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COMMUNICATION, MANAGEMENT AND IN-TERNATIONALIZATION. THE EXAMINATION OF COMMUNICATIONS: INTERACTIONS BETWEEN MANAGERS, PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS

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The elaboration of the Strategic Communication Plan should reflect the aspirations and needs of managers and teachers and should serve to guide the actions and communication practices of the organization. This work focuses on the construction of a Communication Audit for the Secretary of Interinstutional Relations (SRI) of the National University of San Luis. The secretary is a university management body, an office, that deals with the relations of the university with the environment and the processes of cooperation and internationalization of which it is an actor.

The formulation of a communication audit is developed through the establishment of objectives, deadlines, changes that are intended to achieve and areas of action. Advancing a diagnostic methodology means developing an audit model that suggests corrective proposals. The general purposes are to relieve the organizational reality through an audit and generate an organizational diagnosis. The specific objectives are to know the organizational identity (visual and conceptual identity), to know the organizational communication actions, to establish a public map, and to recognize the position of the Secretary and to know the image projected by the Secretary.

1. Organizations and communication

1.1 The organizational phenomenon

In the Latin American sphere, educational organizations in general live in a new context generated by dynamics of change that bring about new social, political and economic conditions together with the exacerbation of competitiveness derived from globalization. Institutions of Higher Education building citizenship and political culture live sensitive transformations caused by the tensions produced between local dynamics and its global perspective.

In this context, the organizational phenomenon can be thought from different prisms. Organizations can be understood as miniature societies (Abravanel and others, 1992) as micro societies, which have processes of socialization in their norms and in their social structures (Sagastizabal and Perlo, 2006). The organizations are constructed by social subjects that are reproducers of practices that have a certain institutionally and that if a broad perspective of the culture is adopted, it can be understood as "a set of meanings shared by a determined social group" (Sagastizabal and Perlo, 2006, p27).

Bartoli (1992) points out that the organization is like an organized group that corresponds to any group of men constituted with the purpose of reaching a certain objective. The students of postmodern society advocate a society constituted by flexible institutions, permeable to change and transformations, with people that contribute to the learning of the organization itself (Sagastizabal and Perlo, 2006), and where they also permanently expand their abilities. Understand com-

plexity, clarify your vision and refine shared mental models according to Senge (1992).

1.2 Institutions of Higher Education (IES)

Higher education institutions (IES) are immersed in processes of international cooperation, internationalization and certification of their training offers. Recognizing its strategic value in Latin American societies is fundamental in the scenario of internationalization and globalization of academic supply and demand. Universities need to manage their institutional communication in order to try to dialogue with the different publics and make the university brand known. This requires the creation of identity through the affiliation of teachers, students, administrators and the identification of these groups with the vision and institutional commitments.

On the other hand, the theory of organizations has also progressed sensibly and together with it, in the last thirty years a set of studies have emerged that attempt to study communication in organizations. Different authors such as Amado (2011), Massoni (2005, 2007,2013), Ritter (2008), Scheinsohn (1993) Abadía Sánchez, and Vaca López, (2014), Bartoli, (1992), Bongiovanni (2011) and Costa (1999), among others have advanced in the study of the different faces and dimensions of communication in organizations, which has developed as a prominent space of communication studies.

Latin American universities suffer an identity crisis. The activity of evaluating communication processes is new in organizations and even more in the university, since developing and exercising organizational communication enables the generation of substantive management in qualitative and quantitative terms and allows the management team to be able to perform tasks with functions and responsibilities of service and production, enabling the creation of policies, procedures or lines of work that support daily operations. Institutional communication seeks to develop relationships that consider individuals as the most important resource, planning and controlling the operations that represent the climate and organizational culture, which favors the construction of friendly strategies and interaction environments that favor all the tasks of the organization.

