

The congruence between the legitimacy judgments of the public institution, the media and citizens

La congruencia entre los juicios de legitimidad de la institución pública, los medios y los ciudadanos



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Abstract:

This research explores the dynamics of legitimacy in a public leader and his organization with executive responsibilities in a central government. The aim of this study is to rebuild the trust of citizens in public institutions by means of the intangible asset legitimacy. Thus, our purpose is to analyse the congruence between the legitimacy judgements which the own organization, the media and citizens make about a ministry of education –Ministry of Education of the Government of Spain, with José Ignacio Wert and Iñigo Méndez de Vigo as ministers (2011-2015)–. The empirical observation follows a triangular methodological design and consists in a quantitative content analysis of the legitimacy judgements, contrasting three points of observation. Specifically, an analysis of the following has been carried out: as far as the organization is concerned, the communication on Twitter by the ministers and the Ministry, as well as press releases and announcements; regarding the media, print media and newspapers profiles on Twitter and, as for citizens, their tweets. The results show the communicative characteristics of the interaction between a public institution and the different actors, as well as how this interaction may affect its legitimacy, and ultimately, citizens.

Keywords:

Communication by public institutions; intangible assets; public sector; legitimacy; trust.

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Resumen:

La investigación explora la dinámica de la legitimidad de un líder público y su organización con responsabilidades ejecutivas en un gobierno central. El objetivo de esta investigación es recuperar la confianza de los ciudadanos a las instituciones públicas mediante el bien intangible legitimidad. Por ello, se pretende analizar la congruencia que hay entre los juicios de legitimidad que sobre un ministerio de educación –Ministerio de Educación del Gobierno de España, con ministros José Ignacio Wert e Iñigo Méndez de Vigo (2011-2015)– formulan la propia organización, los medios y los ciudadanos. El diseño metodológico para la observación empírica es triangular y consiste en un análisis de contenido cuantitativo de los juicios de legitimidad, contrastando tres puntos de observación. En concreto, de la organización se analiza la comunicación en Twitter de los ministros y del ministerio, así como las notas de prensa y comunicados; de la prensa se analiza prensa impresa y los perfiles de los diarios en Twitter; y de los ciudadanos, los tweets. Los resultados manifiestan cómo es la comunicación de una organización pública en su interacción con los diferentes actores, y cómo esta interacción puede afectar a su legitimidad y, en último término, a los ciudadanos.

Palabras clave:

Comunicación de instituciones públicas; bienes intangibles; sector público; legitimidad; confianza.

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1. Introduction

Recent reports by international organizations such as The World Bank or United Nations have expressed the need to carry out some research on the loss of trust in the public sector. These organizations have recommended facilitating the access to information, promoting involvement, building legitimacy, etc., with the aim of narrowing the gap between public institutions and citizens.

This study is focused on intangible assets, legitimacy in particular, to solve this problem. Legitimacy is an intangible asset based on perception. It cannot be created from scratch as it is based on real experiences, but a communicative strategy can be carried out so that it can be developed.

The present research explores the dynamics of legitimacy in a public leader and his organization with executive responsibilities in a central government. Specifically, an analysis of the basis for the construction of this intangible asset has been conducted: the congruence between the legitimacy judgements which the own public institution, the media and citizens make about the ministry and its ministers.

The study case selected has been the Ministers of Education, Culture and Sports in Spain from 2011 to 2015, José Ignacio Wert and Iñigo Méndez de Vigo, and the Spanish Ministry of Education. In order to provide a context for the situation, the minister José Ignacio Wert occupied the post from December 22, 2011 to June 24, 2015.

This minister launched a project to reform Secondary Education on January 31, 2012, resulting in a strike by trade unions, teachers and students. He was also in disagreement with rectors, with the education policy of Catalonia, etc. Moreover, he made controversial decisions concerning the obtaining of scholarships and the Erasmus programme, and he eventually decided to quit the post after continuing disagreements with the education community. According to data from the Spanish Centre for Sociological Research (CIS), Jose Ignacio Wert was among the lowest ranked ministers.

Iñigo Méndez de Vigo took over as minister of Education, Culture and Sports on June 25, 2015.

The purpose of this study is to bring citizens closer to public administrations in order to rebuild their trust by means of the intangible asset of legitimacy. Online legitimacy and media legitimacy are also dealt with as intangible assets.

