**A r t i c l e s**

# Model for Analysis of Internal Communication (MACIn): a proposal for a visual tool for qualitative research

**Francine Lucatelli**[i]
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8339-7239

**Hans Peder Behling**[ii]
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0558-9304

**Carlos Marcelo Ardigó**[iii]
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3374-2401

[i] (Universidade do Vale do Itajaí, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração. Itajaí – SC, Brazil).

[ii] (Universidade do Vale do Itajaí, Programa de Mestrado Profissional em Administração – Gestão, Internacionalização e Logística. Itajaí – SC, Brazil).

[iii] (Universidade do Vale do Itajaí, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Mestrado Profissional em Administração. Itajaí – SC, Brazil. Universidade do Vale do Itajaí, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Administração. Itajaí – SC, Brazil).

**Abstract**

In this article we propose a model for a visual instrument that allows the analysis of communication within organizations, called the Model for Analysis of Internal Communication – MACIn. It is consists of six quadrants, five of which are anchored in the literature, and it is designed to assist in the diagnosis of communication management and the conduct of focus groups, whether for scientific or managerial purposes. MACIn combines the canvas model, the focus group technique and the topic of internal communication into a single tool. This tool allows the user to gather information and facilitate discussions on topics such as organizational goals, perceptions of internal communication, the channels used, information flows and access, and leadership communication. This study highlights the agility

that MACIn brings to the data collection process, and the possibility of interviewing different groups while maintaining the same approach, allowing for later comparative analysis.

**Keywords:** Organizational communication. Internal communication. Qualitative research. Focus group. Visual model.

## Introduction

Since the inception of the Business Model Canvas (OSTERWALDER; PIGNEUR, 2010), many visual business development models have been proposed for different purposes: the social enterprise model canvas (SPARVIERO, 2019), the research design canvas (KETCHEN et al., 2019), the academic planning canvas (RUIZ, 2019), and the life cycle canvas® (NASCIMENTO et al., 2020). In the general field of communication, some models have also emerged, such as the public relations strategy canvas (STEFAN; GRANDI, 2016), the internal communication canvas (EEEDO, 2016), the communication planning canvas (BINATI, 2017), and the communication canvas focused on the digital environment (FEIJÓ, 2019). However, specialized literature does not present any model that integrates focus groups as a data collection method, although this method can furtherenhance the applicability of the canvas.

According to the study "Challenges of COVID-19 for Organizational Communication" (ABERJE, 2020), 83% of the respondents believe that among various communication processes, internal communication was most impacted by the crisis experienced in 2020 caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This underscores the importance of studies that focus on communication that occurs within organizations. Steffen, Henriques, and Lisboa Filho (2020) explored the potential of cultural-media analysis as a research protocol, highlighting the importance of new and different methodological possibilities in the field of communication. This justifies the search for the qualification of the research process in internal communication.

Thinking strategically about internal communication means understanding that it operates as a mechanism based on a system of interactions in which the sharing of meaning, whether at the group, interpersonal, or organizational level, reflects the meaning of the company, and serves as a reference for its members (BRANDÃO, 2018). This understanding emphasizes the importance of the individuals involved in the internal organizational environment in the communication process. Considering the increasing importance of internal communication and the need to find new methodological paths for the field, the objective of this study is to propose a model of a visual tool that allows for the analysis of communication within the internal scope of organizations.

Therefore, we propose the Model for Internal Communication Analysis (MACIn), a methodological construction anchored in the review of internal communication literature and derived from the canvas methodology. Unlike other models mentioned, especially the internal communication canvas (EEEDO, 2016), MACIn's canvas is composed of of six quadrants and uses the focus group for data collection, highlighting its potential contribution to qualitative research, which, according to Vieira and Tibola (2005), is a practice that allows for unraveling

subjective objects that require a deeper understanding of the phenomena surrounding them. The proposed model also offers researchers the possibility of theoretical triangulations, contributing to the advancement of studies in the field of communication within the internal framework of organizations.

In summary, MACIn is a collaborative graphic representation tool, and in addition to its scientific-methodological contribution, it also stands out for the support it provides to managerial communication activities, allowing for more accurate information gathering and organizational diagnostics, and taking into consideration the perceptions of strategically selected groups. In the following sections, we present theoretical references on the canvas model and focus groups used in the construction of MACIn, followed by a detailed explanation of its construction, information on its empirical validation, and final considerations that provide suggestions for future studies.

## Canvas Model

The canvas model can be defined as a tool for business and new project modeling that allows the organization of ideas and the flow of likely actions and reactions for a product or value (RUIZ, 2019). Many models found in the literature are inspired by the business model canvas proposed by Alexander Osterwalder in his Ph.D. dissertation and later published in the book co-authored with Yves Pigneur, entitled "business model generation" (LUKAS, 2018). The book serves as a kind of manual for the design of future companies (OSTERWALDER; PIGNEUR, 2010).

