"I Want To Be a YouTuber". Online References and Aspirational Values for Tweens

"Vull ser 'youtuber'". Referents en línia i valors aspiracionals per als 'tweens'

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The article presents the preliminary results of a study on how tweens (11-12 year-olds) use YouTube and youtubers, especially in relation to the construction of online referents and aspirational values, and in the wider global media teen culture, and highlights some new trends in young audiences.
The study is framed within the Uses and Gratifications Perspective, as well as the Constructivism and Cultural Studies background and is focused on how and for what purposes tweens use YouTube and youtubers. The pilot phase of the study, consisting of a pilot survey (n=85) conducted in secondary schools and a pilot focus group (n=6), is presented in this paper, providing some preliminary findings of a wider study carried on in Catalonia (Spain).
One of the main results is that tweens consider YouTube more as a social medium and use it especially for entertain-

Aquest article presenta els primers resultats d'un estudi sobre l'ús que els tweens (preadolescents de 11-12 anys) fan de YouTube i dels youtubers, sobretot en relació amb la construcció de referents online i valors aspiracionals, i en el context de la més àmplia i global cultura mediàtica teen (o adolescent).
L'estudi s'emmarca en la perspectiva dels Usos i Gratificacions, així com en el marc teòric del Constructivisme i els Cultural Studies, i se centra en els usos, i les relatives motivacions, que els preadolescents atribueixen a YouTube i els youtubers. En aquest article es presenten els resultats preliminars de la fase pilot d'un estudi més ampli realitzat a Catalunya. Aquesta fase ha consistit en una enquesta mitjançant qüestionari (n=85), administrada a estudiants de primer curs de ESO, i un focus group, en què van participar sis preadolescents.

ment, but not for interacting. As for youtubers, tweens like them because they are funny, and, to a lesser extent, for socialisation reasons.

In conclusion, the general picture is one of tweens who use YouTube to consume media content in a more traditional, and not more interactive, manner.

Key words: *YouTube, tweens, adolescents, audiences, social media.*

Entre els resultats, cal destacar que, tot i que els preadolescents consideren You-Tube més aviat com una xarxa social, l'utilitzen sobretot per entretenir-se, i no per les seves característiques interactives. Pel que fa als youtubers*, els* tweens *els aprecien sobretot per la seva faceta divertida, i només en un segon terme per motius lligats a la socialització.*

En conclusió, el quadre general és el d'uns tweens *que fan servir YouTube per consumir continguts mediàtics d'una manera més "tradicional" que no pas interactiva.*

Paraules clau: *YouTube, tweens, adolescents, audiències, social media.*

Research in communication has often stressed the role of media in the socialisation process of adolescents and young people, their individual and collective identity building processes, and their adoption of values, models and stereotypes (Aguaded, 2009; Arnett *et al*., 1995; Buckingham, 1993; Buckingham, 2008; Buckingham and Sefton, 1999; Gerbner *et al*., 2002; Von Feilitzen, 2004). With the advent of the Internet, there is also the need to analyse the presence of communication 2.0 through this phase of their lives, within the context of a marked identity and emotional crisis. Videogames, YouTube tutorials, fashion trends on Instagram, WhatsApp groups, video clips, memes and on-demand TV series, among other content, are part of youth's current transmedia practices and of the complex media environment of today's hyper-connected society (Reig and Vílchez, 2013), interconnected ecology (Scolari and Fraticelli, 2017) or media life (Deuze, 2011; Manovich, 2009). A highly diverse scenario is being unveiled to the new generations: the consolidation of an "immersive consumer" (Díaz, 2009) can signify both superficial browsing as well as making the most of the new means that the digital space has to offer.

As Subrahmanyam *et al*. (2008: 119) point out, young people use digital tools to wider their connective networks with their peers, to connect with friends, to look for support and to bond emotionally.

Since previous studies on young people and social media have focused especially on middle and late teenagers, this research delves into media practices of preadolescents or tweens (9-13 years old), a particular stage of adolescence

which refers to individuals that are neither children nor adolescents (Larocca and Fedele, 2017), that is, they could behave in a particular manner, different from both children and adolescents themselves. Also, it is of interest to analyse young people's use of YouTube and digital media in terms of type of participation, referring to Jenkins and Carpentier (2013)'s contribution, or active participation, which, according to McCosker (2014), quoting Burgess and Green (2009), could allow young users to better understand media messages.

Specifically, this research project, entitled "I want to be a youtuber", aims to delve into the way tweens use YouTube and youtubers in their media life or interconnected ecology and in their socialisation process and to identify new trends in young audiences.