1.1. Legitimacy as an intangible asset and its online conception

Intangible assets are present in the public sector (Bossi et al., 2005) and are necessary to satisfy the demands of citizens in terms of transparency and excellence in the services (Sánchez, 2008).

As a result of the economic crisis, citizens are losing trust in public administrations. The latter cannot meet the needs of citizens (Thomas, 2013) nor preserve the excellence level (Luoma-aho, 2007). This context also toughens the judgements that citizens make concerning corruption (Uslaner, 2010; Canel and García-Molero, 2013; Chen et al., 2013).

The concept of legitimacy has been addressed from different angles basing on the definition by Suchman (1995). This author defines legitimacy as 'a widespread perception of the actions of an organization as being desirable, adequate or appropriate within a system socially built with norms, values, beliefs and definitions' (1995:574).

Additionally, authors like DiMaggio and Powell (1991), Bitektine (2011) or Robles (2019) have related this concept to the judgements made by the stakeholders about the actions performed by the organizations.

In this study we deal with legitimacy as an intangible asset in the public sector both in the public organization and in its leader. Legitimacy meets the characteristics provided in the definition of *intangible asset* for the public sector of Canel and Luoma-Aho:

'Non-monetary asset (without physical substance), that entitles and gives access to tangible assets and it is activated by means of communication, based on past events (and linked to the organization performance); therefore, it gives rise to an identifiable resource from which a flow of the benefit/value is expected (social, monetary, etc.), future (long-term), both for the organization and the stakeholders/citizens' (2019: 77).

Legitimacy concurs with the first characteristic since it is a perception and has no physical form, and it is a non-monetary asset. Secondly, it can be also considered an intangible asset as it is related to the past of the organization. When making their legitimacy judgements, citizens base on information and experiences with public administrations (Luoma-aho, 2007; Canel and Luoma-Aho, 2017; Robles, 2019).

Thirdly, legitimacy can also be an intangible asset as it builds up relationships with stakeholders, that is, it makes increase the trust of citizens. In the fourth place, intangible assets in the private sector create resources entailing an economic benefit. This idea can be taken to the public sector and conclude that legitimacy helps public administrations survive.

Having analysed these characteristics, it can be confirmed that legitimacy is an intangible asset in the public sector. It implies an economic and social benefit to the public organizations (Robles, 2017).

As for the online nature of legitimacy, it stems from social changes. Citizens are increasingly demanding with the organizations and require them to be legitimate and able to justify economic, social and environmental issues. These changes in the way of interacting lead companies to corporate legitimacy and new ways of communication (Colleoni, 2013: 229).

Catelló, Etter and Arup (2016) conducted research on online legitimacy and suggest a social media strategy. They conclude that organizations can earn legitimacy in social media if they avoid hierarchies when dealing with their stakeholders. They also acknowledge the importance of considering that society is connected to Internet.

Social networks have made it easier for legitimacy to emerge from a process of recognition and dialogue between organizations and their stakeholders. Engagement is not defined by the organization; social networks allow the participation of different stakeholders.

Then, it can be concluded that 'online legitimacy, as well as offline legitimacy, remains a judgement regarding the actions of the organization' (Robles, 2017). This judgement is based on social norms and regardless of the information issued by public administration and the media in social media. Subsequently, public administrations have to manage strategically online legitimacy, as well as legitimacy.

1.2. Types of legitimacy

It is important to explore the different types of legitimacy to analyse the elements referred to by citizens when they express a judgement. Literature on this suggests legitimacy typologies to identify the different types of judgements made with regard to the characteristics observed or given in an organization (Deephouse and Carter 2005; Díez et al.2010; Bitektine 2011).

The most complete classification is that suggested by Suchman (1995). This author identifies three types of legitimacy: pragmatic, moral, and cognitive. He declares that this typology is based on the fact that judgements are made in relation to social standards, but there are nuances that distinguish the object of the judgement.

In studies such as those by Canel (2015), Robles and Canel (2017) and Robles, (2019), the typology of moral legitimacy of Schuman (1995) has been used to analyse the communication of intangible assets. This typology is as follows:

- Procedural legitimacy is based on the evaluations that people make of the procedures and processes that public administrations have followed to produce results.
- Personal legitimacy is that of leadership.
- Consequential legitimacy refers to the judgement of the results of public management.
- Structural legitimacy deals with building facilities, resources, labour policies, etc.

Public administrations can benefit from the research on the legitimacy judgements made by citizens to manage legitimacy and come up to their expectations and needs.

