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# Dialogic communication 2.0. Analysis of interactions in Latin American organizations

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## Abstract

**Introduction.** Social networks are key communication tools that enable organizations to engage in dialogue with their publics. **Methodology.** The objective is to determine, through content analysis, how Latin American organizations are using Facebook to foster dialogue with their publics. **Results.** Organizations have a prominent presence and a good level of activity on Facebook, but their interaction rate is low. **Discussion and Conclusions.** Organizations are using Facebook as a tool for disseminating information but not as a channel of communication with their publics; instead they maintain an unidirectional and non-dialogical approach. Their approach to communication focuses on increasing their visibility and fails to take advantage of the opportunities offered by social networks to generate and maintain relationships with their publics through dialogue and the exchange of information.

## Keywords

Communication; Latin America; social networks; Facebook; organizations; engagement

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## 1. Introduction

The use of social networks has increased recently, up to an extent that they have turned into a key instrument of organizational communication. Its prominent growth, access and popularity are introduced as an opportunity offered by Internet to communication professionals so to generate dialogue with publics (DiStaso, McCorkindale, & Wright, 2011). This new professional reality requires the redefinition of communication strategies of organizations towards digital platforms.

The capacity to interact in a direct and close way with publics (Wang, 2015), as well as the possibility to generate enriching experiences, are aspects that encouraged organizations to use social networks (Linke & Zerfass, 2012). The active and collaborative participation is relevant to develop relationships with publics. Sixto Garcia, Aguado Dominguez, & Riveiro Castro (2017) maintain that besides generating interesting contents for users, organizations must be involved in a permanent and interactive manner in the digital area, fostering a fluent dialogue. Thus, social networks become a favourable channel for listening and active participation (Claes & Deltell, 2013), and are being increasingly integrated to the communication programmes of organizations (Carim & Warwick, 2013; DiStaso & McCorkindale, 2013) and institutions (Giraldo-Luque, Villegas-Simón, & Carniel Bugs, 2017).

To achieve a greater participation or visibility, it is necessary to understand social networks as an instrument of dialogue and interaction with publics. To generate dialogues between organizations and their publics, organizations must keep an adequate and professional presence in the social network. Thus, the level of presence and activity, the type of content disseminated, communication resources used, and interaction generated by organizations in the social network are essential elements for the effective management of communication with publics in the platform.

Social networks are also key instruments for the communication of Latin American companies. The change of organizational model promoted by the expansion and economic development of the region in the last decades, caused the need to increase the levels of trust and transparency. In this context, Latin American companies find in social networks, optimal tools to increase national and international visibility and to promote the dialogue with the publics (Moreno et al., 2017), to so to achieve a positive reputation.

Among social networks available, Facebook is presented as a key social network to potentiate the relationships between organizations and their publics. It has more than 2,000 million active users monthly around the world (Facebook, 2017). It is the social network of greater growth between 2014 and 2015 in Latin America (Fosk, 2015), one of the social networks preferred by Spanish and the most used to follow brands in Spain in 2016 (Interactive Advertising Bureau [IAB], 2016), and it is the network leading the ranking of most popular social networks in the United States (Duggan & Page, 2015; Statista, 2018). Facebook offers organizations the possibility to disseminate key messages, share stories and have conversations.

Thus, in this study we aim to analyse how Latin American companies manage their dialogic communication 2.0 on Facebook. To do so, an analysis of the level of presence and activity in the social network was conducted, together with the main contents disseminated, the information resources used to spread contents through the social network and the level of interaction generated based on the disseminated contents.

### 1.1. Organizational communication in social networks

Internet emerged as a new communication medium which use expanded rapidly worldwide (Shih, 2009). The great social penetration achieved by Internet significantly influenced in the relationship of organizations with their publics. This new space of communication caused a change in the traditional communication model. The so-called Web 2.0 modified the traditional communication model between organizations and their publics that characterised the beginnings of the Internet technology and facilitated the active participation of users (Kang & Sundar, 2016). In the ecosystem 2.0, the users are able to disseminate contents, as well as to generate and intervene in conversations. Thus, the Web 2.0 turns into an open platform essentially based on the active participation of users, promoting the dialogic communication between organizations and their publics.

