Public relations strategies in social media: analysis of campaigns for social change in the education sector in Spain and Portugal

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Abstract

The present paper discusses the use of social media when campaigning for social change in the education sector. The main focus is the analysis of the public relation strategies in use: the disclosure of real testimonials and the development of storytelling, as contents that enhance affinity and engagement towards social change. For the purpose of the analysis, two case studies were developed that discuss the campaigns of two non-governmental organizations in the educational sector, via social media: #LeonorDejaLaEscuela by Fundación Secretariado Gitano in Spain, from 2015, and #Amigo-Bagos-Douro by Bagos d'Ouro in Portugal, from 2017. The first one was implemented mainly on Twitter – one of the most well-known social network in use today –, while the other one used WhatsApp – the most popular mobile messenger –, as means of campaigning for broader access to education. The study aimed to answer the following research question: what is the role of social media in nonprofit organizations public relations strategies? This equation expressed two scientific objectives: (1st) to deepen the knowledge on the ability of social media to produce communicative interaction; and (2nd) to (re)frame public relations within communication for development strategies. The analysis demonstrates that social media have greatly contributed to change the way public relations strategies within the third sector are conducted. In fact, social media may play a key role in nonprofit communication: by lobbying for social causes, creating alliances, raising money, mobilizing volunteers, engaging traditional media and community relations, or by advocating for policy reform.

As estratégias de relações públicas nos média sociais: análise de campanhas para a mudança social no setor da educação em Espanha e Portugal

Resumo

O presente artigo discute o uso dos média sociais nas campanhas que visam promover a mudança social no setor da educação. O principal foco de análise é as estratégias de relações públicas utilizadas: a partilha de depoimentos reais e o desenvolvimento do *storytelling,* como conteúdos que aumentam a afinidade e o envolvimento com vista à mudança social. Para este trabalho foram desenvolvidos dois estudos de caso que debatem as campanhas de duas organizações não-governamentais do setor da educação, realizadas através de média sociais: #LeonorDejaLaEscuela da Fundación Secretariado Gitano, em Espanha, em 2015, e #Amigo-Bagos--Douro da Bagos d'Ouro, em Portugal, em 2017. A primeira foi implementada, principalmente, no Twitter – uma das redes sociais mais conhecidas e usadas atualmente –, enquanto a segunda utilizou o WhatsApp – o sistema de mensagens móveis mais popular nos dias de hoje –, como meios de campanha para promover um acesso mais amplo à educação. Este estudo tem como objetivo responder à seguinte questão de partida: qual é o papel dos média sociais nas estratégias de relações públicas das organizações sem fins lucrativos? Trata-se de uma questão que exprime dois objetivos de pesquisa: (1.º) aprofundar o conhecimento sobre a capacidade das redes sociais produzirem interação comunicativa; e (2.º) (re)enquadrar as relações públicas nas estratégias da comunicação para o desenvolvimento. A análise demonstra como as redes sociais têm contribuído significativamente para alterar o modo como as estratégias de relações públicas são usadas no terceiro setor. Na verdade, os média sociais podem desempenhar um papel fundamental na comunicação sem fins lucrativos, nomeadamente cumprindo alguns propósitos: fazendo *lobbying* por causas sociais, criando alianças, angariando financiamento, mobilizando voluntários, envolvendo os média tradicionais e a comunidade, ou advogando pela reforma de políticas.

Palavras-chave

relações públicas; redes sociais; organizações sem fins lucrativos; campanhas de educação; desenvolvimento social; mudança

Introduction

As stated by a wide literature, a well-defined public relations (PR) strategy combined with a social media story can significantly impact public opinion on a specific social cause. As so, this paper aims to describe two successful strategies on social media, developed by non-profit organizations (NGOs) in Spain and Portugal that have adopted innovative communication approaches through Twitter and WhatsApp.

PR strategies in social media seem to have a relatively high degree of effectiveness when implementing social campaigns as they enhance the formation of strong relationships with the stakeholders. Therefore, the third sector is increasingly applying this relational approach to persuasion campaigns on Facebook or Twitter, when trying to impact stakeholders' behaviours (Auger, 2013). However, the panorama of social media and mobile devices faces constant changes concerning PR, hence NGOs need to experience

new digital tools, technological solutions and mobile environments, in order to align themselves with the changes in citizens' behavioural media consumption.

The paper will discuss the use of social media when campaigning for social change in the education sector, through the analysis of the PR strategy in use: the disclosure of real testimonials and the development of storytelling, as contents that may enhance affinity and engagement towards social change among the publics. The analysis examines two case studies from the Iberian Peninsula, considering its common cultural similarities. As such, it discusses the social campaigns of two NGOs in the educational sector implemented via social media: #LeonorDejaLaEscuela by Fundación Secretariado Gitano in Spain, from 2015, and #Amigo-Bagos-Douro by Bagos d'Ouro Association in Portugal, from 2017. The first one was implemented on Twitter, one of the most well-known social networks in use today, and the other one used WhatsApp, the most popular mobile messenger, as means of campaigning for broader access to education.