1.3. Legitimacy in a hybrid media system

In this section we will examine the concept of media legitimacy and contextualize the hybrid media system.

Media legitimacy is the legitimacy shown in the media (Bitektine, 2011). We will deal with the authors Pollock and Rindova to make an approach to the concept of media legitimacy. These authors conclude that ‘the role of the media is to be information intermediaries’ (2003: 631). In their research they consider that the way in which the media broadcasts or does not broadcast the information also influences, making it more desirable and more legitimate (2003: 631). In consequence, the judgements made by investors can be influenced by the presentation of the information issued by the media.

In this sense, we can confirm that media legitimacy is related to the judgement made by the media about a public administration. The authors Robles and Rodríguez (2017: 56) conclude that media legitimacy is an intangible asset for the organization, but dependant on the evaluations made by the media. In addition, they state that ‘the media is a source of public opinion and catalyst for attention, and for this reason, any public or private organization must monitor the media repercussion and adopt strategies that safeguard their legitimacy’ (2017: 56).

As far as media repercussion is concerned, as Chadwick coined (2013), we are immersed in a hybrid media system, that is, in a context where we find traditional media and social media. Following this author, both media are in the same context, but it is traditional media that set the agenda and influence society the most.

However, traditional media are creating social media profiles to adapt themselves to this online context (Chadwick, 2013). For example, the social network Twitter has become a professional communication tool (Ramos del Cano, 2013).

1.4. Social media in public institutions: Twitter as a communication tool

In this section we will study thoroughly the new media context and the use that public administrations and their leaders make of social media.

Public organizations tend to use traditional media to raise visibility, but social media have emerged as a new scenario (Baamonde, 2011).

This new media context has fostered new public forms of participation, in which citizens can interact with public administrations both by creating content and setting the agenda (Jenkins, 2006). Because of social networks, the way in which citizens participate in social and political debates is changing (Bennett & Segerberg, 2014).

The emergence of social media enhances the participation of citizens in public policy and bi-directionality (Bertot et al., 2010; Chun et al., 2010). Public institutions and their leaders can learn about needs and demands through social media. According to the authors Congosto and Aragon, 'citizens can interact with them, echo their messages, follow their slogans, show their disagreement or simply quote them by their real name' (2012: 51).

However, Giansante (2015) states that neither political parties nor leaders running public institutions make the most of social media. They use them as another means to amplify their messages. In this sense, we understand that it can be extrapolated to public institutions because they can also interact with citizens by means of social media.

Regarding social networks, public administrations are increasingly using them. However, in most cases, it is one-way information and neither participation nor dialogue with citizens is encouraged (García, 2012; De Ramon, 2014; Manfredi and Femenía, 2016; Robles, 2019).

In recent years, research on the activity of administrations on social networks has been carried out, especially on Twitter (Romero and Mena, 2013; Vázquez, 2013; Martínez and Piñeiro, 2014; Pardo, 2014; Simelio and Molina, 2014, Catalina et al., 2015).

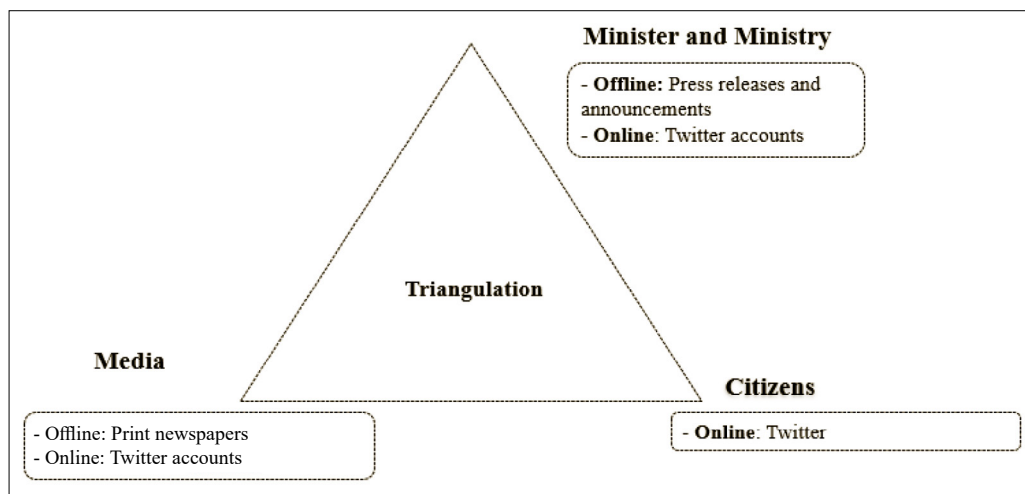
The social network Twitter is considered a social medium that facilitates access to information and interaction with public administrations (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2014).

