COMMUNICATION FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF A UNIVERSITY

COMUNICAÇÃO PARA A SUSTENTABILIDADE DE UMA UNIVERSIDADE

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Abstract

Communication in Public Higher Education Institutions (IESP) with distant campuses is compromised by distance. Managing communication in these institutions is important because they are places for knowledge creation. This study sought to discover if there are guidelines that address communication strategies in public institutions. We verified if the Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo (UFES) has adopted any of these strategies, as it has four campuses and almost 30 teaching centers. Communication should be used strategically and value the human factor of an institution. Therefore, some principles were pointed out regarding what communication is, its types, models, theories, and the result of its articulation with universities. In 2020, UFES adhered to the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and began to use communication aimed at the institution's sustainability. Internal communication is suitable for management, as it values the institutional culture and engagement, contributing to the construction of a cohesive organizational environment oriented towards collective goals, especially when directed at the internal public.

Keywords: Distance. Strategy. Management. Culture. Institution.

Resumo

A comunicação em Instituições de Ensino Superior Públicas (IESP) com campi distantes fica comprometida pela distância. Gerir a comunicação nestas instituições é importante pois são locais de criação de conhecimento. Buscou-se descobrir se existem direcionamentos que abordem estratégias de comunicação em instituições públicas. Verificamos se a Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo (UFES) aderiu à alguma das estratégias, pois possui 4 campi e quase 30 polos de ensino. A comunicação deve ser utilizada como papel estratégico e valorizar o fator humano de uma Instituição. Por isso, foram apontados alguns princípios sobre o que é comunicação, tipos, modelos, teorias e o resultado da sua articulação com Universidades. A UFES aderiu, em 2020, à Agenda 2030 da Organização das Nações Unidas (ONU) para o desenvolvimento sustentável, e passou a utilizar a comunicação visando a sustentabilidade da Instituição. A comunicação interna é a adequada para a gestão, pois valoriza a cultura institucional e promove alinhamento, integração e engajamento, contribuindo para a construção de um ambiente organizacional coeso e orientado para os objetivos coletivos, principalmente quando direcionada ao público interno.

Palavras-chave: Distância. Estratégia. Gestão. Cultura. Instituição.

1 INTRODUCTION

Communication in Brazilian public universities have gaps, especially in campuses that are geographically distant from the higher hierarchies, which weakens the institutional bond (Gonçalves, 2021). Communication in an Institution shows possibilities in a globalized and technological world, and consequently, with unstable and dynamic reality, requiring transformations to be made to survive. Optimizing communication in an Institution is sustainable because it is contemporary and necessary, given that information is the main element for the construction of knowledge and generation of scientific, economic, and social actions for sustainability. This is relevant for Public Higher Education Institutions (IESP) because they are places where knowledge is created and

disseminated, and there is the development of critical, reflective, and active individuals. In these organizations, communication aligns processes, directs individuals to the planned path, and stimulates individual contribution for collective effect. These organizations exist in a global scenario in which sustainable development is on the agenda of the document "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", which is a collaborative action plan with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) sanctioned by the United Nations in 2020 (Onu, 2020). This is a process of transformation in which the exploitation of resources, direction of investments, orientation of technological development, and institutional change must be adapted to meet the needs without compromising future generations (CMMAD, 1991).

The efficient public management of communication in an IESP that implements the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda requires systematic public policies adapted to local realities, which include everyone (Gonçalves, 2021). IESPs contribute at a broad level to achieving SDGs, but have the following challenges: i) strengthen knowledge and solutions that underpin the implementation of SDGs; ii) create means of implementation; iii) provide cross-sectoral leadership in implementation; and iv) incorporate the principles of SDGs via governance, management, and culture (Abad-Segura & Zamar, 2021). They are privileged places and breeding grounds for scientific and technological innovation, where growth is built and shared, and there are stimuli for individuals to act for the common good, either by developing activities applied to socioeconomic and environmental needs, and/or by fostering responsibility to bring about essential change. The commitment of an IESP with SDGs strengthens the reputation of the Institution, consolidating a positive image in society. A communication plan integrated with institutional planning is essential for the implementation of SDGs to work in all sectors that make up a university. Within organizations, communication has a tactical and strategic role, being a guided management tool. Thus, communication should encourage the organization and appreciation of human capital, and the search for dynamic alternatives to overcome static rational actions. Therefore, the Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo (UFES) has been planning how to implement sustainability for citizenship, according to the perspective of the 2030 Agenda.

