weight to the use of images over other multimedia resources, such as videos, for the dissemination of internationalization policies through Twitter. In most cases, the examined tweets are enriched by the

inclusion of links that direct followers to institutional websites to expand the information. On other occasions, they are directed towards national interest sites. In this way, it is verified that the institutional communication on Twitter related to internationalization policies of the Valencian public universities is in accordance with the trends observed at the national level, which prioritize the contents related to the brand in image or link format followed by the video format (García García, 2018). The same will to increase the international projection of the institution could explain that universities favor Spanish over Valencian, co-official language in the Valencian Community, which only dominates in the case of the University of Valencia and the University Jaume I. However, the commitment to internationalization policies does not contribute to significantly introduce the English language in the corporate communication of these universities, in whose messages it is practically non-existent.

Higher Education can and should adapt to the new requirements of society and contribute to overcoming positions of inequality in front of

globalization processes, addressing interuniversity affairs and relations between university and society from the logic of cooperation and not competitiveness. The internationalization factor linked to cooperative objectives should occupy a more prominent place both in the mission and in the institutional communication of contemporary universities. In the 21st century, Higher Education has been recognized as a factor in the development of nations (Sacas-López, 2014), a purpose for which the development of policies, internationalization strategies and adequate communication is of vital importance. Many of them can only be executed successfully with the help of individual and institutional actors whose contribution is indispensable. Therefore, the responsible and effective use of ICTs as fundamental tools to meet the internationalization goals set by each institution brings progress to the country within the framework of national strategies, recognizing universities as architects of the scientific and technological development of our time.

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Twitter as an instrument of participation and deliberation. An approach to its use from the perspective of cyber-democracy. The Rafael Correa case

Twitter como instrumento de participación y deliberación. Una aproximación a su uso desde la perspectiva de la ciberdemocracia: Caso Rafael Correa

4

ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: May 7, 2019 / ACCEPTED: July 02, 2019

Abstract

This article analyzes the use of social networks in the field of political communication as spaces to promote citizen participation and democratic deliberation, which we call "cyber-democracy." The study is based on the description of this concept and its application in the analysis of the Twitter account of the former Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa (@MashiRafael) to determine its informative, deliberative and participatory potential. It is concluded that in spite of being one of the accounts with the greatest interaction at the regional level, its use maintained limitations in the promotion of participation and deliberation, key elements of "cyber-democracy".

Keywords

Cyber-democracy, Social networks, Twitter, Political communication, Rafael Correa.

Resumen

Este artículo analiza el uso de las redes sociales en el campo de la comunicación política como espacios para fomentar la participación ciudadana y deliberación democrática, a lo que llamamos "ciberdemocracia". El estudio parte de la descripción de este concepto para luego aplicarlo en el análisis de la cuenta de Twitter del expresidente ecuatoriano Rafael Correa (@MashiRafael) a fin de determinar su potencial informativo, deliberativo y participativo. Se concluye que, a pesar de ser una de las cuentas con mayor interacción a nivel regional, su uso mantuvo limitaciones en el fomento de la participación y deliberación, elementos clave de la "ciberdemocracia."

Palabras clave

Ciberdemocracia, redes sociales, Twitter, comunicación política, Rafael Correa.

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital platforms have revolutionized the world of communication mainly because Web 2.0 has eliminated the passivity of the viewer by increasing citizen participation, a characteristic of democracy (Menéndez, 2011). The role of passive receiver has been replaced by an active user who creates, shares, interacts and participates in communication processes.

The importance of the study of social networks in the framework of political communication lies in the extent to which they encourage the participation of their users in the information and political processes (Towner, 2013). In addition, they constitute "monumental deliberative spaces" that are ideal to generate and promote debate (Caldevilla, 2010).

Citizens, now turned into users, talk about what really interests them in these digital media and it is they who can generate the political and media agenda (Hernández, 2013). As Vaca (2013) states, in social networks "anyone is potentially a means of communication without the permission of the States" (p.225).

This dialogue now takes place within a digital space with the help of social networks, building what is known as the "online public sphere" (Posada, 2011). Paraphrasing Castells (2008), the information revolution has caused public opinion to globalize. That is, the public sphere, the voice of the people that defines the politics of society previously built in "socio-spatial" places, has been extended to a global environment based on the contents published by the media. There is talk of a global civil society and a "citizenship without borders" that shares, expres-

ses values and interests for universal well-being and manifests a form of global governance (Resina, 2010).

The internet and social networks welcome new virtual communities. These include a valuable and new space for political participation, playing a significant role in influencing government decision-making and shaping relationships between the executive, political and citizen powers and other social actors (Sandoval-Almazán and Gil-García, 2014). In the cyberspace, the user empowers himself as a citizen to comment and present his point of view to an online society that has more and more voices and receivers. The citizen now has the power that was once the privilege of journalists to question, criticize and comment (Rodríguez and Ureña, 2011).

This network of e-citizens who interact and actively engage in political life and collective decisions within an online scenario is called “cyber-democracy” (Sánchez, 2008). Being a new and ambiguous term, there is no consensus in its definition. However, in this investigation we follow Martín (2004), who applies the term as a form of deliberative or participatory democracy against representative democracy, which allows to connect, communicate and share information with a global community.

The development of cyber-democracy has used several spaces to manage its digital operations, with Twitter as one of the central parts of this virtual public sphere (Sampedro and Resina, 2010). After thirteen years of existence, Twitter has established itself as the favorite network to inform and communicate by its microblogging nature (Caldevilla, 2010) that allows a greater content flow in less time.

In the world of political relations, this social network has reached great popularity especially when measuring the interaction between voters and leaders (Waisbord, 2013). Matthias

Lufkens (2015), said in a study conducted for Twiplomacy that the differences between politicians and countries are now reflected on Twitter, leading to a kind of “hashtag war” between embassies and foreign ministries. According to Deltell and Martínez (2014), several intellectuals and analysts believe that Twitter is a vital element for the consolidation of democracy, social values and freedom; a situation that has nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize several times (Morozov, 2012).

This has not gone unnoticed in Latin American political reality. According to data from TwLat.com, the ten most active leaders in Latin America and in the Spanish language in 2013 exceeded a total of 100 million followers, with figures such as Hugo Chávez, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, Dilma Rousseff, among others. Rafael Correa has been considered one of the most influential political figures in the social networks of Ecuador. According to the ranking by Twiplomacy (2015), Correa was ranked # 22 of the world leaders with the most followers on Twitter, in addition to being the Latin American leader who generated the most conversation with 71% of user response tweets. Worldwide, Correa was in the third place of the leaders with the greatest online interaction (Espinosa, 2011).

These characteristics and the popularity in the network made Correa the most influential politician in the country on Twitter (Torral, 2013; Llorente and Cuenca, 2014), where the personality of the ex-president was reflected in many of his messages. Feeling this closeness, some citizens chose to express their complaints and requests, which the former president managed by delegating the problem to the responsible authority. You can even say that the then president ruled through his Twitter account (Ávila, 2017). “Government communication teams are forced to monitor any keyword that cites them,

whether or not they have Twitter and mentions” (Espinosa, 2011, p. 11).

For Mathew Carpenter (2015), former online manager of Google and Twitter for Latin America, Ecuador was the only country in the world where the public sector was more advanced than the private sector in the use of social networks. “I did not find in the world any government that understood the power of networks like this (referring to the government of Rafael Correa)” (p. 1).

Presenting this panorama, the national and international impact of Rafael Correa's Twitter account is evident. However, given the principles of deliberation and participation that the digital public sphere implies, how much has this instrument of communication and management been used to build and strengthen cyber-democracy? This research seeks to provide a descriptive analysis of the use, strategies and management of the Twitter account @MashiRafael.

2. METHOD

A methodology based on two investigations, “The Latin American Governor” of Valenti et al. (2015) and “Political Communication in Social Networks” by María Hernández (2013), was proposed to carry out an in-depth analysis that visualizes the use of the Twitter account of the former Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa. The first one proposes an information survey matrix and a methodological record to measure the democratic actions of the rulers in social networks. The second complements this information at the theoretical level. In turn, they rely on the proposal of Posada (2011) who analyzes integrated communication technologies or ICT as tools to reconnect the electorate with their representatives. In this study, Posada used

three axes as indicators of democratic quality applied to the web pages of political parties in Spain. The proposed axes are: informative, deliberative and participatory.

The methodological approach of this study is quantitative for performing a content analysis and its scope is descriptive. The tweet issued from Rafael Correa's Twitter account, @MashiRafael, and the response to the user were considered as the analysis units. The type of sampling is non-probabilistic and was obtained from the total tweets generated by this account during the period between February 1 and April 1 (n = 262) of 2015¹, together with the responses to users during the selected period (n = 180).

In the first stage of this research, a methodological worksheet was developed. It proposed the categories and indicators with the theoretical support mentioned above. The variables were coded and then tweets were recorded, filtered and categorized.

The methodological structure presented three components, each corresponding to a specific objective. The first component was intended to identify the core issues, this allowed to visualize which issues the former president gave preference to.

The second component was the frequency and viral potential. Being an open and asymmetric public communication platform (Orihuela, 2011), it allows the contents to spread without limitations. With the exception of the maximum limit established by Twitter, which at that time

¹ It should be noted that this period corresponds to the months prior to the visit of Pope Francis to Ecuador, whose presence altered the normal development of communication in Twitter. In addition, the manifestations against the ruling president grew from May 2015 in Ecuador. This political situation would alter the findings, which is why the data was extended until April of that year.

was 140 characters per tweet, this network does not present obstacles when sharing information in an unlimited way (López, 2012). The proposed variables were: number of followers, number of retweets, number of favorites, number of daily publications and number of tweets.

The third component was intended to determine and classify the types of tweets. For this, the following categories proposed by Hernández were established: diversity and quantity of information, interaction, deliberation, citizen participation and account focus (2013, p. 61).

This structure, as proposed by Hernández (2013), aims to describe the opportunities offered by former President Rafael Correa to interact, deliberate with users and allow their participation.

3. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Tweets were classified according to 26 thematic categories and the most repeated words were counted to check the central themes and visualize the predominant thematic contents. The results of the analysis showed that the former president gave preference to issues related to works, visits and political travel (12%); opposition and non-supporters (11%) and communication, media and freedom of expression (8%). The content analysis visualized the recurring use of phrases such as “We are more”, “Ever onward to victory” and “Forbidden to Forget”. It is important to emphasize that 20% of the tweets contained a slogan or made some reference to the Alianza PAIS party or its “Revolución Ciudadana”. Although the repetition of these words demonstrated an effort to position and publicize the party and the government of Alianza PAIS, the use of tags or hashtags was not found on Rafael Correa’s Twitter.

The number of followers is considered as an indicator of the viral potential and the potential scope of the contents (Cha, Haddadi, Benevenuto and Gummadi, 2010) although it is not the most relevant factor when talking about the influence of a political leader on Twitter. In the case of the @MashiRafael account, in August 2015 it had a total of 2,346,000 followers². The average of retweets was 570 and 330 favorites, which evidenced an average of 0.02% and 0.01% of potential readers who considered that the content of the tweet was interesting, relevant or “worthy of being disseminated” (Alonso, Gómez, Figuerola and Cordón, 2012; Jimenez, Artero and Marcos, 2014). According to traditional Twitter analysis metrics, the real reach that the @MashiRafael account maintained was low in proportion to the potential reach.

The amount of information issued is another indicator of activity on Twitter. Illustratively, Rafael Correa could be said to have a total of 8,962 tweets and a total of daily publications ranging from 1 to 20 tweets by the date of the study. The schedules did not seem to be stable either since activity was recorded at any time of the day, especially in the early hours of the morning when a large number of responses were generated.

The predominant type of information was “opinion.” The most repeated central issues were: opposition or non-sympathizers with 30% and communication, media and freedom of expression with 18%. A total of 262 tweets and 182 interactions were recorded during the studied period. That is, 69% of responses to users. Twiplomacy (2015), positioned Rafael Correa as the most conversational leader in Latin America and the third in the world ranking.

² As of the date of this publication, 2019, the total followers of the account reached 3.4 million.

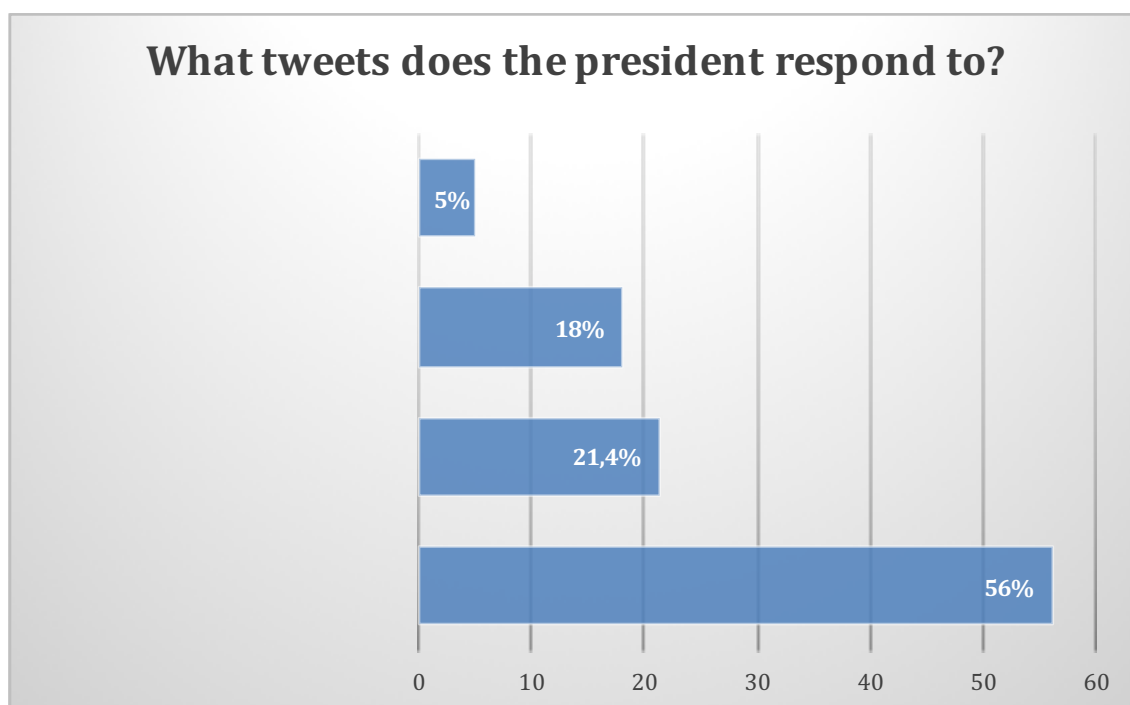


Figure 1. Percentage of responses according to the type of mention.

When responding to a mention, the former president was not only interacting with users but was making visible those who were answered and their tweets. Before this a question arises: Which tweets did the former president respond? 56% of responses to users corresponded to complaints, requests and complaints, followed by a high level of response to sympathetic messages. See Figure 1.

The results of this investigation showed that the @MashiRafael Twitter account promoted few spaces for deliberation. 1% of the tweets contained links or were submitted in the form of an electronic consultation. No tweets had links to applications, citizen debate forums, electronic surveys about projects, reforms or political processes.