The project is framed within a Uses and Gratifications perspective, based especially on previous studies into people's motivations in using social networks as communication tools (Amichai and Vinitzky, 2010; Bonaga and Turiel, 2016; Raacke and Bonds, 2010; Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000; Ross *et al.*, 2009; Ryan and Xenos, 2011; Sheldon, 2008), as well as in the background of Constructivism and Cultural Studies.

TEENS AND YOUTUBE

It is clear that multi-screen digital consumption is firmly implanted in our societies, and the logical progression is that this will only continue to grow, especially referring to young people.

On a consumer level, in Spain, 95.1% of minors between the ages of ten and fifteen use a computer daily and 93.6% have Internet access (INE, 2015). According to Aranda *et al.* (2013), if Spanish young people had to choose between television and the Internet, 65% would choose the Internet. Also, academic research in Spain has shown that young people consistently use social networks (Colás *et al.*, 2013).

As for Catalonia —7.5 million inhabitants (IDESCAT, 2017)—, one of the twenty Autonomous Communities of Spain, data on media consumption are similar to those of other countries with a similar population level, such as Denmark (CAC, 2017: 182). The use of the Internet among young people (16-24 years-old) is the highest of the rest of the age groups, with 97.2% of young users (IDESCAT, 2017).

As for YouTube, it has more than one billion users in the world —a third of all Internet users— and is able to be glocal and cross-media, since it mixes global and local content, as well as different media content; also, it has been integrated in new consumption dynamics (Antolín and Clemente, 2017). In Spain, YouTube has been recently the most valued social network (IAB, 2015), with more that 22,200 new followers every day and 4.5 millions of videos watched daily (Berzosa, 2017: 18). Also, at the end of 2016, there were more than 100 youtubers with more than one million subscribers (Socialblade, 2016). Moreover, as Pérez *et al.* (2018: 62) point out, "in the case of Spanish adolescents, YouTube holds the second place (around 70% of adolescents between 14 and 17 prefer this network) after Facebook (Interactive Advertising Bureau, 2015)".

But beyond the figures on accessibility and consumption, we set out to observe what kind of browsing the new generations prefer.

We know that young people organise their communication and leisure time through technologies such as Facebook or instant messaging services such as WhatsApp, and that teens use new technologies to perform predominantly relational or socialising functions and uses (Buckingham, 2008; Buckingham and Willett, 2013; Fedele *et al.*, 2015), but we still need to delve in how non-linear communication is used as a signpost in tweens' socialisation processes. As we have seen on previous occasions (Aran *et al.*, 2011), the post-modern scenario has allowed us to reflect upon the social functions, values and uses of the media, and to bring them into the academic debate, explicitly relating them not only to emotional communication, but also directly to the notion of privacy. Aspects such as the "tyranny of authenticity" (Beck and Beck, 1998) or the notion of television as the "celebration of the ordinary" (Taylor, 1989), point to how the narrative, particularly the audio-visual narrative, works as a way of modelling "normality" or deviation from the ordinary. We turn to social and cultural makers (including online media) both to elaborate aspects of our personal and collective identity and to explore what we should expect from a particular situation. If international and domestic institutions insist upon the importance of media savviness or skills among its people, in the case of tweens, we consider it especially important that they have the tools to understand the workings of these "social and cultural markers" that are clearly aspirational at their age.

One of the current sources for young people to access those social and cultural markers are YouTube videos and protagonists. About the content, in Spain, there is a clear segmentation between the featured offers of comedy channels and short entertainment videos, while the top 10 of 2016 is full of gamers (Verne, 2016). Also, the Spanish-speaking world happens to have a very significant number of youtubers. Of the top-ten youtubers in the world in terms of subscribers, two are Spanish and one is Mexican: elrubiusOMG, Vegetta777 and Yuya (Bonaga and Turiel, 2016: 129). The data do not always match up: according to Viana (2016: 45), the Spanish-speaking YouTuber with the most subscribers is the Chilean comic German Garmendía (YouTube: Holasoygerman). But they do lead us to affirm that most of followers are of a young age.

In a recent report (Fernández *et al.*, 2016) by the Catalan regional government, the importance of media-based education is highlighted as a tool for "facing risks and taking advantage of the potential of ICT" for young people. What is more, according to these authors, in the case of YouTube, we are looking at one of the new opportunities that these new technologies offer teenagers, that of being "young producers" (Fernández *et al.*, 2016: 33). Burgess and Green (2009) have already discussed how YouTube's uses challenge existing ideas about cultural "production" and "consumption", while the term prosumer (Ritzer *et al.* 2012; Toffler, 1980) has become popular to refer to new possibilities for audiences' participation in new media.