Despite that the Web 2.0 is the technology that makes room to the conversational, it is the social networks the ones that generate an optimum online communicational ecosystem for interactive and dialogic communication of organizations with their publics.

From the organizational perspective, social networks have turned into a key area of communication, up to the extent that they are increasingly integrating into the organizational communication strategies (Carim & Warwick, 2013; Damásio, Dias, & Andrade, 2012; DiStaso & McCorkindale, 2013; Iniesta, 2012; Lee, 2016). Although professionals are acquiring knowledge and abilities in the digital world, the use of social networks as strategic management tool is still one of their main challenges. Chung, Andreev, Benyoucef, Duane, and O'Reilly (2017) state there is not yet a road map established to manage organizations' activities on social networks, but they are key strategical tools in organizations, since they entail a strong potential to revolution the way they interact with their publics.

From the publics' perspective, there are two aspects that influence directly in the active presence of companies in social networks. Firstly, because the publics are there. Almost 80% of Internet users access social networks (Kemp, 2018), and among their main motivations there is the social connection, shared identities, pictures, contents, social research, social network and status updates, entertainment, social interaction and information exchange (Jung & Sundar, 2016; Valentini, 2015). Secondly, because users are having conversations about aspects of real life in social networks (in economic, political, social and cultural areas), and organizations are economic and social agents exposed on the digital ecosystem.

Facebook is the most popular among the social networks available. Based on the data of the *Global Web Index 2016* and *Digital in 2018*, Facebook is the social network with the greatest number of active users worldwide (Kemp, 2018), of which more than half use their services at least once a day (Mander, 2016). Several authors agree that Facebook is being increasingly incorporated to the communication programmes of companies and their different organizational areas, in order to disseminate contents, listen actively, to participate in the conversation, and strengthen bonds with publics (Neill & Moody, 2015).

There are studies that indicate that organizations are mostly becoming present on Facebook (Estudio de Comunicación, 2017; Ki & Nekmat, 2014; Sixto Garcia et al., 2017), but their activity in the social network is rather scarce (Capriotti & Losada-Díaz, 2018; Devaney, 2015; Quintly, 2016). According to experts and professionals, it is advisable to publish between 1 and 2 posts per day (Jordan, 2017; Patel, 2016). However, researches indicate that the activity of organizations on Facebook is less than 1 post per day (Altamirano Benitez, Marín-Gutiérrez, & Ordóñez González, 2018; Devaney, 2015; Estudio de Comunicación, 2017; Kim, Kim, & Hoon Sung, 2014; Quintly, 2016; Statista, 2017).

The adequate presence and activity on Facebook are key elements to reinforce bonds and relationships of trust between organizations and their publics. Thus, the first specific objective of this research consists of analysing the level of presence and activity that Latin American companies keep in this social network.

## 1.2. Interaction management: from information to dialogue

The dialogic theory states that in order to guarantee effective relationships, organizations not only must disseminate information but also they must be willing to listen and interact with their publics (Taylor & Kent, 2014). To do so, social networks provide an appropriate channel to promote interaction (Yang, Kang, & Cha, 2015), at the same time that they become a relevant social capital that allow organizations to increase the value and visibility (Pérez-Dasilva *et al.*, 2013), and Facebook in particular turns into a key instrument to establish and strengthen the dialogue with publics.

Jo and Kim (2003) state that interaction on social networks has significant effects in the construction of relationships between organizations and their publics, but this does not guarantee that the relationship is positive. To make this possible, it is necessary to establish long-term relationships of trust through dialogue.

On the one hand, to effectively communicate with their publics on social networks, organizations use different communication resources available: graphic resources (picture/image, text and emoticon), interactive resources (tag users and link and hashtag) and audiovisual resources (audio, video, and animated images). Different studies (Invodo, 2016; Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Quintly, 2016) indicate that the use of communication resources contributes to contents having a greater reach and interaction and that messages with an interactive approach generate a greater engagement in the public (Abitbol & Lee, 2017). But studies point out that organizations are using Facebook to disseminate information (Huang, Lin & Saxton, 2016; Shin, Pang & Kim, 2015; Sundstrom & Levenshus, 2017; Wissen, 2017), instead of fostering interaction.