According to Martins, Mota, and Marini (2019), the Business Model Canvas assists managers in understanding the process of capturing, creating, and delivering value carried out by the different actors that make up an organization's business. Many models inspired by the Canvas have been proposed for different purposes and in various areas of knowledge. Some examples include the social enterprise model canvas, designed for researchers and social entrepreneurs seeking to understand or design the structure of organizations dedicated to achieving social objectives (SPARVIERO, 2019); the research design canvas, which serves as a tool to help researchers manage scientific research studies (KETCHEN et al., 2019); the academic planning canvas, aimed at education professionals (RUIZ, 2019); and the life cycle canvas®, which widely used by project management professionals and also contributes to skills development in the classroom (NASCIMENTO et al., 2020).

In the field of communication, there are canvas models that help professionals manage their activities. Most of them are empirical proposals, such as the communication planning canvas, which aims to get the entire team on the same page to facilitate the understanding of how to proceed in communication matters (BINATI, 2017). This model consists of eight main elements: (i) differentiators; (ii) objectives (business, marketing, and communication); (iii) central message; (iv) target audience; (v) B2B audience; (vi) expected flow; (vii) channels; and (viii) experience (point of sale, digital, and outdoor communication). In addition to these elements, the model includes sections for "when?" budget (% production and % media), place, period, intensity, results (tangible and intangible), and "how to measure?"

There is an adapted canvas model proposed by the Dutch company pr.co, called the Public Relations Strategy Canvas, which consists of five spreadsheets that should be filled out by communication teams to plan their activities for 12 months and keep track of them. In this model, the spreadsheets correspond to the five main elements of the canvas: (i) purpose; (ii) audience; (iii) themes; (iv) channels; and (v) strategy outline (STEFAN; GRANDI, 2016).

The Finnish company EEEDO (which provides communication solutions) proposed the internal communication canvas model (2016), which aims to help communication professionals assess internal communication strategies and practices and assist in the creation of an internal communication plan. This model is inspired by the business model canvas (OSTERWALDER; PIGNEUR, 2010) and presents nine elements: (i) key stakeholders and partners; (ii) main communication activities; (iii) communication team resources; (iv) communication value proposition and objectives; (v) employee relations; (vi) communication channels; (vii) employee segments; (viii) communication cost structure; and (ix) value added.

The communication canvas proposed by Feijó (2019) is a tactical model for contemporary digital communication planning work. This model was also inspired by the Business Model Canvas (OSTERWALDER; PIGNEUR, 2010), with a proposal of nine elements: (i) receiver; (ii) code; (iii) channels; (iv) highlight phrases; (v) frequency; (vi) key message; (vii) sender; (viii) context; and (ix) metrics. According to the author, although almost all digital businesses start after creating a Business Model Canvas, there was no model focused on the communication process in the digital environment, which can be explained by the fact that companies often prioritize sales results and underestimate the importance of internal communication.

## Focus Groups

Focus groups are a research technique that emerged in the 1940s in the United States. They were first used by Lazarsfeld, Merton, and their collaborators to study audience reactions to advertisements and radio broadcasts during the Second World War (NÓBREGA; ANDRADE; MELO, 2016). It is a data collection technique commonly employed in qualitative research, in which group interviews are conducted to discuss specific topics (MARTINS; THEÓPHILO, 2009). The number of participants in these groups ranges from six to fifteen (TRAD, 2009). The technique serves as a means to support the study of values, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and processes of influence (GONDIM, 2003) and helps to meet diverse research needs (NÓBREGA; ANDRADE; MELO, 2016).

Focus groups allow researchers to understand the interviewee's reality from the interviewee's perspective, allowing them to find meaning in the manifest content (SILVA; RUSSO, 2019), a characteristic feature of qualitative research approaches. Habowski and Conte (2020) emphasize that focus groups go beyond being a research technique focused solely on the use of formal and technical knowledge, as qualitative approaches prioritize the interplay between empirical and theoretical fields.

**4/18**

Intercom, Rev. Bras. Ciênc. Comun.,
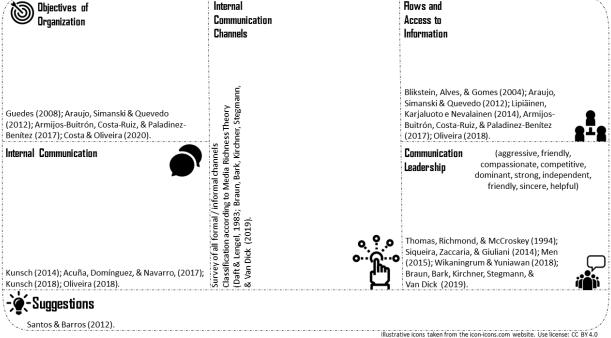São Paulo, v. 46, e2023116, 2023

Gondim (2003) points out that focus groups can be more or less structured, depending on the research objectives. Greater structuring ensures focus and alignment with the topic, but may inhibit the emergence of opinions that would enrich the discussion. Greater flexibility, on the other hand, facilitates interaction between the moderator and group members, but if taken to extremes, it can increase the risk of digressions in responses and compromise comparative data analysis (GONDIM, 2003). Invariably, the conduct of a focus group requires the presence of a moderator with substantial knowledge of the topics under discussion, as well as the support of a second moderator. There may also be the presence of external observers who do not speak but can record participants' reactions (TRAD, 2009).

