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Open access communication academic journals in Mexico. Challenges and difficulties

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Abstract

[EN] **Introduction.** This research presents the case of communication academic journals in Mexico. It briefly presents some of its background, current state, challenges and difficulties. It also provides the number of undergraduate and graduate communication programs in the country in order to reflect on their current state. **Methodology:** The work is descriptive and it is based on the review of open access academic publications that treat communication topics and sub-topics. It identifies the characteristics that give them the description of “academic”, examines their visibility through database indexing, access formats, use of Open *Journal Systems* (OJS), inclusion of the *digital object identifier* (DOI), use of anti-plagiarism programs, adherence to the *Committee on Publication Ethics* (Cope), use of *Creative Commons* licenses and registration of quotes in *Google Scholar*, diversity in access formats, among others. **Results and discussion:** The current state of open access communication publications in Mexico is specified. The fact that the number of existing publications is insufficient and that they coexist with their print versions but electronic versions are lagging behind technological advancement and international standardization processes is what leaves them outside of the interest of national authors for publication. It also recognizes the existence of journals endorsed by educational institutions that are not precisely interested in being indexed to national and international databases, since its endogamous/institutional role allows them to be a learning platform for the training of academics who experiment the art of publishing for the first time.

Keywords.

[EN] academic/scientific journals; communication journals; electronic journals; Mexico; Conacyt.

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Translation by Viridiana Liera Arce

1. Introduction

1.1. Open access to scientific communication in Mexico

Regardless of the area of study, the arrival of information and communication technologies has made it difficult to perceive scientific communication without internet and open access, since they facilitate knowledge by expanding its dissemination to the international scientific society. In this sense, “open access is perceived as the new scientific communication model” (Ferreras-Fernández and Merlo-Vega, 2015, p. 96).

This reality is not indifferent to Mexico. Proof of this is the fact that the 2014-2018 Science, Technology and Innovation Program in section number 1.7.2 mentions that more than one hundred Mexican electronic journals that specialize in science and technology are available in open access to the public thanks to policies implemented by the National Science and Technology Council (Conacyt for its Spanish acronym),[1] as part of the changes established in 2014 in the Science and Technology Act, which emphasize the democratization of access to scientific, technologic and innovation information (Conacyt, 2014a).

These changes were also reflected in the indicators to assess and classify scientific journals within Conacyt, which included three types as of 2016: dissemination journals, scientific research journals and technological research journals. They all had the same value, regardless of the area to which they belonged, 1) physics, mathematics and Earth sciences; 2) biology and chemistry; 3) medicine and health sciences; 4) humanities and behavioral sciences; 5) social sciences; 6) biotechnology and agricultural sciences, and 7) engineering and multidisciplinary.

Even though the classification by areas is still available in Conacyt’s webpage, in mid-2016, publications were assessed internally, and re-classified into two categories: 1) the ones indexed in the Journal Citation Report (JCR) of the Web of Science (WoS) and those included in the SCImago Journal and Country Rank (SJR) of Scopus, and 2) the ones that weren’t. In the case of publications incorporated in WoS and Scopus, they were sub-classified into quarters assigned by them —Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4—, while those that did not appear in said indexes were ordered according to the weighted score of the internal assessment and divided into four groups with the same number of titles each: international journals (RCI), national journals(RCN), journals in consolidation (REC) and journals in development (RED).

Figure 1 shows the new classification implemented in 2016 by the Mexican Science and Technology Journals Classification system (CRMCyT for its Spanish acronym), previously called Mexican Scientific and Technologic Dissemination Journals Index.



Figure 1. Scale of eight steps to classify Mexican journals (Conacyt, 2016c).

This change was very relevant for communication academic in Mexico, because it reconfigured the indicators, giving value to journals that were incorporated to databases such as Latindex,[2] Redalyc,[3] SciELO México,[4] Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and Google Scholar.

With this new methodology to “assess science in Mexico”, journals in consolidation (REC) and journals in development (RED) entered Conacyt’s CRMcyT for the first time, while better-ranked publications, additional to keeping their status, must establish strategies to elevate their scores, or they might drop to a lower level or leave the system (Conacyt, 2016a).

2. Brief background of communication academic journals in Mexico

Before developing this section, it is necessary to recognize and reference the work by researchers José Antonio Meyer Rodríguez and María Belén Fernández Fuentes (2012), who made an extensive chronological review of communication journals in Mexico, which is outlined in table 1.

Table 1. First communication journals in Mexico

Name of the publication	Publisher	Start Year	Situation (Review: December of 2016)
<i>Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales</i> [5] (<i>Mexican Journal of Political and Social Sciences</i>)	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México	1955	Valid, vol. 62, no. 229 (2017) http://www.revistas.unam.mx/index.php/rmstpys
<i>Cuadernos de Comunicación</i> [6] (<i>Communication Notes</i>)	Fundación Eulalio Ferrer	1975	Discontinued
<i>Comunicación y Cultura en América Latina</i> (<i>Communication and Culture in Latin America</i>)	Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana	1978	Electronic access only up to instalment no. 14, July 1985 http://bidi.xoc.uam.mx/fasciculos_revista.php?id_revista=13
<i>Cuadernos del Ticom</i> (Taller de Investigación en Comunicación) (Ticom - Communication Research Workshop -Notes)	Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana	1980	The last identified registry belongs to Ticom Notes, era 50, 2005
<i>Tecnología y Comunicación Educativas</i> (<i>Educational Technology and</i>	Instituto Latinoamericano de la Comunicación Educativa	1985	The last registry identified in the webpage is TyCE no. 47-48 /2008-2009