This study aims to answer the following research question: what is the role of social media in non-profit organizations public relations strategies as innovative approaches to social campaigns? This scientific concern had two specific objectives: (1st) to deepen the knowledge on the ability of social media to produce communicative interaction and impact; and (2nd) to (re)frame public relations within communication for development strategies in the contemporary digital environments. In order to comply with these purposes, the study applies a model of analysis that combines interpretative hermeneutics, web mining and content analysis. The general context of the study and the results will be presented in the following sections.

Theoretical framework: public relations and social media in NGO

Public engagement in social causes

The widespread use of digital media is an undeniable trend in contemporary public relations strategies. Recognizing the value that social media provides for engaging specific publics, many organizations have "eagerly adopted and actively used social media as a part of their communication efforts" (Cho, Schweickart & Haase, 2014, p. 565). Among the most active social media users are non-profit organizations, which seem to far exceeding for-profit organizations performance in this environment. Actually, social media offer numerous and creative opportunities for non-profit organizations to interact with their publics. Additionally, those media are adequate to their often-limited monetary resources (Cho et al., 2014; Curtis et al., 2010). However, the challenge seems to lay in establishing real interactive communication modes.

In the 1990's, a prominent period for the development of the WWW, Kent and Taylor (1998) presented a revealing study on how organizations can build relationships through the internet using two-way dialogic communication channels. They found out that, in fact, the internet was able to provide great opportunities to create organizational

relationships through dialogic mechanisms – at the time, comment forums and email. Since then, other dialogical channels have emerged, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs or WhatsApp, that have challenged much of their thinking. However, Kent and Taylor (1998)'s basic principles of relationship building seem to remain valid: (a) to include useful information; (b) to frequently generate new content; (c) to make the platforms easy to use and navigate; and (d) to strive to keep publics connected (Briones, Kuch, Liu & Jin, 2011).

Yet, despite its potential benefit for public engagement, it seems that non-profit organizations use social media mainly for information diffusion as a complementary support to traditional media, rather than exploiting its interactive nature. In other words, as seen in many studies, non-profits' social media message strategies are still one-way communication, rather than a two-way symmetrical relation (Cho et al., 2014; Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton, 2012). These unidirectional persuasion models were studied by Auger (in 2013; for example), who explains how they can serve different purposes: in Twitter to provide appreciation and recognition; in Facebook to ask the stakeholders for feedback; and in YouTube to call authority figures to communicate key messages. Recently, researchers have added some references to messaging apps. They have suggested WhatsApp as the most popular one among young smartphone users, while fulfilling also organizational purposes, such as to connect, to share and to update information, or to monitor environments (Malka, Ariel & Avidar, 2015; Wright & Hinson, 2017). But still such investigations show the prevalence of the sender metaphor.

A study from Waters and Jamal (2011), for example, examines how non-profit organizations communicate on Twitter. Once again, the findings reveal that organizations are more likely to use one-way models even though the potential for dialogue and community building on those social networking sites. In fact, of the traditional public relations models, *public information* seems to be the most often used by non-profit organizations, followed by the *press agentry*, the *two-way asymmetrical* and finally the *two-way symmetrical*. Moreover, according to Waters and Jamal (2011), the lack of conversation continues to dominate general PR practices, as research shows that the majority of contemporary organizations – non-profit, corporate and governmental – continue to avoid real interactivity and engagement on the internet.

Despite the conservative approach to social media demonstrated by NGOs, several studies reinforce the general belief that the use of such channels is beneficial to non-profit organizations for several reasons. Not only does it help deepen existing relationships, but it also allows individuals to self-organize around causes through collaborating with each other (Briones et al., 2011; Ciszek, 2015), in particular, because the nature of these media provides a normative approach to excellence in dealing with social issues (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002).

Practices and challenges in NGOs communication strategies

Today, most NGOs agree on the importance of digital media for public relations activities, although they express concerns on that matter. Seo, Kim and Yang (2009) identified the following doubts: reliability, message control, and the scope of online audiences. Most of the studied NGOs claimed that getting stories into the mainstream media is still very important because of the reputational effect. The publics do not always think of new media channels as being as reliable as well-known media. Additionally, message control remains an issue, as receivers are also content producers. And, according to the same researchers, these concerns can stop some NGOs from "more actively engaging in new media-based public relation activities" (Seo et al., 2009, p. 125).

Thus, perhaps because NGOs failed to overcome these apprehensions, new media usage seems to have limited influence on organizational efficiency and revenue, following Seo et al. (2009) research results. Moreover, NGOs might not have enough resources (human and monetary) to develop new means of communication (Seo et al., 2009), except those with defined public relations departments (Curtis et al., 2010).

In spite of these challenges, and according to Waters (2009), non-profit organizations predominantly use social media to streamline management functions, to educate the public about programs and services, and to communicate with stakeholders. Additionally, in order to work out the reliability issue, the use of influencers in social media strategies has become an increasingly common practice. Social media influencers represent a new type of independent third party endorser who shape audience attitudes through texts in blogs, tweets, or different contents in other social media (Freberg et al., 2011). An influencer is

> a person who has a greater than average reach or impact through word of mouth in a relevant marketplace. Micro-influencers are not traditional celebrities, but rather individuals who work in their category [of products and services] or are truly knowledgeable, passionate and authentic, and are seen as a trusted source when it comes to recommendations.[1]

Thus, influencers have been identified in the literature as relevant options to integrate in public relations strategies. A relevant trend also found in NGOs practices.