It was also found that Rafael Correa did not give priority to his Twitter as a tool for citizen participation. Of the tweets that contained links, only 3% led to citizen participation platforms.

1% of the tweets contained links to contests or applications. The access to the construction of content or online requests was not promoted through links.

3% of the tweets in this account invited citizens to be part of mobilizations and public events. Only 5.3% of tweets were written as a question. 13% of tweets contained a link. Of these tweets, 47% led to media and 26% to photos, reflecting that an informative approach predominated.

4. CONCLUSIONS

One of the results that attracted attention is the low average active audience with more than 2 million followers (August 2015). The average of retweets was only 570 and 330 favorites, equivalent to 0.02% and 0.01% of active audience. Beyond reflecting that the viral potential and the scope of this account was not being exploited, it is questioned why users did not identify themselves with the content or did not consi-

der the it “worthy of being disseminated” (Alonso, Gómez, Figuerola and Córdón, 2012). One of the explanations for this fact may be the time at which the ex-president tweeted, which could generate less reaction in the audience. Another factor was the absence of a hashtag that generally facilitates greater interaction (Suh, B., Hong, L., Pirolli, P. and Chi, E. H. 2010).

This investigation allowed to visualize that Correa gave priority to three issues: works and political path; opposition or non-sympathizers and communication, media and freedom of expression. The immediacy and control of the message made this network perfect for informing the public about the political journey. Accountability is permanent and was shown as an action inherent in political life. Therefore, it is common for rulers to use their social networks to communicate to citizens about activities that are being carried out for the benefit of society.

A characteristic result of the Ecuadorian government in the presidency of Rafael Correa was the importance attributed to issues related to opposition, communication, media and freedom of expression. This allowed to contemplate the constant confrontation of the government with the opposition groups and the media. This confrontation was also evident on Twitter. This investigation showed that 27% of the tweets targeted the “corrupt press” and 13% targeted opponents or non-sympathizers. 67% of tweets that referred to some individual were expressed in a negative tone. The content analysis showed that among the most repeated words in the @MashiRafael account were “corrupt press” and “mercantilist press.” These results warn of possible discrimination against private media (UN criticism, 2012).

Another important conclusion that allowed to envision the management and administration of Rafael Correa's account was the percentage

of response to his followers, which corresponded to 69% of the total content. This situation placed him as the most conversational leader in Latin America. The content analysis showed in more detail that 56% of the mentions received were “Complaints, requests and claims”, 96% of these were answered and delegated to the responsible authority. It can be concluded that Rafael Correa assumed his role as president on Twitter to delegate responsibilities and solve specific problems of citizenship.

This form of interaction between the ruler and the citizens was closer to the practices of Latin American populism where there is a strong and direct involvement with the electorate (Avila, 2017). The former Ecuadorian governor was characterized throughout his management for maintaining a close relationship with people, which was reflected in the high response of the complaints that people gave him on Twitter.

This work concludes that there was a government management by Rafael Correa on Twitter, who kept interacting with the user maintaining a bi-directional use of the mean. Even so, an informative approach predominated over a participatory approach in Rafael Correa's speech on Twitter.

The amount of tweets written as questions was 5.3%. Asking a question on Twitter means opening a space for participation. As Sánchez, Duarte and Rodríguez Esperanza (2013) mention, it is not enough to be present on social networks or increase the number of messages that are published to politically and electorally make these communication channels profitable. This feature has been underestimated by the Ecuadorian former president.

As mentioned earlier, the level of retweets and favorites was low compared to the number of followers that the @MashiRafael account maintained. One of these causes could be that the

messages were written to inform or communicate his opinion to the followers instead of presenting the same content but with a more attractive and inclusive approach that manifests an interest in knowing public opinion (Toral, 2013). Another indicator that allowed to verify the informative approach of the account was the predominance of links to media, photos and videos related to existing links to participation platforms, contests or surveys.

The importance of the amount of information that is delivered through this channel should not be underestimated, since a more informed user is more willing to participate (Posada, 2011). The @MashiRafael Twitter account mainly focuses on informing. However, the theoretical basis of this research proposes a new virtual scenario for politics, a “must be” of social networks in a democratic state. This scenario demands the existence of spaces for deliberation and citizen participation. Literature reaffirms the idea that the key to Twitter is its dialogic potential, in which the voter not only listens but also participates and expresses (Criado, Martínez-Fuentes and Silván, 2013).

For Posada (2011), this participatory component corresponds to the maximum expression of democracy on the internet. However, it is an element that has been ignored and relegated to the Twitter account of the now former president of the Republic of Ecuador.

This scenario of virtual democracy requires important actions on the part of the rulers, such as access to content construction, the possibility of sending proposals, the creation of forums for debates, events and all those efforts that allow citizens to empower themselves of the political processes and intervene in them (Hernández, 2013). Despite having digital platforms that promoted dialogue and the submission of proposals in Ecuador, such as [\[cional.gob.ec\]\(http://cional.gob.ec\) \(page created and enabled in July 2015 by the Secretaría Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo -Senplades\), this study did not identify that the use of this tool was encouraged or promoted through Rafael Correa’s Twitter.](http://www.dialogona-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

This investigation could verify that Rafael Correa’s Twitter account was not used as a democratic tool but as a government management tool. The ex-president delegated and proposed exits to real problems of the citizens through Twitter, this is understood as government management by Twitter. However, it is not possible to talk about cyber-democracy because the spaces and tools have not been promoted enough for citizens to actively empower themselves with political processes.

The content analysis of this research left an interesting reading that reflects what was a big part of the communicational reality of the country. This Twitter account allowed to notice the reactions and listen to the official voice of the president in specific events. However, as long as the rulers do not build spaces for citizen participation and deliberation and the people are not educated to make use of them, it can be said that the “must be” of social networks in a democratic state has not yet been fulfilled.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors thank the Vice-Rectorate of Research of the Universidad del Azuay and the School of Communication for their support in conducting the study.

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Propaganda in social networks: Twitter content analysis during the Andalusian electoral campaign

Propaganda en redes sociales: Análisis de contenido en Twitter durante la campaña electoral andaluza

5

ARTICLE



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Abstract

The communicative phenomenon of propaganda is present in all time periods. However, it acquires greater relevance in electoral campaigns. This work aims to show what type of digital propaganda campaign has been most appealed by the political parties that ran for the Andalusian Parliament (Spain) in 2018. With this objective, a content analysis has been applied to the official Twitter accounts of each organization. Finally, literature on the political effects of propaganda were reviewed for the discussion of the obtained data. These results have confirmed the scientific evidence: the party that has mostly used a negative campaign has been the most affected at the elections.

Keywords

Politics, Propaganda, Elections, Social media, Twitter, Communication.

Resumen

El fenómeno comunicativo de la propaganda se encuentra presente en todo periodo temporal; no obstante, es en las campañas electorales donde adquiere una mayor relevancia. Este trabajo pretende poner de manifiesto qué tipología de campaña propagandística digital ha sido más recurrida por los partidos políticos que optaron al Parlamento Andaluz (España) en 2018. Con este objetivo, se ha aplicado un análisis de contenido en las cuentas oficiales de cada organización en Twitter. Por último, para la discusión de los datos se ha revisado literatura sobre los efectos políticos

de la propaganda. Estos resultados han confirmado las evidencias científicas: el partido que más ha utilizado una campaña negativa ha sido el más perjudicado en las urnas.

Palabras clave

Política, Propaganda, Elecciones, Redes sociales, Twitter, Comunicación.

1. INTRODUCTION

The act of voting represents one of the most important means for the political participation of the majority of citizens from democratic countries. Aware of the importance of this period, the political parties use all the tools available to get supporters for their cause in the days before the vote, one of these instruments being the mass media. However, it should be noted that voting training does not begin exclusively in the electoral period or by the mass media (García Beaudoux, Dádamo and Slavinsky, 2006). In this sense, the pioneering work of the opinion leader of Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1960) stated that people decide their vote for the primary group rather than for the media. Even the maximum referents of the stage of limited effects did not downplay the outcomes that they could have. As they expressed, the fact that the media materialized the latent vote or reinforced the previous attitudes was already an important effect (1960).

The importance of this electoral period means that both the examination of electoral campaigns and the analysis of political effects have been a fertile ground for the field of research in terms of communication. Along these lines, questions have been raised about the greater or lesser effectiveness of the positive, negative (Lau and Pomper, 2001, p. 73) and propaganda messages of the political parties. This discussion has not been free of controversy. Starting from this debate, this research provides a theo-

retical-empirical approach to that discussion by examining the type of propaganda campaign that each political party that obtained parliamentary representation in the 2018 Andalusian elections has used. For this purpose, a content analysis has been carried out during the election campaign on the social network Twitter. In turn, the results obtained will be contrasted with theories of political effects in order to deepen the understanding of the data. Although the nature of the study does not allow correlations to be established, the support in previous research on the theory of the effects of electoral campaigns will make it possible to reflect on the strategy used by each party.

It should be noted that the choice of this temporal and geographical period is relevant as it was in these regional elections when the ultra-right party, VOX, managed to enter the Spanish institutions with force. Therefore, it is of special interest to determine the political strategies of each political party that achieved representation in the Andalusian Parliament and analyze their achievements and communication failures.

1.1. ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

To understand the basis of electoral campaigns and their role in society in political terms, it is necessary to theoretically establish their most significant points. According to Gronbeck (1978) and Norris (1999), this political period has among its objectives to obtaining success

in the battle of ideas, convert opponents, mobilize supporters and provide them information and discussion topics. From a sociological point of view, these purposes are linked to the definition of propaganda provided by Young (1991), who says that it is “the deliberate use of symbols with the purpose of changing people’s beliefs, ideas and ultimately their acts as a form of power and social control” (p. 109). The communicative phenomenon of propaganda receives the electoral campaign to help issuers achieve their objectives: persuade the electorate through different communication techniques. As Domenach (2001) stated, “propaganda is polymorphic and takes many forms” (p. 21).

Digital communication is one of these variants. As Vergeer (2012, p. 9) points out, it is increasingly gaining strength among political parties and candidates to inform, communicate and connect with large segments of the population. This boom in digital propaganda communication has led to an intense debate in the literature about the mediatization of politics, since digital media seem to question the rules of conventional media in the public sphere (Lobera and Sampedro, 2018, p. 555). Along these lines, social networks appear to break the traditional unidirectional propaganda communication (Holtz-Bacha, 2017). However, recent empirical work on the interactivity of political leader accounts breaks that image: using a platform that allows users to interact does not mean they do. Moreover, the fact is that no political office usually “likes”, comment or retweet messages from the common population. (Olof Larsson and Moe, 2010; Gibson, Lusoli, Ward, 2008; Golbeck, Grimes and Rogers, 2010). According to Ross and Burger (2014, p. 60), this democratizing appearance of social networks is not confirmed by most studies that, in general, show the unidirectional flow of communication

and the lack of interest of politicians to actively engage with the public.

All this causes that the digital electoral campaigns have the elements of the traditional propaganda: a collage of messages sent through the television, fragments of the debates and appearances of the main political parties. In the Spanish political sphere, the parties do not seem to take advantage of the conversation possibilities offered by *Twitter*. On the contrary, they are excessively oriented towards the classical vision of traditional media, focused on unidirectional communication and broadcasting (Ramos-Serrano, Fernández Gómez y Pineda, 2018, p. 132). Therefore, the fact that social networks serve to promote traditional messages makes studying the platform appropriate to determine the propaganda strategy used by each political party.

1.2. EFFECTS OF ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS

Electoral campaigns pursue the mobilization of supporters and the conversion of opponents (Gronbeck, 1978; Norris, 1999), knowing if these objectives have been met is one of the biggest questions that opens after the elections. Along these lines, both the political parties and the academic field have tried to elucidate whether the communications issued have had the desired effects. Thus, political communication research has traditionally played a central role in the effects of mass media (McLeod, Kosicki and McLeod, 2002; Holtz-Bacha, 2017). It should be noted that while it is one of the most attractive fields of study, it is also the one that continues to generate more unresolved issues (Hernández-Santaolalla, 2018). In spite of the existing pessimism regarding the prediction of results, there are certain considerations that obtain consensus regarding which communica-

tion strategies usually obtain a greater or lesser success.

Investigations in this subject usually conclude that political communications, either about the candidate or about the party, do a good job in transferring information to voters regardless of whether or not they sympathize with the cause (Martin, 2004; Meirick, 2005; Kaid, Fernandes and Painter, 2011). Indistinctly of the attitude direction caused by the announcements, the mass communication experts agree that political advertising influences voter perceptions of the candidate (Lee Kaid, Postelnicu, Landreville, Jung Yun and Gail LeGrange, 2007). This is an important result because to convey the image of the candidate or the party to the entire electorate is itself an advantage (Lee Kaid, 2008; Wojcieszak and Kim, 2016). The fact that the messages are received and the receiver remembers the candidate or the party does not ensure that the evaluation is positive (Kaid, 2001; Tedesco and Kaid, 2003). For this reason, the new inquiries about the effects are made focusing attention on comparing the reaction to positive and negative messages to find out which ones get a greater acceptance (Sádaba Garraza, 2003).

To that end, empirical works have been carried out and have shown a greater effectiveness in using positive messages (Matthes, 2013; Matthes, 2012; Hyun and Seo, 2019; Heiss and Matthes, 2019). It is argued that these have fewer adverse consequences than those that may result from negative campaigns of attacks on the opponent (García Bedaudoux, Dádamo and Slavinski, 2006; Nai and Walter, 2015). Although negative communications have a greater impact on mass media (Haselmayer, Meyer and Wagner, 2019), these tend to wake adverse emotions in voters and negatively influence the image of the issuers (Chang, 2001; Byrne and Hart, 2009; Malloy and Pearson-Merkowitz,

2016). In favor of these communications, it has been expressed that fear contributes to increase the receiver's attention to political signals (Nabi, 2003; Valentino et al. 2008) and to process that information (Bradley et al. 2007; Lang, 1991). The difficulty derives from the handling of these emotions, anger can facilitate participation but not necessarily reflective participation. On the other hand, fear and sadness can increase the processing of information but with the adverse consequences of demobilization (Weber, 2012, p. 425).

Once the pros and cons of each type of communication have been summarized, we proceed with the data of this work.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of this investigation is to carry out an analysis of the propaganda messages from the social network Twitter during the election campaign period. For this, the official accounts of the parties that obtained parliamentary representation in the Andalusian parliament on December 2, 2018 were analyzed: PSOE, PP, Ciudadanos, Adelante Andalucía and VOX.

For this, the following specific objectives were proposed:

- a) Identify the type of digital propaganda used by each political party that obtained parliamentary representation in the electoral campaign for the 2018 Andalusian elections.
- b) Detect which classification of propaganda messages prevailed in each party.

Likewise, these objectives linked to the theory of the effects of electoral campaigns have led to a research question:

Do the results obtained in the vote correspond to the premises of the political effects?

3. METHODOLOGY

The research focuses on the electoral campaign of the regional elections for the presidency of the Junta de Andalucía held on December 2, 2018. The study elements that make up the field work are composed of the messages issued from the official Twitter profiles of the political parties during the 15 official days of the election campaign. The choice of this platform is due to the fact that it is often used to expand the messages already issued during the campaign that is presented in the traditional mass media (Ramos-Serrano, Fernández Gómez and Pineda, 2016). Studying the messages that political parties publish in this social network serves the main objective of this article: detect the type of campaign that each party has used, whether positive, negative or reactionary.