Name of the publication	Publisher	Start Year	Situation (Review: December of 2016)
<i>Communication)</i>			
<i>Estudios sobre las Culturas Contemporáneas (Studies on Contemporary Cultures)</i>	Universidad de Colima	1986	Valid, era III, vol. XXII, no. 44, winter, 2016 http://www.culturascontemporaneas.com/
<i>Comunicación y Sociedad (Communication and Society)</i>	Universidad de Guadalajara	1987	Valid, no. 28 (2017) http://www.revistascientificas.udg.mx/index.php/comsoc
<i>Revista Mexicana de Comunicación (Mexican Communication Journal)</i>	Edited by Fundación Manuel Buendía. Started a new era in 2015, starting on number 137, published by Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana	1988	Valid, edition 139, July-December 2016 http://mexicanadecomunicacion.com.mx/rmc/
<i>Convergencia, Revista de Ciencias Sociales (Convergence, Social Sciences Journal)</i>	Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México	1993	Valid, no. 73, January-April 2017 http://convergencia.uaemex.mx/
<i>Razón y Palabra (Reason and Word)</i>	Sponsored by Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey [7]	1996	Valid, vol. 20, no. 2 -93 (2016) http://www.revistarazonypalabra.org/index.php/ryp
<i>Sala de Prensa (Press Room)</i>	Gerardo Albarrán	1998	Valid, no. 130, Februray 2011, year XII, vol. 6 http://www.saladeprensa.org/
<i>Revista Iberoamericana de Derecho de la Información (Right to Information Journal)</i>	Universidad Iberoamericana and Fundación Manuel Buendía	1998	Discontinued
<i>Espacio Público (Public Space)</i>	Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México	1998	Valid, 2016, 19 (46), en versión electrónica mediante RedAlyc http://www.redalyc.org/revista.oa?id=676&numero=46966

Name of the publication	Publisher	Start Year	Situation (Review: December of 2016)
<i>Tópicos de la Comunicación</i> (<i>Communication Topics</i>)	Universidad de Sonora	2000	Interrupted regularity. Last electronic version is from 2013 http://www.psicom.uson.mx/topicos/index.html
<i>Zócalo</i>	Carlos Padilla Ríos (director and founder, private initiative)	2000	Valid, January 13, 2017 http://www.revistazocalo.com.mx/
<i>Etcétera</i>	Editora Periodística y Análisis de Contenidos, S.A. de C.V	2001	Valid, January 2017, no. 194 http://www.etcetera.com.mx/
<i>Revista Iberoamericana de Comunicación</i> (<i>Ibero-American Communication Journal</i>)	Universidad Iberoamericana	2001	Discontinued. Last electronic version is from fall 2003. http://www.iberomx.com/departamentos/dpt_comunicacion/ric/default.html
Started as <i>Hipermedios</i> and then took the name of <i>Global Media Journal</i>	Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey	2002	Valid, fall 2016 https://journals.tdl.org/gmjei/index.php/GMJ_EI/issue/view/37
<i>Ámbitos</i> (<i>Environments</i>)	Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México	After 2000	Discontinued
<i>Sintaxis</i> (<i>Syntax</i>)	Universidad Anáhuac	After 2000	Discontinued http://revistasintaxis.blogspot.mx/ Three numbers were published

Source: own adaptation of Meyer-Rodríguez and Fernández-Fuentes work, 2012

“For a little over three decades, printed and electronic publications that have allowed knowing the work of some of the most active and organized communication academic communities (Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey) have come and gone from Mexico” (Meyer-Rodríguez and Fernández-Fuentes, 2012, p. 26)

The contribution to the work of Meyer-Rodríguez and Fernández-Fuentes (2012) can be identified in the fourth column of table 1, where the current situation of the publications is specified. It can also be seen in the identification of the type of journal (public or private) according to the higher education institutions to which they belong (see table 3).

Also of great relevance to this section is the article *Communication Journals in Mexico* by Dr. Raúl Fuentes Navarro in 2007, who identifies three academic journals as the most important in the field of communication in Mexico: *Studies on Contemporary Cultures*, *Communication and Society and Version*, *communication and politics studies* (Fuentes Navarro, 2007).

“These three journals share one characteristic: they are edited by public universities, directly associated to well-defined academic production projects that are supported by teams of researchers that are mature, in training and affiliated to branches of these universities...Universidad de Colima, Universidad de Guadalajara and Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Unidad Xochimilco” (Fuentes, 2007, p. 107).

These were also the object of study in the dissertation for master of communication *Glimmers of Communication: Knowledge dissemination through academic publications* defended by Karla Margarita Ramírez y Ramírez in 2003, at Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO) in Guadalajara, Mexico (Ramírez y Ramírez, 2003).

From the three publications mentioned by Fuentes (2007) as the most important,—*Studies on Contemporary Cultures*, *Communication and Society and Version*, *communication and politics studies*— only the journal *Communication and Society* — published by the Department of Social Communication Studies of the University of Guadalajara, is recognized by Conacyt (in 2016), while the journal *Studies on Contemporary Cultures* was indexed to Conacyt in the beginning (Ramírez y Ramírez, 2003).

Another relevant work in terms of electronic communication academic journals in Mexico is the dissertation of Mtra. Hernández Lugay (2004), *Academic Communication Online: towards the appropriation of electronic communication journals by communication researchers in Mexico*, who says that “the future and acceptance of electronic communication journals online depends greatly on the project of each publication, which must focus on the guarantee of quality of the product...” “...and that the field is of possibilities more than consolidations” (Hernández, 2005, p. 146 y 149).

2.1. Who assesses communication academic journals in Mexico?

To answer this question, it is necessary to express that the most important organization in Mexico that assesses and legitimizes scientific production is the National Science and Technology Council (Conacyt), founded in 1970.

It is worth mentioning that this organization’s first open call to assess and certify the quality of Mexican scientific journals -regardless of the area of study- was presented 23 years after its foundation. So, it was until 1993 when editors of Mexican printed scientific journals were invited for the first time to an assessment to be part of the Mexican Scientific and Technological Research Journals Index of Conacyt. Even though there were electronic magazines already available in the country, they were not considered quality projects by Conacyt, because for this organization, science could only be conceived traditionally, which meant in paper (López-Ornelas 2006).