Methodology

The model of analysis used in this study is based on a triangulated approach in terms of techniques. It is grounded in the case study methodology and integrates several data gathering techniques, combining interpretative hermeneutics, web mining, non-participative observation and content analysis. Furthermore, the measurement techniques were adjusted to each case study, as WhatsApp and Twitter require specific procedures given their technical characteristics and use environments.

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[1] Retrieved from http://go2.experticity.com/rs/288-azs-731/images/experticity-kellerfaysurveysummary_.pdf

In order to estimate the potential of social media implementation regarding PR strategies in social campaigns, we have followed the PESO model by Bartholomew (2010), together with the AMEC framework (2013[2]; Table 1). Both include some proposals for PR campaigns measurement in social media on each stage of the communication campaign – exposure, engagement, influence, impact and advocacy –, to assess the effectiveness of shared, owned, and earned content in the campaigns.

	EXPOSURE	ENGAGEMENT	INFLUENCE	IMPACT	ADVOCACY
Program metrics	- Total OTS (opportunities to see) for program content	- Number of interactions with the content - Interaction rate - Hashtag usage	- Increase in the % of association with key attributes - Change in issue sentiment	- New subscribers - Referral traffic to website - White paper downloads	- Recommendation/total mentions
Channel metrics	- Number of itens - Mentions - Reach - Impressions CPM (cost per thousand)	- Post likes - Comments - Shares - Views - R Ts/1000 (retweets per thousand followers) - Followers	- Net promotion % by channel	- Unique visitors to website referred from each channel	- Organic posts by advocates - Ratings/reviews
Business metrics			- Purchase consideration% - Likelyhood to recommend % - Association with brand attributes	- Sales - Repeat sales - Purchase frequency - Cost savings - Number leads	- Employee - Ambassadors - Brand - Fans/advocates

Table 1: AMEC 2013 framework

Source: https://amecorg.com/amecframework/

The web mining retrieved the social media data for the Spanish social campaign only[3] by means of Twitter search (tweets from 2015)[4]. As a result, the 63 tweets published on the day of the campaign – 21st October 2015 – were selected due to its major interactivity index. The tweets are from the agency responsible for the campaign, the NGO, Ana Pastor (campaign's media leader and influencer), citizens, institutions and media, in order to maximize the diversity of the publications in the sample.

The Portuguese campaign was assessed by means of non-participative observation, combined with other data collection methods (including document analysis sourcing the data directly from the NGOs management), to achieve a more "nuanced and dynamic" appreciation of situations that cannot be as easily captured through other methods (Liu & Maitlis, 2010, p. 4). For example, web mining WhatsApp by using specific monitoring software is not possible[5]. In 2014, WhatsApp and Open Whisper Systems partnered up

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[2] Retrieved from https://amecorg.com/amecframework/

[3] WhatsApp is an encrypted network so web mining cannot be performed on this application.

[4] Twitter API restricts the access to the last 3.200 tweets or last year as a rule.

[5] WhatsApp's end-to-end encrypted system facilitates privacy and security for all WhatsApp users (retrieved from https://

to make the messaging app a lot more secure by using a technique called end-to-end encryption, which basically locks incoming and outgoing messages so that only you and your recipient can see them[6]. However, the information provided by Bagos d'Ouro's coordinator, as well as the access to campaign messages and non-participative observation, sufficiently answered Bartholomew (2010) model (although partially).

In both campaigns, the content analysis embraces the research of messages, formats, hashtags, keywords, tools, channels and strategic approaches to PR, employed in these two campaigns, ranging from owned to earned and shared content. It also uses secondary data sources such as internal reports and documents of the campaigns and of the associations, their web pages and media publications, as well as email messages.

The analysis of the gathered data was performed by means of interpretative hermeneutics (interpretative phenomenological analysis), consisting of a qualitative analysis of verbal and non-verbal communication to capture the core sense of the messages. The approach allows us to put into perspective two different experiences in campaigning for social change and development, with the common denominator of social media use via interactive digital tools.

Case studies presentation

As previously mentioned, two campaigns developed in the Iberian Peninsula were chosen for this study, considering that this would be a valid social and communication framework for the analysis, given the similarities of the socio-cultural and technological context of both countries and for convenience of the research group (which involved the universities of Málaga – Spain and Minho – Portugal). The campaigns were created by two NGOs working on issues such as education, minorities and social exclusion: Fundación Secretariado Gitano from Spain, and Bagos d'Ouro from Portugal. We have selected the educational sector for its strategic importance in the development of both countries and because of raising concerns with issues as school abandonment, social exclusion and marginal neighbourhoods. Thus, the study examines two social campaigns in the educational sector developed via social media as the common technological denominator.

In Spain the campaign was #LeonorDejaLaEscuela, implemented mostly on Twitter (used mainly on mobiles – 80%, with 326 million users worldwide [Twitter Marketing, 2013]), but using also Facebook and YouTube (2015) as the support. Twitter presents a significant interactive and viral potential that can help to achieve a desired media impact while reaching politicians, journalists, activists and celebrities directly. The campaign from Portugal, called #Amigo-Bagos-Douro, was performed via WhatsApp (2017). Half of the Portuguese population is estimated to use social networks, with WhatsApp being the second in terms of penetration level (58%) (Marktest, 2019). WhatsApp is a

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www.whatsapp.com/research/awards/).

