Public communication strategies of a university in the platform society

Estratégias de comunicação pública de uma universidade na sociedade de plataformas

Estrategias de comunicación pública de una universidad en la sociedad de plataformas

Sendi Chiapinotto Spiazzi, Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Santa Maria, Brasil (sendi.spiazzi@ufsm.br)

Rejane de Oliveira Pozobon, Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Santa Maria, Brasil (rejane.pozobon@ufsm.br)

ABSTRACT | This article aims to stimulate a discussion on the public communication strategies of a university in the platform society (Van Dijck et al., 2018), focusing on the strategies of sensibility (Sodré, 2006), capturing emotion (Charaudeau, 2010, 2013) and emotional forms of persuasive discourse (Mateus, 2019). Using content analysis (Sampaio & Licaryão, 2021), the content posted on Instagram by the Federal University of Goiás (UFG) in the first semester of 2023 (April to July) was analyzed in the categories of content format, information of public communication and focus on capturing emotions. The content posted by UFG on Instagram favored institutional public communication through carousels with cards or photos and sought to trigger some emotions, mostly through the representation of students and staff, i.e., by satisfying the desires and needs of the audience. The content that generated the most engagement during the period studied was the institution's public communication, in the format of videos/reels and triggering satisfaction of the audience's needs and desires through feelings of pride, emotions related to the institution issuing the communication (ethos) and figurative language through humor.

KEYWORDS: public communication; communication strategies; platform society.

RESUMO | Este artigo tem por objetivo propor uma discussão das estratégias de comunicação pública de uma instituição federal de ensino superior (IFES) na sociedade de plataformas (Van Dijck et al., 2018), com foco nas estratégias do sensível (Sodré, 2006), de captação da emoção (Charaudeau, 2010, 2013) e de formas emotivas no discurso persuasivo (Mateus, 2019). Por meio da análise de conteúdo (Sampaio & Licaryão, 2021), examinou-se o conteúdo postado pela Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG) no Instagram durante o primeiro semestre letivo de 2023 (abril a julho) nas categorias de formato de conteúdo, informação de comunicação pública e visada de captação da emoção. O conteúdo postado no Instagram pela UFG privilegiou a comunicação pública institucional por meio de carrosséis com cards ou fotos e buscou acionar algumas emoções, em sua maioria, por meio do protagonismo de estudantes e servidores, ou seja, pela satisfação de desejos e necessidades da audiência. Os conteúdos que geraram maior engajamento no período analisado foram de comunicação pública institucional, porém em formato de vídeos/reels e acionando satisfação de necessidades e desejos da audiência pelo sentimento de orgulho, emoções relativas à instituição emissora da comunicação (ethos) e linguagem figurada através do humor.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *comunicação pública; estratégias de comunicação; plataformização da sociedade.*

RESUMEN | Este artículo busca proponer una discusión sobre las estrategias de comunicación pública de una institución federal de educación superior en la sociedad de plataformas (Van Dijck et al., 2018), con foco en las estrategias de lo sensible (Sodré, 2006), de la captura de la emoción (Charaudeau, 2010, 2013) y de formas emotivas del discurso persuasivo (Mateus, 2019). Mediante el análisis de contenido (Sampaio & Licaryão, 2021), se analizó el contenido publicado por la Universidad Federal de Goiás (UFG) en Instagram durante el primer semestre de 2023 (abril a julio) en las categorías de formato de contenido, información de comunicación pública y enfoque en capturar la emoción. El contenido de la UFG en esa red social ha privilegiado la comunicación pública institucional a través de carruseles con tarjetas o fotos y buscado gatillar emociones, en su mayoría gracias al protagonismo de estudiantes y funcionarios, es decir, mediante la satisfacción de los deseos y necesidades de la audiencia. Los contenidos que han generado más interacción en el período analizado fueron la comunicación pública institucional, en formato de videos/reels, que han provocado la satisfacción de las necesidades y deseos de la audiencia con sentimientos de orgullo, emociones relacionadas con la institución que emite la comunicación (ethos) y lenguaje figurado a través del humor.

PALAVRAS-CLAVE: comunicación pública; estratégias de comunicación; sociedad de plataformas.

INTRODUCTION

This article aims to discuss the public communication strategies used by the Federal University of Goiás (UFG) on Instagram, focusing on strategies of the sensitive (Sodré, 2006), the capture of emotions (Charaudeau, 2010, 2013) and the formation of emotions in persuasive speech (Mateus, 2019). This study is part of a doctoral thesis on public communication strategies of federal higher education institutions (IFES) in the platform society (Van Dijck et al., 2018).

Much research on the use of emotion and affect has been conducted in relation to private companies and brands (Scroferneker & Gomes, 2019; Castilhos, 2016; Ortiz & Cipolla, 2015; Michel et al, 2014; Jenkins et al, 2014; Costa-Sánchez, 2014) or political communication (Ferreira, 2023; Ferreira et al, 2023; Miguel & Fontenelle, 2023; Almeida, 2022), but there is still little discussion on the use of these strategies by public institutions[1]. One of the first public institutions to use humor and proximity as content strategies in social media was Curitiba City Hall (Henriques & Sant'Ana, 2015). As for IFES, we chose to analyze UFG's strategies on Instagram because we already know that the university plans and evaluates interaction on digital media based on engagement and humor. As the study by Costa and colleagues (2019) shows, there is a difference in public engagement between informative static posts and funny GIFs in the promotion of the Unified Selection System (SiSU) 2019 on the university's Instagram.