Fortunately, in the last few years, Conacyt has worked on adapting, innovating and systemizing the criteria to assess academic journals based on international guidelines, so it has implemented different strategies in favor of science in Mexico. The most relevant strategies in terms of scientific journals are presented below:

- In 2007, a methodology that recognizes electronic academic journals in the country is incorporated. One publication is certified through this open call: *Revista Electrónica de Investigación Educativa (Redie, Educational Research Electronic Journal)*. [8]
- In 2009, a cooperation agreement was signed with eight national institutions [9] to formally build the National Consortium for Scientific and Technologic Information Resources (CONRICyT for its Spanish acronym) in order to broaden and facilitate the access to scientific information at higher education institutions and research centers in Mexico. As a result of the communication and promotion strategies of this organization, an annual event of great relevance to the national academic community was organized: the “Between Peers” [10] (CONRICyT, 2016, s/p) event, promoted mainly by the editors of Mexican scientific journals.
- In 2012, the Mexican Scientific and Technologic Dissemination Journals Index (IRMDCyT for its Spanish acronym) was created to address some demands and suggestions made by science disseminators to recognize written scientific work (Lujano y Martínez, 2016).
- The *e-Revistas (e-Journals) Project* was created in 2013. It establishes that new publications that are added to the index starting with open call 2014-2015, must do so as electronic journals, regardless if they have a printed version or not. It also requests journals in the index to complete their transition to electronic through the OJS system before December of 2015 (Conacyt-UNAM, 2013).
- In 2014 SCImago Research Group was asked to assess the state of scientific journals that are edited in Mexico. The research was generated in two years, and its results were presented to the academic community and to more than 320 editors of Mexican scientific journals at the “Between Peers” forum in 2014 and 2015.
- In August of 2016, the methodology proposed by Conacyt went through one of its most important updates. In this scientific metamorphosis, it recognized journals incorporated to databases such as Latindex, Redalyc, SciELO México, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and Google Scholar, classifying them in eight levels and two categories: those indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus, and those that are not; the last group is sub-divided into four: international journals (RCI), national journals (RCN), journals in consolidation (REC) and journals in development (RED) (see figure 1). Another event with great relevance for the Mexican scientific community in the same period was to establish that only open access journals would be validated by Conacyt, leaving out journals with embargo periods (Conacyt, 2016c).

This new assessment methodology proposed by Conacyt is considered of great importance to the scientific community in Mexico, since it makes light of the importance of open access. It also recognizes uprising journals, identifying them in two of the four groups mentioned above: REC and RED. By including them in the Mexican Science and Technology Journals Classification system (CRMCyT), Conacyt helps them be identified as quality journals and encourages people to publish through them.

“[...] Conacyt is not interested in competing with the *Science Citation Index*. It wants to promote the best scientific and technological research journals in Mexico so that they are more visible in the national and international environments, and in the near future, achieve their incorporation to the best international indexes” (Bonilla y Pérez, 1999, p. 102).

In general, these changes strengthen Conacyt’s policies, which have been strict [11] and also strongly criticized in regards to scientific journals (Magaña Rueda, 2014). Currently, without being too relaxed, they distinguish the added value provided by databases such as Latindex, RedAlyc, SciELO México, *Directory of Open Access Journals* and Google Scholar, which establish quality assurance controls to index scientific journals. For example, since 2002, the Latindex catalog has

incorporated only scientific journals that comply with specific editorial quality criteria, with 36 criteria for electronic journals [12] and 33 for printed journals.[13] In the same line, in 2016, DOAJ eliminated approximately 3 300 journals from its directory. This process implied almost two years of planning by DOAJ, and its objective was to elevate the value and quality of open access publications through the compliance of international criteria (DOAJ, 2016).

2.1.1. Some challenges of communication journals in Mexico

Academic journals in the area of communication in Mexico face a whirlwind of technologic advancement with emerging projects that are rapidly overcome by technological advancement. Even though some journals are also available in electronic form, their experience is not up to date with publishing technology, because it dismisses the implementation of Open Journal Systems (OJS) and *digital object identifier* (DOI). The latter is considered as the digital ISBN of the XXI century (Martín, 2013), because it is a unique and permanent digital content identifier that does not change in time; even if the electronic path of the document changes, its numerical identifier is kept intact in all type of electronic documents such as articles, books, videos, images, texts, audio, electronic files, etcetera (Álvarez-Ávila, 2009; Davidson & Douglas, 1998; López-Guzmán & Estrada, 2005; Martín, 2013). Even though it is considered a technical matter, it is distinguished as a factor of quality in scientific journals (Rodríguez-Yunta, 2013).

Other challenges that communication academic publications in Mexico face are those that are closely related to peer reviewing, periodicity, visibility, integration to databases, access formats, use of anti-plagiarism programs, adherence to the *Committee on Publication Ethics* (Cope),[14] incorporation of *Creative Commons* licenses, registration of citations and user statistics using Google Scholar and Google Analytics, among others that sometimes don't allow communication journals in Mexico to be visible to international or even national communities.

2.1.2. Where are communication journals positioned in Mexico?

The “V. Social Sciences” area of the Mexican Science and Technology Journals Classification system (CRMCYT) of Conacyt [15] registered 68 quality publications in December of 2016. Among these publications, there were three journals with communication topics and sub-topics: *Comunicación y Sociedad (Communication and Society)* —published by the Social Communication Department of the Cultural Studies Division of the University of Guadalajara [16]—, *CONfines de Relaciones Internacionales y Ciencia Política (CONfines of International Relations and Political Science)* —edited by the Department of International Relations and Political Science of the School of Business, Social Sciences and Humanities of Tecnológico de Monterrey, Monterrey Campus [17]— and *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales (Mexican Political and Social Sciences Journal)* —published by the School of Political and Social Sciences of la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México[18]—.