Among the resources available on social networks, videos are the ones generating a greater level of engagement (Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013). Although recent studies indicate there is an exponential growth in the use of videos in Facebook (Serrano-Cobos, 2016), graphic resources are the most used by organizations to share contents (Capriotti & Losada-Díaz, 2018; Luarn, Lin, & Chiu, 2015), and their use in posts is twice higher than the audiovisual and interactive resources (Capriotti, Carretón, & Castillo, 2016).

Thus, a second specific objective is proposed for this research, which consists of knowing what communication resources Latin American companies are using to present their contents on Facebook.

On the other hand, Facebook encourages organizations to communicate with greater closeness, easiness and fluency, and allow a direct connection between organizations and publics, to achieve a relationship of mutual benefit. This social network offers three forms of generating interactions: *likes*, *shares* and *comments*. *Likes* are a passive way to express appreciation of contents without verbal expression, *shares* allow users to be volunteer spokespersons of organizational messages in their own social groups, and *comments* allow users to establish direct conversations with organizations and other users (Cho *et al.*, 2014, cited in Abitbol & Lee, 2017, p. 798).

Studies demonstrate that despite publics are more willing to keep interactions about contents promoting the dialogue and conversation (Cho *et al.*, 2014), organizations and institutions are using social networks in general (Giraldo-Luque *et al.*, 2017) and Facebook in particular to disseminate information (Capriotti & Losada-Díaz, 2018; Huang *et al.*, 2016; Shin *et al.*, 2015; Sundstrom & Levenshus, 2017; Wissen, 2017), not taking advantage of opportunities offered by social networks to interact, keep conversations, help and assist users. Thus, a third specific objective is presented that consists of determining the level and the rate of interaction generated from contents published by Latin American companies on Facebook.

## 1.3. Content management: social and economic performance

The way organizational attributes are presented and communicated through social networks influence the perceptions of the publics about the organization. There are studies that demonstrate that social networks present benefits for reputation (Floreddu, Cabiddu & Evaristo, 2014; Li, Berens & Maertelaere, 2013), and that the

active participation of companies on social networks is related positively with the corporate reputation (Dijkmans & Kerkhof, 2015).

The mental associations that publics build about an organization would be linked to two basic roles of organizations in society: the economic and social role (Carroll, 1999; Haigh, Brubaker, & Whiteside, 2013; Waddock, 2004). The economic role is connected to the economic responsibilities of organizations to generate products and offer quality services, to comply with the law and obtain increasingly greater benefits. And the social role is connected to the social responsibilities of organizations so to comply with human rights, take care of the environment and provide a social contribution to the community (Berens & Van Riel, 2004; Capriotti, 2009, 2012).

Eisenegger and Schranz (2011) and Lee (2016) state that the communication of social attributes can have a positive impact on the corporate reputation. However, studies state that contents disseminated by organizations on social networks are focused on economic responsibilities, instead of social responsibilities (Cho, Furey & Mohr, 2016; Haigh *et al.*, 2013).

Organizations mainly use social networks with advertising, promotional and marketing purposes (DiStaso *et al.*, 2011; Kent, 2013; Macnamara, 2016; Valerio Ureña, Herrera Murillo, Herrera Murillo, & Martínez Garza, 2015). There are studies that affirm that the interest for the brands, products, services is one of the factors driving users the most to follow companies on social networks, but the excess of promotional messages generates displeasure among users (Sprout Social, 2016). Thus, the fourth specific objective is to analyse what are the main contents (economic, social and of context) that Latin American companies disseminate on Facebook.

## 2. Methodology

The general objective of this research is to know how Latin American companies manage their dialogic communication 2.0 on Facebook.

### 2.1. Selection of the sample of countries and companies

To identify the main economies of Latin America, there were selected the countries with a higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and where there was conducted the annual study of corporate reputation called *Monitor Empresarial de Reputación Corporativa (MERCOS)* [Company Monitor on Corporate Reputation], for at least two years (2013 and 2014). The final sample is constituted by the 6 following countries: Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Chile and Peru.

To select companies, those having a better corporate reputation in Latin America were selected, since they were considered a reference on communication management issues, at the same time they were the ones allocating relevant resources to innovate and to be in the forefront on digital communication.

Thus, the annual study on corporate reputation *mercoEmpresas* by MERCOS was taken as a reference and there were considered the first 35 companies in said ranking during 2013 and 2014 from Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Chile and Peru.