## Model for Internal Communication Analysis (MACIn)

The MACIn emerged from the need for a tool that would facilitate the discussion of topics related to internal communication in focus groups that were relatively homogeneous in terms of the participants within each group and completely heterogeneous when it came to comparing one group to another. We proposed a canvas model with six quadrants. Next, we present the six quadrants and the main studies that support each of them (Figure 1):

**Figure 1** – MACIn



Illustrative icons taken from the icon-icons.com website. Use license: CC BY 4.0

Source: Prepared by the authors.

*Organization Objectives*

Considering the strategic functions of internal communication as a means to achieve organizational goals, and as a means to align them with the desires of employees, we understand that MACIn should have a specific quadrant to discuss the group's understanding of the organization's strategic goals.

According to Guedes (2008), when communication is focused on the organization's goals, employees can better understand the organizational context and align themselves with goals, comprehend challenges, decisions, positions, strategies, and impacts on both the organization and their own lives. In the same vein, Araujo, Simanski, and Quevedo (2012) emphasize the need for organizational members to be aware of the organization's goals, and to be committed to their success.

Armijos-Buitrón, Costa-Ruiz, and Paladines-Benítez (2017) highlight the importance of communication within organizations: first, for its contribution to achieving organizational goals, and second, because information management is a significant market positioning strategy. Costa and Oliveira (2020) attribute to internal communication the role of aligning organizational interests with those of employees through dialogue, exchange of information and experience, and encouragement of participation at all levels.

*Internal Communication*

Since individuals who make up organizations interconnect through different cognitive universes and different cultures in a communicative process focused on common goals (KUNSCH, 2018), we have added the internal communication quadrant to the model.

Kunsch (2014) emphasizes the inseparability and interdependence of the instrumental, human, cultural, and strategic dimensions of internal communication. According to Acuña, Domínguez, and Navarro (2017), the goal of internal communication is to make the entire team feel satisfied and engaged, because having space to speak, and feeling heard by peers and managemental ensure an increase in enthusiasm and willingness to work. Oliveira (2018) considers internal communication as the foundation of a company's work, with the main focus on the employees themselves. "Communicative actions must be guided by a philosophy and a policy of integrated communication that takes into account the demands, interests, and expectations of the audiences/subjects involved" (KUNSCH, 2018, p. 18). These propositions highlight the importance of understanding the perceptions of individuals involved in the communicative process.

*Internal Communication Channels*

All of the communication-focused canvas models identified in the literature review have a communication channels quadrant. We have included this element in MACIn, incorporating the internal communication channels quadrant to identify all channels that group participants perceived as useful for internal communication. It is important to encourage participants to

think about all the channels that are used, regardless of their format, the frequency of use, the perceived quality of the information that circulates through them, or whether participants perceive the channels as formal or informal. All of this may or may not be specified by the facilitator, depending on the research objectives.

Daft and Lengel (1983) dedicated themselves to studying the richness of information and media (channels), giving rise to the Information Richness Theory, which seeks to investigate information processing in organizations. Braun et al. (2019) understand that this theory consists of a useful heuristic structure for investigations in which there is an interest in analyzing the preference for a particular communication channel. To make this classification, the moderator should use the criteria proposed by the theory itself: information cues (use of verbal and nonverbal signals); degree of personalization (personal focus); feedback capability (interaction); and the degree of language variability (use of natural language). Table 1 provides an example of this classification.

**Table 1** - Richness of Channels

|  | **Face-to-Face Communication** | **E-mail Communication** | **Phone Communication** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Use of Information Cues (verbal and non-verbal signals) | High | Low | Low |
| Extent of Personalization (personal focus)" | High | Medium | Medium |
| Feedback Capacity (interaction) | High | Medium | High |
| Degree of Language Variety (natural language) | High | Medium | High |
| Overall Channel Richness | High | Medium-Low | Medium |

Source: Adapted from Braun et al. (2019, p. 53)

Given the importance attributed to communication channels for the effectiveness of the communication process, we include this quadrant for the purpose of identifying all the channels that participants perceive as useful for internal communication. We believe that the classification anchored in the Theory of Information Richness allows: (i) the moderator to assess the richness of the identified means, and (ii) compare this richness with participants' preferences.

*Flows and Access to Information*
We have included the "flows and access to information" quadrant in MACIn to assist the moderator in identifying the predominant information flows within the organization's

internal context. This ensures the collection of information about the degree of difficulty that participants encounter when seeking information related to their work routines.

Blikstein, Alves, and Gomes (2004) argue that in the field of internal communication, there are downward information flows (from superiors to subordinates), upward information flows (from subordinates to superiors), and horizontal flows (between people at the same hierarchical level). In all cases, both formal and informal communication occur, with informal communication being fueled by comments, rumors, and gossip (Blikstein, Alves, and Gomes, 2004). Rumors consist of various lines of informal communication, and are usually composed of well-informed individuals who do not adhere to the hierarchy, as noted by Araujo, Simanski, and Quevedo (2012). According to Lipiäinen, Karjaluoto, and Nevalainen (2014), when an employee sends a message to the wrong person, the waiting time for a response is longer, and feedback is often unsatisfactory.

Considering the hierarchical relationships established in organizational contexts, Oliveira (2018) warns against a sense of being at the top of the organization that hinders closeness with the rest of the group. Similarly, members in lower hierarchical positions perceive their superiors as aloof. These feelings described by the author can hinder closeness and, consequently, create barriers to information flows. In this sense, it is clear that improving the strategic flow of information directed to the internal audience brings a range of benefits since, according to Armijos-Buitrón, Costa-Ruiz, and Paladines-Benítez (2017), it increases efficiency levels, productivity, and contributes to projecting a solid organizational image to different audiences.