This exposes a reality of contrast and skepticism. Contrast because, historically, “the first communication-focused undergraduate program in Mexico and Latin America was founded in 1960 by Universidad Iberoamericana and demand for this program has not stopped growing in five decades” (Fuentes-Navarro, 2010, p. 215). And even though the “process of building the field of academic research in communication in Mexico emerged in the mid-seventies” (Fuentes-Navarro 2010, p. 104), the numbers indicate that more than four decades of strengthening of communication research in Mexico have passed. However, the biggest legitimizing organization of science in Mexico (Conacyt) certifies only three scientific publications in the area of communication in Mexico. Skepticism because, recently, the methodological proposal of CRMCYT, recognized as

inclusive, opened the doors of its classification system to all journals that complied with a minimum of two years of uninterrupted existence and preserved the indicators that make them “scientific”.

The methodology established recently by Conacyt assesses academic journals in six dimensions, and each of them have a number of variables and criteria that contribute with a score that positions the journal at a maximum of 100 points, as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Assessment criteria of the Mexican Science and Technology Journals Classification system (Conacyt, 2016c)

Dimensions	Number of criteria	Maximum score	Weight
1. Editorial policies and management	8	27	15%
2. Content quality	3	20	25%
3. Citation level	3	12	25%
4. Compliance of publication frequency	3	8	10%
5. Accessibility	4	13	10%
6. International Visibility	5	20	15%
Total	26	100	100%

Source: Conacyt (2016c)

Some of the main benefits of the CRMcyT system (Conacyt, 2016c, pp. 4 y 5) are shown below:

- It pursues the improvement of all scientific journals that are edited in Mexico, offering support to improve their development and assure their quality to be incorporated to the system.
- Assesses the electronic version of publications, fostering their international visibility and impact.
- Assesses all Mexican scientific journals equally.
- Automatically includes journals with international indexation.
- Considers qualitative variables that are expected, regardless of the reviewer, to give coherent results at the level of the journals.
- There is a process in which editors are approached to give them indications of the improvements they could implement in their publications in the mid and long-term, which allows them to assess progress.
- Opens the editorial characteristics of each assessed publication to the community with the purpose of providing information for decision-making.

This exposes the different possibilities that are being generated by Conacyt to promote Mexican scientific journals, so it is inevitable to ask what is happening with journals in the area of communication in Mexico, given that there is so much demand for communication undergraduate programs in the country.

“According to data published by Felafacs (2009), there are more than one thousand ‘Communication’ programs operating in Mexico. Most of them at hundreds of institutions with specific commercial characters” (Fuentes-Navarro, 2011, p. 215).

2.1.2.1. How many communication schools are there in Mexico?

According with the Latin-American Federation of Social Communication Schools (*Federación Latinoamericana de Facultades de Comunicación Social* - Felafacs), there are 67 higher education institutions where communication undergraduate programs are taught in Mexico. It is worth mentioning that Mexico, compared with the other countries affiliated to this organization, is the one that has the most number of higher education institutions where communication programs are taught (see table 3).

Table 3. Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean affiliated to Felafacs.

Country	Number of registered schools
Argentina	21
Bolivia	15
Brazil	1
Colombia	53
Costa Rica	5
Cuba	1
Chile	3
Ecuador	6
El Salvador	5
Guatemala	2
Honduras	3
Mexico	67
Nicaragua	1
Panama	3
Paraguay	1
Peru	28
Puerto Rico	8
Dominican Republic	6
Uruguay	3
Venezuela	4

Own creation, source: Felafacs (2016).

It is important to mention that the 67 IES in Mexico in reality are 48 plus their respective campuses located in other cities or states. In this sense, of the 48 IES where communication undergraduate programs are taught in Mexico, 17 are public and 31 are private (see table 4); private ones suppose - hypothetically- more economic possibilities to safeguard the editing, implementation, technologic infrastructure and human resources costs that entail managing a scientific journal. Table 4 shows only the higher education institutions in Mexico that are registered at the Latin American Federation of Social Communication Schools (<http://felafacs.org/secciones/mexico/>), which does not mean that there are no other higher education institutions that offer communication programs, it only means that they are not registered at Felafacs. Such is the case of Universidad Veracruzana, which is registered but it is not included in table 4 because its website does not have information about it (<http://felafacs.org/universidad-veracruzana-2/>).

Table 4. Higher education institutions in Mexico that offer communication undergraduate programs

Name	Type
1. Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla	Public
2. Centro de Estudios Universitarios de Monterrey	Private
3. Escuela de Periodismo Carlos Septién García	Private
4. Instituto Campechano	Private
5. Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO)	Private
6. Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), Campus Cuernavaca, Monterrey, Querétaro and Estado de México	Private
7. Universidad Nacional Autónoma México	Public
8. Universidad Anáhuac Cancún, Mayab, México Norte and Xalapa	Private
9. Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Campus Tijuana, Mexicali and Ensenada	Public
10. Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua	Public
11. Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila, Campus Saltillo and Unidad Torreón	Public
12. Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero	Public
13. Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León	Public
14. Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro	Public
15. Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí	Public
16. Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa	Public
17. Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas, Campus Tampico and Victoria	Public
18. Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo	Public
19. Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México	Public
20. Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco	Public
21. Universidad Cristóbal Colón	Private
22. Universidad de Celaya	Private
23. Universidad de Colima	Public
24. Universidad de Guadalajara	Public
25. Universidad de La Salle Bajío, A.C.	Private
26. Universidad de las Américas	Private
27. Universidad de Monterrey	Private
28. Universidad de Occidente, Unidad Culiacán and Unidad Los Mochis	Private
29. Universidad de Sonora	Public
30. Universidad del Altiplano	Private
31. Universidad del Centro de México	Private
32. Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana	Private
33. Universidad del Noreste	Private
34. Universidad del Tepeyac	Private
35. Universidad del Valle de Atemajac	Private
36. Universidad del Valle de México, Campus Hermosillo, Campus Lomas Verdes, Campus Querétaro, Campus San Rafael, Campus Tlalpan	Private