1.3 The Undersecretary of Inter-institutional Relations

The Undersecretary of Inter-institutional Relations is a university office that promotes and develops the linking processes of the university with external organizations. It also participates in representation of the National University of San Luis in the establishment of agreements with other organizations of higher education in the promotion of cooperation processes, internationalization, mobility abroad of students and teachers and reception in the university of teachers and students. In addition, it participates in inter-institutional university networks and

develops relations aimed at updating and training university teachers abroad. The university office has few employees and a meager budget, a situation that expresses the limited recognition that the UNSL provides to the activities of cooperation, institutional exchange and internationalization.

We propose an examination of the communicative system of the Undersecretary of Inter-institutional Relations that provides us with information as an input for the subsequent construction of a strategic communication plan for the Undersecretary.

The improvement of communication processes in the organizational arena through innovative proposals helps increase productivity, develops identity, promotes the image, strengthens the work environment, develops internal and external communication, and promotes the offer of various skills that the professional the communication has to contribute in the improvement of the organizational system (Gómez de la Fuente, 2012). The improvement in the processes in the organization requires constant evaluation and all actions must be permanently reviewed. Carmen Gómez de la Fuente (2012) considers that communication is present in production processes, interpersonal relationships, corporate identity, crisis management and communication auditing.

1.4 Communication at the University

Universities are complex and paradigmatic organizations whose basic functions are teaching, research and extension. Universities have traditionally been perceived as institutions dedicated to the preservation, expansion and transmission of knowledge, to the preparation of professionals, where the promotion of research, teaching and access to knowledge constitute relevant elements of their actions.

In the field of institutional communication, as in other areas of university work, it is also beneficial to formulate plans. It is profuse the study of organizations from different perspectives and paradigms and the university as a private organization, has not escaped this stream of studies that day by day is expanded. Different authors have advanced in the study of organizations and in terms of Vizer (2003) the institution conceptually appears as a set both real-social as symbolic and imaginary and defines it as a universe of meaning and social action where the plot of the social is constructed by the action of the agents who, through the rules and resources, structure it from the culture (Vizer, 2003).

Communication permeates all the processes of social life and is a tool that influences and develops every organization. Trujillo Fernández and Quiroga (2003) described some years ago some approaches to the recognition of communicative relations in the university based on the contributions of the communication researcher Prieto Castillo (2000). In organizations, communication constitutes a social world that serves to foster dialogue, encounters and problem solving. In this sense, social subjects should favor the possibility of encounters, working in com-

munity and team, generating favorable environments to solve problems in an analytical and critical manner.

1.4 Organizational communication: the Undersecretary of Institutional Communication

A secretariat or university undersecretary can establish a communication strategy that allows the participation of diverse media, including the institutional channels that the university uses to disseminate news about it. The Undersecretary of Institutional Communication of the National University of San Luis, dependent on the Planning Secretariat of the UNSL and created in September 2016, is the organization that deals with "institutional" communication in that organization. This institutional means is not synonymous with the organization having a communication policy clearly defined or perceived by its managers. The mere creation of organizations dedicated to institutional or university communication does not ensure an improvement in communication in the organizational circuits or in the publics who are interested or connected to the university. In addition, the university has its own radio and a television channel that follow the same logics and production dynamics.



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The members of the university are often unaware of the importance of communication for society to know university research or the university can use it for institutional promotion. Also, because of its size, the university has a dispersion of academic, scientific information, cultural, etc.

In the conflict over the university budget and the teaching salary of the university professors of August 2018 where the Rectorate offices and other facilities of the National University of San Luis took over the students, which prevented the entry of administrative and teaching employees, the media" institutions "scarcely covered the development of events. The information offered was poor in general with the exception of Radio Universidad coverage, which devoted important spaces to its daily programming and other provincial media. Meanwhile, *The Diario de la República*, a provincial newspaper with scarce news on its website, published

almost unedited videos, reporting crudely on the tensions and struggles experienced among the different university sectors.

The university problem also exposed some weakness of the university's media in terms of its limitations, content and quality and current news. Is it possible to contribute to improving the communication of a higher education institution? How could an undersecretary of inter-institutional relations improve their communication qualitatively and quantitatively? What public is attended by the university and what public should the undersecretary attend?

These are some of the questions that address these concerns. We go to the contributions and conceptions that strategic communication proposes in organizations to propose ideas and suggestions to university managers.