Among the parties that appeared at the elections, it was decided to choose those who obtained parliamentary representation: PSOE, PP, Ciudadanos, Adelante Andalucía y VOX. The universe has been selected based on the criterion of representativeness. In this way, the profiles of the five parties that obtained a greater representativeness of votes in the elections have been chosen, jointly accumulating more than 85% of the votes.

Party	Seats
PSOE	33
PP	26
Ciudadanos	21
Adelante Andalucía	17
VOX	12
Total	109

Table 1

Tweets have been manually captured through the Twitter Search instrument in order to look for specific content from certain users and time periods. The official accounts of each party from the autonomous community of Andalusia were examined, except for the VOX party that does not have an extra account for communities and uses the national account. The search for own content tweets was chosen for the final analysis, excluding retweets. This is because these only serve to redistribute content published by other users of the network (Larsson, 2015). For its part, the study universe amounts to:

Party	Tweets
PSOE-A	243
PP	94
Ciudadanos	346
Adelante Andalucía	330
VOX	79
Total	1092

Table 2

The sample size with a confidence level of 95% and an error of ± 5 resulted in a total of 285 units to which a stratified random sampling with proportional affixing was applied:

Stratum	Identification	Nº of tweets in the stratum	Proportion	Stratum Sample
1	PSOE	243	22,3%	63
2	PP	94	8,6%	25
3	Ciudadanos	346	31,7%	90
4	Adelante Andalucía	330	30,2%	86
5	VOX	79	7,2%	21

Table 3

To achieve the objectives, a quantitative approach is proposed through a content analysis (Krippendorff, 1990; Igartua Perosanz, 2006; Benoit, 2010; Nuendorf and Kumar, 2015), this technique makes it possible to delve into the structure of the tweets and “detect the main trends regarding the management of Twitter by parties” (López Meri, 2016, p. 102).

3.1. DESIGN OF THE INVESTIGATION

The definitions made by Pineda (2006) have been considered to define the type of campaign that each party has used as a strategy, according to table four:

Propaganda typology	Definition
Afirmative	They perform praises on themselves and do not mention the opponent
Reactive	They mention positive qualities of the issuer and disqualify the opponent. They are presented as a solution
Negative	They attack the opponent without speaking positively of themselves
None	Informative

Table 4

Three variables of the data will be taken into account for the exploitation process: tweet composition, message typology (classified according to the “wheel of emotions” prepared by Kem (1989)) and the propaganda typology (Table 5).

It has been decided to sort the possible negative propaganda into five classifications based on the fact that disqualifying messages can respond to general ideologies or be specifically aimed at political parties (Harrington and Hess, 1994) (Table 6 and 7).

Clasification of positives messages	Definition
Compassion	Desire to contribute to someone (or a sector) in a situation of unprotection
Ambition	Urgency to make a specific matter of economic interest
Nostalgia	Longing for the past
Tranquility	Satisfaction and current comfort - stability
Trust	Believe in the politician - Specific mention of the party candidate by another person
Intimacy	Feeling familiar with the politician
Hope	A better future and the ability to achieve it
National pride	Shared feeling of belonging

Table 5

Classifi-cation of negative messages	Definition
Guilt	Guilty for past and present offenses without specific association to another party
Fear	Fear of harm without specific association to another party
Anger	Wrath - displeasure without specific association to another party
Uncertainty	Distrust - anxiety for the future without specific association to another party
Opponent	Link the opponent with symbols considered negative by population (previous categories specifically associated with a match)

Table 6

Classification of neutral messages	Definition
Informative	Mention of activity without positive or negative emphasis (For example, announce an intervention).

Table 7

Ultimately, the analysis sheet with the associated variables and categories would be as follows:

1. Composition of the tweet: (1) Text; (2) Image; (3) Text+image; (4) Video; (5) Text+Video; (6) External link; (7) Text+link; (8) Text+link+image

2. Message typology: (1) Compassion; (2) Ambition; (3) Nostalgia; (4) Tranquility; (5) Trust; (6) Intimacy; (7) Hope; (8) National pride; (9) Guilt; (10) Fear; (11) Anger; (12) Uncertainty; (13) Opponent; (14) Informative

3. Type of propaganda: (1) Affirmative; (2) Reactive; (3) Negative; (4) None.

4. Observations: particular annotations (For example, in the case of mentioning a specific adversary, associate that mention expressly with one of the previous categories).

In the results section, a space has been left for a final qualitative variable that would allow to record certain notable issues. It is based on the complementarity of the qualitative methodology that exposes data with a greater difficulty of quantification (Andrade del Cid, 2009; Schoonenboom and Johnson, 2017).

4. ANDALUSIAN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN ON TWITTER

According to the considered variables, the exploitation of the data indicates the different propaganda strategies used by the political parties that obtained parliamentary representation. It should be noted that the type of propaganda that has been most used in all cases during the course of the electoral campaign (Graph 1) has been the affirmative, exceeding 50% of affirmative propaganda tweets in Ciudadanos (54,44%), Partido Socialista Obrero Español (53,97%) y VOX (52,38%). The use of this typology in Adelante Andalucía and Parti-

do Popular has remained at the threshold, with 45.35% and 48% respectively. However, it still is the most widely used.

Regarding the type of reactive propaganda there are notable differences between VOX (33,33%), Partido Popular (12%) y Adelante Andalucía (4,65%). In fact, Adelante Andalucía only resorted to it in 1.16% in the category of anger, presenting itself as a solution to the general problems of the Andalusian community, and in 3.49% expressly mentioning an adversary (Ciudadanos and PSOE). On the other hand, this party prevailed in the categories of negative propaganda (30.23%) and in merely informative tweets (19.77%), that is, messages that contributed nothing to the campaign. Up to 22.09% of the analyzed messages from Adelante Andalucía were dedicated to specifically attack opponents, embodied in Ciudadanos, PSOE and on one occasion in the general elections candidate from Partido Popular, Pablo Casado. (Figure 1).

As can be seen in figure 2, there is a significant difference in attack propaganda between the parties. Of all the negative propaganda messages in which express mention of the opponent is made (41 tweets), Adelante Andalucía (46.34%) leads the ranking followed by Ciudadanos (31.71%). PP (9.76%) and PSOE (9.76%) get a low frequency and lastly is VOX that has negatively mentioned an opponent only in a 2.44% of this classification. (Figure 2).

As has been seen so far, Adelante Andalucía (Graphs 1 and 2) leads the negative propaganda both by mentioning the opponent and in the cases where no particular party is mentioned. However, positive propaganda prevailed in the global comparison (Graph 1) with a difference of 15%.

Crossing the variables typology of the message and type of propaganda, the negative pro-

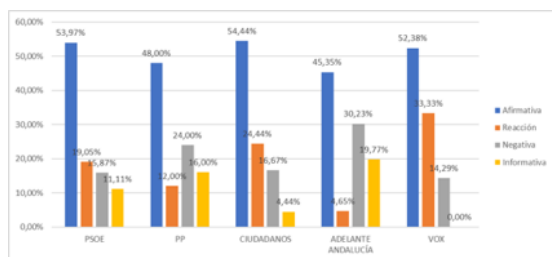


Figure 1. Party propaganda typology.



Figure 2. Negative propaganda – opponent.

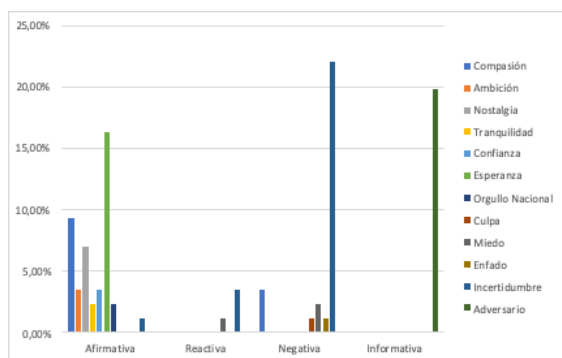


Figure 3. Adelante Andalucía

paganda of an adversary predominates in this party with a 22.09% (graph 3) followed by the merely informative information (19.77%) and the affirmative with the value of hope for a better future and ability to achieve it (16.28%). The affirmative propaganda is in the last place of the rest of the type of compassion with a value of 9.30%. If the specific categories are analyzed, the opponent (22.09%) of the negative typology (30.23%) prevails in general although the positive propaganda predominates (45.35%). With regard to reactive propaganda, it has been used to mention situations of uncertainty (3.49%) and highlights the value of fear. (Figure 3).

On the contrary, VOX (Graph 4) has chosen not to use its account as an informative tool (0%) and has dedicated to answer its adversaries in electoral arguments (28.57%), mainly carrying out attacks aimed at the socialism of the PSOE, Ciudadanos y Partido Popular. It conducted offenses based on the national pride professed by the party, this national pride is also exposed in the purely affirmative propaganda with a value of 9.52%. This percentage is shared with the category of trust placed in the party by another person outside the organization.

A range of categories used contrast with the following table that corresponds to Ciudadanos (Graph 5). The reactive propaganda of opponent typology directed to the PSOE also prevails (23.33%). In the affirmative category they follow the classification of hope in achieving a better future thanks to the party (16.77%) and ambition to make specific improvements in infrastructure (15.56%). However, the type of negative propaganda in this party also stands out with 14.4% in the category of opponent directed towards PSOE and PP. (Figure 4 and 5).

The thematic analysis of the Partido Popular (Graph 6) and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Graph 7) pose a different picture, they are the only parties where the classification of ambition corresponding to affirmative propaganda prevails (PP 28% and PSOE 15.87%) and the affirmative point of hope for a better future (12% and 9.52% respectively) appear with very similar frequencies. These two traditional parties of Spain differ in their strategy regarding negative propaganda. The Partido Popular has directly attacked the adversary more (16%), specifically PSOE and Ciudadanos. PSOE (7.94%) has focused more on spreading the fear of parties that threaten democracy. On the other hand, their official accounts have made an outstanding use of informative messages without propaganda value with 16% of

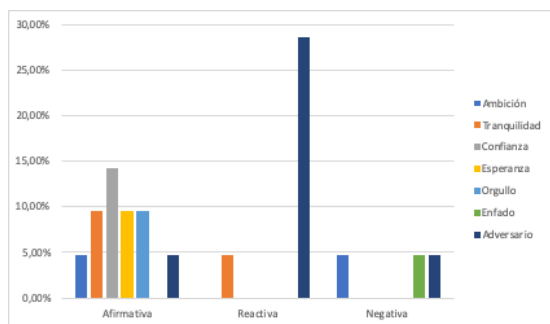


Figura 4. Vox

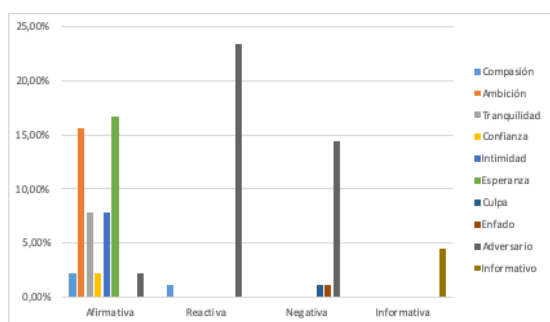


Figura 5. Ciudadanos

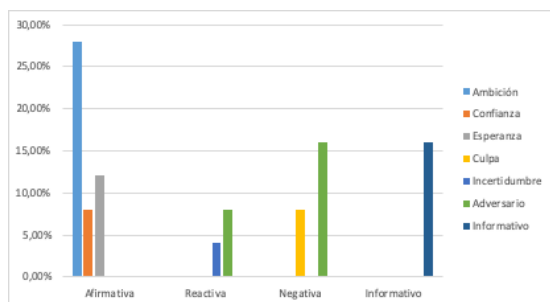


Figura 6. Partido Popular

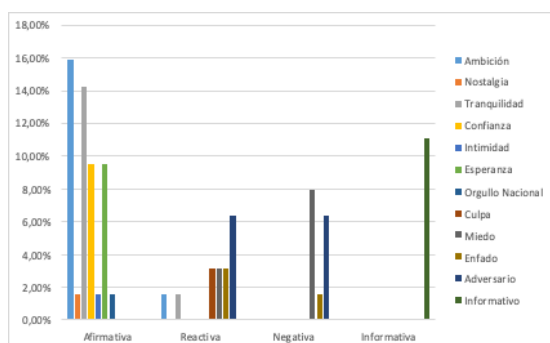


Figura 7. PSOE

the analyzed tweets of the PP and 11.11% of the PSOE messages. (Figure 6 and 7).

Finally, the composition of tweets reflects the predominance of the union of text and image in all political parties except VOX, which has mostly used a video that extended the speech transcribed in the message. On the other hand, traditional parties have agreed to use the text with a link that led to an extension of the message in the second place, especially for conventional mass media such as television. (Figure 8).

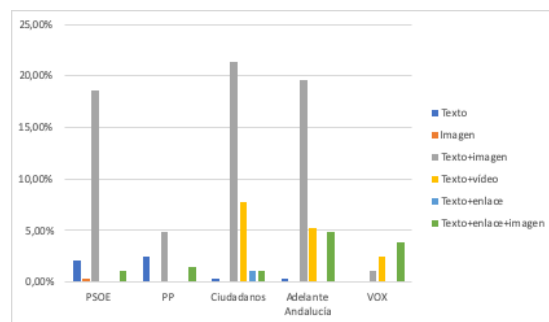


Figura 8.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This work sought to examine the typology and classification of propaganda messages that each party with representation in the Andalusian Parliament has used in the election campaign period of 2018.

The results have shown that the most used typology has been the affirmative: Ciudadanos (54.44%), PSOE (53.97%), VOX (52.38%), PP (48%) and Adelante Andalucía (45.35%). It has been observed that this homogeneity disappears with the other categories. In the case of negative propaganda, Adelante Andalucía (30.23%) predominates, followed by the Partido Popular with a difference of six points (24%). On the other hand, Ciudadanos (16.67%), PSOE (15.87%) and VOX (14.29%) are the ones who have used the least. In the case of reaction pro-

paganda, Adelante Andalucía (4.65%) and Partido Popular (12%) are the parties that have least exposed positive points about themselves and attacked the opponent in the same message. VOX has resorted to this category in a much higher percentage (33.33%) followed by Ciudadanos (24.44%), PSOE (19.05%) and PP (12%).

The second objective of the classification of propaganda categories provides the following scenario: the most recurrent affirmative categories have been hope (Ciudadanos 16,77%, Adelante Andalucía 16,28%, PP 12% and PSOE 9,52%), the economic ambition (PP 28%, PSOE 15.87% and Ciudadanos 15.56%), national pride (VOX 9.52%), trust in the party deposited by third parties (VOX 9.52%) and compassion (Adelante Andalucía 9.30%). In the negative categories, specific attacks have prevailed on the PSOE by Adelante Andalucía (22.09%), PP (16%), Ciudadanos (14.4%), and VOX (4.76 %). PSOE is a party that held power. Although in a smaller influx, these last three parties have also thrown negative messages between them (PP, Ciudadanos and VOX). In the PSOE, these attacks have had a very specific character because they have been framed in the fear strategy (7.94%) without specifically naming a specific organization: parties that undermine democracy.