From the total sample, it was decided to discard from the sample those companies corresponding to the Media sector, considering there were already studies that demonstrated there is the tendency to use social networks by traditional media (press, radio and television), as a dissemination platform of news (Escalas Ribas, 2014; García-De-Torres *et al.*, 2011; Noguera Vivo, 2010). Also, universities were discarded, since they do not meet thematic and contents variables established for the specific analysis of companies, either public or private. Thus, the final sample included 157 companies of Latin America (27 from Brazil, 23 from Mexico, 26 from Argentina, 30 from Colombia, 23 from Chile and 28 from Perú).

## 2.2. Selection of the Facebook profiles and posts.

To select Facebook profiles there were considered the companies having “official” corporate fanpages on Facebook at national scope, also considering that in addition to national companies, there are multinational companies with presence in Latin America.

The corporate profiles were localized initially through the direct links to Facebook present in the official websites of the companies. There were discarded all the profiles that could not be located through the popular Internet browsers or verified by the companies.

Thus, the final sample of Facebook profiles in 2015 and 2016 included 135 profiles of companies operational in Latin America (25 from Brazil, 19 from Mexico, 23 from Argentina, 27 from Colombia, 19 from Chile and 22 from Peru).

To determine the volume of posts analysed, a selection of temporal periods was done. There were collected all posts of the odd weeks in 2015 (from January until June), and the even weeks in 2016 (from July until December). Finally, 29,078 posts were obtained.

## 2.3. Research questions and categories of analysis

To fulfil the main goal of this study, 4 research questions were formulated (RQ):

RQ1: Do companies have corporate profiles on Facebook? If so, what is their level of presence and activity in the social network?

RQ2: What are the main contents that companies disseminate through Facebook?

RQ3: What are the communication resources companies use to disseminate their contents through Facebook?

RQ4: What kind of interaction is generated from contents published by companies on Facebook?

To answer the research questions, the quantitative methodology of content analysis was used to analyse the Facebook profiles and there were defined 4 categories based on the presence and activity, content, information resources and interaction. The categories of analysis presented were developed and tested in previous studies (Capriotti *et al.*, 2016; Losada-Díaz & Capriotti, 2015).

**Table 1** Category: Presence and activity

Categories	Dimensions	Aspects
Presence	Type of page	Corporate fanpage
		User profile
	Institutional information	Extended Brief
Activity	Level of activity	Total general
		Daily average
		Weekly average

Source: Authors' own elaboration

For RQ1, a category of *Presence and Activity*, was established that allows to identify and characterise profiles developed by companies on the social network (Table 1). To do so, 3 dimensions of analysis were established (two of presence and one of activity): the type of page (corporate fanpage or user profile); institutional information (whether it is extended or brief); and the level of activity (obtained from the total general and the daily, weekly average of posts from companies).

For RQ2, the category of *Content* was established, which allows to identify the main themes managed by companies. To do so, 3 key dimensions were identified: (a) Business topics: themes related to corporate, commercial and business activities of companies; (b) CSR topics: themes dealing with the CSR of the company in its daily activities; and (c) Context topics: themes related to the general and business sector context of the company (Table 2).

**Table 2** Category: content

Categories	Dimensions	Aspects
Content	Business topics	Strategy, results, offer, innovation
	CSR topics	Integrity, work and citizenship
	Context topics	General, sector-related and relational

Source: Authors' own elaboration

For RQ3, the category *Communication Resources* was established that allows to determine the resources used for the dissemination of contents. Thus, 2 key dimensions were selected: (1) *Format*: defines the use of graphic (text, image, emoticon), audiovisual (animated images, audio-video), and interactive resources (link, hashtag, tag users). (2) *Approach*: analyses contents disseminated from 2 types of communicational approaches: (a) informational: aims to boost the diffusion of information for public knowledge, (b) interactive: encourages to participate, share, go to the store, provide a suggestion or opinion, etc. (Table 3).