As a theoretical reference, we initially base our analysis on the concepts of strategic communication (Kunsch, 2018; Pérez, 2008; Hallahan et al., 2007; Ruão, 2020), sensitive communication strategies by Sodré (2006), emotion capture by Charaudeau (2010, 2013) and Mateus' (2019) theory on the formation of emotions in persuasive speech. Later, we will present a contextualization of the platform society (Van Dijck et al., 2018) and the role of algorithms in the consumption of information of public interest (Silva, 2017; Silveira, 2019).

We will then discuss public communication through Gomes (2007), Zémor (2009), Brandão (2012), Weber (2011), Koçouski (2013) and Duarte & Duarte (2019), which address the concept, the public actors that make use of public communication and their objectives. Finally, we will use the content analysis methodology (Sampaio & Licaryão, 2021) to examine the UFG's public communication strategies on its Instagram page during the months of April to July 2023, which covers the first academic semester.

---

1. In national and international databases such as Scopus, Scielo, Banco Nacional de Teses e Dissertações, Compós and Compolítica, there are no previous academic studies that emphasize the emotional and persuasive strategy of public institutions.

SENSITIVE AND AFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Strategy is a concept that originates from war between peoples and nations, but over the years it has also been applied to other types of conflict: economics, business, media, or even attention and legitimacy. Usually strategy is analyzed from the point of view of reason, as Martins (1984) reminds us:

> And strategic thinking includes not only concern for the effective use of coercive means, but also the rational analysis of situations, the assessment of risks, the hierarchization of goals, the prospect of the peace sought after war or the situation desired after conflict, all of which help to moderate the drive of passions (p. 116).

But what if today, when dealing with the press, social media and citizens, we need more than just reason, information, argumentation, more than the moderation of the impetus of passions? Sodré (2006) has shown that it is necessary to re-evaluate the traditional notion of strategy when it comes to the sensitive dimension in communication strategies. For him, a strategy for approximating differences results from an "affective, somatic adaptation between different parts of a process destined to constitute a knowledge which, even if intelligible, is indebted neither to the critical-instrumental rationality of the concept nor to abstract figures of thought" (p.11).

When it comes to strategies of media discourse and propagandistic discourse, Charaudeau (2010) notes that when an institution uses its influence to dialog with its audience, it can use discursive strategies in four directions:

> 1) the way of making contact with the other and the kind of relationship that is established between them; 2) the construction of the image of the speaking subject (their ethos); 3) the way of touching the affections of the other in order to seduce or persuade them (pathos) and 4) the forms of organization of discourse that make it possible to describe and explain the world according to the principles of truthfulness (logos) (p. 59).

The author also explains that there can be two main strategies (at which he is aiming): that of simply letting people know (information) and that of making people feel (capture). Capture fulfills the principle of emotion (pathos), it stages information with emotional appeals that touch the beliefs and sociocultural framework of the interlocutors. It can also use someone else's affection to seduce or persuade them.

Mateus (2019) systematizes some elements of emotional persuasion that go beyond logical-argumentative persuasion: 1) suggestiveness: it aims to influence the audience's decision-making power in a discreet way; 2) figurative, adjectival and connotative language: it encourages the audience to approve of the speaker;

3) satisfaction of the audience's needs and desires; 4) emotional effects related to the speaker: beauty and attractiveness of the speaker, ethos (credibility).

Sodré (2006) confirms these more affective strategies when he states that "in the communicative relationship, in addition to the information conveyed by the utterance, that is, in addition to what is made known, a relationship is recognized between two subjectivities, between the interlocutors" (p.11).

Sodré (2006) also notes that communication as an information process (understood as pure transmission of meaning or data), reinforced by technological materiality (such as social media and algorithms), leads to information overload and functional rationality dominating interaction. This raises a problem of understanding and connection that can be balanced by the use of emotions and feelings.

Strategic communication can go further than the traditional strategy of the administrative/economic paradigm, which only aims to transmit information to achieve profitable and quantitative results. It can be more fluid, concerned with human values and subjectivities, less technical, instrumental and rational (Kunsch, 2018; Pérez, 2008).

For Hallahan and colleagues (2007) and Ruão (2020), strategic communication means persuasion, influencing the recipient of the message; it implies a process of meaning-making. For the authors, "persuasion is the essence of strategic communication" (Hallahan et al., 2007, p. 24). Strategies that touch on the emotions and beliefs of interlocutors are increasingly necessary in a platform-based discursive environment dominated by algorithms that select and modulate the information we consume, as the following section shows.

THE PLATFORM SOCIETY AND PUBLIC INTEREST

José Van Dijck and colleagues (2018) write in their book The Platform Society: public values in a connective world that we live in a society in which platforms promise to provide personalized services in an efficient, innovative and economically interesting way, avoiding unnecessary regulations and costs.

> Platformization refers to the penetration of digital infrastructures, economic processes and State structures into various economic sectors and areas of life. It also includes the reorganization of cultural practices and beliefs around these platforms (Poell et al., 2020, p. 2).

The platform society functions through datafication, commodification and selection of data (Van Dijck et al., 2018). Datafication is related to the collection

and dissemination of a huge amount of data and information generated by millions of Internet users. The datafication mechanism plays a central role in shaping social relationships as it collects, processes and tracks activities, feelings, performances and transactions.

Silva (2017) argues, in relation to the concepts of algorithms, digital communication and democracy, that datafication has given power to those who hold the information about what we do, what we like and how we live. When this power is used in a distorted way in favor of the market or state authorities, it impairs the autonomy of subjects and fosters inequalities.

The commodification of these activities, emotions and ideas turns them into tradable commodities. However, the users who generate this data are generally unaware of how it is used by the platforms or how it creates value. These commodities are valued by four different types of currencies: Attention, data, users and money.