Given these data, the percentage of its use is significant although no party has exceeded the use of the type of negative propaganda by 50% and has not carried out an attack campaign, especially in the case of Adelante Andalucía (30.23%). These figures give rise to the question of the study, what can be extracted from these results in relation to the theories of political effects? (Table 8).

In this regard, it should be remembered that negative messages are dangerous to the issuer for several reasons. One of them is the possibility that by launching them, they can serve

Partido	% Negativos	Escaños 2018
PSOE-A	15,87	33
PP	24	26
Ciudadanos	16,67	21
Adelante Andalucía	30,23	17
VOX	14,29	12
Total		109

Table 8. Election results

Partido	Escaños 2018	Escaños 2015
PSOE	33	47
PP	26	33
Ciudadanos	21	9
Adelante Andalucía	17	15 ¹
VOX	12	-
Total	109	109

Table 9.

to campaign for the ideology or party they are attacking (Chang, 2001; Byrne and Hart, 2009; Walter, 2014; Malloy and Pearson-Merkowitz, 2016). In this work, Adelante Andalucía has been the largest issuer of negative messages and that could confirm the theory of its danger. Although it is ahead of VOX, it should be noted that this far-right party entered the parliament for the first time through these elections, obtaining twelve seats in its first attempt. Adelante Andalucía has lost a total of three seats compared to the previous elections (which participated as the Izquierda Unida and Podemos Andalucía). It would be interesting in this case to know if the same strategy was used in the previous elections. However, a comparative report on the campaign strategy and the results obtained in each case cannot be made because there is no data on the type of campaign carried

out in 2015, opening a question of interest for future research. (Table 9).

Regarding the parties that participated in the 2015 elections, Adelante Andalucía has been the most affected and the one that least used the types of affirmative messages (45.35%). The parties that have risen the most were Ciudadanos with twelve seats (from 9 to 21 seats) and VOX with twelve other seats. These have used the categories of hope (16.67% Ciudadanos) and trust (9.67% VOX) more, confirming the theory that positive messages are most influential (Matthes, 2013; Matthes, 2012; Hyun and Seo, 2019; Heiss and Matthes, 2019). The values that Ciudadanos and VOX have used are notable for being the ones that mostly appeal to emotion, in addition to the trust granted by resorting to third parties that endorse the candidacy (VOX). The party that held power until those elections, PSOE, has used the classification of tranquility (14.29%) and ambition (15.28%) to a greater extent. These has been used by the Partido Popular in economic terms (28%). It is noted that three parties have resorted to these networks frequently for informational purposes only, without adding anything of value to the campaign: Adelante Andalucía 19.77%; Partido Popular 16% and PSOE 11.11%.

After observing the obtained results and in line with the empirical evidence, it is determined that the party that has used the most negative propaganda has been the most affected in the elections. For their part, those who have appealed to positive values such as hope and trust have benefited the most. It is striking that the results of the discussion of this work reinforce the premises on the ineffectiveness of negative campaigns. However, it is pointed out that the nature of this study does not allow establishing these correlations with firmness, so it would be of interest for future research to cross the results with studies on the electorate to conti-

nue deepening on political campaigns and their effects. It must be remembered that, although in confluence with other forces that exert pressure on the voter, the propaganda campaigns of this period can be decisive.

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Participatory video and visual literacy: Challenges and opportunities for social and educational change

Vídeo participativo y alfabetización visual: Desafíos y oportunidades para el cambio social y educativo

6

ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: May 30, 2018 / ACCEPTED: August 10, 2019

Abstract

This article addresses the participatory video as a tool for education in new digital media from a theoretical perspective, reviewing some precedents and examples. Participatory video is an educommunicative action connected to the contexts in which it is practiced, it represents a form of democratic experimentalism that questions the unidirectionality of teaching-learning processes. Two aspects that present a challenge

for current education converge in the participatory video: the need for visual and media literacy and the understanding of school and educational processes as scenarios for social transformation.

Keywords

Visual literacy, new media, participatory video, democratic experimentalism, directionality, educational change.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's societies we attend the expansion of images and the visual aspects. For generations born within the digital culture, the convergence between media, devices and languages is part of their daily interactions. Visual practices such as *selfies*, *memes* or *gifs* appear and circulate interconnected through social networks and electronic platforms. The massive production and proliferation of images and visual practices in everyday, scientific and social contexts show the importance of images and collective imaginaries in today's societies as bearers and generators of cultural and symbolic value.

Throughout the history of education, advances in the audiovisual field have been valuable resources that have been incorporated into the teaching-learning process. The main reasons for their use are their capabilities to capture the attention of students and complement the explanations. The convergence between new media and social networks has caused both to become part of education, not only as support resources, but acquiring a leading role in the educational process (Muñoz Prieto, Fragueiro Barrerio & Ayuso, 2013). Technological change, digitalization processes and the emergence of new media occupy a central place among the transformations that affect education. It is a

transformation that erodes the limits of traditional identification between school and education because the first is increasingly the least privileged for the transmission of knowledge and socialization (Navarro, 2009; Peña Acuña, 2011). Education ceases to have its primary stage in school because it is destabilized by ways of understanding reality not necessarily adjusted to institutional boundaries. The reality of education can be placed in an area of experience and cultural contact, but the production and exchange of knowledge are managed by digital media and information and communication technologies (ICT). In turn, the proliferation of devices for the production and reproduction of content on the Internet, interconnected platforms and networks have taken an intersubjective, affective and socializing aspect. This leads to the multiplication of the contexts of socialization, construction of identity and transmission of knowledge and values that compete with the primary fields where these tasks were traditionally assumed, including family and school.

The constructivist perspective continues to facilitate an understanding of the processes of participation and social interaction as the foundations of a culture. It has allowed culture and education to overcome organic and overly static approaches, but constructivism must address the fact that this dialogic approach is cross-

sed by new forms of hypermediated electronic communication (Hernández Requena, 2008). Education as an area of experience and cultural contact can still be linked to the understanding of social life in reference to the spaces it is deployed. It is a positional approach that understands social life as configured according to the game of imposition and appropriation of roles in certain social spaces and in certain communicative situations. But what happens when new technologies intertwine real and virtual contexts when they converge heterogeneous times and spaces in an interconnected present? The cross-cutting issues to the curricula and to the whole of school life such as identity, interculturality, recognition of the other, the construction of autonomy and the opening to new spaces of coexistence are modified by a digital culture that responds to a general call to participation and interconnectivity.

In the relations established between the two spaces that frame the school practice, the institutional and the local space, none is prior to the other. The electronic virtual space-time questions the understanding of both according to any binary logic. The local space refers to the knowledge and ways of having students and teachers build from personal experience, cultures and particular contexts. The institutional space is that of the formalized institution. The concepts of formal and informal institution are two forms of social action. The first is that deployed by the subjects from a conscious organizational logic through consensual bureaucratic resources. The second is done by the subjects in their interactions and ordinary interlocutions without the mediation of bureaucratic regulations or documents. Institutional formalization is procedural. Social institutions are involved in processes that incline them towards formalization or informalization. The institution never

completely formalizes the heterogeneity of social relations (Martín, 2014).

In this article, a reflection is proposed based on the decentralization of the school and formal education, caused by the transformations of the new media. It is pertinent to explore resources and methodologies aimed at developing visual literacy processes to critically understand the scope of these changes. Next, the use of participatory video is proposed as a dialogic and democratic methodology of action-research, aimed at the social transformation of the contexts where it is implemented. Participatory video encourages a reflexive approach to the modes of production, management and sharing of audiovisual representations. Its use in educational contexts allows the articulation between two problems that are currently associated with each other: the need for visual and media literacy and the reflexive approach to the current conditions of configuration and transmission of knowledge and values.

2. VISUAL ALPHABETIZATION FOR NEW ENVIRONMENTS

The dialectic between formal and informal education is modified by the emergence of new technologies and new digital media. What Javier Echevarría (1999) called long ago as the third environment arises, this concept characterizes a new model of social space managed by new information and communication technologies. This differs significantly from the natural, urban and socio-cultural environments in which social life was traditionally developed. It is a scenario that distinguishes itself from the natural and social environments that would be characteristic of the first and second environment. The third environment is a social space under construction, artificial and unstable, driven by technolo-

gies that transform the social relations that the first two environments had as usual scenario.

The third environment is not an area separated from other spaces of social action but one that unites with them, orienting them towards new forms of socialization and individualization. It is not clearly defined on the background of other material spaces and practices. This intermediate condition is reinforced by the articulation between subjectivity, communication and economy, characteristic of contemporary capitalism (Serrano-Puche, 2016). Friendship, family, customs, work or public spaces are elements that belonged to the first and second environments and are modified by the demands of interconnectivity and economic performance that new technologies use. The interconnectivity composes a network affectivity that ends up overflowing the dualisms between the *online* and *offline* world.

Education and school are intervened by the challenges and possibilities of the third environment. Javier Echevarría (2010) pointed out the need to expand education towards this new area. If this movement is not carried out with a reflexive sense, the expansion will also occur but the ideological conditions of which knowledge, education, training and socialization are part will remain without question. The ICT technology system is configured on the convergence of different devices, media and technological subsystems. The third environment emerges from that convergence and reaches relevance in the generation of new spaces for socialization, subjectivity and educational formations. The new technologies enable not only teaching-learning processes, but also enable interrelation modalities that need to be approached from new skills and abilities. Digital transformations are not limited in the electronic field of the Internet because they expand to multimedia technologies, mobile phones, digi-

tal television or video games. Individualization, socialization and intersubjectivity contexts that were previously considered external to those are modified.

These mutations are the effect of the expansion of visual elements in contemporary societies. The massive production of images and the proliferation of visual practices show the importance of images and the imaginaries in today's societies. The paradigms linked to the cultures of reading and writing showed a knowledge of the world that coincided with the achieved by the subjects after a long learning. The immediacy of the image appears and impacts the stability of the subjective cultures in relation to the processes elaborated on the prescribed times of the text: listening and interpretation. The word is not replaced by the image, both converge in unpublished ways on the stage of digital culture (Rodríguez de la Flor, 2010).

Hence the importance of visual literacy. If the third environment emerges from images, visual production, reproduction devices and visual practices, it can be affirmed that literacy in new media and new technologies is visual literacy and vice versa¹. The socialization processes are related to the community formation potentials presented by the imaginary. The images have an intersubjective character because they are inscribers of the other's presence in the social field. They participate in the processes of identity construction on the social and community background. This dimension of images and imaginary is relaunched thanks to the processes of digitalization and network socialization. Images are objects with which people interact, participate in their social and emotional life,

1 Gregory Ulmer (2003) called "electracy" to a form of literacy in electronic media that in digital culture would be the equivalent of literacy in the culture of printing.

enable and condition their experiences. They have not completely left behind their representative dimension. However, digital technologies are intensifying the performance potential of the iconic. That is, images have the capacity to actively intervene in reality. They are less recognized today in the task of representing the world than in participating in it. In the digital world, images are not a finished form but the process of their own preparation and materialization for a variety of networks and platforms. Circulating through them, the images are not only contemplated but commented, linked and post produced. These operations are articulated with the knowledge economies and the presentation modalities of the individuals in public and private life.

Visual literacy provides tools to interpret images. This curricular objective falls short when it uses only the semiotic theories of the sign. Digital images answer the opposition between word and image, between linguistic expression and plastic expression. They disrupt the capacities that, based on this hierarchy, place thought and logos closer to the word than to the image and the sensitive knowledge of the world in a secondary position. The dialectic between images and words is intensified in the digital visual culture. Therefore, terms such as visual literacy do not offer the resolution of that dilemma but underline its complexity. A process of visual literacy goes beyond the development of analytical tools for reading and interpreting images and visual events (Elkins, 2007).

It must also be concerned with addressing the ideological order that conditions these forms of reading and determines which are the subjects and social places where it is legitimate to look and from which it is normative to look away. Visual literacy is a process that serves to show views (Mitchell, 2003). It generates estrangement regarding the viscosity in which subjects

build their image and identity, as well as ways of knowing the world and recognizing others. There is always a margin to oppose or change the meaning of its demands.

The images do not expect to be explained from methodologies and models of linguistic analysis. They are complex objects that are thought, known, taught and learned as in spoken and written language but with their own ways of producing sociability and meaning. The images come alive every time they are represented and interact with researchers, students and with the image pedagogies that they want to undertake (Dussel & Priem, 2017).

3. PARTICIPATORY VIDEO AS A COLLECTIVE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION TOOL

The exploration of the educational potentials of cinema and video play a critical role in this task. This presents an additional challenge to the one already posed by the uses of the kinematic image in a literary sense because the drifts of the digital visual culture point towards blurring the boundaries between specific media. The third environment is also the scenario where the media hybridize with each other and the audiovisual content materializes in a variety of production and reproduction devices (Jenkins, 2008). The differences between producers, consumers, transmitters and receivers of images tend to be diluted. These drifts open new possibilities for education and visual literacy but also pose new challenges. For example, the film pedagogy (Giroux, 2011) sought to put together a critical response from students to the public sphere in which a film is received and on which it projects certain values and identification models. These types of proposals leave out the specific potentials of a medium, in this case the cinematographic one. The question of

how education should resort to cinema needs to combine the problem of what is the most appropriate methodology to articulate a critical thought with the specific implications of the cinematographic medium for education and thought (Decoster & Vansieleghe, 2014).

This effort must meet the trends of media hybridization in which viewers and users are immersed. The critical and educational potentials of digital visual culture may be appropriate to show the visual order that composes it. Participatory video can be taken as a pedagogical tool to critically approach the images and the imaginary that surround us and to relaunch the processes of visual literacy towards the objective of constructing other forms of representation and recognition. Articulated within a collaborative methodology, its use enables the development of affinities and the sharing of different existential experiences. It can be used to introduce a theme, confront experiences and ideas, present facts or procedures that cannot be observed live and analyze or synthesize issues that interest a social and educational community.

The participatory video is a tool for visual literacy, the enrichment of imaginary and the critical approach to social reality through collective creation. It works as an educommunicative resource that provides students with tools to reflectively analyze media texts and to incorporate new media into the school. This also means integrating, revaluing and changing the meaning of their daily culture, in which audiovisual media play an increasingly relevant role.

The educational and critical scope of participatory video practices lies in the fact that it allows the creation of images from local collective spaces. With this, the processes it promotes extend beyond the work of creating a finished visual product. Participatory audiovisual methodologies explore constructivist epistemologies whe-

re the study subjects cease to be the object of the researcher's gaze to become protagonists of the story of their experiences and of the community, with the use of participatory video often in documentary form (Sucari, 2017). The social relationships that are generated in the process, the visual literacy models that are implemented or the collective presentation of the videos are key elements. Generating knowledge about the participatory video fulfills a double function. First, to claim subaltern cultural practices that are left out of both the school and the school institution as well as the hegemonic media discourse to place themselves in the place of the experience of specific groups in the face of the global homogenization of the imaginary. Second, attend to social communication practices that overflow the logic of the instrumental effectiveness of communication, putting into crisis the communicational models based on the traditional separation between emitter and receiver to articulate with other social, artistic, educational and social mobilization processes.

