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Twitch: la clave del nuevo paradigma en la comunicación comercial

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Resumen

En el último año, Twitch se ha convertido en un lugar de reunión, de entretenimiento y de socialización para los jóvenes. Por eso, las marcas buscan transformar sus estrategias de comunicación para poder integrarse en los nuevos hábitos de consumo de medios digitales. El objetivo de esta investigación es identificar el rol de Twitch en la comunicación comercial, evaluando la influencia de los *streamers* en el reconocimiento y percepción que se tiene de las marcas. Para ello, se realiza un método mixto que, a modo de exploración, presenta los intereses y percepciones de los usuarios sobre la plataforma y sobre las marcas que aparecen en ella. Las técnicas utilizadas fueron entrevistas en profundidad a expertos (n=5) y usuarios (n=5), un focus group a usuarios (n=8) y una encuesta en España (n=420). Las marcas han dejado de controlar sus mensajes, siendo los *streamers* y los patrocinios las piezas fundamentales en la comunicación comercial en Twitch.

Palabras Clave

Twitch, streamers, comunicación digital, redes sociales, patrocinio

Twitch: the key to the new paradigm in commercial communication

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Abstract

During the last year, Twitch has become a meeting, entertainment and socialization place for young people. As a result, brands are transforming their communication strategies to be able to integrate into the new digital media consumption habits.

The objective of this research is to identify the role of Twitch in brand communication, evaluating the influence of streamers on the public's perception of brands. For this purpose, a mixed method is conducted, which, by way of exploration, outlines the interests and perceptions of users on the platform and on the brands present on it. The techniques used were in-depth interviews with experts (n=5) and users (n=5), a focus group of users (n=8) and a survey applied in Spain (n=420). The main conclusion is that streamers are the spokespersons for brands on Twitch and are the ones who generate the greatest influence on young audiences. Brands are no longer in control of their messages, being the streamers and the sponsorships as the fundamental pieces in commercial communication on Twitch.

Keywords

Twitch, streamers, digital communication, social media, sponsors

1. Introducción

In less than a year, Twitch has made inroads and impacted the world of commercial communication. While everyone's attention was focused on the increasing success of TikTok, the Covid-19 pandemic transformed other social media applications like Twitch -a tool that allows users to make and watch live broadcasts- which went from being a niche platform, specialized in Videogames and Sports, to become a generalist communication channel with a broad and young audience. As García (2020) says, "the coronavirus crisis has benefited streaming platforms. The confinement imposed by the pandemic has boosted both the number of users and content consumption".

Chase (2020a), agrees that:

Live streaming has been on the rise for years, but the pandemic definitely supersized the amount of streamers and content being watched (...) With people sheltering-in-place, their focus has shifted to online entertainment, both by those who are looking for things to watch and those who are providing the content.

In the same way, Johnson and Woodcock (2019) state that "live streaming is an online practice expanding in both production and consumption at immense speed, and Twitch and its streamers appear to be at the forefront of that revolution" (p.336). Meanwhile, IAB Spain (2021) points out that Twitch is one of the networks that has most increased its notoriety with respect to 2020 and one of those that is growing significantly this year. They also mentioned that Twitch is one of the networks that has most increased its notoriety with respect to 2020 and one of those that is growing significantly this year. According to the same source, and as can be seen in Figure 1, it is the social network where spent more time (IAB Spain, 2021). Also, IAB Spain points out that Twitch is one of the networks that has most increased its notoriety with respect to 2020 and one of those that is growing significantly this year. Figure 1 shows which social network people spent the most time.



Figure 1. Use of networks by intensity (hours per day)

Source: IAB Spain, 2021

Then, Hilvert-Bruce, Neill, Sjöblom and Hamari (2018) state that:

Multiple and ordinal linear regression analyses identified six motivations which helped to explain live-stream engagement: social interaction, sense of community, meeting new people, entertainment, information seeking, and a lack of external support in real life. Compared to mass media, viewer motivations to engage in live-stream entertainment appear to have a stronger social and community basis (p.58).