[6] Retrieved from https://cellphonetracker.net/read-whatsapp-messages/

one-to-one communication channel with a micro-influencer basis, ideal to reach high levels of reliability, as well as message control. As it begins to be applied for non-profit uses, the study looks to comprehend this new phenomenon.

As means of campaigning for a broader access to education, both campaigns have used interactive tools and channels of digital communication, to fulfil their strategic objectives in two similar scenarios in the education sector, which nonetheless required two different approaches.

Study results

#LeonorDejaLaEscuela campaign

#LeonorDejaLaEscuela was a campaign launched on Twitter on 21st October in 2015. The campaign is framed within the education field (IV) of the work of Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) and its main focus was to make the society sensitive to the issue of early school abandonment among Spanish gypsy children. FSG, according to its 2017 annual report, is an active and successful association that works in key areas of social inclusion for the gypsy community mainly in Spain, but also abroad.

The main target groups were the society and political powers, while the secondary publics comprise teachers, along with gypsy families and students. The activities involved impact actions on social networks, by means of hashtag and trending topics, videos (in Spanish and English), graphics (posters), leaflets and a microsite (laleonorreal.org), among others. Facebook, Youtube, Twitter and the website were the main channels of communication, with Twitter being chosen as the campaign's launching platform and main source for viral effect purposes.

#LeonorDejaLaEscuela was financed by IRPF Programme for Solidarity (Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality), and by the Operational Programme for the European Social Fund and Social Inclusion. Additionally, it was supported by the Spanish Ministry of Education. QMS Communication/DDB Spain agency was responsible for the development of the creative idea of the campaign whose main goal was to raise awareness of school abandonment among young gypsies, and that resulted in significant media repercussion.

As a general approach, some strategic elements from the QMS Communication proposal can be identified (Figure 1).
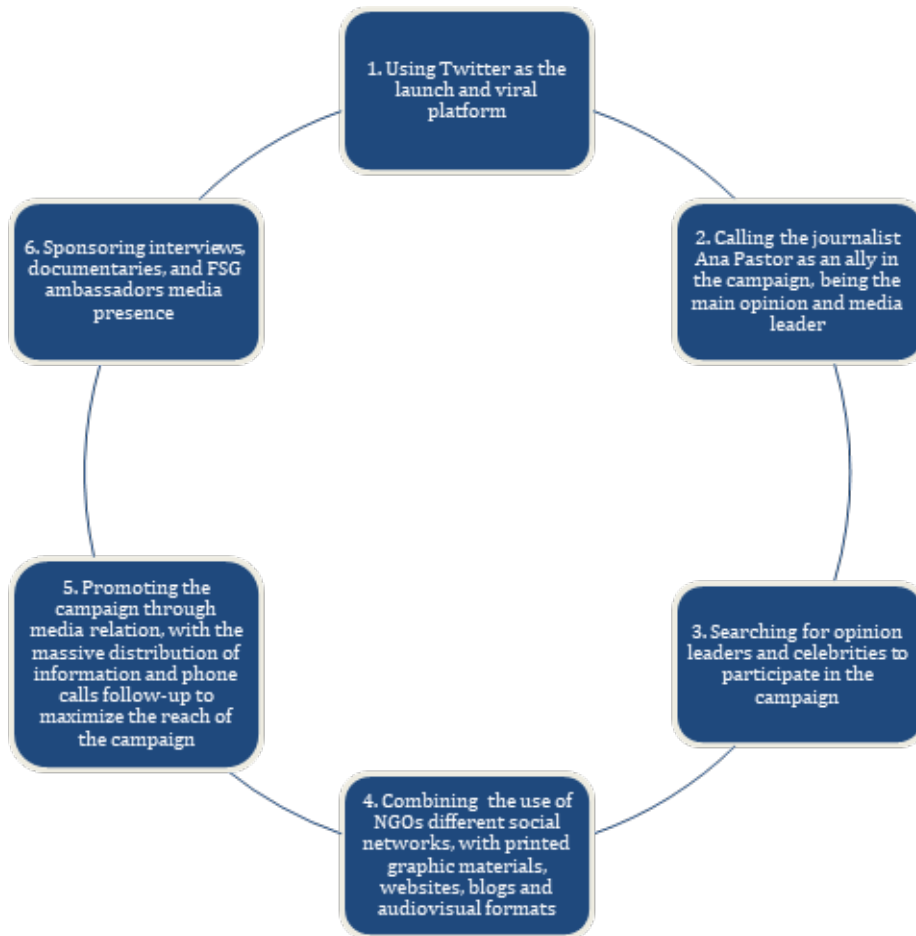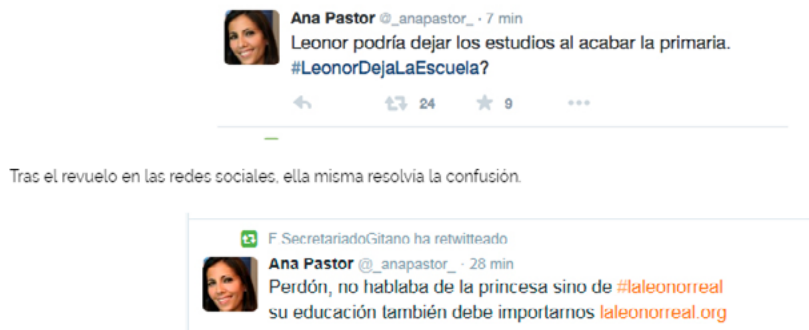
Figure 1: Campaign strategy design
Source: Own elaboration based on QMS' report (2016)