**Table 3** Category: Communication resources

Categories	Dimensions	Resources
Information resources	Format	Graphic
		Audiovisual
		Interactive
	Approach	Informational
		Interactive

Source: Authors' own elaboration

For RQ4, the *Interaction* category was established, which allows to analyse the interactivity generated by contents published in Facebook users. To do so, 2 aspects to analyse were detected: the level of engagement and the engagement rate. On the one hand, the level of engagement allows to assess the volume of reactions

generated by the posts disseminated by companies. To analyse the level of engagement 3 elements were considered: (a) *Likes*: total number of “likes” obtained in publications; (b) *Shares*: total number of times the publication was shared; (c) *Comments*: number of comments from companies and users in publications. On the other hand, the engagement rate allows to assess the volume of reactions generated by posts in relation to number of followers from companies. To evaluate the engagement rate 3 indicators were established: support rate (TdA) estimated from the total of *likes* divided by the total number of fans, x 100; the viralization rate (TdV) estimated from the total of *shares* divided by the total number of fans, x 100; and the conversation rate (TdC) estimated from the total of *comments* divided by the total number of fans, x 100 (Kaushik, 2011; Narayanan et al., 2012). To obtain the TEG, the results of TdA, TdV and TdC were summed (Table 4).

**Table 4** Category: Interaction

Categories	Dimension	Aspects
Interaction	Level of engagement	Total Mean of posts likes
		Total Mean of posts shares
Total Mean of posts comments		
	Engagement rate	Support rate (TdA)
		Viralization rate (TdV)
		Conversation rate (TdC)
		General Engagement Rate (TEG)

Source: Authors' own elaboration

#### 2.4. Collection, systematization and data management.

The proposal of analysis categories allowed the design of an analysis template made on Excel, where the collected data of the sample were entered and codified. For the data collection, a paid monitoring tool available on Internet was used, called *FanPage Karma*, which allows to gather posts from companies and offers detailed analysis depending on content and engagement.

### 3. Results

The results are presented based on research questions (RQ).

#### 3.1. Presence and activity

Regarding the *presence and activity* (RQ1), mostly companies have corporate pages on Facebook, but only two thirds of fanpages have adequate institutional information. On the other hand, its activity is rather frequent on the studied social network.

The presence of Latin American companies on Facebook is about 86% (Table 5). Although Argentina, Brazil and Colombia have a lot of presence (more than 85%), it is detected that Mexican companies have a presence that hardly exceeds 70% of the total, and Chile, Peru and Mexico position below the mean (around 80%).

Most companies of Latin America show a correct and extended institutional information on their Facebook profiles (67.4%), namely they have information related to the mission, vision, objectives, milestones that contribute to the organizational identity, location and contact data, etc.

Latin-American companies, mostly, show a correct and extended institutional information in their Facebook profiles (67.4%), namely they have information related to the mission, vision, goals and milestones that contribute to organizational identity, location and contact data, etc.

The results of Latin American countries are presented in a similar way. In almost all cases there is detected that around 60% of fanpages have a wide organizational information (Table 5). However, Mexico is the country with the greatest percentage of companies with a broad institutional information on Facebook (73.7%).

**Table 5** Presence of companies on Facebook

Presence	Latin America	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Mexico	Peru
Corporate Fanpages (in %)							
Yes	86.5	88.5	92.6	82.6	90.0	82.6	78.6
No	13.5	11.5	7.4	17.4	10.0	17.4	21.4
Institutional Information (%)							
Extended	67.4	60.9	68.0	63.2	70.4	73.7	68.2
Brief	32.6	39.1	32.0	36.8	29.6	26.3	31.8

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Regarding activity, companies publish contents very often in their corporate fanpages, about 1.2 posts per day (Table 6).

The difference in the activity per country is not so relevant, except for Chile. Although this country is the second with the lowest presence of companies in the social network, the results show it is the country with more activity on Facebook (almost 2 posts per day per company).

**Table 6** Activity of companies on Facebook

Activity	Latin America	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Mexico	Peru
Total general	29,078	4,456	4,361	6,015	6,129	4,089	4,028
Daily average	1.2	1.1	1	1.8	1.3	1.3	1
Monthly average	8.4	7.5	7	12.2	8.7	8.7	6.9

Source: Authors' own elaboration

### 3.2. Contents

Regarding the results about *contents* (RQ2), companies are mainly focused on the dissemination of business topics (about 60%). CSR and context topics are spread 3 times less than the former (about 20% in both cases), (Table 7). Regarding business topics, companies deal with their commercial aspects with greater relevance (products and services offer). And regarding the CSR topics, there is focus on the dissemination of their social and environmental responsibilities.