*Leadership Communication*

Investigating an organization's internal communication necessarily entails investigating the communication of its leaders. This argument is supported by the data from the research conducted by Integrating Action and Social Base: 64.8% of the organizations surveyed pointed out that the main challenge for the year 2020 would be to engage leaders as communicators. Therefore, it was considered necessary to include the "Leadership Communication" quadrant in MACIn.

Modern organizations are moving towards knowledge management and understand that information sharing and teamwork are essential. Therefore, it is essential that a manager's performance be measured by their communication (Siqueira Filho, Zaccaria, Giuliani, 2014). According to Men (2015), leadership provides an important context as it sets the tone for internal communication practices. Based on Wikaningrum, Yuniawan (2018), and Braun et al. (2019), we can affirm that the quality of leaders' communication can influence how subordinates perceive their leaders and affect job satisfaction.

Thomas, Richmond, and McCroskey (1994) categorized two leadership communication styles perceived by subordinates: the assertive sociocommunicative style (leaders whose communication is seen as independent, dominant, aggressive, competitive, and strong) and

**8/18**

Intercom, Rev. Bras. Ciênc. Comun.,
São Paulo, v. 46, e2023116, 2023

the responsive sociocommunicative style (leaders whose communication is seen as helpful, friendly, compassionate, sincere, and affectionate). These styles were used by Men (2015), who concluded were that subordinates expect leaders to communicate in a sensitive, welcoming, understanding, sincere, and interested manner, showing concern for subordinates, openness, and willingness to listen. On the other hand, they also expect leaders to communicate assertively, strongly, and decisively at certain times.

Thus, the "Leadership Communication" quadrant of MACIn is anchored in the sociocommunicative styles, assertive and responsive, postulated by Thomas, Richmond, and McCroskey (1994) and developed by Men (2015). The suggestion is that in this quadrant, participants in the focus groups receive descriptors of these two communication styles, and the facilitator asks them to select the option that best describes their leader's communication (the same can be done with groups of leaders, in a self-analysis exercise, asking them to select the option that best describes their own communication style). The discussion can, then, expand on the characteristics identified or on other strengths and weaknesses related to communication and the challenges of leaders and job satisfaction.

*Suggestions*

In our review of the literature, we did not find any communication canvas models that had a quadrant specifically titled "Suggestions." In fact, the closest we cold find was the fourth quadrant, "highlighted phrases," found in the communication canvas proposed by Feijó (2019).

The "Suggestions" quadrant was included in MACIn for two reasons: (i) to serve as a space where the facilitator could direct any suggestions and insights that might emerge from the group during the discussions and that might be important for future discussions; and (ii) to be a specific moment, at the end of the discussions in the other quadrants, where the facilitator requests that the focus group participants note down suggestions related to the organization's internal communication.

In the first case, written notes can be taken at any time during the activity, by the facilitator or by observers, with the aim of fostering a more in-depth discussion with the group, either immediately or at another time.

In the second case, the facilitator should make it clear that while the participants are writing their suggestions, the group should not immediately discuss the ideas. This is crucial to encourage individuals to feel comfortable enough to let their ideas flow and express them freely. This stage resembles brainstorming sessions of teams engaged in creative processes: a special, intentionally prepared moment to let the unconscious emerge.

The authors emphasize that this process typically follows a sequence: (i) problem presentation, (ii) idea development, and (iii) judgment. Therefore, we propose that the judgment or debate of ideas in the "Suggestions" quadrant of MACIn is optional, remaining at the discretion of the session's moderator.

## Validation of MACIn

The empirical validation of MACIn was carried out in an educational organization with several units. First, a pre-test was conducted, and after adjustments, three focus group sessions were conducted: one with managers/leaders of the company and two with groups of employees from two distinct units. The focus groups had a minimum of six and a maximum of 16 participants. The groups took place between November 11th and December 4th, 2019, with each group session lasting between 1 hour and 15 minutes to 1 hour and 54 minutes.

**Table 2** – List of Conducted Focus Groups

| Group | Date | Time | Location | Participants | Duration |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unit B Employees | 11/11/2019 | 2PM | Unit B | 10 | 1h.15m.30s. |
| Unit A Employees | 19/11/2019 | 2PM | Headquarters | 06 | 1h.54m.25s. |
| Managers/Leaders | 04/12/2019 | 3PM | Headquarters | 16 | 1h.38m.55s. |

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Invitations were sent via email about two weeks in advance, and a reminder e-mail was also sent in the early morning hours of the scheduled days of the sessions. Meetings were held during the employees' working hours in locations within the organization's structure, which had been prearranged to make participants more comfortable. Snacks and a warm welcome were provided, including a treat and a thank-you card in anticipation of participants' involvement in the activity.
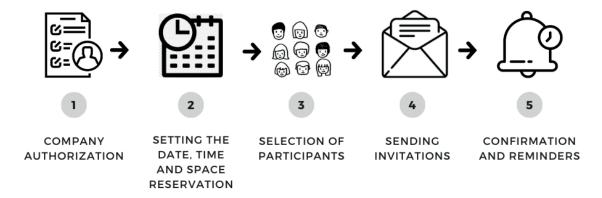
The setup of the room was designed to facilitate the focus group and record the sessions, with desks arranged in a circle, each labeled with numerals. Electronic equipment was distributed throughout the room, including audio and video recording equipment on tripods. Angle and sound tests were conducted beforehand to ensure participants would not be intimidated during the activity. Snacks and beverages were served to provide comfort and create a pleasant atmosphere.