If this opportunity is becoming a reality, or on the contrary, if YouTube is used more passively by teens, as users, is one of the issues raised by this article.

YOUTUBE AND TEEN CULTURE

Adults consider adolescence as a riskier age than childhood (Moreno, 2015: 6), since it is a "critical period of identity formation", a "becoming" moment of life, an "in-between stage", in which adolescents "address key questions about their values and ideals, their future occupation or career, and their sexual identity" (Buckingham, 2008: 2-3). The identity formation can be considered as a psychobiological and cognitive process, in which not only peers but also digital media play a core role (Buckingham, 2008).

We agree with García and Fedele (2011: 134) when they point to the role of television and, by extension, digital media in the transmission of a wide range of representations, as social and cultural phenomena, which may "influence or perpetuate beliefs, stereotypes or values (Peterson and Peters, 1983; Gerbner *et al.*, 2002)", as well as may help adolescents to build their personal and collective identity, their teen identity and teen culture, by offering them various media models. In particular, as we are interested in the first signs of a teen identity and a teen culture with regard to media use, in the youngest teens or tweens.

To understand what teen culture is, we should briefly contextualize the "birth" of the teen market niche and its relationship with the media —television in particular— starting in the 1950's (Davis and Dickinson, 2004). In fact, children and teens gradually became considered as consumers, whether it was due to them increasingly having their own spending money, or because little by little they gained more influence in deciding upon their family's consumption (Ekström and Tufte, 2007). One must keep in mind that, in the same way, the word "teenagers" was coined in order to define a new consumer segment formed by young people (Davis and Dickinson, 2004). In the last few years, new terms have been introduced to designate new "targets". In this sense, Ekström and Tufte (2007) proved that in 1987 a new word first appeared, "tweens", to indicate a new and unexpected consumer group that was emerging, representing young consumers from the ages of eight to twelve. "Tweens" is a marketing term to indicate that these consumers are neither children nor adults (Linn, 2005), persons "between a human being and becoming one" (Larocca and Fedele, 2017).

As pointed out in previous works (Fedele, 2011), since the 1950's the international media panorama, whose presence is markedly Anglophone in origin, has been flooded with cultural products such as pop music or television programs starring teens and intended for teens. These products have been and still are a beacon for their audience when it comes to defining their identity and their status as teenagers (Davis and Dickinson, 2004).

Moreover, current digital media, such as social networks, play an important role in the very conceptualization of youth identity and youth culture (Boyd, 2014; Buckingham, 2008; Sefton, 2004). In fact, these media can "provide young people with symbolic resources for constructing or expressing their own identities, and, in some instances, for evading or directly resisting adult authority" (Buckingham, 2008: 5).

Our premise, as part of broader research, is that YouTube and youtubers have become part of a "teen audio-visual culture", and consequently of a teen me-

dia identity, both as protagonists and as guides, initiating multimedia products intended —directly or indirectly— for the adolescent target market, along the lines of previous media teen culture (Davis and Dickinson, 2004; Ross and Stein, 2008).

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

A series of research questions were formulated at the beginning of this study: What do tweens use YouTube for? What do tweens like or dislike about YouTube? Why do tweens like youtubers? How do YouTube and youtubers connect to "teen culture"?

The main objectives of this study can be summarised as follows:

- To observe how tweens use YouTube and for what purpose;
- To observe how tweens use youtubers as references for a digital teen culture, recognising (or not) in them a mind-set of aspirational values.

The method of the wider research that was carried out in 2017 combines a quantitative phase (survey) and a qualitative phase (focus groups).

In this article, we present the results of the pilot phase of the study: a quantitative phase, arranged in the form of a pilot survey (n=85) administered in November 2016, in order to collect what preadolescent (11-12, corresponding to the first year of secondary school) girls and boys in Catalonia look for in the world of YouTube and youtubers, and a qualitative phase, consisting in a pilot focus group, carried out in December 2016, in order to delve into tweens' opinions.

The participants in the pilot survey consisted of 85 students in the 1st year of secondary school at three Secondary Schools in the city of Barcelona: 41 girls (48.2%) and 44 boys (51.8%) answered the survey (in its Catalan version). As for age, 80% of the participants were 12 years old, with an average age of x=11.95 (Median=12, Mode=12). The participants of the pilot focus group were three boys and three girls of the survey sample, chosen according to following criteria:

- to be talkative;
- to have different levels of interest in the subject "Information technology";
- to belong to two different classrooms.

The survey, entitled "Teens' Preferences", was designed on a Google form to be given online in the classroom in the presence of their teachers. The schools were contacted by email and the teachers received a series of instructions on how to conduct the survey in the classroom (e.g. not to mention in the instructions the word "YouTube" so as not to influence the participants' answers).