2 SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNICATION AT UFES

Sustainability has gained relevance, especially after the launch of the SDGs, but progress towards its consolidation is slow and problems are increasing, and in addition, the adoption of sustainable practices is limited, as there is little knowledge on the subject, as well as internal barriers, mandates, and political views (Sanches-Carrillo *et al.*, 2021). Although Universities have action programs, strategies, policies, or work plans for sustainability, there is still a lack of specific structure for SDGs, and perceptions about their implementation occur via events, actions in the *campus*, research, teaching, tending to be, in general, limited (Leal Filho *et al.*, 2021). In this scenario, UFES stands out because it is an IESP with didactic-scientific, administrative, and financial and asset management autonomy that operates based on the principle of inseparability between teaching, research, and extension, but which complements them with assistance and management activities, having a vocation to act in all areas of knowledge (UFES, 2021). The University has an interest in developing sustainably, as set out in its vision:

> To be recognized as a public institution of national and international excellence in teaching, research, and extension, committed to social inclusion, interiorization, innovation, and sustainable development of Brazilian society, in particular the State of Espírito Santo (UFES, 2021).

UFES was founded in 1954, it is the largest University in Espírito Santo (ES) and encompasses four Campuses[1]; two in the capital Vitória (Goiabeiras and Maruípe), one in the south of ES (Alegre), and another in the north of the state (São Mateus), and has 27 centers of Distance learning in municipalities in Espírito Santo (UFES, 2020). It offers in-person and distance undergraduate courses, and graduate studies, with 86% of Master's courses and 94% of Doctorate courses in the state, conducts scientific and technological research, and extension projects and programs. In 2020, it began implementing SDGs in its structure, following the guidelines of the current Institutional Development Plan (PDI), in accordance with Ordinance No. 424, of July 21st, 2020, which constituted the 2030 Agenda Commission at UFES. This commission is composed of civil servants from different sectors and functions at the University and identifies good practices; evaluates

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[1]Although Ufes considers Alegre and São Mateus informally as *Campuses* of the university, they are not institutionalized in this way, however, the term will be used in this study in line with the official institutional presentation.

possibilities for integration, implementation, and incorporation of the SDGs in the University's policy and plans; and monitors and communicates their actions. For example, the Institutional Project Agenda 2030 at UFES, which gave transparency to the Institution's sustainability actions. This shows the University's concern to adapt to changes in the global scenario and to be active in the environment in which it operates. The 2030 Agenda is an opportunity for UFES to incorporate SDGs in its different fronts of action, strengthen ties, and create internal connections. With a planned institutional agenda, UFES and the Universities will make SDGs central proposals in their functioning and mobilize civil society (Abad-Segura & Zamar, 2021).

With the implementation and completion of SDGs, Universities seek sustainable alternatives via new alliances and with the potential to become a national and international reference for a committed institution, showing its impact on society (Gonçalves, 2021). Communication will play a fundamental role in the process of consolidation and involvement of all subjects of a university, so that they understand the message and actively participate by incorporating the values and translating them by actions aligned with the desired aims. However, most public organizations have rigid structures, excessively hierarchical, and the need to adapt to the new times. Torquato (2015) points out that "public institutions are, in general, bureaucratic, inert, pachydermic, and communication suffers the effects of these obsolete structures. The challenge is to bring them closer to society". For the author, the Brazilian public administration has an archaic mentality, with work conducted automatically, without enthusiasm, making it difficult to implement structural and/or cultural changes and improve the quality of the services provided. Using communication with a strategic role is valuing the human factor and building relationships that make you feel an integral part of the organization. However, what is communication and what types are there to manage an organization? What is the background, models, and theories of organizational communication? And how are public management and communication articulated for the sustainable functioning of a University?