The campaign seeks to bring the so far invisible issue of gypsy school abandonment (involving 67% of the students in Spain) to the center of public debate and convert it into a matter of state. In order to make an impact and call the social and media attention, the campaign allied with the well-known and controversial Spanish journalist Ana Pastor, and involved the use of the name of Princess Leonor de Borbón[7].

The actions planned and developed during the campaign (QMS Communication) involved two main stages: teaser and resolution. With the hashtag #LeonorDejaLaEscuela (#LeonorDropsOutOfSchool), Ana Pastor launched the campaign on Twitter with the following message: "Leonor might drop out of the primary school" (Figure 2).

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[7] A member of the Spanish Royal Family and the future Queen of Spain.

Figure 2: Ana Pastor's message

Source: https://www.sensibilizaciongitanos.org/portfolio-posts/leonordejalaescuela/

This tweet was followed by other Pastor's publication, after a few hours of deliberate silence on Twitter, to create further interest and suspense. Since it provoked a lot of stir in both social and mass media (for the apparent allusion to Princess Leonor de Borbón), the journalist wrote another tweet that revealed the "real" heroine of the story: "sorry, I wasn't talking about the Princess, but about #laleonorreal (#realleonor). Her education should also matter to us www.laleonorreal.org".

By the end of the morning, Leonor's actual identity is revealed: it was a gypsy girl that wants to be a doctor in the future. The tweets that followed included a link to the campaign´s microsite and planned actions. The campaign applied diverse resources for maximizing media visibility, including informal channels, media storytelling approach and FSG's own presentation, using attractive images and informative content, in English and Spanish, to guarantee the international coverage (Table 2). The strategic objectives were to provoke social interaction and thus raise awareness. As a result, the campaign successfully achieved both objectives.

MEDIA RELATIONS	Press release	Press kit
ONLINE MEDIA	Blog	Campaign microsite (responsive design)
AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS	Videos	

Table 2: Campaign's resources

The campaign also showed cultural proximity and positive examples on how to overcome different barriers in order to achieve the educational success, presenting some pioneers of change within the minority circles. They were called the "Gypsy ambassadors of education" and the videos told their stories (Figure 3). The microsite, developed to share the videos, explained the issue of gypsy school abandonment, offering solutions for institutions, society and families. It was a way to change the official communication into a more inspirational version. FSG's main message to society was: "if they study, we all win".
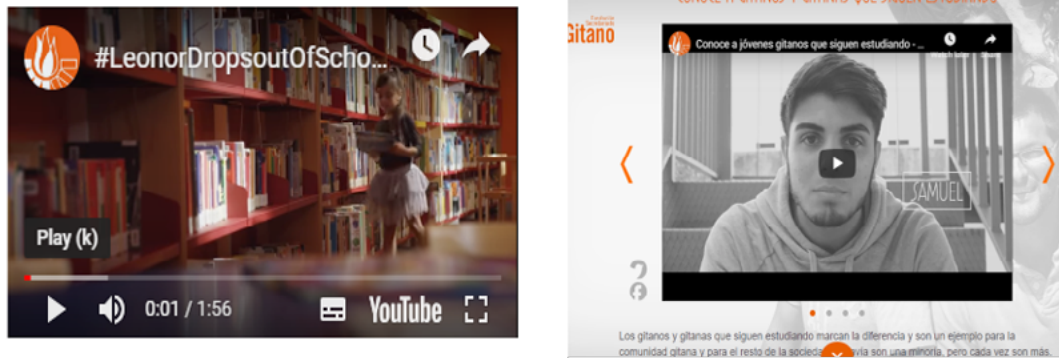
Figure 3: Examples of videos

Source: https://www.sensibilizaciongitanos.org/portfolio-posts/leonordejalaescuela/

The campaign's strategic approach aimed to demonstrate that the education of gypsy children should be treated with the utmost care and should be as important to society as of any other child's. The main hero here is not Princess Leonor, but these 60% of the children who leave school before even finishing the compulsory education, represented by #RealLeonor and her personal story. The kids' stories revealed their dreams and desired future jobs. It resonates with the campaign signature: "all the children shall have the right to fulfil their dreams" (Figure 4). As such, it highlights the main goal of the campaign: nobody shall be deprived of his or her dreams regardless to their social background. By improving their future employment, society avoids further social exclusions, which sooner or later will become a real matter of the state.