The conception of audiovisuals from a participatory and social perspective is not new, it appears after the arrival of digital technology. The first experiences of participatory video have an important historical journey, its beginnings date from the end of the 60s in the Canadian state of *Newfoundland* and were the work of Don Snowden, pioneer in the use of the media with a community approach (Crocker, 2003). These concerns can be traced back to the *Kino Pravda* of Dziga Vertov and even to the cinematographic section of the Pedagogical Missions during the period of the Second Spanish Republic (Castro, 2016)². From the popularization of affordable video cameras and play-

2 Not forgetting the relationships of participatory video with the history of the documentary genre. Ortuño (2013) and Yang (2016) contribute other genealogies of participatory video.

back devices, guerrilla television, community video groups or independent video collectives developed their activities in the United States, Canada and Europe³.

Since then, various initiatives have promoted participatory video processes in a variety of contexts. Its general purpose is to generate situations of contextual communication in which actors and social groups, often silenced, find a margin to consciously develop their own mediations (Tripp, 2012).

The practices around participatory video intersect with those of the community film that discussed the commercial imperatives of the film industry from the 1970s (Malik, Chapain & Comunian, 2017). Both want to go beyond the criticism of the mass media to achieve alternative production and visual consumption practices. Media practices should be politicized, oriented towards the autonomy of the public sphere and the creation of social and communicative interaction devices that are resistant to imposed mediations. To the extent that people are able to develop local media initiatives that they recognize as their own, the two practices can converge in the field of community media. Unlike community cinema, the participatory video provides participants with control of the production process. These will find the possibility to express, represent and empower themselves for individual and collective exploration on the horizon of social change (Lunch & Lunch, 2006; Montero Sánchez & Moreno Domínguez, 2015). The investigation of the economic and sociocultural conditions becomes an active intervention with the objective of modifying them

and questioning the order of representation that sustains them.

It is not our intention to analyze these differences, but it is worth noting that the participatory video presents a vocation for democratic experimentalism and social emancipation, as well as proposals that appropriate locally from other media such as radio or social networks. Democratic experimentalism comes from the North American pragmatist tradition, specifically from Dewey's conception of democracy, which he understands as a process of participatory experimentation and learning (Ford, 2009). It is about the search for alternatives to formal democracy from the conviction that solutions based on privatization and deregulation impoverish the quality of democracies. Democratic experimentalism would be the framework that enables attempts at integration between the production of images, texts, objects and the production of political forms committed to the democratization of representations, mediations and resources⁴. If education is a matter of public interest, it should be addressed collectively as a public issue in participatory situations oriented and built for this purpose. Can a resource like the participatory video generate such communicational contexts? Can situations be generated from the educational field in which the potential democratizers of these media practices can be explored?

Educational theory and practice must develop their own strategies to explore the critical contents that these transformations suggest. Participatory video does not only invite to convert the projection room into a school, but to

3 The Video-Nou group, which starts its activities around 1977 can be considered the first independent video collective in the history of audiovisuals in Spain (Ameller, 1999).

4 Reinaldo Laddaga (2010) defines that democratic experimentalism allows us to test the articulation between the generation of political forms, the democratization of the media and the autonomous production of images and texts. The example to which it refers is *La Comuna* (París, 1871) (2000) of Peter Watkins.

turn the school into a laboratory of production of images and the classroom into a place for education from an autonomous and responsible perspective in a communicational and educational context. The visual literacy process finds a promising version here since experimentation with audiovisual creation devices is added in its connection to the critical reading of images with a socio-cultural context modeled by particular socio-economic and ideological conditions. Participatory video is a process of collective creation of audiovisual content developed by the protagonists of their own reality. It is a video process without previous script, recursively developed in iterative filming and review cycles that creates its own narratives and links them to the social reality that the participating communities wish to communicate (Johansson, 1999). With the participatory video we refer to a set of techniques that allow a group or community to participate “in the formation and creation of their own film, an accessible video that brings people together to explore themes, representation concerns or simply as a creative space to tell stories” (Lunch & Lunch, 2006, p. 10). It engages a group of people in the elucidation of their social situation, their needs and capacities, making these personal, social, political and cultural concerns converge. It is a participatory research tool that promotes practices aimed at identifying the social problems of a specific community and exploring the ways in which its capacity for representation and decision-making can be intensified. (de Lange & Mitchell, 2012; White, 2003).

The difficulty of defining what the participatory video is that there are almost as many definitions as experiences and that each one focuses on some aspect linked to the experience lived. This shows that its most notable feature is the ability to connect with local and defined realities. On the background of this difficulty,

we gather below some of the most relevant cases in which the use of participatory video is explicitly articulated with these realities. One of the organizations dedicated to the development of participatory video is *Insightshare* (<https://insightshare.org/>), it is dedicated to using participatory video in international development projects as a research, implementation and evaluation tool, social justice and human rights. *Zalab TV* (<http://www.zalab.org/en/projects/zalab-tv-2/>), is an international Internet television channel focused on producing and disseminating participatory video proposals. We also mention organizations such as *Quepo Video Social* (<http://www.quepo.org/?lang=en>), it is an activist collective from Barcelona focused on the production of social video to re-elaborate the communication based on the collective sense as a framework for the common good and citizen empowerment. In a similar line is the *Colectivo Circes* (<http://colectivocirces.blogspot.com/>), it is focused on the organization of video workshops with individuals experiencing conflicts, discrimination and social exclusion for economic, cultural or gender reasons. The *Asociación Wanadi* (<http://www.wanadi.org/>) has collaborated with different social organizations in Spain, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and Palestine. This has used audiovisual resources as a transformative tool through media training workshops and community reporting, developing socio-educational and artistic proposals to boost disadvantaged areas and promote the development in cooperative social networks. The alliance between the enhancement of the democratic use of audiovisual media with the promotion of social activism processes is the objective of *The Rights Exposure Project* (<http://therightsexposureproject.com/>). They are especially notable for their attention to the realities and problems of education and school. Initiatives such as those of the *La Cosecha* association (<http://www.lacosechaweb.com/>) are

highlighted. Another example of participatory video as a tool for socio-educational integration is the project that the *Asociació Cultural La Bretxa* implemented in the IES Badalona Nou (Espinosa, 2012), the experience of action research with international students in the San Lorenzo de Castellón neighborhood (Boni & Millán, 2016) and with economically disadvantaged youth in Quart de Poblet (Boni, López-Fogués, Millán & Belda-Miquel, 2017). Or in a very different context, its use to demonstrate, prevent and combat gender violence within South African schools (de Lange & Geldenhuys 2012)

The use of participatory video in these areas is linked to an education with a transformative vocation. The educational process unfolds on an endogenous development, built from the center of the communities that are educated to respond to their needs and not to those of the economic and political system that governs them (Freire, 1970). For this, the main tool available to the facilitator or educator is to promote an egalitarian dialogue based on the ability to listen and respect the differences. The conception of the educational process as a communicative dialogue raises the problem of how to highlight the positions from which the participants state their ideas and approaches.

The confidence in the rational communicative dialogue is established on the invisibility of these positions and their processes of identification, leaving the unequal relations of power on which it is based (Ellsworth, 2005). Both a film and a curriculum fail to demonstrate the positions of the public and students. The task of showing those positions becomes paradoxical. The pedagogical model is universalized and is applicable above any specificity if differences are intensified in order to question those frameworks through rational dialogue. Through the concept of directionality mode, Ellsworth studies the structure of the symbolic, social and

narrative relationships that arise between filmic texts and the scope of action that spectators have.

These relationships are never linear. The positions that the film imagines for its viewers are not completely reciprocated by them. An area of indetermination that Ellsworth moves to education, curriculum and classroom relationships is formed. The experience of uncertainty that unfolds both in the encounter between spectators and filmic texts and in the encounter between students and curriculum is crossed by socioeconomic, racial and gender antagonisms. This uncertainty becomes a pedagogical resource that demands a participatory and localized approach (Castro, 2016; Padró, 2011). The screenplay of the film and its technical-formal solutions are managed regardless of the specific conditions of the production and reception process. Likewise, the curriculum and the distribution of positions in the teaching-learning processes are beyond the context where they are implemented. The participatory video explores these contradictions as it consciously converges the process of making an audiovisual object with the needs and possibilities of a specific context. With this, it separates itself from the tendencies towards universalization to which the rational dialogue is precipitated. The critical force focuses on the distribution of roles within the processes of production and reception of the performances (Hazel, 2016; Whiting, Symon, Roby & Chama-kotis, 2018). In the educational field, this process will also move towards the elucidation of teaching positions, the concrete conditions of access to knowledge and the construction of identity and coexistence.

The participatory video enables to work on a dialogic image whose model does not fit universalist ideals, taking its application in a production and reception context. Audiovisual practi-

ce has traditionally been approached from the representation paradigm. The mutations of the digital image put this model in crisis to open up to dynamics of dialogic and collective thinking in which audiovisual discursive rhetorics are subject to public discussion in reference to the social conditions that model the processes of media production and reception (Montero Sánchez, 2013). Audiovisual discourse is reconfigured as a framework in which collective, heterogeneous and localized interests are found (Lenette, 2019).

The participatory video is located within these transformations. In the field of education, it becomes a resource to open spaces for dialogue and collective interpretation that can disrupt the drifts towards the normative reproduction of institutionalized educational contexts (Anderson, 2017). It is also a tool to deepen a conception of visual literacy as a critical exercise capable of recognizing in the images the traces of power, inequality and ideology. The relationships between communication and education are plotted in unpublished ways based on the sociability generated by the new technologies. Within the framework of these relationships, participatory video will be defined as an educommunicative action with a dialogic and emancipatory character in which the positions and motivations of the participants are exposed and discussed (Mistry, Bignante & Bernardi, 2016; Nagamini & Aguaded, 2018). It will be composed as a practice oriented towards the collaborative construction of knowledge and towards the disposition for the exercise of citizenship, with the condition that educational policies and methodologies assume the challenge of developing processes for the acquisition of media skills and tools for visual literacy.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The participatory video is an instrument for social intervention, diffusion of problems and mediation of conflicts and interests. In its application to educational processes, it develops models of meaning construction within the framework of educational-communicative action because it brings together communicative practices with the empowerment of communities in social and educational contexts. These practices are characterized by establishing a close relationship between the educational component of media production, the objective of presenting problems not addressed by the media and by the participatory dimension of the communities involved in the processes of production, editing and dissemination of audiovisual elements. The participatory video is oriented to the transmission of experiences and knowledge positioned and appropriate at the collective level. Political awareness through images makes it a fruitful resource for groups focused on social change (Montero Sánchez & Moreno Domínguez, 2014). If the relevance of images and visual elements in contemporary societies is increasing, the use of participatory video in the school must know how to mix their social concerns with the appropriate use of audiovisual technologies and focus on visual, critical and reflective literacy.

In this article, it has been proposed to articulate the promotion of democratic participation and shared learning with the development of visual literacy processes that address the current transformations of the image and audiovisual media, especially in educational contexts. Participatory video is a valuable resource to plot the production of knowledge and social changes with the conscious appropriation of audiovisual representation processes. It is located within the union of democratic knowledge and action

research by fostering reflexive, collective and situated learning, proper for this methodology (Feldman & Rowell, 2019). With the complexity of contemporary visual culture, education and school lose their importance as centers for the transmission of knowledge and values. It is not about recovering that lost position but understanding the challenges that this new situation poses. The fact that the configuration conditions of the forms of knowledge, identity and socialization are being modified by the power of the new media demands the opening of spaces of reflexivity in which it is possible to generate critical and autonomous knowledge to control their own audiovisual representations. It is on this axis that we have located the resource for the participatory video.

Maybe in post-media culture we are all producers of content, not only spectators but prosumers, but what are the conditions by which we participate in this new culture? What are the models of identity, socialization and recognition of the other that are promulgated? What role do school and education play in these processes? At what point are they located between the ins-

titutional and local school spaces? If one of the goals of education is to put students in a position to elucidate their social and personal determinants, it is worth asking whether the media culture facilitates the achievement of that objective or rather cancels the critical distance that would allow them to become protagonists of their own learning, their representations and their vital experiences. This perspective is linked to the development of visual literacy processes that provide the tools to distinguish between images and clarify the models of subjectivity and life in common that digital visual culture occupies. We have highlighted the participatory video as one of the strategies we consider most promising to address such process. It is a tool for an action-research methodology and democratic participation that promotes experimental learning, social emancipation and educational change through which is possible to design methodologies for visual literacy and criticism of audiovisual representations. This set of objectives reflects the most urgent challenges that school and education face today.

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STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Study on information consumption of the millennial generation in universities of Loja, Ecuador

Estudio sobre consumo de información de la generación millennial en universidades de Loja, Ecuador

7

ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: April 30, 2019 / ACCEPTED: June 28, 2019

Abstract

Information consumption habits of university millennials in Loja, Ecuador, were analyzed. It is based on previous studies on media consumption, population characteristics and media competencies. It was carried out through discussion groups with students from the Social Communication and Business Administration careers of the Universidad Nacional de Loja and the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja. The study establishes how the millennials of the sample prefer the use of digital tools such as social networks and web pages to consume information of interest, in comparison to the use and access to traditional media due to its immediacy, accessibility and comfort.

Keywords

Information, Consumption, News, Millennials, Loja, Digital culture.

Resumen

Se analizan los hábitos de consumo de información de *millennials* universitarios de Loja, Ecuador, tomando como base estudios previos sobre consumo mediático, características de la población y competencias mediáticas. A través de grupos de discusión con estudiantes de las carreras de Comunicación Social y Administración de Empresas de la Universidad Nacional de Loja y de la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, se establece cómo los *millennial* de la muestra prefieren el uso de herramientas digitales como redes sociales y páginas web para consumir información de su interés, en detrimento del uso y acceso a medios de comunicación tradicionales, debido a su inmediatez, accesibilidad y comodidad.

Palabras clave

Información, Consumo, Noticias, *Millennials*, Loja, Cultura digital.

1. INTRODUCTION

Technological disruption has provided new channels for the distribution of information and has modified consumption habits, so it is necessary to think about the new processes of socialization and communication. Jesús Martín-Barbero (2012) proposes to think about communication processes not from the disciplines but from the problems and operations of social exchange. This is due to the identity conflicts articulated by culture and analyzing the communication process through the culture of society.

Currently, the number of people who have access to the Internet and social networks is growing daily. According to data from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU,

2018), more than half of the world's population is currently connected to the Internet. This is why it is necessary to talk about *prosumers*, people who play the role of consumer and producer simultaneously. The term was defined by Toffler and Toffler (2006, p. 221) as: "those who create goods, services or experiences for their use or enjoyment rather than to sell or exchange them. When we produce and consume our own output as individuals or groups, we are *prosuming*".

Also, the importance of studying the habits of information consumption of the *millennial* generation. According to Howe and Strauss (2010), this is the generation of young people who have changed their vision of technology and experienced greater empathy, comfort and use of digital environments. Specifically, it

refers to those born between 1982 and 1991. However, this age range varies. Authors such as Jackson and Hogg (2010) specify that those born from the year 2000 should be considered *millennials*.