The MACIn canvas was drawn and placed on a table for easy visibility. The groups were led by two moderators and one observer, who also monitored the electronic equipment. Audio and video recordings were made with the express consent of the participants and were later transcribed in full for qualitative data analysis.

Figure 2 illustrates the summary of all the steps taken to conduct the focus groups that validated MACIn, from the preparation to the sequence followed during the group activities.

**10/18**

Intercom, Rev. Bras. Ciênc. Comun.,
São Paulo, v. 46, e2023116, 2023

**Figure 2** – Processes and precautions taken for conducting the focus groups that validated MACIn

## PREPARATION



| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| COMPANY AUTHORIZATION | SETTING THE DATE, TIME AND SPACE RESERVATION | SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS | SENDING INVITATIONS | CONFIRMATION AND REMINDERS |

## RESOURCES USED

- Two moderators and an observer;
- Reserved room;
- Chairs arranged in a circle;
- Large table for setting up the MACIn;
- Badges with identification numbers of the participants;
- Badges identifying moderators and observers;
- Electronic apparatus for recording audio and images (video);
- Tripod to support image recording apparatus;
- Pens;
- Printed Free and Informed Consent Terms (2 for each participant);

- Adhesive paper blocks;
- Adhesive tapes (to draw MACIn on the table);
- Clipboard;
- Printed focus group scripts for moderators;
- Communication styles of leaders printed on a poster;
- Snacks;
- Table for snacks;
- Sweet for each participant with a message of thanks;
- Toast for final draw.

MODEL FOR ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION (MACIN):
A PROPOSAL FOR A VISUAL TOOL FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

## APPLICATION

**1** → **2** → **3** → **4**

**GENERAL PRESENTATION**

Welcome, introduction to the research, and explaining the content of the Free and Informed Consent Form.

**PRESENTATION OF THE ACTIVITY**

Guidance on the importance of members offering their individual opinions and perceptions (written only), and notifying that this information would later be discussed in a group.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE ORGANIZATION**

Participants were requested to inform researchers of the company's objectives.

**INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

Participants' perceptions about the communicative process in the organization's internal context were requested.

**5** → **6** → **7** → **8** → **9**

**INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS**

There was a survey of all internal communication channels identified by the members. Then, during the discussion, the participants' preferences regarding the use of channels were raised. The classification based on the Continuous Theory of Media Wealth (Daft & Lengel, 1983) was performed later, only by the moderators.

**FLOW AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Participants were asked to disclose how they usually receive feedback from their managers and where (or with whom) they seek information, in order to identify whether employees are aware of the hierarchy for seeking information, and to learn whether this communication happens in an unorganized manner. In the group with managers / leaders, they were asked to share their preferred strategies to provide information and offer feedback.

**LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION**

Collaborators were asked to choose the characteristic that best defines their leader's communication style, considering only the characteristics defined by Thomas, Richmond, and McCroskey (1994). Discussions were promoted around the selected styles and the main difficulties they perceive in the leaders' communication process. In the group carried out with the managers / leaders, this quadrant acted as a kind of self-assessment on their communication styles, considering only the characteristics defined by Thomas, Richmond, and McCroskey (1994). This was followed by discussions around the main challenges faced in communication with their teams and their peers.

**SUGGESTIONS**

Throughout the activity, this field was filled out by the moderators with suggestions and ideas that came from the group. At the end of the discussion, it was requested that participants offer their individual suggestions related to the institution's internal communication. Researchers informed participants that these suggestions would not be discussed, only stored for later analysis.

**CLOSING**

Closing the activity and thanks to all involved. Informing participants that after the conclusion of the research, everyone will receive a report in which they can view the activity's results.

## ANALYSIS

**1** → **2** → **3**

**ORGANIZATION AND TRANSCRIPTION OF DATA**

Transcription of qualitative information in Word file, through audios and videos, and assigning codes to the investigated subjects. Transcription of data from rounds of individual responses, in Excel file, for later quantification.

**SOFTWARE CHOICE**

The qualitative software MaxQDA Analytics Pro 2020 was chosen to prepare, organize and categorize the data.

**CATEGORIZATION**

Based on the theoretical constructs proposed for each quadrant of the MAIC, the categories emerged from the group's responses (individual rounds and discussions).

**4** → **5** → **6**

**CHOICE OF ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE**

Content analysis was adopted as a technique for data analysis.

**SYSTEMATIC DATA ANALYSIS**

Qualitative analysis of data from discussions and quantification of data from individual responses (rounds that filled the MACIn with sticky notes). The analysis was performed individually (by the group) and also comparatively (between the three groups).

**TRIANGULATION**

Triangulation of data from the focus groups with data obtained from other sources (interviews and secondary data) and with the theoretical framework, using the studies that anchored the quadrants proposed in MAIC.