3 THE PROCESS AND TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

3.1 The communication process and variations

Communication is the way of relating to other people via ideas, facts, thoughts, and values (Chiavenato, 2009). This is a process (Figure 1) in which an initial purpose is required, expressed as a message that is encoded (converted into symbolic form) and transmitted via a medium (channel) to a receiver, which retranslates (decodes) the message initiated by the sender (Robbins *et al*., 2014). The flow of communication is vertically upward when directed to the highest levels of the organization; vertically descending when it flows from high to low levels; horizontal, because it occurs between equivalent hierarchical levels; and there are noises that interfere with the effective transmission of the message, being indicated feedback to achieve understanding of the information. Formal communication is that which follows the hierarchy of the organization, and informal communication is that which ignores levels of authority and moves in any direction (Robbins *et al*., 2010). Efficient and effective communication clearly conveys the message, reducing the effects of barriers, and must be done using appropriate language and with appropriate means so that the receiver understands what the sender wants and needs to consider the possibilities of interpretation. Communication is an open system in which it is crucial to identify sociological and anthropological constraints in the elements that make up the process, and it is a multidisciplinary area that mediates the interests of those involved, reinforcing its relevance, especially for an organization (Torquato, 2015).

Figure 1

The communication process
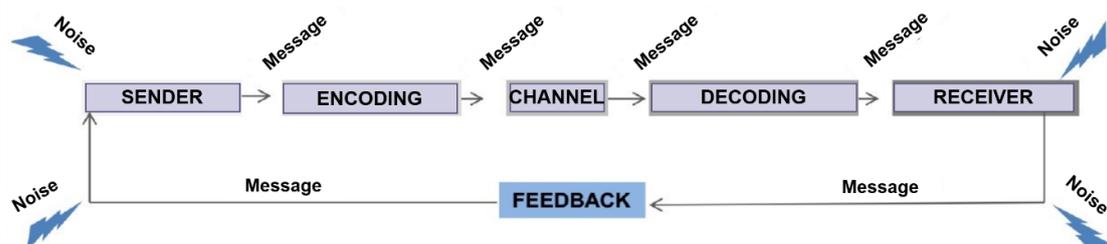
Source: Adapted from Robbins, DeCenzo & Wolter, 2014

3.2 Organizational communication

An organization is made up of mechanical processes and people, making communication inherent to the organizational environment because people relate to each other and to the environments, and therefore, such relationships, culture, and personal needs need to be considered for the development and strengthening of contemporary organizations. An efficient, transparent, integrated, and interactive communication system is essential to face new social challenges in a competitive world. Chiavenato (2009) mentions that "organizations cannot exist or operate without communication; this is the network that connects and integrates all parts." Organizational communication occurs in an organization and aims to improve human relations and the achievement of organizational goals via various ways of interacting and relating to the various stakeholders[2], assuming a strategic role in contemporary administrative management. Organizational communication is a systemic possibility that brings together communication, cultural, administrative, social, and information systems modalities in an integrated way (Torquato, 2002).

Marchiori (2010) states that communication is a process of building internal relationships that incites new organizational relationships, providing the development of human beings. Communication, as the exchange of information, is one of the fundamental processes of humanity and organizations, defining two main purposes: i) exchange and understanding of information for the performance of administrative activities; and ii) attitudes to generate motivation, cooperation and satisfaction, generating an environment that improves efficiency in tasks (Chiavenato, 2016). This is a tool that incites change because it mediates the parts of the system and balances the organizational climate to improve collective performance (Fernandes & Brun, 2019), so it deals professionally with communication. The communication process must be consistent with the organization's culture and be part of strategic planning, share objectives, create loyalty, motivate and improve the climate, and stimulate commitment via transparent, aligned, and adequate communication. In an organization, communication is indispensable for the achievement of purposes and processes, and for the construction of culture and identity, highlighting

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[2]Stakeholders originate from the union of words *stake* (interest) and *holders* (those who have something), used to refer to the audiences of interest of a management.

in this context the role of internal communication as a means of interaction and integration of this network of interdependent relationships.