Millennials are the generation that has grown up with the Internet, the phenomena of the Information Society, the Network Society, media convergence and *hypermediation*; which have changed the way of consumption and information production of society.

The most notable change has occurred in the cognitive differences exhibited in the social behavior of those born in the digital age, in their ways of learning and communicating. Therefore, "they think and process information significantly differently from their predecessors" (Velásquez, 2017, p. 113). It is the first generation that uses the Internet in each and every one of its daily activities.

The research of Zenith Openmedia (2014) in Ecuador determined that traditional media such as television, radio and written press experience a detriment in their use and consumption by the millennial generation more frequently, compared to tools such as the Internet or mobile devices.

More than 6,000 cases analyzed by Zenith Openmedia show that Facebook and Twitter are the most used social networks by this segment of the population and that more than 50% could access the Internet from their own mobile devices.

The data provided by the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC) (2017) show that 53% of the population has an activated cell phone and that 31.9% use social networks from their *smartphone*. This incidence occurs to a greater extent in the population aged 18 to 24 years, precisely the *millennial* generation,

which represents 29% of the total population nationwide (INEC, 2017).

The study "Millennials en Latinoamérica. Una perspectiva desde Ecuador" by Gutiérrez-Rubíe (2016), refers to the technological preference of this segment of the population. This has completely changed the way Ecuadorian youth access news. At least 85.6% receive information through digital media.

These investigations on the habits of use and consumption of different forms of communication by young Ecuadorians and the research developed by Velásquez and Paladines (2011), Velásquez, Yaguache and Carrión (2016) and Velásquez (2017); allowed to theoretically support this study aimed at determining the extent to which *millennials* are informed through social networks.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 THE TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION AND THE MEDIA

Castells (2005) refers to a technological revolution that has influenced the change and diversification of the media. The prediction of McLuhan (1996) in saying that "the medium is the message" is materialized little by little in these times when the media must adapt their characteristics to reach a more critical and constantly evolving audience.

Martín Barbero (2010) speaks of a virtual city as opposed to the concept of the literate city of Ángel Rama as a way of explaining the relationship between two different cities, the one that has knowledge and the one that does not. Barbero (2010, p. 81) also mentions that "the transformations of the ways in which knowledge circulates constitute one of the deepest

transformations that a society can undergo" and it reflects on the world we live in that "does not require bodies gathered, but interconnected" in a communication space that uses "connections, flows and networks" (Martín Barbero, 2010, p. 50) instead of meetings and crowds.

Finally, he explains that today's young people seem to have a greater neuronal plasticity that gives them an enormous facility for the languages of technology and a "empathy that is evidenced by the enormous capacity of absorption of information via television or computerized video games, together with the ease of entering and managing the complexity of the networks facilitated by the conversation via chat" (Martín Barbero, 2010, p. 51).

This expresses how *millennials*, the generation that uses technology as a common element to communicate, find and produce information, have the ability to interact and live with increasingly complex and evolved tools that provide various uses within their conception of simpler ways.

Therefore, responses to the media "both in particular and in general, vary according to individuals and across social groups according to gender, age, class, ethnicity and nationality, and also throughout the time" (Silverstone, 2004, p. 26).

2.2 MEDIA CONVERGENCE AND HYPERMEDIATIONS

The investigations of McLuhan (1996) in relation to the ecology of the media lead to explain its evolution as a response to social transformations and as agents of transformation. "Every new means of communication introduces new media environments that transform the cultural ecology of societies." Islas (2010, p. 45).

The concept of "Media Convergence" by Henry Jenkins (2008) explains the confluence of technology and multimedia in the devices we use. The relationship between use and medium was previously made. This convergence allows the use of different media (radio, written press, television and internet) in mobile devices with applications that perform their functions in single devices. This has eliminated the differences between them and has allowed the emergence of new genres, functionalities and uses.

Hypermediations are the characteristics of the new media according to Scolari (2008). Mediations (Martín Barbero, 1987) are the articulation between communication practices and social movements, *hypermediations* become "the social transformations that the developments of new forms of communication are generating" (Scolari, 2008, p. 116).

Hypermediations are characterized by the study of digital media, hypertextual structures, interaction, multimedia, convergence, confluence of languages and participation; elements given by the new technologies to today's media.

It is interpreted that the technological advance in communication and information has generated the development of new virtual environments in which new generations interact, consume and produce information. They combine different formats and media in unique devices, generating immediate and shared information throughout the community.

This reinforces the hypothesis that the pattern of information consumption of the generation of digital natives has been transformed, as well as the role of social networks to become a source of information.

2.3 THE MEANS BY WHICH MILLENNIALS CONSUME INFORMATION

Aguilar (2016) explains that networks “serve as a channel to reflect their identity, tastes, interests and positions. Thus, consulting, sharing and commenting on them is one of their favorite activities.” (Aguilar, 2016, p. 2). It states that the social networks Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and YouTube are the *millennial's* favorite platforms to find out what is happening today.

Research such as those of Chase (2017) or Aguilar (2017) determine that these young people use social networks to be informed by their main characteristics: immediacy, multimedia, specificity of information and adapted formats that fit their needs and satisfy them more efficiently.

The data consulted show an important trend in terms of the use of devices and information consumption over the Internet, especially through social networks, to the detriment of traditional media such as radio, newspapers or television. Several studies confirm that Latin America is the territory that has the greatest use of social networks. (Fernández, 2013). In Ecuador, 65% of millennials prefer Facebook as the main source for news, followed by online newspapers. (Gutiérrez-Rubí, 2016, p. 78).

The configuration of *prosumers* permanently connected to the network through mobile devices with increasingly complex and better developed applications justifies the need to study how this generation consumes information through these tools.

3. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative study was carried out to deepen the analysis of consumption behaviors and ob-

tain information on this segment of the population.

It was carried out through focus group discussions with students from the Business Administration and Social Communication careers of the Universidad Nacional de Loja and the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja. They were developed in a calm and suitable environment for group dynamics in two discussion groups with ten participants each: 5 women and 5 men.

As Mella (2000, p. 4) explains, “Focus groups respond to the need for qualitative information that provides depth and context. Discussions within the focus group can give insights as to whether the plans are on track. They can also reduce the distance between expectations and current events around the project.”

The study was conducted for one hour, moderated by the authors. A digital camera was used to record the session.

- **General objective of the discussion groups:** Identify millennial information consumption habits and the use of digital tools and media such as social networks and web pages.
- **Limitations:** the presence of the moderators could inhibit some opinions of the participants.
- **Thematic Axes**
 - Access to ICT.
 - The new paradigm: how *millennials* are informed.
 - The credibility of the new media.
 - The analysis of the problem.

3.1 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The focus group study was applied to a sample of university *millennials* from the city of Loja. Male (50%) and female (50%) students of the Business Administration and Social Communication careers of the Universidad Nacional de Loja and the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, whose age range was between 18 to 27 years old. All were previously informed of the nature and objectives of the study and signed an informed consent form regarding their participation and acceptance of the recording of the two focus group sessions.

4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The results are shown from four thematic axes that were applied to both focus groups of students of Social Communication and Business Administration.

These axes are:

1. Access to ICT.
2. The new paradigm: how *millennials* are informed.
3. The credibility of the new media.
4. The analysis of the problem.

Open questions were asked about topics related to these axes (*Do you have a smartphone? What content do you consume through the devices you connect to? Do you prefer to inform yourself through traditional media or new media? Do you believe everything that appears as information on social networks or new media? Do you check the information that appears on digital platforms?*). Both focus group sessions lasted 60 minutes each.

4.1 THE ACCESS TO ICT

At the beginning of the two focus group sessions, a survey was conducted regarding the latest news to which the participants had access.

FOCUS GROUP 1	
News	Media
The dismissal of Carlos Ochoa	Facebook
The death of Hittar Cuesta, guitarist from Loja	Social networks
FEF and television rights	TC televisión
Search for an older adult in Loja	Lo del Momento Loja (digital media)
Emilia Benavides case	Lo del Momento Loja (digital media)
Car accident	Facebook

Table 1. Latest news you have accessed. Focus group 1

FOCUS GROUP 2	
News	Media
Stephen Hawking's death	Facebook Instagram Twitter Ecuavisa (Television)

Table 2. Latest news you have accessed. Focus group 2

Most participants explained that they accessed the latest news through digital media portals or social networks. It is noted that the news they last accessed were related to the current situation or to events close to them.

The participants specified that they access news of their interest thanks to subscriptions to applications or news platforms about automobile sports or local football in the form of mailing lists with information related to the topic or notifications from the social networks of information portals of their interest. This shows

that the preferences in access to information are entirely digital platforms with different themes according to their own interests or tastes.

4.2 THE NEW PARADIGM: HOW MILLENNIALS ARE INFORMED

The data shown reflect the mechanics of the information process followed by the participants of the sample. The answers are related to the uses they give to social networks and their habits of search and consumption of information.

FOCUS GROUP 1	
Question	Answers
What do they use social networks for?	I look for news whenever I go to Facebook, I have predetermined notifications that tell me what is new. On Instagram I watch videos or photos and WhatsApp for messaging.
	I use Facebook to watch cooking tutorial videos and for information. I use Instagram to see publications related to jewelry or shoes shopping pages.
	I use Facebook to sell my products.
	I use Facebook for news and information.
	I use Facebook to find out what my friends do or see what politicians do. I use Instagram to upload photographs.
	I use Facebook to inform me about what happens in the class, also for homework.
	We use Facebook for academics because teachers and students use it to share information related to classes.

Table 3. Reasons for using social networks. Focus group 1

FOCUS GROUP 2	
Question	Answers
What do they use social networks for?	Entertainment, see memes.
	See images of celebrities on Instagram
	I use Facebook to see memes, chat or review tasks. Instagram is to see stories and what celebrities publish.
	I look for information about youtubers
	I find out what the celebrities publish
	I review information about technology or sports.

Table 4. Reasons for using social networks. Focus group 2.

The tables above show the answers to the questions about the use of social networks. All participants of both focus groups had accounts or public profiles on social networks (Facebook and Instagram in all cases and Twitter or Snapchat in some), but the use of these social networks is wide. However, important preferences were determined on entertainment; what friends, acquaintances or celebrities are doing, but not to be informed.

It is important to note that the information that is sought tends to relate to personal interests such as cooking tutorials, memes, pages for buying and selling items or services. This shows a tendency to customize the use given to these platforms depending on the individual and what interests him at the moment, but not as a source of news.

FOCUS GROUP 1	
Question	Answers
Where would you look for information if you didn't have access to social networks or digital media?	I would appeal to television
	I would go to the radio because it can go much further than television, radio is the first means of communication because everyone has access to it.
	I would look on television, because the newspaper bores me and television catches my attention more.
	We are more familiar with television.
	I get distracted on the radio. On the other hand, I find out the information when viewing the images on TV.

Table 5. Search for information in other media. Focus group 1

FOCUS GROUP 2	
Question	Answers
Where would you look for information if you didn't have access to social networks or digital media?	The radio, because the news in the morning always gives the information on what is happening.
	Television, because they also report on all events.
	Television is the main medium where I can see what happens.

Table 6. Search for information in other media. Focus group 2.

The results of this question determine which is the second source of preference when finding news about a specific case. Participants were given an example of an event that would arouse immediate interest in them (the hypothetical closure of the university career they are stud-

ying) and the responses set a tendency to look on television. This was due to the audiovisual component to which they are accustomed. It is more attractive because it is more related to the products presented in social networks or other digital media.

In addition to television, radio is in second place because of the level of trust it has acquired within the group of participants. However, in no case were newspapers mentioned.

FOCUS GROUP 1	
Question	Answers
What advantages do you find in digital media that are not present in traditional media?	Information spreads faster. The moment something happens, someone takes a picture and instantly you see it on digital media.
	We can find out what happens faster.
	You don't have to wait for it to appear on the TV news or the newspaper the next day.

Table 7. Advantages of digital media. Focus group 1.

FOCUS GROUP 2	
Question	Answers
What advantages do you find in digital media that are not present in traditional media?	Easier to use.
	They have updated information.
	They upload information instantly
	The news appears instantly

Table 8. Advantages of digital media. Focus group 2.

As advantages of digital media over traditional media, there is a tendency to seek the immediacy of information and ease of use. There is a clear understanding of the operation mode of digital media for permanent updating their information and instant comments on the produ-

ced events, while the mechanics of traditional media follow other processes that contradict this current conception of immediacy.

The unanimous opinion of the participants in both focus groups determines an idea that is set around a total preference for the use of digital media to be informed by their inherent characteristics in the dissemination of information and the naturalization of the use of these platforms thanks to the access to mobile devices or the Internet.

FOCUS GROUP 1	
Question	Answers
What disadvantages do you find in digital media?	The problem with immediacy is that because so much information is presented, sometimes you get lost because you are in class or you are busy and you do not know what is happening.
	The information is uploaded immediately, in traditional media you know that you find the information at the time they broadcast the news.

Table 9. Disadvantages of digital media. Focus group 1.

FOCUS GROUP 2	
Question	Answers
What disadvantages do you find in digital media?	Sometimes they upload false information or news, such as the deaths of celebrities.
	It depends on the page, there are some that always alter the information.
	The media focus the news in different ways. Some put the information as it is and others distort it.
	In traditional media there is more information than in digital media, there are more testimonials.

Table 10. Disadvantages of digital media. Focus group 2.

The previous answers show the appreciation of the limitations that can be found in the process of accessing information through digital media. The immediacy of the information could be a problem since it is not possible to be connected all the time, you cannot keep an eye on all the news of the day.

There are also references to the notion that the news could be more complete in traditional media. Although there is no mention of processes such as editorial review or contrasting sources, there is an idea that traditional media give better processing to information.

Similarly, references are made to a lack of credibility in the information presented in these media. Although these platforms are more consumed by the characteristics already mentioned, there is a clear tendency to distrust the veracity of what has been presented.

4.3 CREDIBILITY TOWARDS THE NEW COMMUNICATION MEDIA

In this block, the attendees of the focus groups were asked about their position regarding the veracity or falsity of the information presented in the media they accessed in order to determine if their credibility was the same or not in relation to information from traditional media.

FOCUS GROUP 1	
Question	Answers
Do traditional media or digital media give you more credibility? Why?	It depends, traditional media are governed by certain processes and generate more credibility.
	There are times that Teleamazonas presents a story and in another channel they present the same story with different data and another approach. You would have to find several sources and draw your own conclusions.
	The ways in which traditional media report are very different from each other despite being traditional. No media tells the whole truth. That depends on us. No media is totally reliable.
	If you put it on a scale, what creates more credibility is the traditional media.

Table 11. Credibility towards digital media. Focus group 1.

FOCUS GROUP 2	
Question	Answers
Do traditional media or digital media give you more credibility? Why?	It depends on the page. For example, there are social media accounts of digital media that do have true information.
	You generally believe what you find on Facebook but it may not be true.

Table 12. Credibility towards digital media. Focus group 2.

These answers complement the previous question and allow the analysis around the credibility variable towards digital and traditional media. The participants were clear that they should follow a process of verifying the information that has been presented as a news event, without believing everything that is presented in one or other media but accepting that there is a greater susceptibility to distrust the information presented.