Anna Bentes (2019) focuses on the issue of attention when she talks about the digital economy, an economy in which market strategies are increasingly focused on developing compelling mechanisms to keep users' attention for longer in an environment built on an excess of information.

Finally, Van Dijck and colleagues (2018) define selection as the "ability of platforms to trigger and filter user activity through interfaces and algorithms, while users, through their interaction with these coded environments, influence the online visibility and availability of particular content, services, and people." (pp. 40-41). Along the same lines, Silveira (2019) argues that "platforms feed on personal data, which is processed and sold in patterns to interfere and organize the consumption and practices of their customers" (p. 19).

Algorithms are used in this process. They not only help us to search for information, but also influence our relationships with other people, the cultural artifacts we consume and our knowledge of the world (Silva, 2017). Through this selection carried out by algorithms, platforms replace the work of experts (journalists, teachers, cultural critics, sports instructors) in selecting the news, courses, movies and physical activities that we consume on websites, social media and applications, to name just a few examples.

This selection takes place via various mechanisms. One of them is called personalization: "Platforms algorithmically determine the interests, desires, and needs of each user on the basis of a wide variety of datafied user signals, personalizing the user's stream of content, advertising, and contact suggestions." (Van Dijck et al., 2018, p. 41).

This customization/personalization is useful to help users find information, products and services, but it can also contribute to the fragmentation of society and the entrenchment of filter bubbles in social media. Big tech companies do not guarantee that users receive a fair and comprehensive pluralistic news offering, which is considered essential for democracy. Moreover, these personalization mechanisms, although they take into account users' actions, have other codes that are opaque and difficult to evaluate or verify (Pasquale, 2015).

Another selection feature is reputation and trend categorization. Reputation refers to the ability to rate and rank a product or service on platforms, e.g., hotels, restaurants and app drivers. Trend refers to trending topics on social media, most read news, most watched series, content that appears due to its popularity among users. This categorization affects the type of news that becomes more visible, favoring content that generates greater user engagement based on a logic of virality rather than quality, veracity or public interest.

Finally, we have moderation, described by Van Dijck and colleagues (2018) as the ability of platforms to control who and what is shared. Content moderation is necessary, but the existing shortcomings become apparent during election periods when fake news becomes rampant: "...content filtering or lack of such filtering has set off alarm bells regarding the ways in which platforms potentially limit freedom of expression and undermine the quality of public debate" (Van Dijck et al., 2018, p. 45).

> One of the most important forms of control that platform managers exercise over their users is the modulation of options and ways of interacting and accessing the published content. Modulation is a process of controlling the visualization of content, which can be associated with speech, images or sounds. Platforms do not create speech, but rely on algorithmic systems that disseminate speech created by their users: corporations or people (Silveira, 2019, p. 21).

The leading mechanisms of the platform society make it difficult for people to consume information of public interest because the algorithms that select and modulate our choices are driven by private interests. Van Dijck and colleagues (2018) look at how platforms influence public values and services such as health, education and information.

Since public universities are educational institutions linked to the government, the knowledge produced in and by these institutions, as well as the services they provide, are real issues of public interest, which raises the question: How do these universities compete with friends, family, brands, personalities, media,

private companies and fake news in a society governed by algorithms? Public communication is responsible for the dissemination of knowledge produced in/by these institutions, as well as for constructing the relationship between these institutions and society. Therefore, it is important to examine this relationship and its changes over time, as the following section will show.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN THE PLATFORM SOCIETY

Pierre Zémor (2009) defines public communication as the

> exchange and sharing of information of general interest obligations. It contributes to the preservation of social ties. The responsibility for this lies with public bodies, i.e., public administrations, local authority services, institutions, undertakings, bodies entrusted with the performance of a task of general interest (p. 189).

According to the author, in order to maintain these social ties, communication must be diverse, attractive, pluralistic and authentic, in line with people's concerns and curiosities. Brandão (2012) expands on the concept of public communication by showing how it works. The author offers five perspectives to explain the concept:

- Organizational communication: between the institution and its audiences with the aim of strengthening the institutional image.

- Scientific communication: through pop-science.

- State and/or governmental communication: between public institutions and citizens.

- Political communication: with the aim of defending political ideals and positions.

- Community and/or alternative communication: carried out by organized civil society.

Bueno (2009, pp. 3-4) defines organizational communication as the "integrated set of actions, strategies, plans, policies and products planned and developed by an organization to establish a lasting and systematic relationship with all audiences". Through the publications of Margarida Kunsch (2003), who defines integrated communication as that which includes institutional, marketing, administrative and internal communication, organizational communication began to be understood in a more integrated form.

By scientific communication, Brandão (2012) refers to exemplary scientific topics that attract the attention of the public and promote the development of the country. The author argues that the dissemination of scientific knowledge shows concern for the social role of science and knowledge in the exercise of citizenship.

According to Brandão (2012), government communication refers to the communication of public institutions and contributes to the construction of the public agenda, accountability and the incentives of the population to participate in public policies. In other words, it increases participation in the public debate.

Heloíza Matos (2006) states that political communication privileges political messages, electoral campaigns and the promotion of political actors. Peruzzo (2017), on the other hand, explains that community communication is what is carried out by community organizations and Brazilian popular movements as a means of mobilization and collective action.

Many scholars also point to the purposes of public communication, which are:

- Build democracy and defend public wellness (Weber, 2011).

- Fulfill the right to citizenship through information and social participation mechanisms, negotiating issues that affect the collectives (Koçouski, 2013).

- Release State actions and services, maintain communication channels between the State and citizens, transparency and access to information (Duarte & Duarte, 2019).