3.3 Internal communication

Internal communication shows the organization's way of being and is directed to the internal public, and to employees, who, when well informed, listened to and involved, strengthen the Institution and become engaged multipliers, positively impacting the organization's performance. Therefore, it is important to have a continuous exchange of information in an open and interactive way, because, in the search for the quality of products and services, people are the competitive advantage and are part of the intellectual capital. Therefore, they need to feel part of the organization, and be valued, trained, and motivated to contribute. In this way, internal communication can form ambassadors of the organization, and "the basis of the organization's values (trust, competence, commitment, and credibility) depends on the quality of the communication process that will be experienced by all members" (Marchiori, 2014). This has been done since the end of the Cold War, when the technological revolution occurred, making reality more unstable and dynamic, and transformations are necessary to face the new scenario. Organizations began to adapt to a less mechanistic and more organic posture, becoming more concerned with the environment and human relationships. Internal communication stands out in organizations because it builds a corporate culture and identity, aspects recognized in the current dynamic conjuncture marked by economic, social, cultural, and technological changes (Cerantola, 2016).

Such advances make communication flows constant, multidirectional, and instantaneous, consolidating the need to enhance relationships with audiences, especially employees. From these groups, commitment and contribution to solving problems are desired, and consequent institutional solidification by the ability to adapt and innovate, making the environment flexible and conducive to exchanges. Therefore, it is necessary to develop new ways of management that overcome traditional communication models, which are linear, vertical, and imposing, and need to have their policies and actions rethought. They must prioritize related processes and seek greater employee involvement by more autonomous and empowered participation. In this context, internal communication stands out because it encompasses the entire set of efforts aimed at flows,

formal and informal networks, and communication channels and tools that establish interactions between organizations, their collaborators and employees (Cerantola, 2016). For Reis *et al.* (2018) "communication with the internal customer maintains the company's objectives and contributes to everyone working in the same direction". In strategic terms, this type of communication enables the evolution of individual collective engagement in times of changes that affect the established parameters of the organizational culture (Marson *et al.*, 2013).

Internal communication should seek interaction with the internal public, stimulating dialogue between executive management and the operational base, and thus, strengthening the relationship in a way that the employee becomes committed to the fulfillment of his duties and, consequently, to the achievement of results (Kunsch, 2003). Thus, internal communication displays an economic and/or human face, in which the former helps to retain talent, reduce turnover, and increase the capacity for change and innovation; and the second is related to interactions between people, mutual trust, dialogue, engagement, the construction of identity and organizational reputation (Cerantola, 2016). However, it is difficult to organize, implement, and manage the complex information network, which requires a combination of behavioral, technological, and managerial skills (Marson *et al.*, 2013). The challenge is to mediate the contradictions between individual human needs and organizational objectives aimed at results. Some strategies for internal communication in organizations are: i) evaluate and create channels; ii) mapping employees, listening, and speaking; iii) develop effective relationships and manage conflicts; iv) seek awareness and participation; v) change the mentality of the audiences involved; and vi) communicate effectively (Marchiori, 2014).

Regarding effectiveness and efficiency, Torquato (2015) mentions that: "Relevance, credibility, adequacy, understanding, and synchrony are some characteristics that can be analyzed in the study of efficacy. On the one hand, communicative efficiency should be seen as the potentiality of the sender to affect others to make them follow their intentions and to be affected by others, so that they are advantageous for themselves or for their organization". In this process, the leader's role as a communicator stands out to align and build the climate, stimulate the flow of communication, and prepare more open and dynamic environments, aiming to facilitate and mobilize changes. Internal communication is, therefore, a factor of utmost importance, as it encompasses the most diverse ways of interacting and relating to the internal public, making it possible to

establish a channel of exchange and dialogue with employees, as well as their inclusion in organizational processes. Thus, it assumes a more strategic role in administrative management, including public management, which has currently used many tools that have been applicable, for many years, only in private companies.