On the other hand, brands are very important in social networks. In fact, "the accounts most followed by social network users (...) are those of their immediate environment, followed by influencers and brands" (IAB Spain, 2021). This is especially relevant if we take into account that Twitch, due to its own characteristics, is a platform where users can interact with streamers and brands at the same time without necessarily having the direct intervention of the latter.

For this reason, the main objective of this article is to learn about the role of Twitch in brand communication. It also seeks to achieve three specific objectives: 1) to evaluate the influence of streamers in brands perception, 2) to know the interests and consumption patterns of the audience from Twitch and 3) to analyze the so-called "Ibai Effect" and his influence on the audience from Twitch.

By analysing this information we intend to establish the necessary resources to have an assertive brand communication on Twitch.

1.1. Evolution of brand communication

In the past, brands have given preference to offline communication, seeking to achieve maximum visibility in the street and through the traditional media such as television, radio and the press. Nevertheless, customers/consumers were only observers. The consolidation of the Internet has generated a new competitive environment where the traditional ways to build and communicate a brand have also evolved, adopting digital media and the use of transmedia narratives where citizens are more active and involved (Grant, 2006).

In addition, one of the main transformations that brand communication has experienced is that now the users find themselves as content generators and trend setters. For this purpose, it is worth remembering that trust is part of this system in social networks, since

"its importance goes beyond market considerations" (Luque de Marcos and Baraybar, 2018, p.438).

Compared to communication strategies carried out in traditional media, the digital world makes it possible to measure the real reach of content with audiences, facilitates immediate adjustments and optimizes evaluation times. However, the company must be careful with the digital media, due to the exposure to criticism from the public opinion, increasing the risk of crisis or bad reputation (Martínez, 2021).

The particularities of digital environments encourage the company to interact with the user and create a brand community. It can be assumed that there is a predisposition of users to the messages of companies and brands, because they are really looking for content that has an added value (Castelló-Martínez y Ros-Diego, 2012). So, social media became the main interaction channel. Related with the advertising on Twitch, Pollack *et al.* (2020), mention that:

In general, there appears to be two ways in which brands receive notoriety on Twitch: informal promotion (e.g. casual discussion or mentions of the brand without any kind of streamer sponsorship agreement) and formal advertisements (e.g. sponsorship deals between companies and the streamer). Informal promotions generated noticeable exposure for companies without overt marketing campaigns, although these are typically popular products with heavy traditional marketing campaigns (p.2800).

Since not all social networks offer the same options for interaction, each of them has a different type of audience (Igartúa y Rodríguez de Dios, 2016).

The authors Frutos, Pretel y Sánchez, state that the "brand presence means an identity symbol between young people. Therefore, the contents have more responsiveness" (2014, p.82). However, not all brands are in the same position to lead this process. For example, young people are more willing to interact with brands they know, which is the first ingredient needed to engage in virtual dialogue. Consequently, spontaneous live speech is archived on social networks, becoming delayed messages and consolidating the image of a brand consumers and users. For this aim, it can be said that social media content does have an influence on brand awareness.

1.2. Audience and content on Twitch

Initially, Twitch was a platform where gamers streamed their games. However, following the pandemic caused by COVID-19, this platform has experienced a massive increase of usage, especially in categories that are not related to video games, such as music and fitness. One

of the features of this platform that has made its popularity grow is the possibility of live audience interaction through the chat (Wilson, 2021; Gutiérrez and Cuartero, 2020). In fact, Twitch reported in its Transparency Report (2020) that the channel production increased by 40% in 2020, and that this growth was accompanied by an increase in audience and engagement, including a 33% growth in chat messages. As the platform itself points out: "Twitch is shaping the future of live interactive entertainment" (Twitch, 2021).

In terms of audience, a large part of it belongs to Generation Z: according to the study conducted by Harvard Business Review, "21% are between 13 and 17 years old and almost half are between 18 and 34 years old" (2021). Because of this age heterogeneity, the study will focus on all young people. It is worth mentioning that young people show "a clear preference for visuals in social media" (Álvarez, Heredia and Romero, 2019, p.2), and that is one of the main characteristics of the platform studied in this paper: Twitch.