## SOME PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE

- Reserve a room free of noise that may impair the quality of audios;
- When deciding the place, time, and date of the group, consider what would best facilitate the participation of the subjects, e.g., avoiding places that would require greater effort to arrive, or times close to lunch or the end of the workday;
- Perform preliminary tests of electronic equipment and set up the devices before the arrival of the participants, check the angle for capturing the images, and leave the device on the tripod;
- Test audio quality by checking distances and interference from ambient noise, such as air conditioning;

- Create a relaxing environment to encourage the participation of group members, putting them at ease;
- Have observers who understand the research objectives and can assist during the application;
- Wear comfortable clothes that do not distract or inhibit participants;
- Check the battery and storage capacity of electronic equipment;
- Pause the video recording so that the file is not unnecessarily long and heavy;
- Send the survey results to the participants.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

After conducting the focus groups, subcategories of analysis were identified and linked to the previously established theoretical categories, to help guide the analysis process as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3** – Categories and subcategories of analysis

| Analysis Categories | Subcategories |
|---|---|
| Practices and Process | - |
| Benefits | Service, Trust, Engagement, Image, Minimizes Noise, Productivity, Symmetry and Sales |
| Challenges | Corrective Actions, Bureaucracy, Organic Communication, Complexity, Teaching/Administrative, Effective Delivery, Lack of Engagement, Flow/Hierarchy, Sector Integration, Press, Multicampi, Few Channels, Corridor Radio, Technology, Training and Uniformity |
| Mission and Institutional Objectives | Community, Growth, Financial Balance, Excellence, Transparent Management, Governance and Management, Implement, Internationalization, Planning, Quality, Relations, Social Return and Redeeming Credibility |
| Channels | E-mail, Extranet, Face to Face, Facebook, Instagram, Leader, Wall, Institution Portals, Meetings, Skype, Telephone and Institution up to date |
| Informal Channels and Corridor Radio | WhatsApp |
| Technologies and Social Networks | - |

Intercom, Rev. Bras. Ciênc. Comun., São Paulo, v. 46, e2023116, 2023

**13/18**

| Analysis Categories | Subcategories |
| --- | --- |
| Style and Skills | - |
| Engagement, Training and Guidance | - |

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Due to the frequency with which they were mentioned, new categories of analysis also emerged from the discussions: information search, formality, financial impact, innovation, perceived improvements, measurement, penalization/sensitization, frontline, internal/external positioning, employee turnover, prospecting, feelings toward upper management, and management turnover. The procedures presented allowed us to achieve the study's objectives and create a management report sent to the organization's top management, highlighting the scientific and practical utility of MACIn.

## Final Thoughts

As evidenced throughout this article, complexity permeates communication in the context of organizations, which requires managers, communicators, and researchers in the field to have skills to deal with these subjective elements.

Seeking to propose a tool that assists in this task, we presented MACIn. This tool is composed of six quadrants, five of which are anchored in studies related to each respective quadrant's theme.

Put briefly, we can state that MACIn is a canvas model that uses the focus group technique for data collection, with internal communication as the object of investigation. In practice, it allows for information gathering and discussion on topics such as organizational objectives, perception of internal communication, channels used, the composition of flows and access to information, and leadership communication. In this way, MACIn contributes to gathering information from the perspective of internal audiences, helping to conduct internal communication diagnostics and implement more accurate management strategies.

The validation of the model allowed us to observe contributions such as the speed in the data collection process, and the possibility of comparative analysis (as the same discussions were promoted with different groups). The visual aspect of the model helped reduce participants' anxiety, engaging them throughout the completion process, and creating a favorable atmosphere for group discussions.

Based on the theoretical framework underlying this proposal (Figure 1), it is expected that researchers can also assist in the data triangulation process with theory while presenting and discussing the results of future research. We emphasize that the ways in which the authors suggest to anchor the discussions do not in any way limit the possibilities for studies on the

**14/18**

Intercom, Rev. Bras. Ciênc. Comun.,
São Paulo, v. 46, e2023116, 2023

topics addressed in each quadrant. These are studies that have contributed to validating the proposed model, and we believe they can be useful for new studies, but they can – and should – be updated and combined with the work of other authors.

Thus, it is important for MACIn users to be aware that this is a tool built and validated based on the criteria presented in the study, which may limit the ability of the tool depending on the objectives to be achieved. Therefore, further studies are recommended to validate and improve this model in different segments and organizational contexts.

## References

ABERJE - Associação Brasileira de Comunicação Empresarial. Desafios da COVID-19 para a Comunicação Organizacional, 2020. Available at: https://www.aberje.com.br/pesquisa-aberje-55-das-empresas-acreditam-que-maior-desafio-na-crise-e-manter-profissionais-engajados/. Access on: 07 dez. 2020.

ACUÑA, B. P.; DOMÍNGUEZ, D. C.; NAVARRO, P. B. Tres casos de Empresas Internacionales con Éxito: estudio de las estrátegias de comunicación interna. **Chasqui Revista Latinoamericana de Comunicación**, v. 134, p. 315-330, 2017.

ARAUJO, D. C.; SIMANSKI, E. S. S.; QUEVEDO, D. M. Comunicação Interna: relação entre empresa e colaboradores, um estudo de caso. **Brazilian Business Review**, v. 9, n. 1, p. 47-64, 2012.