The campaign's message was clearly stated from the beginning and it was framed in two ideas by means of two hashtags in order to foment the viral effect:

1. #LeonorDejaLaEscuela – to call the attention of society that usually cares more for one popular person in a comfortable situation than other groups of underprivileged children; and

2. #LaLeonorReal – to highlight an issue that should be considered socially important: underprivileged children and the education for all.
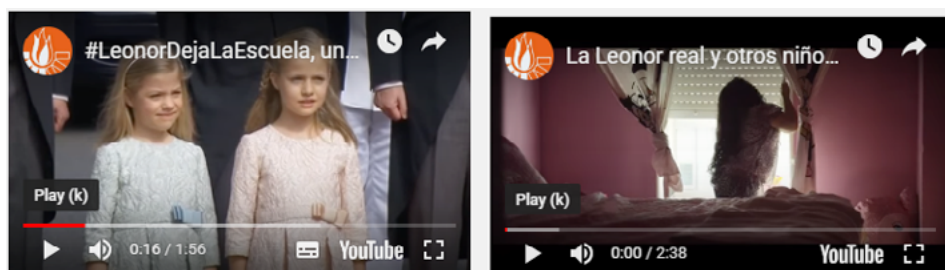

Figure 4: Video-storytelling

Source: https://www.sensibilizaciongitanos.org/portfolio-posts/leonordejalaescuela/

Therefore, the main goal of the campaign was to engage the whole society into gypsy kids' education, in order to transform their vulnerable situation, create equal

opportunities, and thus benefit the society as a whole. The communication objective was to give the maximum visibility and media repercussion to the campaign in online and offline media. And the effects were substantial. The hashtag and tweet #LeonorDejaLaEscuela became a trending topic on the very same day of the campaign´s launch. The Ana Pastor's (Figure 5) tweet reached 57 replies, 199 retweets, and 100 favorites.

Figure 5: Media reaction
Source: Twitter

Through the storytelling triangulation effect in different channels, Spanish media, journalists and celebrities, public institutions, including the monarchy and NGOs, together with Spanish companies and citizens, were all engaged in the campaign (something visible in user generated content, mainly memes; Table 3).

Impacts	Participation in conversation	Campaigns' viwers in 24h (*El País*)
20 mln	16 mln	15 mln

Table 3: Campaign's impact on Twitter - viewers in 24h (*El País*)

The Twitter's search results, by the hashtag #LeonorDejaLaEscuela, shows that it was there that the 63 publications with the greatest interaction were produced, the majority of which containing a video of the campaign and the link to the website, all of them including the hashtag (Table 4).

	Replies	Retweets	Favourites	Average RT and favourite
	188	1126	1109	18
Tweets type among 63 most interacted tweets	Organic	Opinion leader Ana Pastor	FSG	
	56	3	4	

Table 4: The impact of 63 mostly interacted tweets and their types

Media personality, proximity achieved through personalization, and dramatization seemed to be key factors of communication success and viral effect. The campaign was even largely visible in the major Spanish media (Table 5). *El País* newspaper, for example, published a special article dedicated to this issue and based on the campaign, encouraging the social debate, and highlighting some of the comments from the public.

TV	Newspaper	Online media	NGO and specialized sites	Industry site
- La Sexta	- *El Diario Sur* - *El País* - *El Publico* - *El confidencia*l	- Huffingtonpost.es	- Aulaintercultural.org - Educo Actúa, Plataforma de Infancia	- Controlpublicidad.com

Table 5: Media presence

According to QMS Communication agency's report, who was responsible for the campaign management, #LeonorDejaLaEscuela has achieved remarkable media impact (Table 6).

	Appearances	Audience	Media	ROI (return on investiment)
Total	143	38.144.283 mln	Radio/TV/newspaper/online	€ 684.274
TV	7	3.890.000	La Sexta Noticias, La 2 Noticias, Telecinco, TVE	€ 212.311
Radio	9	3.907.000	*Julia en la Onda, Esto me suena de RNE, Fin de semana Cadena COPE*	€ 112.166
Online media	117	29.296.283	No data	€ 306.317
Printed media	10 (nine publications)	1.051.000	No data	€ 53.483

Table 6: Media impact

As overall effect, the #LeonorDejaLaEscuela campaign and the agency received the "Bronze award for Public Relations" (Sol de Bronce) at the Sol – "Iberoamerican

Advertising Communication Festival" –, in 2016, the most important in Spain and Iberoamerica, and were awarded with the prize Fundación Princesa de Girona by the King of Spain in the same year.

In short, and taking as reference the aforementioned PR models for social media (Bartholomew, 2010; AMEC 2013[8]), we can state that the campaign achieved the desired effect of *exposure* mainly due to owned (videos, microsites, social accounts), shared (retweets) and earned media (media appearances; message delivery). Regarding *influence*, it has been mostly observed in terms of increase in public awareness on the issue (within media, institutions and citizens), in the earned content (associating the topic with FSG), and finally in owned media (with new modified attributions to gypsy community). Regarding *impact*, the issue gained, in fact, visibility in the media and within society, being the focus of debate in 15 million conversations online (on Twitter and including citizens, media, and others). As it can be observed, the campaign not only attained a high level of activity with limited resource (thanks to the strategically planned viral effect on Twitter), but also benefit from applying digital tools in a creative and interactive way (using influencers, ambassadors, digital storytelling, video formats, hashtags and trending topics), together with a more traditional media relations approach. It allowed the interaction and engagement of the public through a combined use of earned and shared media to leverage the media interest.