Thomas (2020) considers that in order to have an impact on young people, it is necessary to offer them both, content and entertainment. In fact, young people are also content creators (Castelló-Martínez and del Pino-Romero, 2019). Elias (2021) supports this claim by stating that this is the generation that looks to Twitch streamers for a long-term relationship. The proximity and impatience that characterise this age group has caused them to gradually move away from television to migrate towards other types of VOD (video on demand) platforms such as "traditional television on demand like Netflix or HBO or video platforms like YouTube or Twitch" (Gutiérrez and Cuartero, 2020, & Navarro and Vázquez, 2020). Galevy (2021) states that "the phenomenon of online video consumption through platforms (...) such as Twitch, have highlighted the interest of the new generations in a thematic, participative, original, fresh and close audiovisual offer". Furthermore, he claims that this type of platform "will further increase the already marked dispersion of audiences" caused by on demand video (Galevy, 2021).

Then, Francisco and Rodríguez (2020) stated that young people are making complementary use of the two media (Internet and television) most of the time. Because: "young people value online audiovisual content due to reasons such as spatio-temporal instantaneity, variety of content or identification with the creators of the videos" (Navarro and Vázquez, 2020, p.11). These types of media live video streaming systems "can now be seen as competitors of the traditional cable TV" (Pires y Simon, 2015, p.255). Moreover, "live streaming is a unique medium that merges different layers of communication by facilitating individual, group, and mass communication simultaneously" (Wohn and Freeman, 2020, p.106)

In this regard, Gutiérrez and Cuartero refer to "the Twitch paradox" (2020, p.168), pointing out the differences between public figures from traditional media and new media, "their audience from these more consolidated platforms to new windows such as Twitch, thanks mainly to the ability of these content creators to connect with young audiences" (p.169).

However, Twitch does not only rely on TV-related content, it also has other video-on-demand platforms such as Netflix or YouTube. An example of this is the growth experienced by the "chess" category on Twitch following the premiere of the series *The Queen's Gambit* on Netflix. In that moment, "chess became part of the national conversation" (Chase, 2021). IAB Spain (2021) refers that Twitch is the preferred social network for watching streaming content, especially if it is about esports. However, while YouTube is still the preferred one for watching on-demand content, Twitch is currently gaining influence in this modality compared to 2020.

In summary, "we can consider that Twitch not only evidences a change of trend in terms of audiovisual consumption by young people, but also causes a broader transformation in the way in which this audience relates to an audiovisual product" (Gutiérrez & Cuartero, 2020, p.171).

1.3. Streamers on Twitch

A Streamers are an important factor of commercial communication on Twitch. As already mentioned, they are the voice of the brands since they do not have their own profile on the platform. It is necessary that the brand, the streamer and the platform itself are in synergy to ensure proper communication. Therefore, the brand must be familiar with the streamer, as well as be able to design a communication strategy according to the platform on which its message is going to be disseminated. This way, the streamer will become a brand prescriber, which requires to know the brand's values and be able to convey its message correctly.

In fact, Zhao, Chen, Cheng and Wang (2018) consider it crucial that the platform itself works in favor of streamer loyalty so that they do not stop broadcasting and as a result get new users. Sjöblom, Törhönen, Hamari y Macey (2019) said that "the new type of creator focused economies that have appeared around services such as Twitch and YouTube are testaments to the need of understanding the interactions going on between producers and consumers of the modern internet era" (p.26).