- Digital democracy (Gomes, 2007).

- Educate for citizenship (Lima, 2022).

In this context of disputes over space, visibility, credibility and engagement on platforms, public institutions have a challenge ahead: to touch the citizens' emotions and to produce content that generates engagement and virality. Despite the empirical observation on how public institutions use emotionally appealing formats and languages in their communication with citizens, mainly through social media, there are still a few academic studies that emphasize the sensitive strategy behind these actions.

For this reason, this study analyzes the content strategies in Federal University of Goiás (UFG) on Instagram during the first academic semester of 2023 (from March to July), aiming at observing which information of public character is released to the students and employees, but more than that, which strategies of the sensitive and emotion capture are triggered.

UFG'S CONTENT AND STRATEGY ANALYSIS ON INSTAGRAM

As part of a broader study on the public communication strategies of federal higher education institutions (IFES) in the contestation of space and visibility in the platform society (Van Dijck et al., 2018), in this article we analyzed the communication strategies in all posts published by the Federal University of Goiás (UFG) on Instagram[2]. For this purpose, we selected all posts from the newsfeed of this social media in the months between March and July 2023, which covers the first academic semester of that year. We assume that one semester is representative to analyze the routine and publication and communication strategies of a college.

We opted for content analysis (Sampaio & Lycarião, 2021) to evaluate and categorize formats and informative aspects of public communication, focusing on the capture of emotions in the posts published on the Instagram feed (a social medium that allows the posting of different formats such as images, videos, maps, carousels, in addition to textual resources such as captions, emojis and hashtags).

> Content analysis is a scientific research technique based on systematic, inter-subjectively validated and publicly available procedures to draw valid conclusions about specific verbal, visual or written content aimed at describing, quantifying or interpreting a specific phenomenon in terms of its meanings, intentions, consequences or contexts (Sampaio & Lycarião, 2021, p. 6).

In the Format category, posts were divided into: 1) video/reels; 2) image; 3) card (art and text together), and 4) carousel (multiple images or art and text linked together so that the user must click to see the next content). Stories were not analyzed due to their 24-hour transience.

In the category Informative aspects of public communication, the contributions were coded according to the codes described in table 1.

In the category Capture of emotion, we evaluated whether there is only a focus on information or if there is a strategy of capturing emotions (Charaudeau, 2010, 2013) in the posted content that describes the possible identified emotions. We also tried to evaluate the possible forms of emotions triggered, such as suggestiveness, figurative language, audience satisfaction, emotional impact of the speaker (Mateus, 2019).

---

2. We chose Instagram for this study because it is the third most used social media network by Brazilians in 2023, just behind WhatsApp and YouTube (Souza, 2023). In addition, Instagram is a social network that allows the upload of different formats, such as photos, videos, cards, carousels, in addition to textual resources such as captions, emojis and hashtags.

Code	Features for decoding
Institutional communication	Posts that refer to the institution itself, its products and services.
Governamental communication	Posts that refer to the institution's governmental sphere, its relation with the State, data transparency.
Scientific communication	Posts about research, extension and innovation projects.
Political communication	Posts about campaigns or political actors.
Alternative communication	Posts shared or posts that broadcast the action of organized civil society.

Table 1. Informative aspects of public communication

Source: Own elaboration based on Brandão (2012).

The federal university of Goiás

UFG has a history of more than 60 years and offers 104 undergraduate and 78 graduate degree programs, representing a total of 26.2 thousand students. The college has four campuses in the city of Goiânia and one in the city of Goiás, both cities in the state of Goiás. As a means of communication, the UFG has a television channel, a radio station, a website and accounts on the following social networks: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. On Instagram, the social media analyzed in this article, the UFG has 125 thousand followers.

RESULTS

During the first academic semester of 2023 (from April to July), the college published 136 posts on its Instagram account, including 51 card or image carousels, 47 cards (art or pictures and text together), 35 videos and three pictures. Of all posts, 23 were published in collaboration[3] with other profiles belonging to the university. Table 2 shows the public communication content posted during this period, with examples of the topics posted.

As expected, most of the posts, namely 75% (n=102), dealt with topics characteristic of institutional public communication and related to the university itself, to the services provided to the community and to themes of a social nature. Secondly, there were scientific public communication contents (22.06%) about research and outreach, typical of this type of institution. Government public communication (2.94%) mentioned federal or State government actions and events.

---

3. This type of format lets a single post be displayed on two different profiles.

Type of communication	Frequency	Examples of content
Institutional communication	102	Publicizing spaces (auditorium, campus, curiosities), rankings and awards, institutional calendar with social themes (Mother's Day, environment, LGBTQIAPN+, indigenous peoples), daily activities, services provided (courses, events, job fair, undergraduate and graduate application process, student aid, enrollment).
Scientific communication	30	Research and outreach content: projects in schools in the region, family farming fair, technical cooperation, scientific discoveries, ongoing studies.
Political communication	0	We have not found any information on campaigns or political actors.
Governamental communication	4	State mentions (events organized by the federal or State government), visits by members of the government to the university.
Alternative communication	0	We have not found any information about the third sector or organized civil society.

Table 2. Content coded in the category Informative aspects of public communication

Source: Own elaboration based on the analysis carried out in August, 2023 on the Universidade Federal de Goiás Instagram account and on Brandão's (2012) categories of public communication.

No alternative public communication content was found that could be represented by joint actions and content from non-governmental organizations, collectives and organized civil society. No political communication content was found either, which was already expected as this is not the main focus of communication from public education institutions.