FOCUS GROUP 1	
Question	Answers
What would it take for digital media to have more credibility?	Since everyone has the possibility to upload information, it is very difficult for the information to be one hundred percent true.
	There are people who do not know how to transmit the information to other people.
	When doing citizen journalism, the news is always decontextualized because I publish it from my perspective.
	There are many people who publish many things that are wrong and nobody controls it.
	Social networks have no limits in terms of the information published, especially in photos and identities of people.
	It would be a good initiative for digital media to train people as to what and how to publish.
	In digital media, information is mixed with opinion.

Table 13. Proposals to improve credibility in digital media. Focus group 1.

FOCUS GROUP 2	
Question	Answers
What would it take for digital media to have more credibility?	Sometimes the media cannot cover everything and people also give their opinion, that is a part of reality because people can make a person look bad or so.
	Sometimes the photos that are uploaded in digital media can affect the people involved in the events.

Table 14. Proposals to improve credibility in digital media. Focus group 2.

These responses clearly show how the participants determine that citizen participation in the generation of information in the new media could be a limitation to make this information reliable or relevant. The possibility of anyone issuing information from their personal accounts and generating discussion about news events is problematic. One of the interesting proposals is the management of digital media in the education of citizens prepared to generate information. Given the possibilities granted by the new media, limiting this possibility only to journalists or people prepared on the subject is anachronistic.

4.4 ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

Finally, these data seek to obtain information from the participants' own reflection on the phenomenon under investigation. We sought to know their position on the new paradigm of information and content generation through new media and platforms to fully understand their perspective and support this study.

FOCUS GROUP 1	
Question	Answers
What would you propose to improve the way millennials are informed?	That the digital media segment the public according to my interests.
	That they present me information according to what is in vogue or the most important things.
	Notify me of information that interests me.

Table 15. Proposals to improve the information method. Focus group 1.

FOCUS GROUP 2	
Question	Answers
What would you propose to improve the way millennials are informed?	That the information formats innovate, for example, giving all the information in sixty seconds or something.
	That videos or audios about the information are presented and not just text.

Table 16. Proposals to improve the information method. Focus group 2.

FOCUS GROUP 1	
Question	Answers
What do you think will happen in the future regarding this issue?	Digital media will be more accessible.
	It is becoming part of the culture to go digital.
	Digital platforms recognize what one consumes, so we don't see information that we don't want to see.
	It is easier to be aware of everything through digital media.

Table 17. The future of the information access paradigm. Focus group 1.

FOCUS GROUP 2	
Question	Answers
What do you think will happen in the future regarding this issue?	Digital media will continue to move forward and will eventually replace traditional media.
	There are people who are not yet interested in digital media.
	There may be ways for traditional media not to disappear, because there will always be people interested in getting informed in that way.

Table 18. The future of the information access paradigm. Focus group 1.

The answers to the last two questions are related to the present and the future of the consumption habits of the millennial participants of this study. On the one hand, we see the configuration of a consumer oriented to receive personalized content, which responds to the needs and interests of the individual instead of issuing information to the entire public. Increasingly, we see how this configuration is present through the notifications, recommendations and possibilities that social networks and digital media deliver to their users through algorithms that save user information. In this way, they can ensure the loyalty of a consumer who increasingly looks for personalized and own content.

On the other hand, the perception that the participants have about the trend that will mark the consumption of information is clear, the digital media will continue to gain ground to the traditional media by the characteristics already mentioned: immediacy, comfort, ease of use and accessibility. As one of the answers says, we live in a digital culture. Most of the things we do are influenced by technology or new media, which in turn mean new mechanics, different possibilities and more attractive features for the generation that concerns us.

5. DISCUSSION

Information and communication technologies are constantly changing the way people consume and produce information. Today's news is generated immediately and shared through the Internet by a society that is interconnected with each other through increasingly technologically advanced devices.

The results of this research show a correspondence with the characteristics of the population reviewed by the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC, 2014) and the research

of Zenith Optimedia (2014) regarding Internet access and the availability of cell phones with Internet connection.

Likewise, the results correspond to those reported by studies such as those of Aguilar (2017), Aguilar (2016), Chase (2017), Velásquez and Paladines (2011) and Velásquez, Yaguache and Carrión (2016), regarding the configuration of a generation that seeks to consume information produced in digital media; more specifically through social networks. The characteristics of the Network Society of Castells (2005) and the conceptualization of a Global Village (McLuhan, 1996) as a society in which people are connected through their devices are applicable to these times. Young people have the possibility of being interconnected through the Internet and the mobile devices through which they interact and feed on diverse multimedia content as Jenkins (2008) explains through media convergence.

The results correspond to those of the research by Zomeño and Blay-Arráez (2017) and Rodríguez and Vega (2016) who conclude that millennials prefer the consumption of digital formats because of the mix of narratives, the use of different resources and characteristics of the networks. These issues are often far from the daily practice of journalism but must be adapted to meet the latent needs of this generation.

Traditional media have lost ground in this regard and a total reinvention would be necessary in order to try to recover the millennial audience and the next generations.

It is important to establish that these results are limited only to the participants of the sample of this study, therefore, it is limited to conclude based on the answers obtained by specific groups of university students with specific demographic characteristics. Even so, the results

allow us to know the position, opinion and reflections of this demographic group regarding the phenomenon of access to information today.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The elaboration of this investigation has allowed to conclude:

1. This work is supported by previous research on millennial consumption habits in Ecuador. The ideas that sustain that this generation supposes a change in the paradigm of access to information are reinforced.
2. The Millennials that participated in this study are completely familiar with the use of digital media to consume information. If necessary, the first option they use is social networks, where they find information about their interests.
3. The results show that the surveyed millennials prefer this type of media due to the immediacy with which they can find the information and the access facilities of social networks. The naturalization of the use and consumption of information through new media has been verified through the discussion groups.
4. There is a critical view on the information they consume. While there is no generalization regarding the credibility of the new media, participants explain that they tend to doubt whether or not information is true depending on the media in which they are presented.
5. The possibilities granted by social networks for the production and generation of content are seen as a disadvantage in the construction of information and the de-

velopment of a true criterion regarding its validity. Participants suggest training and public awareness events on the issue of management and dissemination of relevant information.

6. The notion of a user who searches for personalized content according to his own interests or needs is defined. A user who wants the information presented to meet the requirements that only he or she sets. Social networks are fulfilling that role through the systems of notifications, subscriptions and recommendations that are not yet applied to traditional journalism.

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Evaluation of university advertising in the written press of Ecuador, a longitudinal study

Evaluación de la publicidad de universidades en la prensa escrita de Ecuador, un estudio longitudinal

8

ARTICLE



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RECEIVED: May 27, 2019 / ACCEPTED: July 18, 2019

Abstract

The objective of the study is the evaluation of university advertising in the Ecuadorian press. The methodological technique of longitudinal study was applied, analyzing 772 advertisements published in three leading newspapers during every Sunday in 2016 and 2017. This study identified what type of universities, content and visual attributes stood out, and what audiences they were targeting. The conclusions include the predominance of promotional content of private universities that are aimed at potential students and the value that persists in the written press despite the rise of online advertising. The year 2017 exceeds in ads to 2016.

Keywords

Communication, Advertising, Press, University, Ecuador.

Resumen

El objeto de estudio es la evaluación de la publicidad de universidades en la prensa ecuatoriana. Se aplicó la técnica metodológica del estudio longitudinal, analizando 772 anuncios publicados en los tres diarios líderes durante cada domingo de 2016 y 2017. Se identificó qué tipo de universidades sobresalen, qué contenidos, qué atributos visuales y a qué audiencias se dirigen. Entre las conclusiones destacan el predominio de contenidos promocionales de universidades privadas que se dirigen a estudiantes potenciales y el valor que persiste de la prensa, a pesar del auge de la publicidad online. El año 2017 supera en anuncios al 2016.

Palabras clave

Comunicación, Publicidad, Prensa, Universidad, Ecuador.

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is one of the marketing communication tools paid by sponsors who wish to inform or persuade the audience about their products or services through ads that are disseminated in various media (Arens, Weigold & Arens,

2008). It can influence the increase in income but also impacts on better social recognition or the support of other organizations as it is useful for profit and non-profit institutions. It is not the only thing that influences the decisions of the public because the quality of service, distribution and price are key (Treviño, 2010).

The brand is also influenced, one of the most important intangible assets. Through brands, institutions relate to their stakeholders and transmit values that identify them. It is the most positioned component in the minds of audiences, influencing their preferences, choices or fidelity (Velilla, 2010). That is why organizations seek to build powerful brands to differentiate themselves in a saturated context. They have understood the need to insert them into their institutional communication, since being intangible, they are difficult to imitate and are able to improve credibility, trust and reputation (Fernández & Labarta, 2009).

1.1 UNIVERSITY ADVERTISING

Investment in advertising influences the increase in revenue (Sahni, 2016) but mostly benefits the value of the brand (McAlister, Srinivasan, Jindal & Cannella, 2016). In the case of higher education institutions HEI, advertising is important to project the contribution they make to the community (Veas, 2015), since they are responsible for a society to develop through scientific knowledge (Simancas-González & García-López, 2017). A strategic communication allows them to respond to social needs (Marino & Presti, 2017) and balance them with their economic interests (Vaquero, 2012) that are the livelihood to continue in force. The HEI supported by advertising compete for popularity, resources, students and teachers (Zapata & Tejeda, 2016).

People decide in which university to study through an evaluation of the alternatives they consider best suited to their needs (Scharf & Correia, 2015). Higher education can be a broad field for deceptive advertising, particularly on the quality and economy that universities promote, because it is difficult to contrast this information (Zapata & Tejeda, 2016). The content must be true for ethics and because

it avoids defrauding consumers, since the objective of advertising is that all parties benefit (Beltrán, 2010).

Regarding research on institutional communication of universities, Scharf & Correia (2015) recognize that there is little literature. It is necessary to identify the audiences and the published contents (Rodríguez & Santamaría, 2012). According to De Aguilera & Farías (2010), it is advisable to conduct studies by countries or regions, avoiding treating HEIs as a single set since each context regulates the quality of higher education differently.

1.2 PRESS ADVERTISING

Media coverage is broader when advertising spending is higher (Rinallo & Basuroy, 2009), but traditional media have been threatened by the new media that are available in a myriad of ways, which is why the mission of institutional communication is a challenge (Clow & Baack, 2010).

Newspapers had consolidated as the mass communication channel in the eighteenth century (Alonso, 2013) and they were the main advertising platform in the nineteenth century (Heras, 2000). In fact, newspapers have been the second largest media after television until 2008, but digital readers increasingly abandon print formats (Arens et al., 2008). Currently, the press is the third media after television and internet (Sánchez, 2018). The latter is the channel of consultation, information and entertainment with more demand and this makes brands feel more attracted to invest in online advertising (Gómez, 2016).

Some world reference newspapers have disappeared due to the decrease in advertising, their main source of income (Treviño, 2010). In general, the decrease in advertising sales and copies is inevitable (Picard, 2014). This does not

mean that advertising revenue in the online version is sufficient, in fact it is not. The written press is threatened by the digital press, mainly due to free access to information and the increase of competitors that are native in the digital media (Casero-Ripollés, 2010).

It should be remembered that the press has been transformed since before the internet existed and that it has adapted to the online environment better than television and radio, adding multimedia content. The new media still depend on the conventional media because they have more years of experience in the generation of informative content, they have specialized professionals and established organizational structures (Cabrera-González, 2001). Although some authors thought that internet would be the end of the written press, it is clear that instead there is a coexistence of offline and online media (Edo, 2000). At least so far.

However, managers of the written press reduce production costs instead of innovating (Casero-Ripollés, 2010). In Ecuador, managers are pressured to optimize paper investment while adapting to a digital environment that brings minimal profits. The printed version predominates because it generates its highest income (Quichimbo & Rivera-Rogel, 2016). If all this is a problem for media companies, it is more critical for advertisers who need to communicate with their audiences through strategic channels. There are obvious disadvantages that the written press means for advertising. The cost is high, young audiences do not use it, it reaches very large audiences, it is not possible to estimate how many people read an ad, it competes with others on the same page (Treviño, 2010) and even with the contents of the newspaper, the quality of the print media is not optimal, it is not common to know on which page exactly the ad will appear (Arens et al., 2008). The written

press does not allow interaction between advertisers and recipients (García-Uceda, 2011).

As the communication process occurs when the information is understood by the recipients (Clow & Baack, 2010), these must be carefully studied during the planning and design of an advertisement since its behavior in the purchase decision process is the result of stimuli they receive from the attractiveness of the advertised offer. In fact, what motivates people to make a purchase after seeing an ad in the press is the level of attraction of the offer and the level of influence that certain newspapers exert for the quality of their news (Benavides & Leiva, 2014). Therefore, what defines which media is the most important for informing and announcing is the attractiveness of its contents and the level of confidence in them (Edo, 2000). Despite the disadvantages, press advertising still exists because newspapers have high credibility and have good prestige (García-Uceda, 2011).

The volatility of the political context is one of the factors that influence the levels of trust that societies have over the media worldwide (Hanitzsch, Van Dalen & Steindl, 2018). In Ecuador, the media lost credibility during the first decade of the 21st century due to strong confrontations between the political, financial and media sectors. This was due to the fact that the new constitution of the year 2008 prohibited financial institutions from owning media (Czech – Godoy, 2012). A little more than a decade has passed since then and although on June 25, 2013, the first Organic Law of Communication in the country entered into force, substantial reforms are currently under way. Therefore, credibility levels will hardly be consolidated in the immediate future. As mentioned by Viveros & Mellado (2018), the law has made journalists in the country more cautious with information.

More rightly, the synergy between advertising and the press is necessary since the first one finances the second one, granting it freedom of expression without political or other pressures. The second one becomes a mass diffusion support for the first one (Heras, 2000). That is, the media need advertising to exist, whether traditional or not (Nitrihual, 2007). The audience is the articulating element between advertising and journalism. In addition, as advertising highlights information about products or services to boost sales, it contributes to good competitiveness among organizations that offer benefits to the community and makes them interested in seeking quality. (Treviño, 2010).

Regardless of the political environment, young Latin Americans prefer to use the internet and distrust the local press (Salzman & Albarran, 2011). They reject the written press more than the digital media (Muñoz, Durán & Thayer, 2014). Those who have grown up using the new media have easier navigation and feel less comfortable reading printed news (Ambrose & Harris, 2008). They have more control over advertising, although they still suffer interruptions in the media, they choose and discard ads. That is why the importance of marketing and creativity has been resumed (Treviño, 2010).

Graphic design helps the ad to positively impact the reader with the good use of visual attributes such as images, typography, color and composition (García-Uceda, 2011). The audience index of a media outlet changes depending on the quality of the ads. The more readers feel identified with the product, the more they will appropriate it (Beltrán, 2010). Advertising should attract attention in a pleasant way. When the visual characteristics are complex, the attention towards the brand and the attitude towards the advertisement are negatively affected. But when design is complex, people

pay more attention to both the design aspect and the content (Pieters, Wedel & Batra, 2010).