ARMIJOS-BUITRÓN, V. A.; COSTA-RUIZ, M. P.; PALADINES-BENÍTEZ, J. E. The use of Information and Communication Technologies in the Management of Internal Communication in the Service Sector of Ecuador. *In*: 12th Iberian Conference on Information Systems and Technologies, Lisbon, 21 - 24 June, 2017, **Anais Eletrônicos** [...], Lisbon, 2017. Available at: https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/7976022. Access on: 25 out. 2023.

BINATI, B. Canvas Planejamento de Comunicação, 2017. Available at: http://canvasdeplanejamento.com.br/saiba-mais Access on: 15 maio 2020

BLIKSTEIN, I.; ALVES, M. A.; GOMES, M. T. Os Estudos Organizacionais e a Comunicação no Brasil. *In:* CALDAS. M.; FACHIN, R.; FISCHER, T. **Handbook de estudos organizacionais: ação e análise organizacionais**. 3. ed. São Paulo: Atlas, 2004.

BRANDÃO, N. G. A comunicação interna estratégica como reforço da valorização das pessoas e seus níveis de engajamento nas organizações. **Media & Jornalismo**, v. 18, n. 33, p. 91-102, 2018.

BRAUN, S.; BARK, A. H.; KIRCHNER, A.; STEGMANN, S.; VAN DICK, R. Emails from the Boss—curse or blessing? Relations between Communication Channels, Leader Evaluation, and Employees' Attitudes. **International Journal of Business Communication**, v. 56, n. 1, p. 50-81, 2019.

COSTA, E.; OLIVEIRA, T. S. Comunicação organizacional: uma ferramenta estratégica de compatibilização de interesses. **Revista Alterjor**, v. 22, n. 2, p. 397-409, 2020.

DAFT, R. L.; LENGEL, R. H. **Information Richness**: a new approach to managerial behavior and organization design. Texas: College of Business Administration, 1983.

EEEDO. Internal Communication Canvas – A Tool to Create Your Internal Communication Plan, 2016. Available at: https://eee.do/internal-communication-canvas/. Access on: 15 maio 2020.

FEIJÓ, A. Canvas da Comunicação: um modelo tático para conectar estratégia de negócio com a prática da Comunicação Organizacional. *In:* XX Congresso de Ciências da Comunicação na Região Sul, Porto Alegre-RS,

Intercom, Rev. Bras. Ciênc. Comun., São Paulo, v. 46, e2023116, 2023

**15/18**

20 – 22 de junho, 2019, **Anais Eletrônicos** [...], Porto Alegre, 2019, p. 1-11. Available at: https://portalintercom.org.br/anais/sul2019/resumos/R65-1308-1.pdf. Access on: 25 out. 2023.

GONDIM, S. M. G. Grupos Focais como Técnica de Investigação Qualitativa: desafios metodológicos. **Paidéia**, v. 12, n. 24, p. 149-161, 2003.

GUEDES, E. N. A comunicação interna alinhada aos objetivos organizacionais: o caso Vale. *In:* X Congresso de Ciências da Comunicação na Região Nordeste, 12-14 junho, São Luís - MA, 2008. **Anais Eletrônicos** [...] São Luís - MA, 2008. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/771094/A_comunica%C3%A7%C3%A3o_interna_alinhada_aos_objetivos_organizacionais_o_caso_Vale. Access on: 25 out. 2023.

HABOWSKI, A. C.; CONTE, E. A técnica de pesquisa de grupo focal: contribuições à educação. **Revista Cocar**, v. 14, n. 28, 10-16, 2020.

KETCHEN, D. J.; BERGH, D. D.; BOYD, B. K. The Research Design Canvas: a tool for creating better studies. **Research Methodology in Strategy and Management**, v. 11, p. 63-76, 2019.

KUNSCH, M. M. K. A Comunicação Estratégica nas Organizações Contemporâneas. **Media & Jornalismo**, v. 18, n. 33, p. 13-24, 2018.

KUNSCH, M. M. K. Comunicação Organizacional: contextos, paradigmas e abrangência conceitual. **MATRIZes**, v. 8, n. 2, p. 35-61, 2014.

LIPIÄINEN, H. S. M.; KARJALUOTO, H. E.; NEVALAINEN, M. Digital channels in the internal communication of a multinational corporation. **Corporate Communications: an International Journal**, v. 19, n. 3, p.275-286, 2014.

LUKAS, T. Business Model Canvas – Geschäftsmodellentwicklung im digitalen Zeitalter. *In:* GROTE S.; GOYK R. (eds). **Führungsinstrumente aus dem Silicon Valley**. Springer Gabler, Berlin, Heidelberg, 2018. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-54885-1_9

MARTINS, G. A.; THEÓPHILO, C. R. **Metodologia da Investigação Científica para Ciências Sociais Aplicadas**. 2. ed. São Paulo: Atlas, 2009.

MARTINS, H.; MOTA, J.; MARINI, C. Modelos de Negócio na Esfera Pública: o Modelo Canvas de Governança Pública. **Cadernos EBAPE.BR**, v. 17, n. 1, p. 49-67, 2018.