2. Methodology

The methodology adopted in this research is triangular with the purpose of analysing the congruence of the legitimacy judgements made about the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports between the organization itself, the media and citizens.

It has been studied how the messages of the ministry and minister, particularly the Ministry of Education of the Spanish Government and the ministers José Ignacio Wert and Iñigo Méndez de Vigo (2011-2015), interact with the media and citizens.

Image 1. Methodological design



Source: created by the author

A content analysis has been carried out for this research. Thus, communication on Twitter and in traditional media can be studied in a quantitative and objective way. An analysis guide and a code have been designed to study each case.

In order to do the analysis of the Twitter accounts of the minister and ministry, the analysis units of the following accounts have been codified: Ministers of Education, Culture and Sports José Ignacio Wert (@Jiwert) and Iñigo Méndez de Vigo (@IMendezdeVigo), and Ministry of Education (@educaciongob). In terms of dates, the first year since the appointment of the two ministers and one year of the ministry, which includes both ministers, have been analysed.

The variables that have been selected for this analysis are the following:

1. Tweet number: this is the number used to identify the unit of analysis.
2. Date: in the format dd/mm/yy.
3. Importance of the tweet: whether it includes image, video, links, etc.
4. Education: whether it is about education or not.
5. The judged: that person on whom something is judged; that is, to whom a judgement is attributed.
6. The judge: that person (person/institution/party, etc.) who judges something about the minister, ministry or public policy.
7. Qualitative judgement: the tweet published in the account of the minister or ministry.
8. Quantitative judgement: what the judge judges on the judged.

9. Type of legitimacy: personal, structural, procedural or consequential.
10. Tone of the judgement: whether the attribute is positive, negative or neutral.

Regarding the analysis in speeches and announcements, the analysis units of press releases and announcements published on the website of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports have been codified. Only those that refer to education or appointment issues have been codified. The analysed dates range from December 20, 2011 to December 31, 2015.

The variables that have been selected for this analysis are the following:

1. Press release or announcement number: this is the number used to identify the unit of analysis.
2. Date: in the format dd/mm/yy.
3. The judged: that person on whom something is judged; that is, to whom a judgement is attributed.
4. The judge: that person (person/institution/party, etc.) who judges something about someone.
5. Qualitative judgement: the judgement published in the press release.
6. Quantitative judgement: what the judge judges on the judged.
7. Type of legitimacy: personal, structural, procedural or consequential.
8. Tone of the judgement: whether the attribute is positive, negative or neutral.

In order to carry out the analysis of the media on Twitter, the analysis units of the accounts of El País (@el_pais), El Mundo (@elmundoes) and ABC (@abc_es) have been codified. The tweets about the ministers José Ignacio Wert and Iñigo Méndez de Vigo and about the Ministry of Education from December 20, 2011 to November 20, 2015 have been analysed.

The variables that have been selected for this analysis are the following:

1. Tweet number: this is the number used to identify the unit of analysis.
2. Medium: El País, El Mundo and ABC.
3. Date: in the format dd/mm/yy.
4. Importance of the tweet: whether it includes image, video, links, etc.
5. Education: whether it is about education or not.
6. The judged: that person on whom something is judged; that is, to whom a judgement is attributed.
7. The judge: that person (person/institution/party, etc.) who judges something about the minister, ministry or public policy.
8. Qualitative judgement: the tweet published in the account of the media.
9. Quantitative judgement: what the judge judges on the judged.
10. Type of legitimacy: personal, structural, procedural or consequential.
11. Tone of the judgement: whether the attribute is positive, negative or neutral.

In the case of the print media, it has been analysed the analysis units which include some of the following terms in the headlines, subheadings, headers or paragraphs in the text of the news: 'Minister of Education, Culture and Sports', 'José Ignacio Wert', 'Iñigo Méndez de Vigo' or 'Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports'. This analysis has been carried out in papers from December 22, 2011 to November 20, 2015.