In terms of advertising formats on Twitch, one of the most common is streamer sponsorship, through which brands “can use the subcultural and communal authenticity of live streamers to market their products to relevant demographics” (Woodcock & Jhonson, 2019, p.329). The ability of streamers to connect with their audience makes the messaging more effective, “rather than a strategic communication practitioner presenting a product to an audience who might immediately be suspicious or wary, the comfort of watching a trusted streamer allows products to slide underneath viewers’ defences” (Woodcock & Johnson, 2019, p.329). On the effectiveness of Twitch as a communication channel and the role of streamers in it, Woodcock & Jhonson (2019) stated:

There are two related elements which are particularly central to *Twitch*’s effectiveness in this area compared to other comparable platforms: the fact that all broadcasts and interactions with influencers are *live*, and the ability to hold direct *conversations* with these streamers. This live aspect creates affordances of closeness between the audience (as individual and collective) and the streamer; this means that the streamer must seek to foster authenticity in various ways to build a close community, ensuring that the relationship with the audience is two-way and reciprocal. *Twitch* is therefore well positioned to become a major channel for social media influencers, and its distinctive combination of liveness and proximity are key components of its growing success in this area (p. 331-332).

According to Woodcock and Jhonson (2019), regarding the size of the streamers’ community, it is generally more interesting for brands to have a presence in channels that put together the maximum possible audience despite the fact that streamers with small channels have more intimate relationships with their viewers and, therefore, have more opportunity for interaction. Nevertheless, the proximity and interactivity offered by small channels can also be very beneficial for commercial communication, even if the reach of the message is smaller.

It is worth mentioning that streamers can receive funds directly from their viewers. In addition, González (2021) affirms that user subscriptions are “the main source of revenue for content creators”. This means that streamers no longer “rely on advertising from other companies to monetize their content” (González, 2021).

As for notable streamers, in Spain, as will be explained later in the results of the research, the figure of Ibai Llanos stands out as the streamer of the moment. This streamer 26-year-old began his professional career as a caster, narrating professional League of Legends games. He has become one of the most important streamers in Spain, and is well-known worldwide.

2. Metodología

The methodology applied has an analytical empirical scope which consists of an exploratory study (Batthyány and Cabrera, 2011) and a mixed approach, of the Spanish audience. The purpose is to evaluate the perspectives and interests that the audience have on Twitch. The second objective is to know the role of Twitch in the communication strategy from the brands, and finally, to analyze the so-called "Ibai Effect" and the influence of this streamer on the audience from Twitch.

In order to achieve the objectives, the current research has three phases for data collection: 1) approach to Twitch users; 2) vision of the advertising industry; 3) survey application.

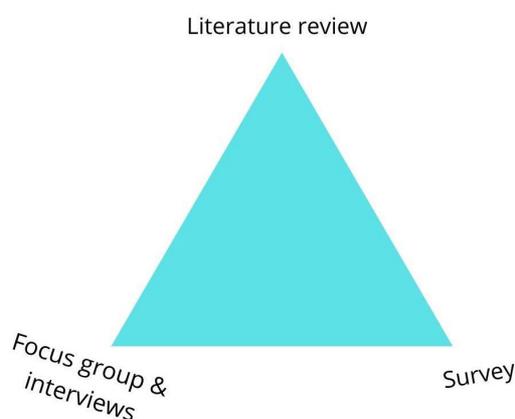


Figure 2. Methodological triangulation

Source: Own Elaboration

At the first phase: "approach to Twitch users", a focus group was conducted to examine users' perspectives and interests on Twitch. We want to determine the brands people are interested in and the type of content that is consumed by young people. We decided to work with a group of 8 teenagers between 15 and 19 years old, because according to the theoretical review, the main users of Twitch belong to this age generation (Gutiérrez & Cuartero, 2020; Blanco, 2020). Heterogeneity was pursued with relation to the features of the participants, who in addition to meeting the age requirement, they have to use Twitch regularly. Before starting the focus groups, participants were asked for demographic information and information about their ongoing and previous involvement in Twitch. The focus group was conducted using a self-developed guideline which has two parts: general

information about Twitch usability and the second part was about the brand perceptions that users have in this social network.

In the second phase "vision of the advertising industry", the aim was to learn about the work of organizations in Twitch. We asked the experts which is the main goal of Twitch in advertising and to know what are the opportunities and weaknesses that brands have in this streaming platform. So, four online interviews were conducted during the month of April with four marketing experts with the purpose of talking about the communication strategies of brands. The interviewees were Álvaro de la Cruz (Strategy Director at The Modern Kids and Family), Olga Diez and Katty Huerta (CEO and Market Research Analyst at The Onion Inside, respectively) and Gaby Rabinowicz (Co-Founder of Kidsmedia).