In terms of capturing emotion, we identified 98 pieces of content that presented some kind of emotional appeal, mainly through pictures and videos (as described in Table 3). The remaining 39 posts focused solely on information. The use of informal language, hashtags and emojis is recurrent, even when promoting services such as application processes and student support - a feature of social media and communication directed at students.

Suggestiveness (Mateus, 2019) is also present, as it is already inherent in the logic of social media through like and share buttons and through selection and recommendation algorithms that suggest content according to user behavior.

In attempting to identify and describe the possible emotions captured by the content, we found that 44.9% of the posts (n=44) tried to satisfy the needs and desires of the audience, i.e., the academic community interacting on social media networks. Among them, 29.59% of the posts (n=29) addressed students and staff of the academic community as protagonists. This resource is commonly used on social media as people want to see themselves and share more content that they identify with. Next, 15.31% of posts (n=15) showed pride in being part of the institution – including the use of the title "Proud to be UFG" in posts.

Emotional effect	Emotions	Frequency	Description
Audience's satisfaction, needs and desires.	Protagonism of students and employees	29	Pictures and videos showing staff and students. In particular, videos in which students themselves present their activities and studies or interview other people from the academic community.
	Pride and belonging	15	Title "Proud to be UFG when announcing rankings and awards received by the university, staff or students, welcoming.
Emotional effects related to the speaker.	Institution advertising	13	University facilities, number of participants in institutional events.
	Social responsibility	12	University actions in the local community, defense of indigenous, race, LGBTQIAPN+, environmental causes.
Figurative, adjectival and connotative language.	Humor	14	Memes about vacations, returning to classes, the graduate application process, funny situations caused by monkeys on campus.
	Culture and aesthetic appeal	13	Use of aesthetic and cultural elements to attract attention. Examples: Geek Pride Day, promotion of concerts with well-known artists, critically acclaimed films and directors, nature and graffiti on campuses, use of playful animation.
	Teaser	2	Clues about singers who would perform at university events, without revealing their identity. Advertisement language.

Table 3. Analysis of the emotions triggered in the posted content

Source: Own elaboration based on the analysis carried out in August, 2023 on the Universidade Federal de Goiás Instagram account and on Mateus' (2019) categories of emotive forms of discourse.

We also found emotional impact in relation to the speaker, i.e., 25.5% of the posts (n=25) referred to the characteristics (ethos) of the UFG sender. 13.26% of the analyzed content (n=13) referred to what we coded as promotion of the institution, to aspects related to the facilities, new spaces and campuses safety, while 12.24% of the posts (n=12) highlighted the social responsibility of the organization.

Finally, 29.58% of the posts (n=29) used figurative, adjectival and connotative language to solicit the public's attention in the logic of the platform society. 14.28% of the content (n=14) evoked humor through the use of memes and animated GIFs, a typical emotion in the language of social media. In this study, we identify original content created to entertain the audience, as shown in the images below.

Thus, 13.26% of the posts (n=13) mobilized elements of culture and aesthetic appeal. Beautiful images and aesthetic appeal are typical content on Instagram, a social media platform created with the aim of sharing beautiful pictures edited with filters. 2.04% of the content (n=2) were teasers.

To deepen the analysis qualitatively, we present below the posts with the highest rate of likes and engagement in each month analyzed.

In April 2023, the content with the most likes had 6,422 likes, 150 comments, 683 shares and 73.2 thousand views by the day of this analysis (August 9, 2023). The reel entitled "Samambaia campus tour – part 1" (Tour pelo campus Samambaia parte 1) was posted on April 17, 2023, as shown in image 1.

To welcome the community, UFG presented a tour of one of its campuses to showcase the promotion of the institution (ethos). This tour was carried by a moving cell phone camera in a very simple style, complemented by a fake Google voice (common trend on Instagram and TikTok). The reel format tends to be viewed more frequently as Instagram's algorithms send them to a larger number of users competing with TikTok for attention and viewers. In other words, posting reels on this social media platform is a way to compete for space in the algorithmic logic of the platform society.

In May 2023, the most liked content had 6,720 likes[4], 281 comments, 2,5 thousand shares and 106 thousand views until the day of this analysis (August 9, 2023). The reel entitled "Dossier Gang of Monkeys" (Dossiê Gangue dos Macacos) was posted on May, , 2023, as shown in image 2.

Although the caption refers to the interaction and feeding of these animals that inhabit the campuses, the video had a humorous nature, as it simulated a police news broadcast with testimonies of employees and students who have already lost their lunch to these monkeys, in addition to showing comical situations of these animals interacting with the academic community. These monkeys were a recurring theme in UFG's posts, as they are well-known residents of the community.

In June 2023, the most-liked content had 8,118 likes, 506 comments, 989 shares and 141 thousand views by the day of this analysis (August 9, 2023). The reels with the title "Is UFG part of your dream?" (A UFG faz parte do seu sonho?) was posted on June 28, 2023, as can be seen in image 3.

---

4. On May 12, a carousel about the number of participants in the job's fair had a larger number of likes (7,081), but the number of comments was much lower (68), so it was not included for the purposes of this analysis.

Image 1. The most liked post in April 2023 – Tour pelo campus Samambaia parte 1

Source: Universidade Federal de Goiás (2023).

Image 2. The most liked post in May 2023 – Dossiê Gangue dos Macacos

Source: Universidade Federal de Goiás (2023).

Image 3. The most liked post in June 2023 – A UFG faz parte do seu sonho?

Source: Universidade Federal de Goiás (2023).

The caption simply contained the emotional provocation about the possibility of making the dream come true, while the video showed images of the university with a nostalgic song in the background and thoughtful quotes about the dream of studying, evoking pride in studying at UFG and at a public university, in an attempt to satisfy the desires and needs of the audience.