#Amigo-Bagos-Douro campaign

Bagos d'Ouro Association (ABO) is a nonprofit institution operating in a somewhat "paradoxical" area, the Douro region, in the north of Portugal. It is known for its historical and cultural value: as the oldest demarcated region in the world, as an Unesco World Heritage landscape, and for producing some of the most prestigious wines in the world, such as the famous Port wine. On the other hand, it simultaneously remains one of the poorest regions in Europe, characterized by a rural context with high poverty indicators, associated to other social risk factors, such as alcoholism, domestic violence and unemployment.

Recognizing this difficult context, Bagos d'Ouro ("Gold Berries") was founded in 2010 with the main purpose of promoting the education of needed children and young people in the Douro region, as the means to enhance a more balanced society by contributing to social inclusion through education – the "most powerful weapon to change the World"[9]. Bagos d'Ouro Association promotes youth capacitation, through a long-term commitment, based on personalized interventions with each one of the children and young people they support, seeking to follow their educational, social and family journey towards full integration into an active life. Presently, ABO supports more than

[8] Retrieved from https://amecorg.com/amecframework/

[9] Retrieved from www.bagosdouro.pt

150 children and their families, reaching up around 300 beneficiaries. Accountability is a normal and valuable practice in this association since its foundation, contributing to brand loyalty and, more importantly, good reputation among donors.

"Amigo Bagos d'Ouro" fundraising program

ABO is not funded by the state, as it has always based its sustainability on fundraising actions among companies and individuals. The "Amigo Bagos d'Ouro" program – meaning literally "Gold Berries Friend" – is a fundraising program, born in the association's second year of activity (2011). However, until the launch of an experimental campaign, in 2017, it never had a significant return. The campaign consisted of a strategy applied to WhatsApp mobile network.

In 2017, the ABO Board of Directors defined the fundraising program as a priority, to reinforce the fixed income of the association, by increasing the number of people or companies committed to their mission on a regular basis. As a result, the "Amigos Bagos d' Ouro" campaign was born. The use of the concept of "friend" aimed to bring people or companies closer to ABO's mission, inviting them to financially support a child's school career and, thus, help the family as well. In the messages shared, it was also made clear that the "donors-friends" are an essential support for ABO's activity, since their contributions allow the association to establish a long-term commitment to each family.

The "Amigo" campaign was, then, released in November 2017, with a launch event in Lisbon, to which were invited the media and some public figures, with the purpose of generating issue awareness. However, there was no media impact. This first phase was followed by a campaign on ABO's Facebook page – with public figures' video testimonials. According to the Association's general coordinator, Inês Taveira[10], the campaign via WhatsApp has been more successful than the celebrities' action and the Facebook posts, in terms of an effective increase in the number of donors.

The campaign was initially based on a WhatsApp group of five people from the Board of Directors that received the campaign contents and instructions to act as digital disseminators. Then, each one created a group among their known contacts in order to share several campaign messages. And afterwards the process developed itself in a "grapevine" model, that is, each person who received the message, shared it with other friends. Again, according to the association's general coordinator, these personalized contacts and recommendations, as well as the easiness in forwarding and sharing the message with friends, were the key points of the WhatsApp campaign. The messages were about real stories of each child and young people supported by the association.

Considering our previously defined variables, as detailed in Table 1, micro-personalization and emotional discourse were the main rhetorical resources selected to reach a very particular, yet generous, target, through a group people highly involved with the

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[10] Email interview with the ABO's general coordinator.

cause and the institution – the ABO's Board of Directors. This group is actually composed of micro-influencers with special bonds to the Douro region, and willing to use their personal network for the donors' campaign. Besides that, the campaign used personalized stories of Douro's children and young people, sharing their dreams, what provided emotional bonds through communication waves (Table 7). In fact, storytelling is a strong communication option especially when it is reinforced by regular accountability. In the ABO's case, that strategy is operationalized through a report sent by email to each donor, in a personalized tone, about the educational evolution of every supported child.

Variable	Analysis
Messages and formats	Personalize stories of each child or young person supported by the association sent by text messaging – no images or videos. Each text has the name of the beneficiary, its dreams to be accomplished and the monthly contribution needed to help that specific case. It also mentions how to donate and guarantees regular reports on his/her evolution.
Keywords	Persons' name; dreams; supporting; school assignment; € 30; reporting; simplicity.
Channels	WhatsApp and website.
Hashtags	#amigo-bagos-douro
Tools	Personal WhatsApp contacts; official website; donors email.
Strategic approach	Testimonies gathering and copy writing for short messages; hyperlink to the official website at the end of texting for donation (commitment); personal stories sent one-by-one to ABO directors WhatsApp number, directors personal involvement and sharing; personalized emailing reports send to donators on a regular basis (loyalty).

Table 7: Bagos d'Ouro campaign: content analysis variables

Through several communication channels (detailed in Table 2), the simplicity of the process to participate in the campaign was disseminated and it seems to have been an important factor concerning effectiveness. After receiving the call-to-action message delivered by a friend, the potential donors could access ABO donors' webpage directly, where they could find the instructions on how to act (Table 8[11]). Accountability is one of the most relevant techniques to guarantee a long-term relationship. If an emotional bond with a particular story is achieved, it is critical to maintain this link, as if it was someone as close as family.

[11] All internal and external data come from: an email interview to ABO general coordinator, 23th March 2019, and the 2018 Annual Financial Report, March 2019.