4 HISTORY, MODELS, AND THEORIES OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

4.1 Organizational communication in Brazil: a brief history

The history of organizational communication in Brazil can be listed as follows (Kunsch, 2006, 2014):

- **1950s:** organizational communication arises because of the economic, social, and political development of the country, because of the developmental industrial policy initiated by Getúlio Vargas and implemented by Juscelino Kubistchek;

- **1970s:** organizational communication was functionalist and worked from an instrumental linear perspective;

- **1980s:** critical theory is used with the support of critical interpretative research;

- **1990s:** technical communication arises to guide the operationalization of the work to mass communication, and there is dissemination of ideas and dissemination of the brand, services, and products by a single source, and the receiver has become active in this process;

- **2000s:** organizational communication began to be seen with an interdisciplinary identity, gaining new perceptions and implications;

- **Late Twentieth Century, the Information Age:** Dynamization of communication flows, which start to disseminate and share messages by common users, transforming the traditional and unidirectional media of the pre-internet era. Information and communication technologies revolutionize contemporary society and have highlighted the importance of strategic communication to deal with the network-society and globalization, as well as to enable the synergistic relationship between organizations and the world.

4.2 Organizational communication models

There are different approaches that highlight the importance of organizational communication and the concern to (re)define its coverage field (Sckrofernecker, 2006). "Integrated organizational communication" (Figure 2) brings together several areas of communication (institutional, marketing, administrative, and internal), no longer being just tactical, but strategic and valuing people, which helps the organization to fulfill its mission, achieve its goals, and contribute to establish its values together with its Stakeholders (Kunsch, 2016). In summary, integrated communication would be the interrelation of communication activities and governed by joint strategic planning. Organizations are members of a global system and important agents in political, social, and economic dynamics, and they need to participate and contribute to the new realities and demands, paying attention to the most critical and vigilant public opinion. Therefore, communicative actions are more than administrative functions and need to be guided by an integrated communication philosophy that considers the demands, interests, and requirements of society and different audiences (Kunsch, 2016). In the face of so many transformations in the means of communication, in which the individual has an active voice in this process, being able to produce, consume, and transmit information, organizational communication needs to be innovated to keep up with these changes and adopt a more interactive, participatory, and collective posture. Also, according to Kunsch (2018):

> Classical, instrumental, exclusively technical, and operational communication fails to meet the demands of organizations in the new socioeconomic and political environment. Currently, public social responsibility, the preservation of the planet via sustainable development, respect for diversity, transparency, ethics, and intangible values are some of the imperatives that guide institutional behaviors and, consequently, will require more proactive and strategic organizational communication.

4.3 Theories of organizational communication

Each theory, in its time and historical context, reveals specificities that (re)dimension and (re)place the individual, assuming (or not) a plurality of roles/functions (Scroferneker & Wells, 2015). The authors point out the following about the theories:

a) studies on organizational communication began with mass communication, focusing on the manipulation of the public, in the period between the world wars, and resulted in the Hypodermic Theory, which considered that the message sent by the media reached all individuals in the same way;

b) in view of the gaps in this theory, the Lasswell Model emerged, with greater concern about sending the message, valuing the content and its way of dissemination to make it clearer and more directed;

c) then, the Theory of Persuasion appears, based on the psychological aspects of each individual, starting to influence their interest and biased understanding of the message;

d) then emerges the Empirical Field Theory, which considered the sociological filters of individuals before the message was absorbed by them.