The main section of the survey, written in both the official languages of Catalonia (Catalan and Spanish), consisted of two parts:

- Five questions for identification purposes (age, sex, school, among others, always respecting the anonymity of the respondent),
- Eight questions pertaining to the research topics: one open question and the rest with closed responses (some multiple choice and others using a 5-point Likert scale).

The online questionnaire, outlined in Table 1, had an appearance that was simple and attractive for the respondents, who were able to click on or select the different reply options.

Table 1. Questionnaire Scheme

General Questions	Age	
	Sex	
	School	
	Town/City	
Specific Questions	1	When I grow up, I would like to be…
	2	What is YouTube?
	3	Who uses YouTube at home?
	4	I use YouTube to…
	5	What I like the most of YouTube…
	6	What I do not like of YouTube…
	7	Which youtuber I like and why
	8	Which YouTube channel I would create

Source: own elaboration.

The question "What is YouTube" has four suggested options (among which participants could indicate more than an o ption): a social network, a content platform, a video catalogue or a "new TV", options that most coincided with the observations made by McCosker (2014).

In terms of their motivations for using YouTube, the categories identified by Ito *et al*. (2010) —'hanging out' (which can be considered as an erratic use), 'messing around' (explorative use) and 'geeking out' (expert use)— and those proposed by Igartua and Rodríguez de Díos (2016) —entertainment, virtual community, maintaining relationships, coolness, companionship and self-expression—, were adapted for an *ad hoc* set of labels, including a new one, 'Self-Learning'. This adaptation is based on the idea, shared with other scholars, such as Livingstone and Sefton (2016), that new learning possibilities emerge from digital media such as YouTube.

On the other hand, in order to contrast the types of youtubers that are most popular among our adolescents, they were asked to give a degree of awareness

and reasons for interest in the youtubers with the most followers in Catalonia (Socialblade, 2016). More specifically, the participants were asked to evaluate ten youtubers, chosen from the twenty most popular Spanish speaking youtubers, in order to have a variety of genres and YouTube channel categories (videogames, music, memes/jokes, beauty/fashion, etc.).

The youtubers were proposed on the survey in the following order (by number of followers): elrubiusOMG, Vegetta777, Willyrex, ZacortGame, ElrincondeGiorgio, Wismichu, Staxx, Auronplay, ExpCaseros and YellowMellowMG. In addition, participants could indicate another YouTuber not included in the list.

The characteristics that the respondents had to evaluate are related to criteria such as their identification or admiration with the character/person, entertainment functions and social functions, such as sharing with one's peers (e.g. Fedele, 2011; Buckingham, 1987; Igartua and Muñiz, 2008; Livingstone, 1988; McQuail, 1994; Medrano *et al.*, 2010; Feilitzen, 2004).

The focus group was conducted by a researcher following a flexible script, based on the same categories established for the quantitative phase. It was recorded and transcribed to allow the qualitative content analysis.

Quantitative data were analysed with SPSS software, while qualitative data with the help of the software Atlas.ti.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

When I Grow Up, I Want To Be...

As shown in figure 1, nearly 30% of the participants still did not know what type of job they would like to have as an adult, while the remainder gave a wide variety of responses.

Figure 1. When I Grow Up, I Want To Be... (%)
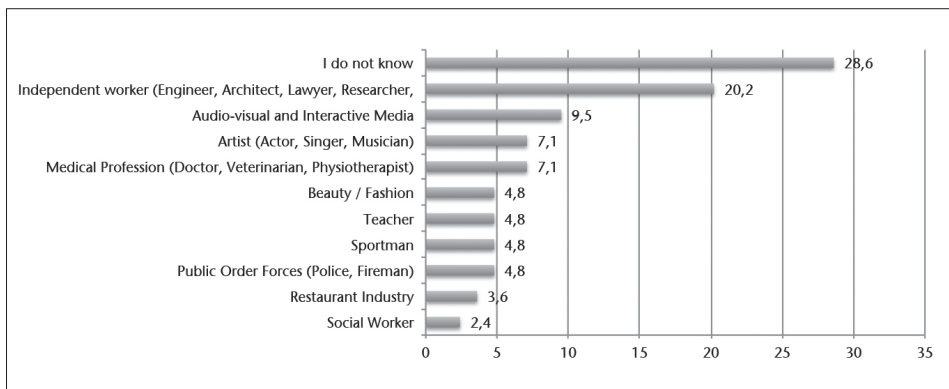
Source: own elaboration.

Percentage-wise, the more 'traditional' liberal professions, such as lawyer or architect, stood out (20.2%), to which other less well-known jobs were added, such as researcher.