Regarding the results of the Latin American countries, it is observed that all are mainly focused on business topics. This represents between 50% and 60% of publications in almost all countries, except for Argentina, where the presence of posts about business topics represents a quite higher percentage compared to the rest of countries (74.1%).

**Table 7** Types of communication disseminated by companies on Facebook (%)

Content	Latin America	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Mexico	Peru
Business	57.8	74.1	60.2	55.5	56.3	50.9	49.9
CSR	19.6	10.9	18.7	17.5	23.5	27.5	19.7
Context	22.6	15.0	21.1	27.0	20.2	21.6	30.4

Source: Authors' own elaboration

### 3.3. Communication Resources

The results of *communication resources* (RQ3) show significant differences. Regarding *format*, graphic resources are the most used by companies to disseminate contents on Facebook (Table 8). Almost the entirety of posts have text (97.8%), and the fixed images are selected to accompany it the most. In some cases, emoticons are included as well (less than 10%). On the other hand, it has been detected that audiovisual resources are the least used in contents. Somewhat more than 10% of posts have videos (12.7%) or animated images (9.8%).

Also, interactive resources are used such as links and hashtags. Even though their presence in posts is lower compared to graphic resources, at least half of posts have one or more interactive resources, therefore they are used more than audiovisual resources.

Comparing the different Latin American countries, all of them mainly use graphic resources (text and image). However, a significant difference in the use of audiovisual resources between Brazil, Mexico and Chile is noteworthy. Even though the use of videos is not so frequent in general, companies with operations in Brazil and Mexico are the ones using this resource the most (about 15%), and the Chilean companies are the ones using it the least (less than 10%). On the other hand, Brazilian companies are the ones using interactive resources the most. Almost 70% of posts from Brazil have a link, which represents between 15% and 25% more compared to the rest of countries.

**Table 8** Communication resources used by companies on Facebook (%)

Communication resources	Latin America	Argentina	Brazil	Chile	Colombia	Mexico	Peru
Format (%)							
Graphic resources	97.8	96.8	97.3	98.3	97.5	97.9	98.8
Interactive resources	48.6	51.7	64.3	53.6	43.7	40.9	45.5
Audiovisual resources	12.7	12.3	15.1	13.0	11.8	16.8	14.1
Approach (%)							
Informational	74.0	71.5	75.0	71.6	76.5	78.0	71.4
Interactive	26.0	28.5	25.0	28.4	23.5	22.1	28.6

Source: Authors' own elaboration

About the *approach*, it is observed on Table 8 that posts mostly have an informational approach. More than 70% of posts disseminate information in order to make public what companies do and think. This means that less than 30% of posts have an interactive approach and promote that users perform some kind of action, either participating, provide an opinion or a suggestion, etc. These results are similar in all countries of Latin America.

### 3.4. Interaction

The results about *interaction* (RQ3) show it is rather low. Regarding the level of engagement, the level of support (88.5%) is quite above the level of viralization (7.5%) and conversation (4%) (Table 9). According to the data obtained, by every 12 *likes* a post gets, it is shared just once, and by every 25 *likes*, a post receives at least one comment from users. It is worth mentioning that users show much more interested than companies in interacting and having conversations about the contents of posts disseminated by companies: almost the entirety of comments found correspond to those made by users (3.5% out of the total 4%).

There is a scarcely significant difference among Latin American countries. In all cases, the level of support is much higher than the level of viralization and conversation. However, it is worth mentioning there is a significant difference in the average of likes per country, being Brazil the country that most likes receives per post per company (a mean of 3,637.6). Likewise, these results are observed in the obtained data about *shares*. Every post per company of Brazil is shared about 270 times, widely exceeding the average of *shares* of Latin America (106.6 per company per post). In addition, on results it is also detected that Colombia and Chile are the countries that fewer *likes* and *shares* get per post. Data show that every post per company of Colombia gets somewhat more than 390 *likes* and it is shared about 60 times. And data from Chile indicate that every post per company receives 316 *likes* and it is shared 23 times. Compared to this, it is also observed that Colombia is the country obtaining the highest percentage of shares (almost 13%).