Figure 2

Diagram of Integrated Organizational Communication

Source: Kunsch, 2006

The theoretical matrix of organizational communication is based on the models proposed by George Burrel and Gareth Morgan: functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist, and radical structuralist; Although traditional studies indicate three:

functionalist, interpretive, and critical (Chart 1), and from these perspectives, other authors have expanded the approaches (Scrofenecker, 2006; Kunsch, 2014):

1. **Linda Putnam (1982):** mechanical, psychological, interpretative, and interaction of systems approach;

2. **Tom D. Daniels, Bany Spiker and Michael J. Papa (1997):** they also emphasize critical perspective;

3. **Eric M. Eisenberg and Harold L. Goodall (2001):** analyzed how information transfer, transnational process, control strategy, balance between creativity and coercion, dialogue effort.

4. **Dennis Mumby (2013):** analyzes four perspectives: interpretive, critical, postmodern, and feminist.

Table 1

Theories of organizational communication

THEORY	Functionalist (Classical)	Interpretative (Linked to Sociology)	Critical
DESCRIPTION	*Mechanistic view*	*Culturalist view*	*Dialectical view*
COMMUNICATION	Observable and tangible, measured and standardized, focused on organizational effectiveness	Valuing people, with the creation of spaces for dialogue and interactions in the work environment	Seen as an instrument of domination and masking of reality
ORGANIZATION	Concerned with formal and informal communication structures and practices according to results	Seen as cultures, networks of meaning, and space for negotiation	Focus on the oppressed classes and gender diversity. Organizations dominated by patriarchy as an instrument of this oppression
FOCUS	Effectiveness	Understanding	Critics

Source: Adapted from Kunsch, 2014

In contemporary times, organizational communication undergoes transformations due to social, political, and economic demands, and finally, the digital age, which shows the power of information in the network-society and inverts the traditional way of communicating: instead of a one-way flow and passive receiver, there is a transition to an interaction with a receiver who is also a sender in a relationship network (Amorim & Oliveira, 2015). The authors mention that organizations, as members of this social structure, have realized they have responsibility and need to position themselves via strategically planned communicative actions; But there is also the instrumental and

utilitarian bias of communication, combined with the bureaucratic, hierarchical, and centralized model of the organization.

5 PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

5.1 Public management and communication in Brazilian organizations

Management theories have evolved over time and are important for the foundation of management: the Theory of Bureaucracy focused on structure, impersonality, and hierarchy; the Theory of Human Relations seeks to know the psychological and social needs of the employee; and Behavioral Theory focuses on people and integrates organizational and individual objectives. Such concepts are applicable in private and public institutions, and in public administration, the manager and the civil servants only do what is legally regulated. Public sector administration comprises all government activities, which has society as its main client and the quality of the services provided as its primary aim (Cardoso Júnior & Tófani, 2007). The Industrial Revolution and the consequent changes in labor relations culminated in the need to seek ways to communicate with the public, with the emergence of internal communication with an administrative and informative focus, as well as advertising focused on the external public for the dissemination of products. Both have a functional and instrumental character, and are symmetrical, without concern for the perception of these audiences. With the transition from an industrial society (use of machinery and search for improvements in working conditions) to the information society, it is necessary to adapt organizational communication, acquiring a managerial and qualified bias, aiming to be transparent with actions, unify the message, and integrate the target audiences, establishing the strategic profile of communication.

This is important, because at the end of the twentieth century there were significant changes in the economic and social scenario, with changes in the informational, production, distribution, and organization systems, in which the expansion of competition made the market competitive and globalization expanded the possibilities of interactions between audiences, requiring greater professionalism in the relationship with consumers. However, in Brazil, there is hybridism of the management models that permeate the Brazilian public administration, namely: patrimonialist, managerial,

societal, and little overlap of a new model over the previous one (Drumond *et al.*, 2013; Filgueiras, 2018). However, there have been advances in management mechanisms and cultural change within the Brazilian public service, and the organizational communication of public institutions has gone through phases and adaptations in line with economic and social changes. The patrimonialism between the Brazilian State and society exists, because corruption and centralization in the government of the Union are recurrent. There has been progress, but the bureaucratic model is present in the organizational communication of public institutions, as there is an excessive hierarchy of positions often occupied by people without training for the function, and there is centralization of decisions in higher positions, making the processes time-consuming and with the possibility of distorting the messages, which causes late or negative results (Drumond *et al.*, 2013).