37. Universidad Iberoamericana, Ciudad de México, León, Puebla, Torreón	Private
38. Universidad Intercontinental	Private
39. Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco	Private
40. Universidad Justo Sierra	Private
41. Universidad Kino, A.C.	Private
42. Universidad La Salle Laguna	Private
43. Universidad La Salle, A.C.	Private
44. Universidad Lasallista Benavente, S.C.	Private
45. Universidad Latina de América	Private
46. Universidad Loyola del Pacífico	Private
47. Universidad México Americana del Norte	Private
48. Universidad Panamericana, Campus Ciudad de México	Private

Own creation, source: Felafacs (2016).

2.1.2.2. How many communication graduate programs exist in Mexico?

The National Program of Quality Graduate Programs (PNPC) [19] of the National Science and Technology Council, classifies graduate programs into four levels:

1. International: they have collaborations in international environments through agreements with student and faculty mobility and co-direction of dissertations and joint research projects.
2. Consolidated: they acquire national recognition thanks to the appropriateness and impact in the education of high-level human resources, academic productivity and collaboration with other sectors of society.
3. In development: they establish a positive academic prospection based on their improvement plan and goals that are attainable in the mid-term.
4. Recent creation: they satisfy the basic criteria and standards established by PNPC (Conacyt, 2014b, s/p)

Additional to this classification, graduate programs in Mexico are divided by focus (research or professional).

Paradoxically, in Mexico there are only 17 graduate programs in the area of communication that are recognized by Conacyt, which are classified as follows:

- 15 master's degrees: four were recently created, seven are in development, two in consolidation and two in international consolidation —highest classification to which graduate degrees in Mexico can aspire—. Of these programs, 11 are taught at public institutions and four at private institutions. Seven have a research focus and eight a professional focus. All fifteen programs are offered in the traditional modality.
- Two doctoral degrees, both recently created. Taught at private institutions with research focus and traditional modality.

“PNPC recognizes the educational ability of graduate programs; the methodology for assessment and follow-up is both qualitative and quantitative, and it values the compliance of appropriateness and quality standards” (Conacyt, 2014b, s/p).

In this sense, full-time students who are studying face to face graduate programs accredited by PNPC, are awarded scholarships to support them fully or partially, including medical services during the program. Additionally, students have the possibility to request a mixed scholarship for national or international mobility for research stays. There are even get post-doctoral scholarships for graduates of doctoral programs registered at PNPC.

Table 5 shows the 17 graduate programs in the area of communication in Mexico, as well as the institutions that offer them and the classification level given by PNPC.

Table 5. Graduate programs in Mexico in the area of social sciences that are included in the National Program of Quality Graduate Programs of Conacyt, 2017

Graduate program	Institution	State	Type	Focus	Level
Masters in strategic communication	Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla	Puebla	Public	Professional	In development
Masters in management of innovation in information and communication technologies	Infotec Centro de Investigación e Innovación en las Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación	Ciudad de México	Public	Professional	In development
Masters in information and communication technologies law	Infotec Centro de Investigación e Innovación en las Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación	Ciudad de México	Public	Professional	In development
Masters in information and communication technologies law	Infotec Centro de Investigación e Innovación en las Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación	Ciudad de México	Public	Professional	Recently created
Masters in communication	Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey	Nuevo León	Privado	Research	Consolidated
Masters in communication with specialization in promotion of science and culture	Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente	Jalisco	Privado	Research	International

Doctorate in communication research	Universidad Anáhuac	Ciudad de México	Private	Research	Recently created
Masters in strategic communication and public relations	Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero	Guerrero	Public	Professional	Recently created
Masters in communication and digital culture	Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro	Querétaro	Public	Research	Recently created
Masters in communication with emphasis on social and corporate communication, digital design and mass media	Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas	Tamaulipas	Public	Professional	In development
Masters in political communication	Universidad Autónoma de Metropolitana	Ciudad de México	Public	Research	In development
Masters in communication	Universidad de Guadalajara	Jalisco	Public	Research	International
Masters in communication and social change	Universidad Iberoamericana	Puebla	Private	Research	Recently created
Doctorate in communication	Universidad Iberoamericana	Ciudad de México	Private	Research	Recently created
Masters in communication	Universidad Iberoamericana	Ciudad de México	Private	Professional	In development
Masters in communication	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México	Ciudad de México	Public	Research	Consolidated
Masters in culture and communication studies	Universidad Veracruzana	Veracruz	Public	Research	In development

Source: Conacyt (2014b).

“The proportion of more than 75 thousand undergraduate students to less than one thousand graduate students in communication at Mexican universities has generated a diagnosis of a field with too many undergraduate programs and too few research and advanced professionalization programs” (Fuentes-Navarro, 2011, p. 215).

The analytic framework visualizes three basic points in this research: there is growing demand for communication programs in Mexico, not enough graduate programs recognized as *quality graduate*

programs, and three scientific journals accredited by the Mexican Science and Technology Journals Classification system.

3. Research design

3.1. Objectives

The objective of this research is to make a descriptive study that allows presenting the current state of open access academic journals in the area of communication in Mexico. Once this is achieved, a second objective is presented, which is to identify the challenges and difficulties of the identified publications.

3.2. Methodology

3.2.1 Sample and procedure

To achieve the proposed objectives, the study considered all open access journals in Mexico that address communication topics and sub-topics. In order to do this, we carried out a document search in December of 2016, in which we thoroughly reviewed databases recognized by Conacyt: Latindex, Redalyc, Scielo México, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and Google Scholar (Conacyt, 2016c, pp 7 y 11). The information provided by the studied publications was not automatically considered, meaning that it was verified that all publications that claimed to be indexed in a database, were really there.