The variables that have been selected for this analysis are the following:

1. News number: this is the number used to identify the unit of analysis.
2. Medium: El País, El Mundo and ABC.
3. Date: in the format dd/mm/yy.
4. Page: whether the news page number is even, odd or double page.
5. Length (including images and graphics): less than a quarter page, less than half a page, half a page or more, full page or more than one page.
6. The judged: that person on whom something is judged; that is, to whom a judgement is attributed.
7. The judge: that person (person/institution/party, etc.) who judges something about the minister, ministry or public policy.
8. Qualitative judgement: the first complete judgement.
9. Quantitative judgement: what the judge judges on the judged.
10. Type of legitimacy: personal, structural, procedural or consequential.
11. Tone of the judgement: whether the attribute is positive, negative or neutral.

Finally, two hashtags have been selected on Twitter to analyse the legitimacy judgements of citizens. Specifically, the analysis units of the accounts that have used the hashtags #JoseIgnacioWert and #IñigoMéndezdeVigo have been codified. Then, the tweets of these hashtags from December 20, 2011 to December 31, 2015 have been analysed.

The variables that have been selected for this analysis are the following:

1. Tweet number: this is the number used to identify the unit of analysis.
2. Which hashtag: #joseignaciowert or #IñigoMéndezDeVigo.
3. Date: in the format dd/mm/yy.
4. Importance of the tweet: whether it includes image, video, links, etc.
5. Education: whether it is about education or not.
6. The judged: that person on whom something is judged; that is, to whom a judgement is attributed.
7. The judge: that person (person/institution/party, etc.) who judges something about the minister, ministry or public policy.
8. Qualitative judgement: the tweet published.

9. Quantitative judgement: what the judge judges on the judged.
10. Type of legitimacy: personal, structural, procedural or consequential.
11. Tone of the judgement: whether the attribute is positive, negative or neutral.

This research aims to explore the degree of congruence between the judgements of the different agents (organization, media and citizens). Accounting for the survey data on the low popularity of the minister and the ministry (although it has not been asked explicitly, it can be interpreted as related to low legitimacy and low reputation), the hypothesis confirms that there will be little congruence. But, in addition, since the media play an important role in legitimacy (the legitimacy that organizations have in their stakeholders is moderated by media legitimacy), the following questions are addressed:

Research question 1: Are the judgements of the organization very different from those of their stakeholders (media and citizens) on the same issues?

A coding system has been designed to evaluate the types of judgements that are included in the judgements issued. This variable includes the following attributes: trust, transparency, ability to justify and explain decisions, consensus, compliance with the law, efficiency, responsibility, commitment, sympathy, communication skills, corruption, proximity, popularity, history of the organization, exemplariness and leadership.

Research question 2: Do the judgements of citizens tend to be more similar to the judgements made by the media than to those of the organization regarding the type of legitimacy and the tone of the judgement?

The results obtained from this research are analysed below.

3. Results

In this section we will show the results of the data obtained from the content analysis done in the three observation points. It must be noted that the data of the actors are presented in two ways when dealing with them. On the one hand, we talk about 'gathered actors' when all the data from the same observation point are added together and distinguishing between the online and offline context. On the other hand, we refer to 'non-gathered actors' when dealing with the data separately.

3.1. Congruence in the content of the organization versus the media and citizens

By means of the variable *judgement* we intended to obtain a little more precise information about the features or characteristics to which the legitimacy judgements refer in each actor.

Table 1. The content of the judgements of the non-gathered actors

Attributes	Online organization			Offline organization	Online media	Offline media	Citizens
	Wert's Twitter	Méndez de Vigo's Twitter	Ministry of Education's Twitter	Press releases and announcements	Press on Twitter	Print media	Tweets from citizens
Trust	0% (0)	0.6% (1)	0% (0)	0.8% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Transparency	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.8% (15)	1.3% (5)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.6% (2)
Ability to justify and explain decisions	14.7% (5)	6.6% (12)	0.7% (14)	17.4% (69)	22.8% (28)	15% (40)	18.2% (58)
Consensus	5.9% (2)	17.7% (32)	37% (720)	22.2% (96)	11.4% (14)	19.5% (52)	20.7% (66)
Compliance with the law	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.1% (1)	1.8% (7)	0.8% (1)	4.5% (12)	0.6% (2)
Efficiency	47.1% (16)	34.8% (63)	61.1% (1.187)	53.7% (213)	60.2% (74)	50.9% (136)	48% (153)
Responsibility	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.2% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.4% (1)	0% (0)
Commitment	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.1% (2)	0.3% (1)	0% (0)	0.7% (2)	0.6% (2)
Sympathy	5.9% (2)	1.1% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.8% (1)	3% (8)	5.3% (17)
Communication skills	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.4% (1)	0% (0)
Corruption	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.4% (1)	1.6% (5)
Proximity	23.5% (8)	39.2% (71)	0% (0)	0.3% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.3% (1)
Popularity	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.1% (1)	0% (0)	1.6% (2)	1.5% (4)	0% (0)
History of the organization	2.9% (1)	0% (0)	0.1% (1)	0% (0)	1.6% (2)	3.7% (10)	4.1% (13)
Exemplariness	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.5% (2)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Leadership	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.8% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)
N= 3265							
Chi-square= 0.000							