2. Strategic Communication

2.1 Theoretical Framework of Strategic Communication

According to Meyer (2009) strategic communication can be understood as a methodology that seeks to understand external contextual conditions, coordinate and take full advantage of internal resources, design comprehensive policies and manage plans to develop institutional knowledge, strengthen competitiveness and consolidate the reputation. The realization of a communicational audit serves to examine the state of the institutional communication and later of input for the elaboration of a strategic plan of communication.

The study of organizational communication is a set of systematized knowledge that focuses on the analysis, diagnosis and organization of the complex variables that make up the communication processes in organizations, with the purpose of improving the interrelation among its members, between them and the external public and the affirmation of identity and organizational performance.

A communication audit process implies that the various actors involved in the organizational system participate in the process, documenting the evidence, and informing the auditors about their processes to ensure an accurate opinion, attached to the reality of each institution. In the complexity of our context, the organizations educational must organize the plan communication strategy.

All public communication has an inescapable political dimension insofar as it is an intervention in the public space and a position taken against society (Amado, 2011). In higher education organizations, a communicative planning that serves to diagnose is necessary because the phenomena of organizational communication occur as the "exchange of information, ideas and feelings" (Ritter, 2008, p. 9).

According to Lucas Marín, the study of organizational communication begins with the organizations own needs, promoted by the improvement efforts of their members' own communication skills and with the development of theories of

the organization focused on organizational culture (Marín, 1997). Organizations must overcome the normative role of institutional issuer to try to communicate assuming its role as institutional actor (Amado, 2011) and to have a self-awareness of its social responsibility

A challenge for analysis and reflection on decision making in the university context, is that when this idea of organized anarchy is adopted to rethink planning, decision-making and synergies occur within these organizations in the face of the turbulent environments where he lives. At times the scarce coordination and the ambiguous, conflicting and sometimes contradictory purposes that these organizations have can be perceived.

In recent times, communication studies have begun a process of transformation, where communication phenomena are conceived from the strategic and the fluid in the framework of multiparadigmatic and transdisciplinary approaches. Gone is the reduced vision of framing communication from the transfer of information or to consider it merely as a technological baggage. Varela (1990) has conceived the concept of *in action* (enacción) enriching the idea originally proposed by Jerone Brunner as an alternative to representation. Gadamer reminds us that enacción is "to emerge". The idea is suggestively applicable to the organization of knowledge as opposed to iconic and symbolic alternatives. The communication in the institutions comes from the first social organizations, but its rules change with the diachronic social transformations (Amado, 2011).

If we trace some distance with the classic sociological and semiological perspectives that study the communicative as transmitted meanings, the new approach of strategic communication studies the communicational as well as emerging actions and meanings that do not ignore the dynamic and evolutionary links of the reality of the subjects (Massoni, 2013). That is, they are formulations of strategic communication that work from the roots of Latin American communication thinking and are committed to the new paradigms of science, while being subsidiary to the theories of complexity, cultural studies and semiotics of the presence (Massoni, 2013).

As Amado (2011) points out, business communication has led the bibliography in communication management has faced transformations in its strategies of such measure, that organizational identity cannot be built around a single value. In addition, Amado emphasizes that the new production conditions, technological and relocated have defined a new role for the business and state actors generating an unprecedented space for the voices of civil society.

In this context, today it is relevant in organizations the diagnosis formulation that perceives the organizational problems, the planning, the start-up and the continuous examination of its development. Thus, different alternatives have been developed that try to establish the organizational diagnosis, recognizing their limits, their strengths and weaknesses (SWOT Analysis) and the organization's prospecting. Every communication plan must be born from a systematic study of the needs of the organization and its particular contextual situation (Amado, 2011).

The audit has been conceived as "a diagnostic process whose purpose is to examine and improve the systems and practices of internal and external communication of an organization at all levels" (Varona, 1994, p. 2). Grisanti (2012, p. 93) said that "auditing is a systematic process to obtain and objectively assess the evidence referring to information on economic activities and other related events, whose purpose is based on establishing the degree of correlation of the information content with the evidence that gave rise to it" The organizational communication management audit can be understood as "performing structured examinations of action programs, organizations, activities or operating segments of a public or private entity, with the purpose of evaluating and reporting on the efficient use of their resources and the achievement of their objectives" (Mejía, Montilla and Montes, 2008, p. 64). This model of examination can be promoted in companies, government organizations, education and NGOs, among others.