MEN, L. R. The internal communication role of the chief executive officer: communication channels, style, and effectiveness. **Public Relations Review**, v. 41, n. 4, p. 461-471, 2015.

NASCIMENTO, T. H. C. R.; SILVA, D. C.; MEDEIROS, M. F. M.; SOUSA NETO, M. V. Gestão de projetos no contexto da aprendizagem baseada em projetos usando o Modelo Life Cycle Canvas®. **GUAL**, v. 13, n. 2, p. 25-48, 2020.

NÓBREGA, D. O.; ANDRADE, E. R. G.; MELO, E. S. N. Pesquisa com Grupo Focal: contribuições ao estudo das representações sociais. **Psicologia & Sociedade**, v. 28, n. 3, p. 433-441, 2016.

OLIVEIRA, F. N. S. Comunicação das Organizações: um olhar sobre a importância da Comunicação Interna. **Media & Jornalismo**, v. 18, n. 33, p. 61-73, 2018.

OSTERWALDER, A.; PIGNEUR, Y. **Business Model Generation**: a handbook for visionaries, game changers, and challengers. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2010.

RUIZ, C. R. Criação de um Modelo Canvas para Planejamento Acadêmico aliado a Ferramentas de Design Thinking. **Revista on line de Política e Gestão Educacional**, v. 23, n. 2, p. 321-327, 2019.

**16/18**

Intercom, Rev. Bras. Ciênc. Comun.,
São Paulo, v. 46, e2023116, 2023

SANTOS, F.; BARROS, T. M. P. Incursões da propaganda no imaginário: revisitando o brainstorm. **Sessões do Imaginário**, v.17, n. 28, p. 84-93, 2012.

SILVA, L. F.; RUSSO, R. F. S. M. Aplicação de entrevistas em pesquisa qualitativa. **Revista de Gestão e Projetos**, v. 10, n. 1, p. 1-6, 2019.

SIQUEIRA FILHO, A. B.; ZACCARIA, R. B.; GIULIANI, A. C. Comunicação Interna na Era da Colaboração: a IBM Brasil. **Caderno Profissional de Marketing**, v. 2, n. 2, p. 25-31, 2014.

SPARVIERO, S. The Case for a Socially Oriented Business Model Canvas: The Social Enterprise Model Canvas. **Journal of Social Entrepreneurship**, v. 10, n. 2, p. 232-251, 2019.

STEFAN, F.; GRADI, L. How to develop your Communications Strategy with the PR Strategy Canvas, 2016. Available at: https://academy.pr.co/129439-how-to-develop-your-communications-strategy. Access on: 15 maio 2020.

STEFFEN, L. S.; HENRIQUES, M. N.; LISBOA FILHO, F. F. Análise cultural-midiática como protocolo teórico-metodológico de pesquisas em comunicação. **Intercom: Revista Brasileira de Ciências da Comunicação**, v. 43, n. 3, p. 21-39, 2020.

THOMAS, C. E.; RICHMOND, V. P.; MCCROSKEY, J. C. The association between Immediacy and Socio-Communicative Style. **Communication Research Reports**, v. 11, n. 1, p. 107-114, 1994.

TRAD, L. A. B. Grupos focais: conceitos, procedimentos e reflexões baseadas em experiências com o uso da técnica em pesquisas de saúde. **Physis**, v. 19, n. 3, 2009.

VIEIRA, V. A.; TIBOLA, F. Pesquisa qualitativa em marketing e suas variações: trilhas para pesquisas futuras. **Revista de Administração Contemporânea**, v. 9, n. 2, p. 9-33, 2005.

WIKANINGRUM, T.; YUNIAWAN, U. A. The relationships among leadership styles, communication skills, and employee satisfaction: a study on equal employment opportunity in leadership. **Journal of Business and Retail Management Research**, v. 13, n. 1, p. 138-147, 2018.

**About the authors**

*Francine Lucatelli*
PhD student and Master in Administration at the University of Vale do Itajaí (UNIVALI). Specialist in Strategic Marketing and Bachelor in Social Communication, with a qualification in Public Relations, also from Univali. Email: fran_lucatelli@univali.br.

*Hans Peder Behling*
PhD in Language Sciences (UNISUL, 2013), PDSE-CAPES Fellow (Université de Montréal, 2012), Master in Language Sciences (UNISUL/2006), specialist in Strategic Business Management (FURB, 2001) and Bachelor in Social Communication - Advertising and Propaganda (FURB, 1999). Email: hanspeda@yahoo.com.br.

Intercom, Rev. Bras. Ciênc. Comun.,
São Paulo, v. 46, e2023116, 2023

**17/18**

*Carlos Marcelo Ardigo*
PhD in Production Engineering, in the Organizational Intelligence Concentration Area, from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC); master in Administration from UFSC; specialist in Marketing from the University of Vale do Itajaí (UNIVALI); and graduated in Administration from UNIVALI. Email: marcelo.ardigo@univali.br.

**Authors' contributions**

Lucatelli, F. L.: conceptualization, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing; Behling, H. P.: conceptualization, review, formal analysis, writing – review and editing; Ardigó, C. M.: conceptualization, review, formal analysis, writing – review and editing.

**Data availability**

The data supporting this study are available upon request from the authors.

**Conflict of interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

**Editorial data**