Source: created by author

As it is shown in Table 1, the main attribute of all the non-gathered actors is *efficiency*, except for the minister Méndez de Vigo on Twitter, whose judgements include more frequently the attribute *proximity* or *distance*. There are some contrasts between the different actors of the organization. The data indicate that the second most used attribute by Wert was *proximity* or *distance*, and *efficiency* in the case of Méndez de Vigo. However, it was the *ability to interact or agree* the most relevant attribute in the twitter profile of the Ministry or in the press releases issued by the latter.

There are also some differences concerning the media: the print media is more congruent with both the organization on Twitter and the press releases with the attribute *ability to interact or agree* (19, 5%) as the second most used in the judgements, whereas the media on Twitter places more importance on the attribute *ability to justify and explain decisions* (22,8%).

However, after *efficiency*, citizens attached more importance to the attribute *compliance with the law* (20,7%) in their judgements.

For the sake of congruency, an analysis of bivariate correlations was performed between the content hierarchies of the different judgements made by each specific actor (non-gathered), that is, arranged in descending order, according to the percentage of frequency obtained in each case to verify the similarity between the different rankings. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Bivariate correlations between the attributes of the different non-gathered actors

	Wert's Twitter	Méndez de Vigo's Twitter	Ministry of Education's Twitter	Press releases and announcements	Press on Twitter	Print media	Tweets from citizens
Wert's Twitter	1						
Méndez de Vigo's Twitter	.561*	1					
Ministry of Education's Twitter	-	-.329	1				
Press releases and announcements	-	.302	-	1			
Press on Twitter	.403	-	-	-.554*	1		
Print media	-	-	.357	-.307	-	1	
Tweets from citizens	.428	-	-	.403	-	-	1

N= 16

Source: created by the author

The data show that there is a statistically significant correlation (Spearman's Rho = .02) in the attributes of the judgement on Twitter that were most important to the minister Wert and those that were most important to the minister Méndez de Vigo (coefficient .56). As a matter of fact, this is an expected result since, despite being different ministers, they belong to the same government and party, and naturally, their discourse should be somewhat consistent. Then, the phenomenon *organizational hybridity* coined by Chadwick (2007) occurs, meaning that leaders, apart from using traditional media, have adopted the use of social media to enrich the communication offered to citizens; and in this case, it can be noticed that there is consistency between the messages of the minister Méndez de Vigo and the minister Wert.

Another interesting and statistically significant connection can be derived from the data (Spearman's Rho = .02), negative in this case (coefficient -.55), between the attributes of the judgements made by the organization in the press releases and those made by the media on Twitter. That is to say, there seems to be a rift between the communication by the offline organization and the communication in the online media. For the time being, it seems that, as far as the content of the judgement is concerned, the organization is unable to determine just by means of its press releases the issues for the agenda of the online media.

And the opposite of what Giansante (2015) suggests may have happened: the organization has to take into account the differences between traditional and social media. That is, if an organization sends a press release to the media, it has to think of another strategy for social media as well. This does not seem to have been the case, according to these data.

Although not statistically significant, it should also be noted that there was a positive correlation between the content of the judgements issued by Wert, on the one hand, with those of the media on Twitter (.403) and, on the other, with the tweets of citizens (.428), a correlation that is explained by the nature of the medium: online communication may be inclining the different actors towards the same type of attributes.