In July 2023, the most popular content had 8,147 likes, 163 comments, 2,534 shares and 140 thousand views by the day of this analysis (August 9, 2023). The reel entitled *Attenzione pickpocket* was posted on July 18, 2023, as shown in image 4.

The video shows monkeys stealing food, fruit and materials from students and staff. The video not only echoed the theme of monkeys and their interaction with the university's academic community, but also used humor as a figurative language through an audio, widely circulated at the time in the form of a meme, of an Italian lady filming thieves on the streets of Italy while shouting "Watch out, thief".

The content with the most engagement was institutional public communication and covered themes related to campus structure (emotions related to the speaker), monkeys' interaction with the academic community (figurative language that triggers humor), and the dream of studying at UFG (satisfying the audience's needs and desires).

Image 4. The most liked post in July 2023 – Attenzione pickpocket
Source: Universidade Federal de Goiás(2023).

All four pieces of content were posted in reel format and triggered some sort of emotion: promotion of the institution, pride in being part of the university, and humor through memes.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In an environment dominated by algorithms, it is becoming increasingly necessary and strategic to touch on the feelings and beliefs of the interlocutors. In this scenario of contention for space, visibility, credibility and engagement on platforms, strategic communication becomes even more persuasive, as Hallahan and colleagues (2007) and Ruão (2020) have already noted.

We have observed that public institutions use sensitive communicative strategies (Sodré, 2006), emotion capture (Charaudeau, 2010, 2013) and emotive forms of persuasive speech (Mateus, 2019), which leads to more engagement and activates platform choice and personalization (Van Dijck et al., 2018) to deliver more relevant public interest content to a greater number of people. In reaching this conclusion, we take into account that the services and knowledge produced by these institutions, especially universities, are of public interest (Kunsch, 1992; Silva et al., 2016).

Despite the empirical observation that public institutions use emotionally engaging formats and language in their communication with others, especially through social media, there are still few academic studies that highlight the sensitive strategy behind these actions. The brief analysis in this article provides some evidence of affective strategies and emotion capture in UFG's public communication in the platform community, mainly with students and staff.

The content posted on Instagram privileged the institution's public communication (Brandão, 2012) through carousels consisting of cards or pictures presenting the institution and its services, aiming to reinforce its institutional image in the academic community. In addition, these contents also aimed to evoke emotions through the representation of students and staff, humanizing their communication and satisfying the desires and needs of the audience (Mateus, 2019).

The content that generates the most engagement in the period of this analysis (first semester of 2023) uses the video/reels format and captures emotions such as the pride of being part of the institution, the satisfaction of the audience's wants and needs, the promotion of the institution (an excellent ethos of the public university) and humor (through the visual language of GIFs and memes), emotional forms presented by Mateus (2019).

The sensitive strategies presented are visible, but not many scholars explore them in the field of public institution communication. They are often repeated by default, as is the case with other institutions or even private companies, without strategic planning and an evaluation of their results (Mintzberg, 2007).

It is necessary to focus more on these strategies and rethink the practice of public communication beyond information sharing, transparency and citizenship, characteristics that are already consolidated in theory and practice. Humanizing public information and building an affective relationship with citizens is one of the tasks of public relations professionals in these institutions. Specifically, public universities have students and employees as very close audiences whose affection can be easily mobilized through the institutions' public communication.

The limitations of this study and the obligation for future research by these researchers is to extend the analysis of strategies used by other universities over a longer period of time covering the entire academic year, not only through content analysis on Instagram, but also through interviews with staff and communication professionals at these institutions. In this way, we believe it is possible to draw more conclusions about the challenges of public organizational communication for public relations professionals and to compare the empirically analyzed results with the communication goals set by the institutions.

Furthermore, this study can be replicated to other public institutions to broaden the perception of a more diverse audience and deepen the concepts and use of sensitive strategies and emotion capture by public institutions on the platform society.

REFERENCES

Almeida, J. P. M. de. (2022). Argumentação, gênero e memes no discurso político (Argumentation, gender and memes in political discourse). *Revista Eletrônica de Estudos Integrados em Discurso e Argumentação, 22*(3), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.47369/eidea-22-3-3451

Bentes, A. (2019). A gestão algorítmica da atenção: enganchar, conhecer e persuadir (Algorithmic attention management: engaging, knowing and persuading). In F. Polido, L. Anjos, & L. Brandão (Orgs.). *Políticas, Internet e Sociedade* (Politics, Internet and Society) (pp. 222-234). Instituto de Referência em Internet e Sociedade.

Brandão, E. P. (2012). Conceito de comunicação pública (The concept of public communication). In J. Duarte (Org.). *Comunicação pública: Estado, mercado, sociedade e interesse público* (Public communication: State, market, society and public interest) (pp. 1-34). Atlas.

Bueno, W. C. (2009). *Comunicação empresarial: políticas e estratégias* (Business communication: policies and strategies). Saraiva.

Castilhos, L. de. (2016). *Dimensões da comunicação organizacional: emoção, afeto e afetividade nos vídeos institucionais da Panvel e do Zaffari* (Dimensions of organizational communication: emotion, affection and affectivity in Panvel and Zaffari institutional videos) (Master thesis, PUCRS/Famecos). https://tede2.pucrs.br/tede2/handle/tede/6926

Charaudeau, P. (2010). O discurso propagandista: uma tipologia (Propaganda speech: a typology). In I. L. Machado & R. Mello (Orgs.), *Análises do discurso hoje* (Discourse analysis today) (pp. 57-78). Nova Fronteira.