The Massoni Strategic Communication model has as distinctive characteristics that it is inclusive because it includes the different dimensions of communication, defining in each case, what is the priority problem, avoiding the dispersion of institutional capacities based on participation frameworks, providing a planning by knowledge objectives / communication process and specifying product goals (Massoni, 2013).

The organizational communication in the XXI century is presented as a strong imprint as it states that "the paradigm of the 21st century overlaps the previous one that was born two centuries ago and has just expired. Now, the vectors of the new paradigm are clearly strategic: Identity, Culture, Action, Communication and Image" (Costa, 1999, p. 14).

3. Objtives of the research

3.1 Objetives

The objectives are the purposes that guide the research work:

General purpose

- Relieve the status and structure of the communications of the Under Secretary of Inter-institutional Relations of the National University of San Luis through a communication management audit
 - Generate a communicational diagnosis for the Undersecretariat.

We propose these specific objectives

- Describe the structure of the organizational communication process of the Undersecretariat.
 - Formulate an inventory of communication strengths and weaknesses.
- Recognize the public that interacts with the Undersecretary and establish a public map.

4. Methodology

4.1 Methodology in the field

To obtain the information, we proposed the realization of a qualitative questionnaire with open questions that allow a greater extension and complexity in the responses made to the actors of the organizational communication process, that is to say with the managers or those in charge of the departments or communication areas organization of the university. This instrument will seek to obtain information on basic and fundamental aspects of the communication of the university undersecretary.

We understand the qualitative survey as a procedure of exploration of general ideas and beliefs about certain aspects of reality and its elaboration is initiated taking into consideration the theoretical reference schemes and experiences defined by a given group and in relation to the context of which they are part.

We proposed to focus the investigative process in three steps:

- Inquiry about the processes of organizational communication and its audit in the Undersecretary of Inter-institutional Relations, as the unit of analysis
- Determination of the data that was consigned in a matrix of analysis for the consolidation of results.
- Adoption of conclusions as input, since they will provide material for the construction of an organizational communication audit model of the university.

The execution of the audit includes field work, analysis of results and the preparation of the conclusions of the audit.

- Fieldwork: Consisted in the collection of data and information defined in the planning of the audit.
- Analysis of results: for the analysis of the results obtained in the audit fieldwork, the tools and techniques appropriate to the type of evidence obtained were used. The techniques we propose are frequency tabulation, graphical data analysis, qualitative analysis, content analysis and triangulation.
- Audit conclusions. The performance of the audit sought to promote the finding of different situations that sought to be compared with the criteria established in the identification of their probable causes and effects on management.

The Communication Audit Planning must contain:

- Preliminary analysis of the audit object
- Definition of the purpose and scope of the audit
- Specification of the audit criteria
- Development of data collection instruments

This research was proposed as exploratory and it was searched through it, to determine the characteristic of the communication processes in that university undersecretary. The audit sought to establish its status and, based on the information gathered, design a Strategic Communication Plan for it. We frame this

research in the field of intangible management corresponding to a qualitative study, in which the communication activities in the university represent the unit of analysis.

5. Paradigms of scientific research

Varona (1994) points out that the objectives of the communication audit in an organization change according to the perspectives with which they are looked at. In a functionalist view, the objectives of the audit will be the evaluation of the internal structure, the analysis of communication systems and processes, the role and need of technology and the impact that communication processes have on job satisfaction, in productivity and in the promotion of changes in the communication system. From a qualitative perspective, the analysis of the communication audit serves to systematize the different communication productions as symbolic productions and to evaluate the processes of creation and development of the communicational productions. From a critical perspective, the study allows to systematize the existing communication practices, in their different manifestations of communication in the organizational, evaluate the manipulative techniques of communication, examine the vested interests that serve the distortion processes and promote the necessary changes in communication practices with the purpose of eliminating all forms of oppression and manipulation that exist in the organization (Amado, 2011).