In second place, with 9.5%, were responses which have to do with professions related to audio-visual and/or interactive media (director, screenwriter, video-games designer…). Two of the participants said they wanted to be a youtuber when they grew up.

On the other hand, 7.1% of the participants wanted to be an artist of some kind (actor, singer, musician, etc.), while the same percentage wanted to take up a medical profession. 4.8% was the percentage of jobs related to both the world of fashion or beauty; education (teacher or trainer, of people or animals); sports (player or coach); and public order forces (police, firefighting).

Finally, some of the participants expressed the desire to work in the restaurant industry (3.6%), either by opening a restaurant or becoming chefs, or as social workers (2.4%), by doing work to help others or make a better world.

Qualitative data confirm this tendency, being youtuber not really seen as a "real" job.

WHAT IS YOUTUBE?

As seen in figure 2, the participants mostly considered YouTube as a social network, while to a lesser degree they defined it as a "new television", an aspect that will be discussed more deeply in the following sections.

Figure 2. What Is YouTube? (%)
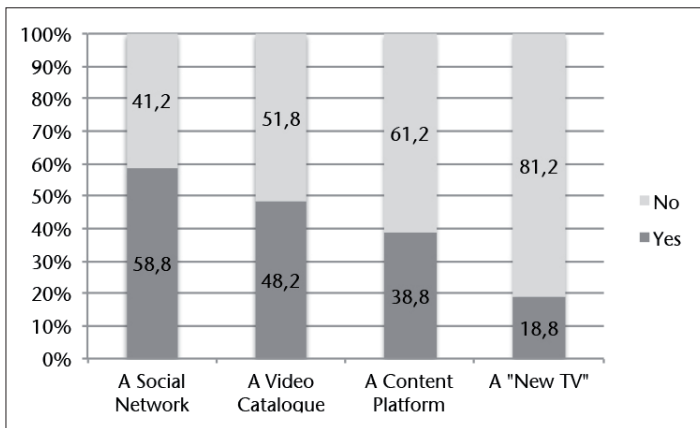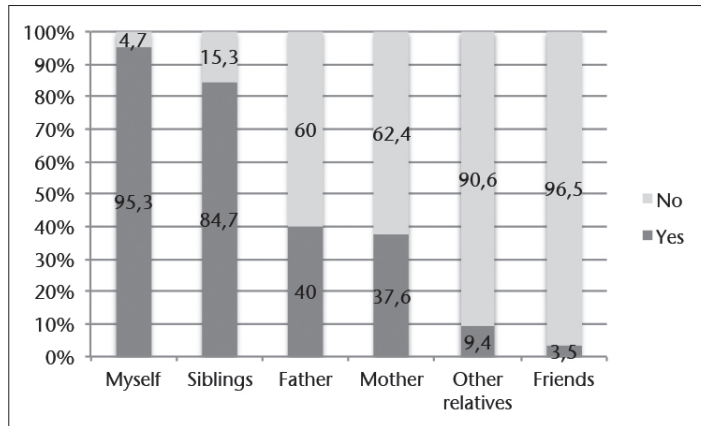

Source: own elaboration.

WHO USES YOUTUBE AT HOME?

Once again, the respondents could choose more than one option from the following: father, mother, brother, sister, myself, and others.

From the results, shown in figure 3, it can be deduced that YouTube is largely a teenage media, as those who use it most are the offspring (the participants themselves and their brothers or sisters).

Apart from parents, a minimal use of the platform is made by other family members (such as grandparents or cousins) and friends.

Figure 3. Who Uses YouTube at Home? (%)

Source: own elaboration.

Motivations for Using YouTube

In order to verify what the motives were for preadolescents to use YouTube, the participants were asked to evaluate different reasons why they used it, on a scale from 1 (=very little) to 5 (=a lot). They also had an option of responding 0 (=none). A value of 3 is considered the midpoint or neutral response (=neither too much nor too little).

It is obvious from Table 2 that the motivations related to entertainment are the ones for which YouTube is most used, to pass the time and have fun. Both options have an average slightly above the neutral value, and the values of the median and mode are higher. The highest rated motivation within coolness is that YouTube is "awesome", even though the statistics place it around the neutral value. Learning registered average values, although the mode places it in the neutral position. The remaining reasons are barely validated by the participants.

Table 2. Results: Motivations for Using YouTube

	Entertainment		Companionship	Maintaining relationships	Virtual Community	Coolness		Self-Expression	Learning	
	Pass the time	Have fun	Companionship	Stay in touch with friends	Follow what people are doing	It's awesome	It's in fashion	Upload things	Learn things	Test myself
Mean	3.09	3.47	0.58	0.54	1.49	2.75	1.06	0.22	2.14	0.65
Median	3	4	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0
Mode	4	4	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0
S.D.	1.525	1.359	1.199	1.140	1.770	1.668	1.515	0.807	1.416	1.192

Source: own elaboration.