About the level of conversation, it is detected that the total percentage of *comments* does not exceed the 5.5% from the total of interactions. Likewise, there is a significant difference between *comments* of Latin America and Brazil, being this country the one that most *comments* from users gets per post per company (121.8). In addition, there are also countries that receive very few *comments* from users (Colombia and Mexico). For instance, Colombia is the country showing the lowest average of *comments* per post per company of Latin America (14.5), followed by Mexico with an average of somewhat more than 30 *comments* per post per

company. In general, *comments* from users are quite above the average of *comments* from companies, therefore the greatest commitment comes from users. Regarding *comments* from companies, the percentage is very low in all countries (in almost all cases it does not exceed 1%). However, it is worth mentioning that the mean of Peru is the highest among all countries and it reaches the 15 *comments* of companies per post. This means that companies of Perú are the ones that intervene the most in conversations (Table 9).

**Table 9** Level of *engagement* of companies on Facebook

Level of engagement		Level of support (likes)	Level of viralization (shares)	Level of conversation (comments)		
				Total	Companies	Users
Latin America	Mean/comp/post	1,265.9	106.6	56.8	6.8	50.1
	% total	88.5	7.5	4.0	0.5	3.5
Argentina	Mean/comp/post	1,323.8	85.3	63.3	5.6	57.7
	% total	90.3	5.3	4.4	0.4	4.0
Brazil	Mean/comp/post	3,637.6	272.9	121.8	11.1	110.6
	% total	90.2	6.8	3.0	0.1	2.9
Chile	Mean/comp/post	316.0	23.2	49.3	2.2	47.2
	% total	81.3	6.0	12.7	0.6	12.1
Colombia	Mean/comp/post	390.5	59.7	17.0	2.5	14.5
	% total	83.6	12.8	3.6	0.5	3.1
México	Mean/comp/post	1,547.6	179.8	40.2	7.8	32.4
	% total	85.3	9.9	4.8	0.4	4.4
Perú	Mean/comp/post	1,098.8	71.6	68.2	15.6	52.6
	% total	88.7	5.8	5.5	1.3	4.2

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Even though the results about *level of engagement* show there is a high volume of interaction, it is necessary to emphasize that companies have a high average of followers.

In this sense, the results of the *engagement rate* show that interaction generated about contents by every 100 fans is rather low (Table 10). The data obtained indicate that the TdA is the one showing a greater percentage (5.7% annually). This result exceeds the one obtained by TdV and TdC by far (both show percentages below 1% annually).

In all Latin American countries, the greater percentage corresponds to TdA, followed by TdV and TdC. However, there are countries like Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Mexico which TdA reaches between 10% and 15% per company per year compared to the annual TdA of Latin America (5.7%).

The *general engagement rate* (TEG) obtained is 6.5% per company per year. There is an outstanding difference between the TEG per countries of Latin America, since it is detected that in Argentina and Colombia (17%), as well as Chile and Peru it is 14%, and Mexico is 15.5, the TEG per company is 2 or 3 times higher than that of Latin America (Table 10). On the other hand, Brazil is the country that less TEG obtains per company (somewhat higher than 3%).

**Table 10** *Engagement Rate* of companies on Facebook (%)

<i>Engagement rate</i> by every 100 fans (%)	Support rate (TdA)	Viralization rate (TdV)	Conversation rate (TdC)	General Engagement Rate (TEG)
Latin America	5.7	0.5	0.3	6.5
Argentina	14.8	1.0	1.4	17.2
Brazil	3.2	0.2	0.1	3.5
Chile	11.6	0.8	1.8	14.2
Colombia	14.5	2.2	0.6	17.3
Mexico	13.2	1.5	0.7	15.4
Peru	12.5	0.8	0.8	14.1

Source: Authors' own elaboration

#### 4. Discussion and conclusions

Regarding the “presence and activity” (RQ1), the study shows that the main companies of Latin America have a majoritarian presence on Facebook (more than 85%). However, it must be emphasized that only a little bit more than two thirds of companies present on Facebook have a correct presence in the social network (67.4%).

The companies present on the social network have a good level of activity. According to the recommendation of experts and professionals, it is ideal to publish between 1 and 2 posts per day (Jordan, 2017; Patel, 2016). The results of this study indicate that companies have a minimally adequate level of activity. These findings are similar to those obtained by other studies (Capriotti & Losada-Díaz, 2018; Estudio de Comunicación, 2017; Kim et al., 2014).