It is necessary to explain that the validation of the databases used to identify communication academic journals with open access in Mexico was done because for the first time, in the 2016 open call, the Mexican Science and Technology Journals Classification system awarded points to publications that were indexed in such databases (Conacyt, 2016c).

Following this dynamic, we registered their general characteristics and defined their challenges and difficulties, focusing mainly on the editorial-technological aspects that electronic publications are facing.

Specific search criteria were established for the selection of journals, regardless of the criteria provided by the databases. These were: country, open access, area/discipline/topic/sub-topic and institution/publisher. It is worth mentioning that the criteria were used only to narrow the search, allowing us to identify the name of the publication, its ISSN, publisher, type of institution and database where the journal is indexed, as shown in table 5.

The study of electronic resources online, specifically communication journals is presented as an emerging line of research justified in the context of the academic communication needed to make possible the articulations between the three sub-fields that make up the communication field (scientific, professional and educational), without losing sight of the identification of a typology of specialized journals regarding levels of communication (dissemination, divulgation and promotion) (Hernández, 2006, p. 10).

4. Discussion and results

Table 6 analyzes 11 communication journals in alphabetical order, identifying their ISSN (International Standard Serial Number), publisher, type of instruction and the databases in which they are indexed.

Table 6. Mexican journals that address communication topics or sub-topics and that are indexed in databases recognized by Conacyt

Name of the publication	ISSN	Publisher	Type of IES	Database
1. <i>Antrópica. Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades (Anthropic Social Sciences and Humanities Journal)</i> http://www.antropologia.uady.mx/revista/antropica/antropica.php	2448-5241	Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán	Public	• Latindex
2. <i>Comunicación y Sociedad (Communication and Society)</i> http://www.comunicacionysociedad.cucsh.udg.mx/	0188-252X	Universidad de Guadalajara	Public	• Conacyt • Latindex • Redalyc • SciELO Méx. • Google Scholar
3. <i>CONfines de Relaciones Internacionales y Ciencia Política (CONfines of International Relations and Political Science)</i> http://confines.mty.itesm.mx/	1870-3569	Tecnológico de Monterrey	Private	• Conacyt • Latindex • SciELO Méx. • Google Scholar
4. <i>Derecho a Comunicar (Right to Communicate)</i> http://www.derechoacomunicar.amedia.org.mx/	2007-137X	Asociación Mexicana de Derecho a la Información, A. C.	Private	• Latindex • Google Scholar
5. <i>Espacios Públicos (Public Spaces)</i> http://www.politicas.uae.mx/espaciospublicos/	1665-8140	Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México	Public	• Latindex • Redalyc • DOAJ • Google Scholar
6. <i>Global Media Journal</i> https://journals.tdl.org/gmjei/index.php/GMJ_EI	2007-2031	Texas A&M International University e Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey	Private	• Redalyc • Latindex • Google Scholar
7. <i>Razón y Palabra [20] (Reason and Word)</i> http://www.revistarazonypalabra.org/index.php/ryj	1605-4806	Universidad de Los Hemisferios (Quito, Ecuador)	Public	• Latindex • Google Scholar
8. <i>Revista Mexicana de</i>	2448-492X	Universidad	Public	• Conacyt

Name of the publication	ISSN	Publisher	Type of IES	Database
<i>Ciencias Políticas y Sociales (Mexican Political and Social Sciences Journal)</i> http://www.revistas.unan.mx/index.php/rmspys		Nacional Autónoma de México		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latindex • SciELO Méx • DOAJ • Google Scholar
9. <i>Revista Mexicana de Opinión Pública [21] (Mexican Public Opinion Journal)</i> http://www.revistas.unan.mx/index.php/rmop	2448-4911	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México	Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latindex • Google Scholar
10. <i>Versión. Estudios de Comunicación y Política (Version. Communication and Politics Studies)</i> http://version.xoc.uam.mx/	2007-5758	Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana	Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latindex • Google Scholar
11. <i>VIRTUALIS</i> http://aplicaciones.ccm.itesm.mx/virtualis/index.php/virtualis/index	2007-2678	Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey	Private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latindex • DOAJ • Google Scholar

Of the 11 journals identified in this search

De las 11 revistas identificadas en la búsqueda —mediante la aplicación los indicadores descritos en el apartado de metodología—, se distinguen tres publicaciones que se encuentran indexadas mínimamente a cuatro bases de datos: Conacyt, Latindex, Redalyc y SciELO Méx. A continuación, se muestran, en las figuras 2, 3 y 4, la calificación de las tres revistas otorgada por el sistema de Clasificación de Revistas Mexicanas de Ciencia y Tecnología del Conacyt.



Comunicación y Sociedad
 ISSN: 0188-252X

Clasificación de la Revista: Q4			
Se considera:			
WoS		Scopus	
Journal Impact Factor:	Sin Datos	Source Normalized Impact per Paper:	19
Eigenfactor Score:	Sin Datos	Scimago Journal Rank:	0.104
Total Cites:	Sin Datos	H Index:	1

Figure 2. Classification of the journal *Comunicación y Sociedad (Communication and Society)* in the CRMCYT system of Conacyt, 2016



Confines de Relaciones Internacionales y Ciencia Política
 ISSN: 1879-3569

La revista obtuvo 34.06 pts.	
Se considera:	
De 53.63 pts. a 68.55 pts.	Competencia Internacional
De 45.62 pts. a 53.62 pts.	Competencia Nacional
De 37.57 pts. a 45.61 pts.	En Proceso de Consolidación
De 4.42 pts. a 37.56 pts.	En Desarrollo

Figure 3. Score of the journal *Confines de Relaciones Internacionales y Ciencia Política* (Confines of International Relations and Political Science) in the CRMCyT system of Conacyt, 2016



Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales
 ISSN: 0185-1918

Clasificación de la Revista: Q4			
Se considera:			
WoS		Scopus	
Journal Impact Factor:	Sin Datos	Source Normalized Impact per Paper:	44
Eigenfactor Score:	Sin Datos	Scimago Journal Rank:	0.1
Total Cites:	Sin Datos	H Index:	1

Figure 4. Score of the journal *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales* (Mexican Political and Social Sciences Journal) in the CRMCyT system of Conacyt, 2016

Regarding the other eight journals: *Antrópica. Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades* (*Anthropic. Social Sciences and Humanities Journal*), *Derecho a Comunicar* (*Right to Communicate*), *Espacios Públicos* (*Public Spaces*), *Global Media Journal*, *Razón y Palabra* (*Reason and Word*), *Revista Mexicana de Opinión Pública* (*Mexican Public Opinion Journal*), *Versión. Estudios de Comunicación y Política* (*Version. Communication and Politics Studies*), and *VIRTUALIS*—, they are indexed to the Latindex catalog, which includes only publications that comply with the first eight basic characteristics and at least 17 of the other characteristics, completing a minimum of 25 mandatory characteristics. If a publication does not comply with one of the basic characteristics, they cannot be indexed. Such characteristics are divided in four blocks:

- Basic characteristics with eight mandatory criteria.
- Presentation characteristics, with eight criteria.
- Management and editorial policy characteristics, with nine criteria.
- Content characteristics, with 11 criteria.

This means that the eight registered journals (see table 5) complied with the minimum characteristics to participate in the 2016 open call of Conacyt’s CRMcyT and be recognized as journals in consolidation (REC) or journals in development (RED) (see figure 1), especially as Conacyt notified in writing that it would support a group of up to ten journals which, after undergoing a self-assessment process using CRMcyT methodology that could be found in the editor’s portal [22] between September 5th and 14th, 2016, reached between 20.1 and 24.9 points (Conacyt, 2016a).

Table 7 retakes the same list of publications identified in databases recognized by Conacyt and explored if they complied with the quality criteria pertaining to editorial technological advancements in academic publications, meaning the use of *Open Journal Systems* (OJS), *Digital Object Identifier* (DOI), antiplagiarism program, adherence to the *Committee on Publication Ethics* (Cope), *Creative Commons* license and use of social media, and conversion of articles to *Xtensible Markup Language* (XML), understood as a distinctive criterion for “interoperability with other platforms or content repositories when working with XML semantic metadata” (Hernández-Redero, 2016, p. 137), exclusively inherent to electronic publication.

Table 7. Mexican journals that address communication topics or sub-topics that are indexed in databases recognized by Conacyt.

Name of the publication	OJS	DOI	Anti-plagiarism program	Cope	CC	Access Formats	RSS
<i>Antrópica. Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades (Social Sciences and Humanities Journal)</i>	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	PDF	N/C
<i>Comunicación y Sociedad (Communication and Society)</i>	SI	N/C	SI	SI	N/C	PDF and HTML	Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., includes more than 199 sharing options
<i>CONfines de relaciones Internacionales y Ciencia Política (CONfines of International Relations and Political Science)</i>	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	PDF	N/C
<i>Derecho a Comunicar (Right to Communicate)</i> (disabled link)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Espacios Públicos (Public Spaces)</i>	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	Access to PDF articles depends on Redalyc.	Twitter Facebook Google+
<i>Global Media Journal</i>	SI	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	HTML and	N/C

Name of the publication	OJS	DOI	Anti-plagiarism program	Cope	CC	Access Formats	RSS
<i>Razón y Palabra (Reason and Word)</i>	SI	N/C	N/C	N/C	4.0	PDF HTML and PDF	N/C
12. <i>Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales (Mexican Political and Social Sciences Journal)</i>	SI	N/C	N/C	SI	4.0	HTML and PDF	Facebook
<i>Revista Mexicana de Opinión Pública (Mexican Public Opinion Journal)</i>	SI	N/C	N/C	N/C	4.0	HTML and PDF	Twitter Facebook LinkedIn Google+
<i>Versión. Estudios de Comunicación y Política (Version. Communication and Politics Studies)</i>	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	PDF	Twitter Facebook
<i>VIRTUALIS</i>	SI	N/C	N/C	SI	4.0	HTML and PDF	N/C

N/C: Does not comply. N/A: Non applicable

The results of this analysis showed that from 11 journals, six use the OJS platform and none of them have implemented the use of DOI or XLM in their articles. Regarding the use of computer programs known as anti-plagiarism programs, only the *Comunicación y Sociedad (Communication and Society)* journal specifies in its “Editorial policy” section that they use Turnitin. Three journals claim to be in the *Committee on Publication Ethics*, four use *Creative Commons 4.0* licenses, all of them offer the possibility to view articles using PDF, and only the *Espacios Públicos (Public Spaces)* journal depends on Redalyc to maintain their electronic format. Five publications provide the option to distribute their articles through different social networks, especially *Twitter* and *Facebook*. *Comunicación y Sociedad (Communication and Society)* gives the reader more than 199 options to share their articles.

“Since the end of the 80s and up until today, very few agents of the academic field of communication doubt that the journal *Comunicación y Sociedad (Communication and Society)* consolidated its position as one of the main scientific journals in the field of communication in Mexico and Latin America” (León-Duarte, 2007, s/p).

In general, the journal *Comunicación y Sociedad (Communication and Society)* is the publication with the biggest number of complied technological indicators. Regarding the ones it is missing—el DOI, application of *Creative Commons* licenses and diversity of access formats such as *ePub* and *XLM*—, it is important to emphasize that DOI must be a priority for the journal for the reasons explained in the introduction of this research, which without being repetitive, confirm that scientific publications that have DOI, “generate an increase in visibility and their impact, besides from being a guarantee of «© copyright» or «CC Creative Commons» of a digital object” (Hernández-Redero, 2016, p. 137). Regarding the diversity of access formats, we would have to review some journals in

Ibero-America that are pioneers in technological innovation and visibility of electronic scientific publication, such as *Palabra Clave (Key Word)*, edited by Universidad de la Sabana in Colombia, and *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social (Latin Social Communication Journal)*, edited by the Latin Society of Social Communication in Spain.