Given that YouTube is mainly considered to be a social network, it is strange to think that the survey respondents do not use it to follow what others are doing, be in contact with friends or publish material.

In this sense, it must be said that the results of the pilot focus group indicate that teenagers define social networks as "places to share things (photographs, videos, information...)". More specifically, they brought up Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp or Musically as social networks without being prompted. Within the focus group, they were asked whether or not YouTube is also a social network; a question which reached a unanimous answer after hearing that "people upload videos to it", "blogs are made on it" and "you can see the number of views and people know when you are online, even when you aren't liking things". As a result, the study participants consider YouTube to be a social network, despite not using it as regularly as other social media platforms. Indeed, there is a contradiction between the fact that the tweens in our study more commonly defined YouTube as a "social network" rather than "new TV", and the fact that they seem to consume it in a fairly passive way.

What I Like Best and What I Don't Like About YouTube

The participants were asked what they like best about YouTube and what they do not like about it.

The participants were given a series of items related to YouTube and had to choose the features that they like or do not like about the platform. The items can be grouped into three categories:

1.   YouTube technical characteristics (speed/slowness, usability, video quality);

2. Content (music, TV programs, tutorials, memes/jokes);
3. Functional features specific to YouTube (uploading videos, sharing videos, writing comments, liking or disliking material).

Regarding the features that the participants like the most, it can be said that they value content the highest, as can be seen in Figure 4.

Musical content in particular obtained the highest score with almost 70% of the preferences, with joke/meme videos occupying third place. These results suggest that tweens in our sample use the platform for entertainment purposes. On the other hand, despite the fact that tutorials are the participants' second favourite type of content, they did not rate learning as one of the main reasons for use.

However, the second most popular YouTube feature amongst the pilot survey respondents is its ease of use or usability (41.2%), whereas a very small number of participants appreciate the features that are specific to the platform. Highly notable in this regard is that only one person chose "sharing videos" as one of their favourite YouTube features.

Figure 4. What I Like Best of YouTube (%)
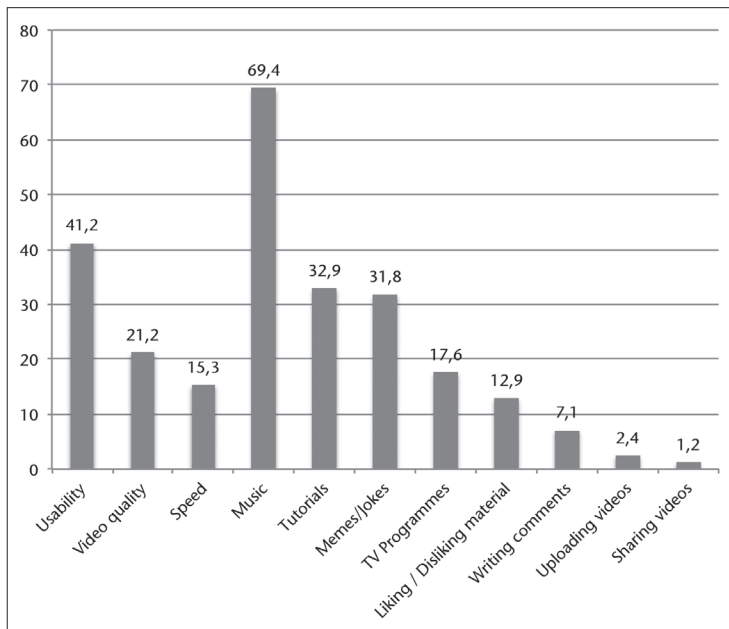
Source: own elaboration.

The results for things that adolescents do not like, as shown in figure 5, match those of the previous question, with the features specific to YouTube being what the participants like the least. In particular, it is notable that the most popular answer from the sample group was uploading videos, at almost 40%.

When looking at the different types of content, music is confirmed to be the best valued content by participants, since only 2.4% indicated this item as a not likeable one.

Lastly, while the high approval of YouTube's usability was confirmed when looking at its technical features, it must be pointed out that 18.8% and 14.1% of the participants do not like its slowness and the video quality, respectively.