From the 1980s onwards, with the political reopening and the process of redemocratization, organizational communication to face the challenges, became a strategic tool for organizations to deal with new market issues and relate to their Stakeholders. They have become increasingly demanding in terms of social responsibility, transparent attitudes, and ethical behaviors, which has generated the need to professionalize the management of organizational communication, with emphasis on elements of the management model (Kunsch, 2006). As a response to the impositions of the State crisis and the opening of markets worldwide, administrative reform became a central theme in 1995 and was fundamental to rebuilding the country based on the development of a modern, professional, and efficient public service, aimed at meeting the needs of citizens (Pereira, 1998). This new structuring of global interdependence has led to the consolidation of a mode of communication based on new technologies in the twenty-first century, enabling greater connectivity, knowledge, and interaction, without the need for intermediation of traditional media, generating a more participatory and questioning society in relation to organizations, especially public ones. During these transitions, communication began to have the receiver as an active subject.

5.2 The New Brazilian Public Administration

A "New Public Administration" (NAP) recognizes the State as a mechanism to implement social, scientific and technological public policies via modern managerial

practices. The aim of the Brazilian NAP is to provide a high-quality service via interaction, collaboration, and encouragement of talents to improve productivity and insert Brazil in the world (Brasil, 2020). The system must be changed, and the current model must be renewed to meet current and future needs, as public organizations are heirs to the bureaucratic and slow culture, and maintain "a hierarchical and departmentalized structure" (Montero, 2010). Currently, the organization is a collective entity with awareness of the human factor as a competitive differential, however, it is necessary to break paradigms of public administration. Transformations of internal processes and change of bureaucratic culture are needed to enable the construction of a less patrimonialist and more decentralized management model, and with the replacement of hierarchical pyramidal structures. The success of the organization goes beyond bureaucratic processes and must be focused on valuing the human being, because a paternalistic corporate environment, based on lack of information and favor, and marked by lack of stimulus, generates a servile and unhappy workforce (Brum, 2010). To modernize public management, civil servants must be involved to find team synergy by the strengthening of relationships and the sharing of organizational purposes, aiming at a management that balances individual needs and institutional aims, with consequent improvement in the quality-of-service delivery.

In the search for competitive solutions and alternatives for differentiation and modernization, there must be planning that involves public managers, indispensable leaders to enhance new implementations. Communication is no longer the responsibility of a single body, sector or department, and becomes a function of the entire institution as the strategic management of the organization is incorporated. Thus, the Public Administration enhances the process of internal communication, commitment, motivation, and satisfaction of the employees, keeping them connected with the organizational aims, and resulting in continuous improvement of the productive performance and the quality of the services provided (Costa, 2012). Awakening in the servers the feeling of belonging and bonding with the Institution is to seek from them commitment to the transformation and achievement of the planned goals and aims. Therefore, it is important to perceive the human factor in organizations as a set of attitudes, behaviors, and postures capable of strengthening bonds, generating credibility, flexibility, and impacting expectations, contributing to results. There must be communication, especially internal communication, that is systemic, responsible,

transparent, and clear, with a continuous flow of information and feedbacks to establish respect and trust among civil servants (Pereira, 2009). Internal communication is influenced by organizational culture and is, today, a significant element in the process of organizational change, especially in public organizations (Marson *et al.*, 2013).