Regarding the “contents” disseminated on the social network (RQ2), the topics are mainly focused on business, specifically the commercial offer. These results are aligned with those of previous studies that indicate that contents of companies are focused on business (Eisenegger & Schranz, 2011; Haigh et al., 2013) and that social networks are used for promotion and advertising (Parveen, Jaafar, & Ainin, 2014), instead of having dialogues about aspects linked to CSR. Despite the fact that social networks are relevant tools for the communication of

CSR, since they allow to promote and strengthen reputation (Cortado & Chalmeta, 2016), the research results show that in very few occasions companies are using Facebook to communicate their CSR.

Regarding the category “communication resources” (RQ3), most companies include graphic resources in their contents. Even though almost all posts have text and fixed image, it is also found that more than half of posts promote interaction through the use of links and hashtags. This suggests that companies are also using interactive resources with a certain frequency to foster interaction with users on Facebook. However, audiovisual resources are the least used, although they contribute to increase the engagement even more because they involve a greater level of commitment (Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013; Quintly, 2016). But this study shows that companies are not taking advantage of videos and animated images to generate a greater engagement. Likewise, the communicational approach used to disseminate contents is essentially informative. In few occasions Facebook is used to encourage users to generate interactions. Even though a wide percentage of companies includes interactive and audiovisual resources in posts, in few occasions they elaborate messages encouraging users to issue opinions, participate or get involved in some activity.

The results about “interaction” (RQ4), indicate there is a great volume of interaction on contents disseminated by companies, but the level of interactions is mainly determined by the high volume of “likes” obtained. The level of viralization (*shares*) and conversation (*comments*) are much lower than the level of support (*likes*). This result is reflected in the TEG. Although *likes* are very used, the level of commitment that this kind of interaction involves is much lower than the levels generated by *shares* or *comments*, therefore the TEG is low.

The results about the *engagement rates* indicate there is a very low percentage of users that interact with company updates, therefore the participation by users in general is rather poor. This suggests that companies are disseminating information that is scarcely interesting for users or that are showing quite little interest in generating and keeping the dialogue with publics on the social network. According to the data about the conversation rate, in very few occasions companies respond to user’s comments.

In conclusion overall, it can be said that the main Latin American companies have an outstanding presence on Facebook, although their level of activity is minimally adequate and can be improved. Companies focus their communication mainly in the dissemination of business contents, leaving the CSR topics aside. In addition, the social networks are scarcely harnessed to promote interaction and keep dialogues with the publics. This allows to reaffirm that companies are missing a purpose of communication through Facebook, which is to generate and maintain relationships with users through dialogue. In this sense, it is possible there are two reason why companies are not keeping dialogues with their publics in an adequate manner. On the one hand, due to the lack of resources or having limited resources (Wissen, 2017), which is rather unlikely in this research, since companies studied are large corporations. And on the other hand, due to fear of losing control of conversations with publics (van den Berg & Verhoeven, 2017), which would hardly be a strategical thinking, since the fact that companies participate in conversations and dialogue with users allows to increase trust and achieve a greater commitment by publics, at the same time it contributes to strengthen their corporate reputation.

Since the moment that companies include Facebook in their communication strategies, they start to use a key tool to generate relationships with their publics in the online ecosystem. To do so, to keep a correct presence, a frequent level of activity and a high level of interaction contribute to achieve a successful management of communication with their publics. Through the production of quality contents and the adequate use of resources, a greater interaction and dialogue with publics can be achieved. However, companies are using Facebook as another dissemination channel rather than a communication channel. Despite they have a significant number of followers interested in their contents, companies are not managing communication with publics on Facebook to stablish and strengthen relationships, but rather to achieve visibility.

Finally, this study presents a specific methodology to analyse the management of communication on Facebook and it was adapted to a specific object of study (companies). From the academic perspective, the study can be useful for application in other sorts of organizations (for instance, non-profit organizations and/or public institutions), and also in countries and/or specific regions and promote the comparative analysis, that allows to determine whether the tendencies and results found are replicated in other kinds of organizations and geographical areas. From the professional perspective, the results can contribute to detect strengths and weaknesses of the management of communication on social networks, and thus improve the practices in organizations.

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