Going back to Mexico, we recognize that there is another type of academic publications that are important, such as those edited by higher education institutions, especially public institutions, which make great efforts to generate links, spaces, mediums and channels for their students and professors. Meaning that this type of publications that are accredited by higher education institutions are not particularly interested in being indexed in national and international databases, because their institutional role allows them to be a learning platform for the training of professors and even students, who experience the art of publishing for the first time. Some examples of these publications are: *Antrópica. Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades (Anthropic. Social Sciences and Humanities Journal)*, *Espacios Públicos (Public Spaces)*, *Versión. Estudios de Comunicación y Política (Version. Communication and Politics Studies)*, among others.

Even though the trend of scientific publications in Mexico is based on an open access policy that support the development and consolidation of academic journals by the National Science and Technology Council, such transition has not been achieved in the other areas, and in the case of the area of communication, they are insufficient compared with the demand of undergraduate degrees in the same area; insufficient even with the existence of only 15 graduate programs in the area of communication that are recognized by the National Program for Quality Graduate Programs of Conacyt. For this reason, the challenges and difficulties of communication journals in Mexico go beyond international normalization, technological aspects and positioning. The challenges and difficulties are focused on the need for academic consolidation of the field of communication. “Hence, the diagnosis that best describes the current state of academic research in the field of communication in Mexico is a ‘concentrated standstill’” (Fuentes-Navarro, 2011, p. 221), because only a few IES produce research in the field of communication and they are also the ones that publish communication journals in Mexico.

Unlike «international» scientific journals, which are usually published by trans-institutional associations, our journals are institutional projects, mainly justified as a means to disseminate «local» academic production (Fuentes, 2007, p. 107-108).

5 Notes

1 Conacyt is a public organization decentralized from the federal government that promotes and stimulates the development of science and technology in Mexico. It has the official responsibility of creating national science and technology policies (Universidad Veracruzana, 2017, s/p).

2 Regional Online Information System for Scientific Journals from Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal.

3 Network of Scientific Journals from Latin America and the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal.

4 Scientific Electronic Library Online.

5 *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales (Mexican Political and Social Sciences Journal)* does not exclusively publish communication topics, since it addresses topics related to social sciences in general and its disciplines (sociology, political science, international relations, public administration and communication sciences). It also addresses topics from specializations and common fields between disciplines, such as: political theory, social theory, political communication,

public opinion, public management and policies, society and State, international actors and globalization processes, among others.

6 *Cuadernos de Comunicación (Communication Notes)* was considered “[...] a vehicle for the dissemination of essays, projects and research results in a variety of topics and from all the methodological-theoretical approaches adopted in the field. Its contribution is proportionally greater than the growth of the academic community” (Fuentes Navarro, s/f, p. 47, en Galindo y López-Parra, 2012).

7 Since July of 2013, it is published independently from the Tecnológico de Monterrey system, keeping the quality and supervision by its founder and director, Octavio Islas. Currently, *Razón y Palabra (Reason and Word)* is endorsed by Universidad de Los Hemisferios de Quito, Ecuador, and is still considered a Mexican publication.

8 Edited by the Educational Research and Development Department of Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (<http://redie.uabc.mx>).

9 The Secretariat of Public Education (SEP - Secretaría De Educación Pública), the National Association of Universities and Higher Education Institutions (ANUIES - Asociación Nacional De Universidades e Instituciones De Educación Superior), Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Instituto Politécnico Nacional (IPN), Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional (Cinvestav - Center for Research and Advanced Studies of Instituto Politécnico Nacional), Universidad de Guadalajara (UdeG) and the University Corporation for Internet Development (CUDI - Corporación Universitaria para el Desarrollo de Internet)

10 <http://entrepares.conicyt.mx/>

11 In the first open call presented by Conacyt, only 27 journals were considered of excellence and approved without reservations. 127 publications participated (Bazdresch, 1999).

12 <http://www.latindex.unam.mx/latindex/editImpresas>

13 <http://www.latindex.unam.mx/latindex/editImpresas>

14 The Committee on Publication Ethics is a nonprofit organization that has the purpose of defining best practices in ethics of academic publications and help editors, authors and all people related to the publication make specific decisions according to each case.

15 <http://www.revistacytconacyt.mx/revistas?area=5>

16 Public institution.

17 Private institution.

18 Public institution.

19 Endorsed by the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), with experience in assessment of graduate programs since 1991, the National Program for Quality Graduate Programs has the responsibility of offering information to students, the academic community and the general public about the quality and appropriateness of graduate programs accredited by Conacyt.

20 *Razón y Palabra (Reason and Word)* has the special characteristic of being edited in Mexico, and it was recently endorsed by a private higher education institution in Quito, Ecuador. It is worth mentioning that it is still endorsed and respected by the Mexican academic community, and it is the first Mexican electronic journal in Ibero-America that specializes in communication.

21 The objective of *Revista Mexicana de Opinión Pública (Mexican Public Opinion Journal)* is to foster academic reflection, from which answers to the concrete situations of the dynamics of public

opinion in Mexico, Latin America and the World must arise. The questions that open public opinion must be discussed in an environment that fosters analysis and supported criticism. The topics it addresses are related to the academic approaches and practical themes. In this way, authors in this magazine have analyzed public opinion from the point of view of sociology, linguistics, political sciences, communication and/or statistics.

22. <http://portaldeeditor.conricyt.mx/autoevaluacion-revistas>

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