Also of no statistical significance, there is some correlation between the communication by the Ministry on Twitter and the print media (.357), and between the attributes of press releases and those of citizens (.403). However, and surprisingly, there is a negative correlation in the content of the judgements of the minister Méndez de Vigo and the Ministry of

Education on Twitter (-.329), as if the minister had carried his own agenda of attributes independent of the organization he represents. Finally, it is also interesting to note an equally negative correlation (-.307) between the press releases of the organization and the content of the judgements made by the media, whether print or online. This is the second relevant piece of information we arrive at that shows that the press releases of the Ministry have not been able to influence the media. In response to research question 1 and considering these data, we can confirm that the judgements made by the organization are far from those made by the media and citizens. Despite the fact that the most used attribute in all the judgements is that of efficiency in all the actors, except for the minister Méndez de Vigo, there is no correlation between the three points of observation. Moreover, in the case of press releases and online media, it is given in a negative way, that is, high values of one correspond to low values of the other or vice versa. In short, it seems that what is central to building the legitimacy of an organization, namely the congruence between its judgements and those of its various stakeholders, has not occurred as far as the Ministry of Education is concerned at the stage studied in this paper.

3.2. Congruence in the type of legitimacy of the organization versus the media and citizens

Basing on the data shown in Table 3 and 4, we will analyse the congruence in the type of legitimacy of the organization versus the other two points of observation.

Table 3. The four dimensions of legitimacy of the non-gathered actors

Actors		Type of legitimacy			
		Procedural	Consequential	Structural	Personal
Online organization	Wert's Twitter	70% (21)	10% (3)	0% (0)	20% (6)
	Méndez de Vigo's Twitter	78.8% (82)	15.4% (16)	0% (0)	5.8% (6)
	Ministry of Education's Twitter	95% (1.847)	1.5% (30)	3.4% (67)	0% (0)
Offline organization	Press releases and announcements	91.4% (363)	8.6% (34)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Online press	Press on Twitter	79.8% (99)	9.7% (12)	0% (0)	10.5% (13)
Offline press	Print media	51.3% (139)	35.8% (97)	0.4% (1)	12.5% (34)
Citizens	Tweets from citizens	74.8% (243)	6.5% (21)	0% (0)	18.8% (61)
N= 3195					
Chi-square= 0.000					

Source: created by the author

Table 4. The four dimensions of legitimacy of the gathered actors

Actors	Type of legitimacy			
	Procedural	Consequential	Structural	Personal
Online organization	81.3% (1.950)	9% (49)	1.1% (67)	8.6% (12)
Offline organization	91.4% (363)	8.6% (34)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Online press	79.8% (99)	9.7% (12)	0% (0)	10.5% (13)
Offline press	51.3% (139)	35.8% (97)	0.4% (1)	12.5%(34)
Citizens	74.8% (243)	6.5% (21)	0% (0)	18.8%(61)
N= 3195				
Chi-square= 0.000				

Source: created by the author

The data show that there is indeed no congruence between the different actors, that is, there is concern about different issues at the three levels observed. And citizens are more in line with the media than with the organization; but curiously, not with the offline media but with the online one: the patterns of concern about the results and the leader reflected by citizens coincide with those of the online media. The offline media is the one that leads the discourse on management results, but it is not followed by citizens. And, in response to research question 1, the media and citizens do not agree –do not follow– with the message that the organization formulated: none share this almost exclusive concern for procedures.

3.3. Congruence in the tone of the judgement of the organization versus the media and citizens.

Table 5 shows the tone of the judgements of the gathered actors.

Table 5. Tone of the judgements of the gathered actors

Actors	Tone of judgement		
	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Online organization	17.9% (99)	0% (0)	82.1% (2.079)
Offline organization	9.1% (36)	0% (0)	90.9% (361)
Online press	7.3% (9)	42.7% (53)	50% (62)
Offline press	16.1% (44)	51.8% (142)	32.1% (88)
Citizens	8.8% (29)	52.3% (172)	38.9% (128)
N= 3302			
Chi-square= 0.000			

Source: created by the author

The data show a great disparity between the judgements of the three actors: the high neutrality of the organization is not followed by the media or citizens. These, as expected, are more negative (52.3%) than the organization (0), and due to this negativity they are closer to the judgements of the media. But, curiously, the judgements of citizens are closer to the offline media (negativity rate 51.8%) than to the online one (negativity rate 42.7%). We say *curiously* because it could be expected that, as the analysed communication by citizens is online, it would be the online media to which their judgements are similar; and this is not the case.

Considering the interest of these data, the non-gathered actors are reproduced in Table 6.