Charaudeau, P. (2013). *O discurso das mídias* (The media and information: The impossible transparency of discourse) (2nd Ed). Contexto.

Costa-Sánchez, C. (2014). *Storytelling* y audiovisualización de la comunicación corporativa: las claves de la campaña "Gracias por elegirnos" (Balay) (Storytelling and audio-visualization of corporate communication: the keys of the "Gracias por elegirnos" campaign (Balay)). *Organicom, 11*(20), 162-176. https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2238-2593.organicom.2014.139228

Costa, V. d. P., Machado, J. R. R., & Stasiak, D. (2019, May 22-24). *Comunicação pública no Instagram: uso de memes em informações oficiais* (Public communication on Instagram: the use of memes in official information) (paper presentation). XXI Congresso de Ciências da Comunicação na Região Centro-Oeste, Goiânia, Brazil. https://portalintercom.org.br/anais/centrooeste2019/resumos/R66-0451-1.pdf

Duarte, J. & Duarte, M. Y. (2019). Serviço Público, Comunicação e Cidadania (Public Service, Communication and Citizenship). In P. Nassar & E. Maretti (Eds.), *Comunicação Pública: por uma prática mais republicana* (Public Communication: for a more republican practice) (pp. 57-77). Aberje.

Ferreira, M. A. S.. (2023). As emoções na luta política: um debate mais que necessário (Emotions in the political struggle: a more than necessary debate). *Revista Brasileira de Ciência Política*, (41), e267628. https://doi.org/10.1590/0103-3352.2023.41.267628

Ferreira, M. A. S., Penteado, C. L. de C., Jardim, L., & Santos, P. D. dos. (2023). Indignação e desconfiança? As emoções no debate sobre sistema eleitoral no Twitter (Indignation and distrust? Emotions in the debate on the electoral system on Twitter). In C. Aggio (Coord.), *Anais 10ª Compolítica* (Annals of the 10th Compolitica), Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC). http://compolitica.org/novo/anais-2023/

Gomes, W. (2007). Democracia digital: que democracia (Digital democracy: which democracy). In *Anais II Encontro da Associação Nacional de Pesquisadores em Comunicação e Política* (Annals of the 2nd Meeting of the National Association of Researchers in Communication and Politics). Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG) http://www.compolitica.org/home/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/gt_ip-wilson.pdf

Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., Van Ruler, B., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2007). Defining strategic communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, *1*(1) 3-35. https://doi.org/10.1080/15531180701285244

Henriques, M. S. & Sant'ana, L. F. (2015). A construção da proximidade na comunicação pública: mídia social e a ruptura da impessoalidade (The construction of proximity in public communication: social media and the rupture of impersonality). *Organicom*, 2(22), 92-102. https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2238-2593.organicom.2015.139270

Jenkins, H.,, Green, J., & Ford, S. (2014). *Cultura da Conexão* (Culture of Connection). Aleph.

Koçouski, M. (2013). Comunicação pública: construindo um conceito (Public communication: building a concept). In H. Matos (Org.) *Comunicação pública: interlocuções, interlocutores e perspectivas* (Public communication: dialogues, interlocutors and perspectives) (pp. 41-58). ECA/USP.

Kunsch, M. M. K. (1992). *Universidade e Comunicação na Edificação da Sociedade* (University and Communication in the Building of Society). Loyola.

Kunsch, M. M. K. (2003). *Planejamento de Relações Públicas na comunicação integrada* (Public relations planning in integrated communication). Summus.

Kunsch, M. M. K. (2018). A comunicação estratégica nas organizações contemporâneas (Strategic communication in contemporary organizations). *Media & Jornalismo, 18*(33), 13-24. https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-5462_33_1

Lima, A. M. P. (2022). #CâmaraNoTikTok: Política, Educação e Entretenimento na Comunicação Pública (#ChamberOnTikTok: Politics, Education and Entertainment in Public Communication). *Revista Compolitica, 12*(2), 33-58.

Martins, R. F. (1984). Acerca do conceito de estratégia (About the strategy concept). *Nação e Defesa, 9*(29), 96-125.

Mateus, S. (2019). Formas emotivas do discurso persuasivo (Emotive forms of persuasive discourse). *Media & Jornalismo, 19*(34), 127-141. https://doi.org/10.14195/2183-5462_34_9

Matos, H. G. M. (2006). Comunicação Política e Comunicação Pública (Political and public communication). *Organicom, 3*(4), 59-73. https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2238-2593.organicom.2006.138911

Michel, M., Michel, J., & Porciúncula, G. (2014, September 2-5). *A Comunicação organizacional, as redes sociais: afetos, emoções e memória na campanha "Dove pela Real Beleza"* (Organizational Communication, Social Networks: Affects, Emotions And Memory In The "Dove For Real Beauty" Campaign). XV Congresso de Ciências da Comunicação na Região Sul, Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil. http://www.intercom.org.br/papers/nacionais/2014/resumos/R9-0751-1.pdf

Miguel, L. F. & Fontenelle, A. (2023). Lacração ou formação: modos do discurso político no Instagram. In C. Aggio (Coord.), *Anais 10ª Compolítica*. Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC). http://compolitica.org/novo/anais-2023/

Mintzberg, H. (2007). 5 Ps para estratégia. In H. Mintzberg, J. Lampel, J. B. Quinn, S. Ghoshal, L. d. O. da Rocha, & A. Rodrigues (Eds.), *O processo da estratégia: conceitos, contextos e casos selecionados* (The strategy process: concepts, contexts and selected cases). Artmed.