Figure 5. What I Don't Like of YouTube (%)
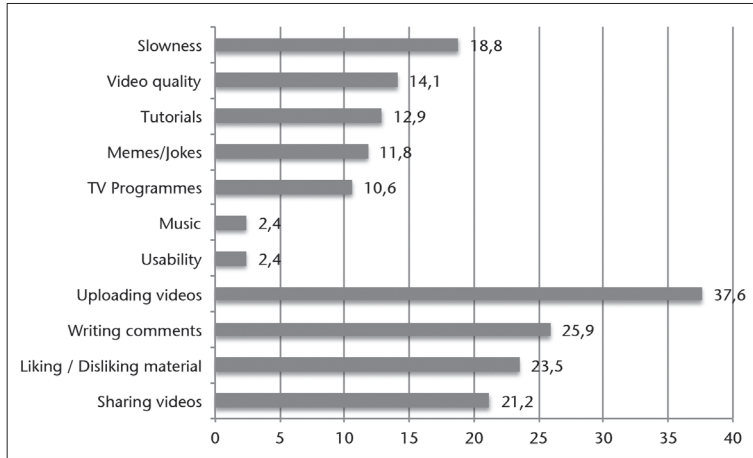
Source: own elaboration.

WHICH YOUTUBERS DO ADOLESCENTS LIKE AND WHY?

Firstly, it must be pointed out that many of the youtubers put forward were barely known by the participants of the pilot survey, or they did not like them (the percentage of replies with "I don't like them/I don't know them" given between brackets):

- ZacortGame (80%)
- ExpCaseros (78.8%)
- YellowMellowMG (78.8%)
- Staxx (68.2%)
- ElrincondeGiorgio (64.7%)
- Willyrex (57.6%)
- elrubiusOMG (45.9%)
- Vegetta777 (45.9%)
- Wismichu (38.8%)
- Auronplay (17.6%)

Only the last four youtubers received positive ratings for some of their characteristics by over half of the participants.

In general, the characteristic that was most frequently chosen by the participants was "She/He's funny", confirming previous results regarding the survey respondents' use of YouTube for entertainment purposes. This is the case with Auronplay (44.7%), Wismichu (36.5%), elrubiusOMG (24.7%), ElrincondeGiorgio (14.1%), and Vegetta777 (10.6%).

In some cases, the youtubers were also rated according to their socialisation function (liked by the peer group), such as Vegetta777 (15.3%), Auronplay (12.9%) or Willyrex (12.9%).

Also, some of them were rated highly because they are famous, as is the case of Vegetta777 (15.3%) and elrubiusOMG (9.4%).

Lastly, it should be pointed out that the participants were able to propose another YouTuber who they like and who does not appear on the list. This was done by over 50% of the contestants. Notable other youtubers proposed by tweens in the sample include Dulceida, one of the few female youtubers in Spain, and Fernanfloo. More different youtubers, including Yuya or Hamza Zaidi, were mentioned during the pilot focus group.

WHICH YOUTUBE CHANNEL WOULD ADOLESCENTS CREATE IF THEY COULD?

Regarding the type of channel that they would create, as shown in figure 6, the most popular answers chosen by participants are videogames, meme/joke channels, music channels and beauty/fashion channels.

Figure 6. What YouTube Channel Would I Create? (%)
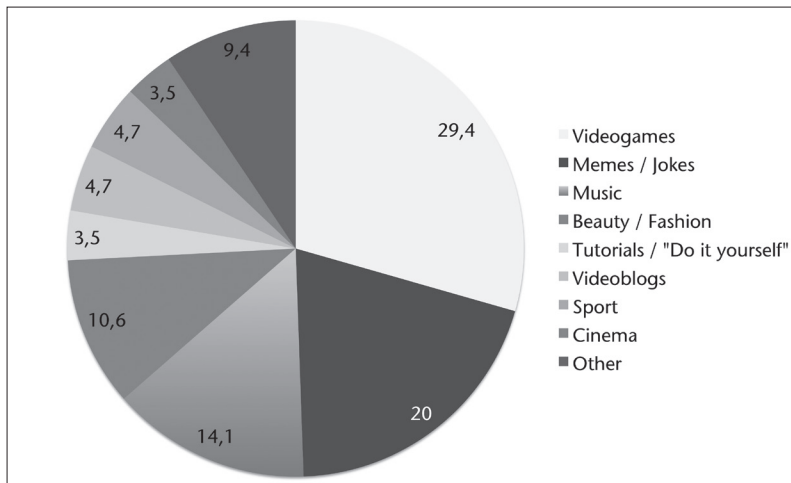
Source: own elaboration.

For the "other" option, some repeated one of the types that had already been put forward, whereas others expressed their indifference to the possibility of creating

a YouTube channel. Two of the responses stand out in particular: "I already have a channel" and "One which is varied".