Recreating the organizational culture so that there is a greater appreciation of meritocracy instead of patrimonialism, stimulating the development of entrepreneurship in civil servants, and training management leaders on people management are obstacles to be overcome by organizations. It goes beyond building concepts of mission, vision, and organizational values, and consists of inserting these concepts in the hearts and minds of employees (Brum, 2003). Thus, regular access to information, knowledge about strategic aims, commitment to institutional goals and values, and recognition of the served as a key part of the process and personal satisfaction can be worked on via internal communication. In this way, better results and quality in the provision of services to society are enabled, incorporating sustainability into the current system and positively transforming the image of public organizations. In some Universities there is still a need for readjustments in communication activities, and it is found that there is a lack of qualified personnel, investments and planning, which negatively influences the directions and assimilation of the proposals (Alves, 2015). These facts reinforce that communication must be comprehensive and linked to the general objectives of the Institution, enabling the configuration of a communication plan that promotes interaction with the public.

5.3 Sustainable Development in Public Management

Sustainability is important because there has been the installation of dynamic and consumerist scenarios, making it necessary to rethink the way of life and seek environmental, economic, and social balance. In the face of the insistent degradation and inconsequential exploitation of the environment, and the limitation and non-renewal of some natural resources, organizations must have a collective conscience and reevaluate their conduct. They should seek greater social participation and environmental responsibility aiming at sustainability. To this end, the transparent, ethical, and active posture in relation to the environment and the community in which they are inserted is and will be increasingly demanded by a more informed, demanding, and participatory society. The public sector has its role assigned by Article 225 of the Brazilian Federal

Constitution (Brasil, 1988), which states: "[...] everyone has the right to an ecologically balanced environment, which is a common good of the people and essential to a healthy quality of life, imposing on the public authorities the duty to defend and preserve it for present and future generations." The text ratifies the duty of the State to develop and implement sustainable actions that involve the Public Administration, which is an example and promoter of the application of responsible practices. But what is observed about communication (especially internal communication) in the management of the public service, especially in federal universities, is traditional management with a vertical structure and centralized decision-making processes.

Federal universities are relevant because they have excellence in academic knowledge and in the formulation of criticisms, and in the quality of the service provided (Montero, 2010). This author highlights the importance of seeing internal communication in these places as a collective process, which weaves the organizational culture, instead of being a task of competent sectors. Therefore, he suggests expanding the vision of organizational communication as something that generates knowledge, modifies structures, and behaviors. For him, this type of communication is also a process of building internal relationships, which incites new organizational relationships and promotes the development of human beings, something essential for the sustainability of organizations. Communication for sustainability must pay attention to its potential to generate understanding, that is, more than informing, it needs to pay attention so that what is said makes sense in the mind, in the network of meaning of the public, and society (Baldissera & Mourão, 2015). To mobilize, engage, and fully use people in their activities, organizations are changing concepts and changing management practices (Chiavenato, 2014). It is important that public management reflects on the new concept of people management and seeks alternatives to achieve aims and fulfill its mission in the face of the global commitment to sustainability.

6 CONCLUSION

Although sustainability is part of UFES' strategy and the University already develops activities in this regard, it was only in 2020 that the 2030 Agenda Commission was constituted, and the Institutional Project Agenda of 2030 began. Changes will be necessary, and communication will be fundamental if there are institutional obstacles. In

all possible combinations of communication, there must be clarity and transparency, otherwise it will compromise the organization. In this sense, integrated and strategic internal communication is essential for structural and procedural transformations necessary to face the challenges of the man/organization/world relationship, to involve the collectivity, solidify the credibility of the Institution, and thus, add value to its brand and legitimize its public image as a responsible and conscious organization.

Internal communication is relevant for strategic management and for modern public management, so studies focused on the theme support and guide the continuous improvement of the service provided to the citizens, the work environment, and the processes, contributing to the evolution of the system. Organizations must be flexible and develop the ability to adapt to the most volatile and global reality, understanding that communication is an essential part of the process of building identity, strengthening their values, their brand, and consequently, longevity. Studies focused on sustainability should be conducted, revealing the actions developed and the challenges faced with the implementation of SDGs in public universities, reinforcing the need for organizations to be concerned and involved with the surrounding issues.

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All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

Data availability

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