SOURCE	QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS
Official website	Specific donation page, explaining donors' options and providing payment forms in a simple and easy language (facilitation).
Internal and external reports	The internal budget for 2018 estimated € 22.200 as expected raising value. At the end of the year, donations reached € 49.753. This means an increase of more than 100%. Total of 43 "friends" raised through the campaign. 2018 Annual Reports dedicates two full pages to the campaign.
Emailing messages	The ABO team ensures accountability through regular reporting on the children's path, based on information collected by staff on the ground. It is send quarterly, according to school calendar (engagement).

Table 8: Interpretative hermeneutics

The results of the WhatsApp's social campaign surpassed the initial internal fundraising goals (Tables 2 and 3). The positive gap between predefined quantitative objectives and final results stresses the importance of trust and reliable sources as means to achieve engagement and lead to action, especially on messaging tools such as WhatsApp (Table 9). Many campaigns pursuing social causes achieve engagement, but the behavioural change is not achieved. In this case, the use of micro-influencers seems to be the key factor to obtain a high degree of effectiveness on this particular dimension.

EXPOSURE	Five senders have shared the campaign to an unknown number of people (personal contacts from their cell phones).
ENGAGEMENT	High level of potential engagement once it was a message sent by a friend, a "trustful source" (endorsement).
INFLUENCE	Micro-influencers shared personalized stories full of emotional content to a friend (reliability).
PESO MODEL (ACTION IN PAID, EARNED, SHARED AND OWNED MEDIA)	Owned media: € 59.823 (amount obtained in 2017 and 2018).

Table 9: WhatsApp monitoring

The ABO's case stresses the importance of building "safety networks" between the third sector and the donors, using reliable contents (true stories sent by someone we trust) and being accountable. In general, WhatsApp features, as an encrypted social media mobile messaging service, gives consistency to this strategy. Concerning long-term effects, those strategic options can lead to an increase on brand reputation as well as on loyalty. Also, it can help building "safety nets", or expressive strong bonds with the

most important stakeholders, reducing reputational risks (using Fombrun, Gardberg & Barnett, 2000, concept). However, the case study also highlights certain problems that can arise from using this social network: (1) strong dependency on the senders' goodwill, as well as their personal reputation; and (2) impossibility of measuring the number of messages sent by each member, as well as the number of shares from the moment the recipient receives it.

In sum, results are encouraging, since this digital pilot action doubled the expected results in quantitative terms, validating WhatsApp as a reliable channel for the third sector. Financial incomes appear not to be very high, however, as pointed by Fombrun et al. (2000, p. 106): "a consistent and sustained message requires continuous investment in and commitment to citizenship activities, despite the difficulty in directly quantifying the gains". In fact, the use of WhatsApp has proved to be a useful tool to Bagos d'Ouro Association. As well, the mobile messenger service proved to be a mean of campaigning for a broader access to education. However, the case shows that this social network does not allow scaling up a fundraising strategy, as we concluded by the quantitative results obtained.

Discussion and conclusions

The analysis clearly demonstrates that social media have greatly contributed in a positive manner to the way public relations strategies within the third sector are conducted. Social media can have a key role in non-profit communication by lobbying for social causes, creating alliances, raising money, mobilizing volunteers, engaging traditional media and community relations, or for advocating for policy reform. However, there is not a single model to develop these campaigns. As in traditional PR, it depends on the issue, the goals and the targets.

#LeonorDejaLaEscuela and #Amigo-Bagos-Douro are two very successful social campaigns within the educational sector, implemented via social media, but with very different scales and interaction levels. This leads to the conclusion that the public relations two-way asymmetrical model, as the ideal communication practice between an organization and its publics, cannot be seen as the only way to succeed. In fact, the Spanish case study, using Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, is an example of success supported by the high interactive level reached (moving away from the trends suggested in our literature review). Nevertheless, the Portuguese case study, using WhatsApp, shows how low interaction can become equally effective. In general, what the two campaigns have in common is the combination of the following communication strategies in social media: (1) the use of storytelling to promote emotional engagement; (2) the personalization of contents to increase impact; (3) the focus on the viral effect to reach targets; (4) the use of influencers (or micro-influencers) to enhance engagement; (5) the establishment the "safety nets", among stakeholders, to develop activism and brand loyalty; (6)

the triangulated effect by exploring media visibility; and (7) the development of original and creative ideas to stimulate awareness.

As regards to the first specific objective of this study, the Iberian context helped better understanding the innovative use of social media in PR campaigns. In both cases, social media made possible a more direct or personalised interaction with those participating in the campaign, via content and direct communication. As such, the advocacy effect and the action on social causes were fomented. Regarding the second objective, both campaigns are clear examples of the re-framing of PR communications throughout the use of social networks that in turn are able to increase media and social impact. The use of digital tools framed the communication for a more direct and personal approach with a high level of interactions that successfully drive PR from a mere exposure stage to a participative, content creation and user-based perspective. It is a strong proof of the value of re-framing from owned and paid content in mass media to earned and shared content, co-generated by diverse publics feeling engaged with the cause and purpose of the campaign. Through this renewed positioning, public relations can play an important role in the communication for development mix, as a driving force for societal challenges.

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