Ortiz, F. C. & Cipolla, M. (2015). Estratégias criativo-inovadoras de comunicação institucional de empresas em mídias sociais digitais: casos Itaú, O Boticário e Cacau Show (Creative-innovative strategies of corporate communication of companies in digital social media: the Itaú, O Boticário and Cacau Show cases). *Organicom, 12*(22), 272-290. https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2238-2593.organicom.2015.139285

Pasquale, F. (2015). *The Blackbox Society*. Harvard University Press.

Pérez, R. A. (2008). *Estrategias de comunicación* (Communication strategies) (4th Ed). Ariel.

Peruzzo, C. M. K. (2017). Ideias de Paulo Freire aplicadas à Comunicação popular e comunitária (Paulo Freire's ideas applied to popular and community communication). *Revista Famecos, 24*(1), ID24207. https://doi.org/10.15448/1980-3729.2017.1.24207

Poell, T., Nieborg, D., Van Dijck, J. (2020). Plataformização (Platformisation). *Fronteiras, 22*(1), 2-10. http://revistas.unisinos.br/index.php/fronteiras/article/view/fem.2020.221.01

Ruão, T. (2020). A Comunicação Enquanto Estratégica (Communication as a Strategy). In J. D. B. Félix (Org.), *Comunicação Estratégica e Integrada: a visão de renomados autores de 5 países* (Strategic and Integrated Communication: the vision of renowned authors from 5 countries) (pp. 27-39). Rede Integrada.

Sampaio, R. C. & Lycarião, D. (2021). *Análise de conteúdo categorial: manual de aplicação* (Category content analysis: manual of application). Enap.

Scroferneker, C. M. A. & Gomes, L. B. (2019). A provocação do afeto como estratégia discursiva organizacional (The provocation of affect as an organizational discursive strategy). *Revista Comunicare*, *19*(2), 64-81. https://hdl.handle.net/10923/18261

Silva, S. P. da. (2017). Algoritmos, comunicação digital e democracia: dimensões culturais e implicações políticas nos processos de big data (Algorithms, digital communication and democracy: cultural dimensions and political implications of big data processes). In J.P. Mehl & S. P. da Silva, (Orgs.), *Cultura Digital, internet e apropriações políticas: experiências, desafios e horizontes* (Digital culture, the internet and political appropriation: experiences, challenges and horizons) (pp. 29-43). Letra e Imagem.

Silva, S. M., Ruão, T., & Gonçalves, G. (2016). O desafio da comunicação estratégica nas instituições de ensino superior: estudo do papel da comunicação na promoção da sua missão social (The challenge of strategic communication in higher education institutions: studying the role of communication in promoting their social mission). *Revista Comunicando, 5*(1), 218-242. https://doi.org/10.58050/comunicando.v5i1.209

Silveira, A. da. (2019). A noção de modulação e os sistemas algorítmicos (The notion of modulation and algorithmic systems). *PAULUS: Revista de Comunicação da FAPCOM, 3*(6),17-26. https://fapcom.edu.br/revista/index.php/revista-paulus/article/view/111

Sodré, M. (2006). *As estratégias sensíveis: afeto, mídia e política* (Sensitive strategies: affection, media and politics). Vozes.

Souza, G. (2023, July 21). Qual a rede social mais usada em 2023? A resposta vai te surpreender (Which social network will be the most used in 2023? The answer will surprise you). *TechTudo.* https://www.techtudo.com.br/listas/2023/07/qual-a-rede-social-mais-usada-em-2023-a-resposta-vai-te-surpreender-edapps.ghtml

Universidade Federal de Goiás. (@ufg_oficial). (2023, April 17). *Hoje começamos um novo semestre da UFG (Today we begin a new semester at UFG)*. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reel/CrIifO9g3yr/

Universidade Federal de Goiás. (@ufg_oficial). (2023, May 4). *Dossiê completo sobre A Gangue dos Macacos!* (Full dossier on The Monkey Gang!). Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cr0n0gnggRW/

Universidade Federal de Goiás. (@ufg_oficial). (2023, June 28). *A UFG faz parte do seu sonho? (Is the UFG part of your dream?)*. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reel/CuCod7fA-vS/

Universidade Federal de Goiás. (@ufg_oficial). (2023, July 18). *A comunidade UFG há tempos acostumada com os pickpockets* (UFG community has long been used to the pickpockets). Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cu13BgwoW22/

Van Dijck, J., Poell, T., & De Wall, M. (2018). *The Platform Society: public values in a connective world.* Oxford University Press.

Weber, M. H. (2011). Estratégias da comunicação de Estado e a disputa por visibilidade e opinião (State communication strategies and the dispute over visibility and opinion). In M. M. K. Kunsch (Org)., *Comunicação pública, sociedade e cidadania* (Public communication, society and citizenship) (pp. 101-119). Difusão Editora.

Zémor, P. (2009). Como anda a comunicação pública? (How is public communication going?) *Revista do Serviço Público, 60*(2) 189-195. http://seer.enap.gov.br/index.php/RSP/article/view/21/18

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

SENDI CHIAPINOTTO SPIAZZI, PhD student in Communication at Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM), holds a master's degree in Public Organizations Management (UFSM) and a bachelor's degree in Public Relations (UFSM) and is member of the Research Group "Media, Discourse and Public Communication" (CNPq/UFSM). She works as a Public Relations professional at UFSM.

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6929-3433

REJANE DE OLIVEIRA POZOBON, professor in the Communication Department Graduate Program (UFSM). She holds a PhD degree in Communication Sciences from University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Unisinos), holds a master's degree in Education (UFSM), bachelor's degree in Journalism and Public Relations (UFSM). She is the leader of the Research Group "Media, Discourse and Public Communication" (CNPq/UFSM).

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4828-3148