Table 6. Tone of the judgements of the non-gathered actors

Actors		Tone of judgement		
		Positive	Negative	Neutral
Online organization	Wert's Twitter	15.2% (7)	0% (0)	84.8% (39)
	Méndez de Vigo's Twitter	37.4% (70)	0% (0)	62.6% (117)
	Ministry of Education's Twitter	1.1% (22)	0% (0)	98.9% (1.923)
Offline organization	Press releases and announcements	9.1% (36)	0% (0)	90.9% (361)
Online press	Press on Twitter	7.3% (9)	42.7% (53)	50% (62)
Offline press	Print media	16.1% (44)	51.8% (142)	32.1% (88)
Citizens	Tweets from citizens	8.8% (29)	52.3% (172)	38.9% (128)
N= 3302				
Chi-square= 0.000				

Source: created by the author

The data show that it is the online communication by the Ministry that increases the neutrality of the organization, since it can be noticed, when the data are viewed separately, that the leaders, although with a predominantly neutral discourse, introduce more positive statements than the organization in its profile. There is a clear difference between the communication by Wert and that of his successor Méndez de Vigo, which almost doubles the positive statements of the former.

On the other hand, the table shows differences between the print media and Twitter. While the former is more negative (51.8%), the latter is neutral (50%) and negative (42.7%). Citizens are predominantly negative (52.3%). Therefore, as for the tone of the judgement, they are more consistent with the print media than with the rest of the actors.

Consequently, the analysis of the contrast clearly shows that there is a disparity between the organization and the media and citizens, and this occurs in all the communication formats of the organization (the accounts of the ministers and the ministry on Twitter, but also in the press releases and announcements). The media on Twitter follows a little more the organizational guidelines than the print media, which is the one that shows more similarity with the discourse of citizens.

Once the data have been analysed, we can answer research question 2: the judgements of citizens tend to be more similar to those of the media than to those of the organization in terms of the type of legitimacy and the tone of the judgement. But it must be explained that, as far as the type of legitimacy is concerned, although procedural legitimacy predominates

in both, both citizens and the media introduce other types of concerns. As for the tone of the judgement, the judgements of citizens are more similar to the media than to the different actors in the organization. But interestingly, this similarity is more emphasized with the print media than with the online media.

4. Conclusions

After the analysis of the data, the conclusions we have reached in the present study are the following.

We conclude that the judgements made by the organization are far from those of the media and citizens, in response to research question 1. Despite the fact that the attribute most used by all the actors in their judgements is that of *effectiveness*, there is no correlation between the three points of observation (organization, media and citizens). The data seem to have shown a lack of congruence within the organization itself; and perhaps this is what is reflected on the media (even the communication by the organization through press releases correlates negatively with the online media) and on citizens.

As for the type of legitimacy, the results show that the predominant one, as previously said, is procedural legitimacy. However, while there is total predominance in the organization, the procedural one was less present than the consequential one in the media, and the most significant in citizens was the personal one.

Having analysed the data, we can state that the judgements of citizens tend to resemble those of the media more than those of the organization in terms of the type of legitimacy and the tone of the judgement, in response to research question 2.

It should be noted, however, that in terms of the type of legitimacy, procedural legitimacy predominates in both actors, although citizens and the media introduce other types of concerns. As for the tone of the judgement, the judgements of citizens are more similar to the media than to the different actors in the organization.

But that resemblance is stronger with the print media than with the online one. Therefore, in general terms, we can conclude that what Chadwick (2013) says is true, that is, it is the traditional media that influences citizens more than the online media.

After this discussion, it seems that what is central to building the legitimacy of an organization, namely the congruence between its judgements and those of its various stakeholders, has not occurred as far as the Ministry of Education is concerned at the stage studied in this paper.

Following the media legitimacy approach of Robles and Rodríguez (2017), we conclude that public institutions must watch the media repercussion when elaborating their communication strategies in order to take care of their legitimacy.

In short, the data show the need to develop communication strategies that combine results and personal aspects with processes so as not to distance themselves from the media and citizens. Furthermore, these communication strategies should be adapted to different types of media.

Henceforth, lines of research on the dynamics of legitimacy judgements in the Public Administration are opened. On the other hand, the analysis of the offline communication by citizens, through ad-hoc and specific surveys on legitimacy, is still pending, in order to be able to compare the three points of observation from an offline perspective. Another important

future line of research would be to go deeper into the personal legitimacy of the leader, that is, to analyse the importance that the attributes have on the personal aspects of the political leader within his identity.

Finally, and with regard to the study in the field of intangibles in the public sector, this research has focused on the intangible asset legitimacy, so it would be appropriate to continue the study with other assets such as intellectual capital or social capital, in order to see, ultimately, how the construction of intangibles contributes to the recovery of trust in public organizations.

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