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the pilot phase of the study was to identify preliminary trends in the preferences and extent of tweens' use of YouTube in Catalonia and provide for preliminary insights in young audiences' uses of social media to be digged deeply and confirmed in a wider research. This pilot study forms part of a wider underway project about adolescent audiences, with the main objective of identifying and analysing uses and transmedia practices of young people in a web 2.0 environment, with an emphasis on social media networks.

Among the main results, we have to stress that tweens in our sample consider YouTube to be a social network rather than a "new TV" even if they use it primarily for entertainment purposes rather than a means of interacting with others (e.g. writing comments or sharing videos). Furthermore, their favourite thing about YouTube is the content of the videos, especially when related to music, while they do not like YouTube's interactive functions such as uploading videos.

In summary, the general picture is that of tweens who use YouTube to consume media content in a traditional manner, rather than in a more interactive fashion.

For this reason, the participation in YouTube of tweens in our sample can be explained, using Jenkins and Carpentier (2013: 274)'s contribution, with the notion of "participation in media", that is, the ability to make decisions about the media products they want to see, rather than the notion of "participation through media", which has more to do with how people can enter public spaces and use media to enter into societal debates, dialogue and reflection. Even if, as McCosker (2014) suggests, YouTube can be used by young people throughout active and creative participation in order to learn to be more critical of media messages, unfortunately this is not the case of our participants. That is, prosumption is not really an option for our participants.

As for youtubers, tweens in our sample like them especially because they are funny and to a lesser extent for socialisation reasons (e.g. because their friends like them). On the other hand, our participants do not identify with youtubers, neither project their future towards the job of youtubers, even if many are interested in careers related to independent work and creative and audio-visual media. So it would appear that tweens in our sample do not really look at those youtubers as models for their individual identities. Nevertheless, they do integrate youtubers and YouTube content in their habitually consumed media, and, to a certain extent, in their incipient teen media cultural and teen identity.

From the results it can also be deduced that, in the ages studied, there is no relation between the most successful types of youtubers and those who are known by the adolescents in the study, in which gamers are clearly the most popular.

Finally, it has to be mentioned that the perspective of Uses and Gratifications has been appropriate for analysing how and what for tweens use YouTube. In this first phase, it has been clear that the study participants predominantly use

YouTube for entertainment purposes, which is related to their consumption of specific content. Despite the fact that social uses (both sharing things with people of the same age and the construction of identity) are in second place, one might assume that these motivations may emerge in the wider research and be more closely related to tweens' relational use of YouTube after viewing the contents.

This study is not without its limitations. Firstly, it is a pilot study of the primary user demographic —first-year secondary school students—. Secondly, it could certainly be the case that the extent of use for this sample would not be the same for older users. That is why we are considering comparing the results with a similar study in the middle and last phase of adolescence.

In order to address these limitations, future research should continue to explore online references and aspirational values for tweens. It would be interesting to know about the presence and recognition of stereotypes among the youtubers and if they could have an influence on the choices of young followers. It would also be interesting to discover if identification with an age group is more common when young people think that the youtubers look like them, or if they feel that their stories or experiences could happen to them in their own daily lives (or they would like them to). Also, it would be of a prior interest to analyse the use of YouTube and social media in general according to the gender perspective, in order to verify if gender-based uses of traditional media are being perpetuated in the digital environment or, on the contrary, the gender gap is smaller in the digital media.

However, even with adjustments for accuracy, the results strongly support the fact that tweens use YouTube to consume media content in a traditional way, rather than an interactive one.

The fact that tweens predominantly use YouTube for entertainment purposes as opposed to engaging in a participatory way is an important finding which challenges dominant discourses around participatory culture, since it contradicts most of the literature about the new media environment and young people as "early adopters" that might contest the actual existing "rules of the game". As Jenkins *et al.* (2013) stated, the participatory dimension of the new media environment creates opportunities for participation that can be adopted, or not, by users. In some contexts, this participatory dimension might contest the existing relationship between producers and consumers of content, albeit in others hegemonies remain unaltered. Even if it is unquestionable that YouTube has made it easier for users to publish their own audio-visual content, it is also true, as our study points out, that for our tweens, content production and publication on this platform are not media practices that are of interest to them.

We feel that we cannot allow ourselves to miss out on the opportunities offered by YouTube to young generations as a new media literacy tool. From our theoretical perspective, bordering on Constructionism and Cultural Studies, we understand that viewers are able to interact with media messages and use them according to their most immediate reference environments. The biggest interaction offered by YouTube between receivers and broadcasters requires a thorough review of the communication roles that are created; especially now that digitalisation has favoured new forms of participation, from entertainment to social and

political engagement. And it is imperative that media research delves into young people's experience as an audience, to provide tools that will encourage them to use media in a more active way.

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