To carry out this inquiry, we proposed to apply an approach to qualitative research, seeking the understanding of social phenomena, looking at a dynamic and complex reality, framed in an organization, taking into account the experiences of those who make up the organization and daily manage the communication processes and its measurement and audit in the areas of organizational communication.

6. Diagnosis

The strategies that are drawn in the diagnostic conceptions are different. These conceptions have been formulated, for example, from the educational field giving account of two divergent models of diagnosis, where the traditional model seeks to place its focus and interest on the products achieved, which gives it a static nature, as if it were a photography, in as much the constructivist diagnosis in the terms raised by Sagastizabal and Perlo (2006) or it only focuses on the products, but also in the processes that dynamically are constructing that state of situation. It implies a theoretical-methodological assumption, whose applications of instruments serve to revise and reformulate the theory. The constructivist model tends to overcome the limitations of the traditional model of diagnosis based on mere description, products, its centrality in the student, its static structure, etc. The

model that contributes constructivism overcomes educational phenomena as a road map, from the description-explanation, its dynamism, attention to processes and products, its centrality not only in the student, but also in the group and the institution (Sagastizabal and Perlo, 2006).

The traditional communication diagnoses insist on the characterization and recognition of the recipients, they place attention on the messages and on the topics to be communicated, they deny the otherness, they emphasize the products, on the non-integration of the researcher and they do not exceed the mere informative dimension (Massoni, 2007).

As a theoretical methodological framework, strategic communication presents displacements in relation to the use of traditional diagnoses. The diagnosis of strategic communication recognizes social actors with diverse interests and needs, focuses on the desirable and possible transformations according to the knowledge / communication objectives and the trajectories of the actors, conceives the work as inter and transisciplinary, recognizes the other as a real other, without wanting to transform it and recover and embrace the tensions of different visions of a problem (Massoni, 2013). This model also recognizes transdisciplinarity from the search and exploration of the enacted sense and the communication cut as a difference from the traditional dialogue of knowledge.

Conceptions framed within the universe of strategic communication generate changes in institutional communication in universities and at the same time transform the traditional role of social communicators generated from other paradigms.

Today it is affirmed that organizations learn and use that knowledge for their own development. Under this paradigm, it is about knowing how people learn and relate through dialogues and constructive interactions. This approach understands communication as a creative process, horizontal and always opens, being a multi-directional system where there is interaction between the institution, the group and its social environment through multiple communication flows that can ensure their survival and enable their growth and development. Although communication is a producer of meaning, action is a producer of reality (Amado, 2011).

Advancing a diagnostic methodology means developing an audit model that suggests corrective proposals for the organization. Audit as a diagnostic process aims to investigate and improve the systems and practices of internal and external communication in an organization and is an input for strategic planning.

7. Public

The idea of public can be characterized from multiple disciplines and perspectives. Bongiovanni (2011) starts from an instrumental definition of the public, a concept that artificially allows to isolate the different audiences and then examine them in relation to communication and the identity of the organization. Wolton

emphasizes that "communication is always the search for the other and a sharing" (2001, p. 38).

Bongiovanni (2011) gives us some elements for the recognition of the public

- Organizations cultivate relationships with diverse audiences simultaneously
 - The public are constructions
 - Audiences are dynamic
 - Each organization defines its public
- No communication strategy is possible without the recognition of the public (Bongiovanni, 2011).

7. On the way to the Strategic Communication Plan

The communication management audit has become an effective tool to view the opportunities and strengths, the weaknesses and threats of the operations, tactics and strategies at the communication level and evaluate the management of communication from various dimensions (Abadía Sanchez, Vaca López, 2014).

The preparation of a Communication Audit establishes a guide, a path, a strategy and is the driving force of institutional aspirations, while at the same time reflecting the wishes and needs of managers and teachers and must serve to guide the actions and practices of communication of the organization. The audit is a fundamental input for the construction of a strategic plan.

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