Before the 1950s it was common for ads to occupy a page full of text in newspapers to mention the benefits of a product, in that decade Paul Rand proposed a more visual style (Sorrentino, 2014). In communicative design today, more complete visual codes need to be used to understand complex information in a simple way (Arrojo, 2015). The work must be interdisciplinary (González-Díez & Puebla-Martínez, 2018), not only because of quality, but because advertising creativity is demanded more than before in the offline environment due to the proliferation of online media (Perlado Lamo de Espinosa & Rubio Romero, 2017). Creativity must balance aesthetics, that is, beauty in a graphic composition and the quality of the message (Beltrán, 2010).

Since there is a high exposure of advertisements, it is necessary to educate people in advertising since their childhood to have the ability to make decisions with freedom and responsibility when a brand seeks to persuade them (Pellicer Jordá, 2015). Scientific content that includes some advertisements must also be discerned and critically analyzed by readers before making a decision (Ezquerria & Fernández-Sánchez, 2014). The social values that are included in the copywriting should also be identified because the agencies base their creative strategies on the needs and on what the target audiences value (Gutiérrez-Guerrero, Méndiz-Noguero & Repiso-Caballero, 2018).

With the above, it is worth questioning what presence universities have in the traditional press and how their advertisements are developed to determine if the written press is still valued and used in the higher education sector, given the media convergence. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to evalua-

te the presence of university advertising in the national press of Ecuador. For this purpose, the following specific objectives were established: to detect what type of universities publish the most, to identify what content they publish, to determine which audiences they are targeting and to analyze what visual attributes characterize the advertisements. The fulfillment of the objectives allows to answer the following research question: Have universities reduced the publication of advertisements in the written press of Ecuador?

2. METHODOLOGY

A longitudinal study was developed to achieve the objectives and answer the research question. A descriptive and inferential statistical analysis were performed based on the direct observation of 772 advertisements that universities published every Sunday from January 2016 to December 2017 in the three most important newspapers in Ecuador: *El Comercio*, *El Universo* and *La Hora*. They are considered to be the most important newspapers because their reach is national and because it has been found that they had the greatest circulation during the two years of study.

In Ecuador, the press is the second largest media after the radio (Consejo de Regulación y Desarrollo de la Información y Comunicación, 2017). Of the conventional media, the written press is the only one that has permanent archives of the printed version on their websites.

The analysis of the results was carried out from a database built for this study. A series of variables that other authors included in their research were considered. The variables for this research were: contents, recipients (Ortega-Gaucin & Peña-García, 2016), date of publication, section (Fernández Trigueros & Fer-

nández Castaño, 2014), location on the page, size (Zapata & Tejeda, 2016), issuer, color and informative value (Guallar, Rovira & Ruiz, 2010).

Gutiérrez-Guerrero, Méndiz-Noguero & Repiso-Caballero (2018) pointed out that social values in advertising must also be identified. Based on the contribution of Segura-Mariño (2018), the contents were classified as informative, promotional and social. The informative contents communicate about past events, the promotional contents boost the action of the recipients regarding offers and the social contents promote scientific knowledge or actions on topics of social interest.

In addition to the name of the university, it was identified if it is public or private and if it is present in a world ranking, particularly in Scimago Institutions Rankings SIR of the year 2018. Regarding the newspaper, it was observed in which newspaper and on which page each advertisement appeared.

It is necessary to point out that the classification of universities by financing in Ecuador includes four types: national public universities, public universities operating in Ecuador under international agreements and conventions, private universities receiving allocations and income from the State, and self-financed private universities. However, it has been decided to reduce research to the types of public and private so that the results can be compared to other countries in future studies.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Until August 2, 2018, the day the Organic Reform Law to the Organic Law of Higher Education came into effect, the Ecuadorian entity that accredited and categorized universities according to their quality was the Consejo de Evaluación, Acreditación y Aseguramiento de la Cali-

dad de la Educación Superior CEAACES. From that date, the categorization was eliminated but the evaluation and accreditation is maintained by a new entity, the Consejo de Aseguramiento de la Calidad de la Educación Superior CACES. This has generated controversy since the perception on the quality of each university differs according to the international ranking that is consulted after the national categorization disappeared. It is also an opportunity for those HEIs that were not in the highest category to improve or recover their positioning through different media.

The HEIs were classified as public and private in order to meet the objectives, answer the research question and detect what type of universities publish the most, it was also determined whether or not they were present in the SIR. Although there are Ecuadorian universities in several rankings, the SIR has the only objective classification system worldwide in which there are universities from Ecuador, although there are only 8 of a total of 60 HEIs until the end of this research (Table 1).

Presence in Scimago Institutions Rankings		Total		
		Sí	No	
Type of university	Public	4	29	33
	Private	4	23	27
Total		8	52	60

Table 1. Universities in Ecuador. Source: Consejo de Educación Superior de Ecuador.

3.1 TYPES OF UNIVERSITIES THAT PUBLISH THE MOST

Of the 60 universities, 35 published and 25 did not publish. Most of them are private. All 8 universities that were in Scimago Institutions Rankings published. The chi-square and Fisher statistics show that there is a relationship between advertising in the press with the type of university and the presence in the ranking (Table 2 and Table 3).

The number of ads is also associated with it. Of the 772 ads, 570 were from private HEIs and 202 from public HEIs. The average is 12.87, the range is 0 to 128, the median is 1 and the mode 0. It was observed that the variances between the groups were different when comparing the average of advertisements between public and private HEIs, as well as between HEIs that were in SIR. The levels of significance were less than 0.05 in both cases and were determined through the Student's t-test (Table 4 and Table 5).

3.2 CONTENTS OF ADVERTISEMENTS

The contents were classified as informative, promotional and social. The informative contents communicate about past events, the promotional contents boost the action of the recipients regarding offers and the social contents promote scientific knowledge or actions on topics of social interest (Segura-Mariño, 2018). Of the 772 ads, 550 (71.2%) had promotional purposes, especially about the academic offer. 146 ads (18.9%) addressed social interest (research results) and 76 (9.8%) were informative about events held in previous days. The chi-square analysis determined that the content is not defined according to the type of HEI or depending on whether they were present in SIR. Significance values are greater than 0.05. Segura-Mariño (2018) found slight differences in the online en-

Have they advertised in newspapers?				Total	
			Yes	No	
What type of university is it?	Public	Count	13	20	33
		Expected frequency	19,3	13,8	33,0
	Private	Count	22	5	27
		Expected frequency	15,8	11,3	27,0
Total Frecuencia esperada		Count	35	25	60
		35,0	25,0	60,0	
		Value		gl	Asymptotic significance (bilateral)
Pearson's Chi-square		10,823 ^a		1	,001
a. 0 boxes (0.0%) have an expected frequency of less than 5. The minimum expected frequency is 11.25.					

Table 2. Type of university and presence in newspapers.

Have they advertised in newspapers?				Total	
			Yes	No	
Presence in Scimago Institutions Rankings	Yes	Count	8	0	8
		Expected frequency	4,7	3,3	8,0
	No	Count	27	25	52
		Expected frequency	30,3	21,7	52,0
Total Frecuencia esperada		Count	35	25	60
		35,0	25,0	60,0	
		Value	gl	Asymptotic significance (bilateral)	Exact significance (bilateral)
Pearson's Chi-square		6,593 ^a	1	,010	
Fisher's exact statistic					,016
a. 2 boxes (50.0%) have an expected frequency of less than 5. The minimum expected frequency is 3.33.					

Table 3. Presence in Scimago Institutions Rankings and in newspapers.

	What kind of university is it?	N	Mean	Typical deviation.	Typical error of the mean
¿Cuántos anuncios publicó?	Public	33	6,12	17,217	2,997
	Private	27	21,11	33,250	6,399
Bilateral Significance					
T-test for equality of means	Equal variances have been assumed				,028
	Equal variances have not been assumed				,041

Table 4. Number of ads by type of university.

	Presence in Scimago Institutions Rankings	N	Mean	Typical deviation	Typical error of the mean
How many ads did it publish?	Yes	8	58,88	47,601	16,829
	No	52	5,79	10,996	1,525
Bilateral Significance					
T-test for equality of means	Equal variances have been assumed				,000
	Equal variances have not been assumed				,016

Table 5. Number of ads based on presence in Scimago Institutions Rankings.

vironment, the HEIs of Ecuador publish more promotional content on Facebook (54.4%), the followed by informative content (41.6%) and only 4% were social.

3.3 ADVERTISING AUDIENCE

Three classifications were made about the audience: internal, external and both. A variable was also created to classify them in detail as they were detected in the content analysis: university students, alumni, high school graduates, future graduates, professionals, organizations, parents and citizens in general.

Public HEI advertisements were primarily aimed at both audiences, private advertisements were aimed at external audiences. 1.7% were directed only to the internal public. On the other hand, the HEIs present in SIR were directed more to both audiences. HEIs that were not in SIR were directed to external audiences. The chi-square indicated that the types of audiences and the types of universities were associated (0.001 and 0.024 respectively). Generally, the promotional ads were aimed at students of HEIs, citizens in general, future high school graduates, graduates and professionals. The advertisements of social interest and information were aimed at the general public. It is convenient to know the ads each audience re-

ceives most. 44.7% was directed to the general public with promotional and social interest content, 21% was directed to university students with promotional content, 17% was directed to professionals with promotional content, 15.5% was directed to future high school graduates and high school graduates with promotional content, 0.9% corresponded to organizations with content of social and promotional interest, 0.5% was directed to parents with promotional content and 0.4% was directed to alumni with promotional content.

3.4 VISUAL ATTRIBUTES OF ADVERTISEMENTS

The three newspapers with the highest circulation are El Comercio, El Universo and La Hora. The universities preferred to publish in that order. 58.9% of ads were published in El Comercio, 34.2% in El Universo and 6.9% in La Hora. The majority were from private universities, the same was found when observing the type of HEI that publishes more in each newspaper. It was observed that there were representative differences when analyzing whether the newspaper's decision is associated with HEIs that are in the ranking or not. Those in the ranking prefer El Comercio and those that do not, El Universo (Table 6).

For an advertisement to be effective in the written press, Trevino (2010) argues that it must be located on odd pages because they are more visible. In this study it was found that universities in Ecuador seek to apply this strategy. Of the 772 ads, 688 (89.12%) were published on the right side of the pages, especially at the bottom.

On the other hand, it was detected that being in the ranking or not is related to the size of the ad. The biggest ad occupied two pages. There were eight two-page ads, seven were from HEIs that were in the SIR. There was no major difference in terms of those that occupied a page or half a page. Those that occupied a quarter and an eighth of page were mostly of the HEIs that were in the SIR. The smallest ads (1/16 page) were from HEIs that were not in the SIR. It was observed in which part of the newspa-

pers were located the ads. The majority (98.4%) were on internal pages, none were on the cover and only 1.6% were on the back cover. 7 of them were in El Universo, 5 in El Comercio and none in La Hora. 2 were from the public university Escuela Politécnica Nacional, the number one Ecuadorian university in the SIR. 10 were from private universities, six from Universidad Casa Grande, two from Universidad San Francisco de Quito, one from Universidad Católica Santiago de Guayaquil and one from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador. These were in the group of the most published, but the Universidad Casa Grande and the Universidad Católica Santiago de Guayaquil were not in SIR.

Another key element is color. Alonso (2013) argues that it can be the most active visual communication component since it impresses im-

It is in Scimago Institutions Rankings			Total		
			Sí	No	
Newspapers	El Comercio	Count	328	127	455
		Expected frequency	277,6	177,4	455,0
	El Universo	Count	113	151	264
		Expected frequency	161,1	102,9	264,0
	La Hora	Count	30	23	53
		Expected frequency	32,3	20,7	53,0
Total		Count	471	301	772
		Expected frequency	471,0	301,0	772,0
			Value	gl	Asymptotic significance (bilateral)
Pearson's Chi-square			60,696 ^a	2	,000
Likelihood ratio			60,606	2	,000
a. 0 boxes (0.0%) have an expected frequency of less than 5. The minimum expected frequency is 20.66.					

Table 6. Newspapers according to presence in ranking.

mediately. For Ambrose & Harris (2008) it is the most instantaneous way to highlight, differentiate and rank information. This investigation identified that 72.9% of ads were in color and 27.1% were in black and white. HEIs preferred color advertisements, especially in El Universo (84.5%), then in El Comercio (66.6%) and in La Hora there were no significant differences in preference. The type of HEI and whether or not they were in the SIR is associated with color preference; the significance value is 0.000 in the chi-square test.

On the informative value, Alonso (2013) distinguishes image formats such as photos, infographics, illustrations, graphic brands, among others. Of the 772 studied ads, most used photos, only 5 had illustrations and 5 had infographics.

3.5 HAVE UNIVERSITIES DECREASED THE PUBLICATION OF ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE WRITTEN PRESS OF ECUADOR?

No, universities have not decreased the publication of advertisements. On the contrary, the advertisements of every Sunday of the year 2017 (470) increased in 55.63% compared to the year 2016 (302). Figure 1 shows that there is no pattern in the number of ads throughout each year. It would be assumed that there is more publicity in the registration months, but they coincided on high values only in July. This is understandable, because HEIs not only promote graduate degrees, but also postgraduate programs, continuing education, events, and so on.

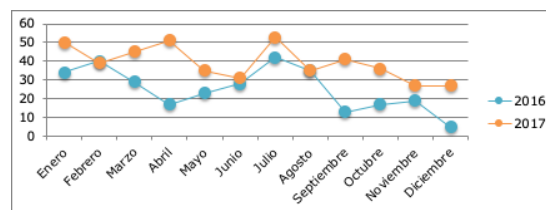


Figure 1. Number of ads per year. Source: Direct observation.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Evaluating the presence of university advertising in the written press of Ecuador allowed to determine that this type of media is still valued by higher education despite the rise of online media mentioned by Clow & Baack (2010). Brands are more attracted to investing in online advertising but prefer traditional media as mentioned by Gomez (2016), although the media lost credibility in the country, as noted Checa-Godoy (2012).

There was a 55.63% increase in advertisements by Ecuadorian HEIs in 2017 compared to 2016. In the future, it is of special interest to investigate: the causes of such increase, the participation of other sectors in the written press, the comparisons with the online framework and the analysis of the transmedia narrative with emphasis in this last aspect. In addition, it would be necessary to study how audiences perceive advertisements based on the theory of Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion.

In total, 35 universities (58.4%) published advertisements in national newspapers during the two years of study and 25 did not (41.7%). The institutions that most valued the press as an advertising medium were private and those included in Scimago Institutions Rankings.

Universities have improved their visual communication strategies. Institutions seek to publish on odd pages (which are the most visible), in color and use images. They use photos rather

than illustrations and infographics. All this despite the fact that most ads were published on internal pages, 1.6% on back covers and none on covers.

Advertising that targets potential students predominates. In this sense, universities do not strategically advertise in the written press because they aim at people who prefer to use the internet. They do not take advantage of the fact that the written press has the potential to reach other audiences such as parents, professionals who wish to get a postgraduate degree, adults interested in continuing education or to inform about the activities they carry out.

Advertising with promotional content that demonstrates the interest in increasing the number of students also predominates. They

should highlight their mission regarding the development of scientific and social knowledge that they are called to do as institutions of higher education. This would improve their positioning and the positive results would be sustainable in the long term.

It can be concluded with certainty that universities have to improve their offline communication strategies and respond with agility to the needs of the audience on the Internet, specifically on emerging websites and social media that have not yet been studied through a longitudinal analysis.

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