Additionally, during the 2 previous research methods, both in the focus group and in the interviews, the participants highlighted the importance and recognition of the streamer Ibai Llanos. Consequently, we can describe his influence in this media. The data was complemented by five in-depth interviews with users. We asked for information regarding this streamer and looking forward to describing the big picture of this Twitch character. Both the interviews and the focus group were conducted online by members of the research team. The survey was structured with the data from the focus group and the interviews. As result, in the third phase, an online survey was conducted, in which the sample universe was Spanish women and men between 14 and 20 years old, who were Twitch users.

This questionnaire has six questions divided into four topics: to know the Twitch user experience, to recognize the users perception of the brands in Twitch, to know who are the famous streamers and which are the preferred Twitch content. Further, we asked about the ideal advertising that the audience would be better accepted on Twitch. The questions also determined users' recognition of the brands and how they rate their image on Twitch.

With the answers of the survey it was possible to shape the role of Twitch in brand's communication and also which are the contents most consumed by the public. Furthermore, the survey data helped to confirm the influence that Ibai Llanos has on the audience.

The survey was available during one month (March 18 to April 19, 2021) and 420 responses were obtained. To obtain a higher number of responses in different parts of Spain, the survey was shared in Whatsapp groups and via email; we had the support of secondary school and university teachers, who send the link among their students in different cities: Madrid, Toledo, Barcelona, Seville, Las Palmas and Malaga, among others.

The next figure showed the process of the methodology.

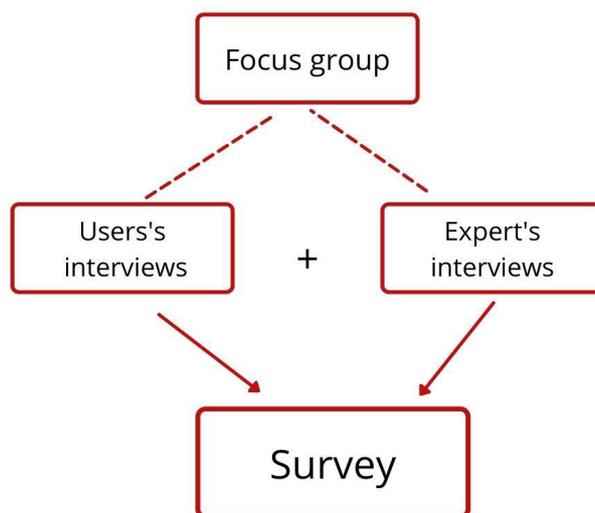


Figure 3. Conducted Methods

Source: Own Elaboration

The research starts with a literature review to learn about the concepts, then a focus group is conducted as an exploration on the topic of usability on Twitch. This information provides the guidelines to elaborate the interviews among users and experts. Finally, with all the qualitative data, the questionnaire can be developed, which serves to confirm the opinions of the experts and to design the consumption patterns on Twitch.

The data analysis was based mainly on the thematic analysis approach. The analysis process was organised in two steps: first summarize and contrast the information from the focus group and the interviews, where conceptual maps were made showing the relationships and the thematic dependencies. Then, we stated the main differences and similarities. This separation was useful to establish the consumption patterns and the relevance of Twitch in the brand communication. At the end, the discussion is elaborated and the principal conclusions of the current work are presented.

3. Resultados

This section presents a synthesis of the main results, highlighting the thematic relationships and the most important items in the communication that brands have on Twitch.

3.1. Focus Group

The following results represent the focus group conducted with eight young people, four men and four women, between 15 and 19 years of age. It was done via google meet on March 11, 2021 with a duration of 1:10 min.

Figure 4 shows relationships between the four main categories of the research: content consumption, brand presence and brand perception in the Twitch social network. Also explains that the most consumed content on Twitch are video games and sports. Similarly, brand recognition is produced thanks to sponsorship content and streamers mentions. As well as, people mentioned the lack of creativity in the brands communication.

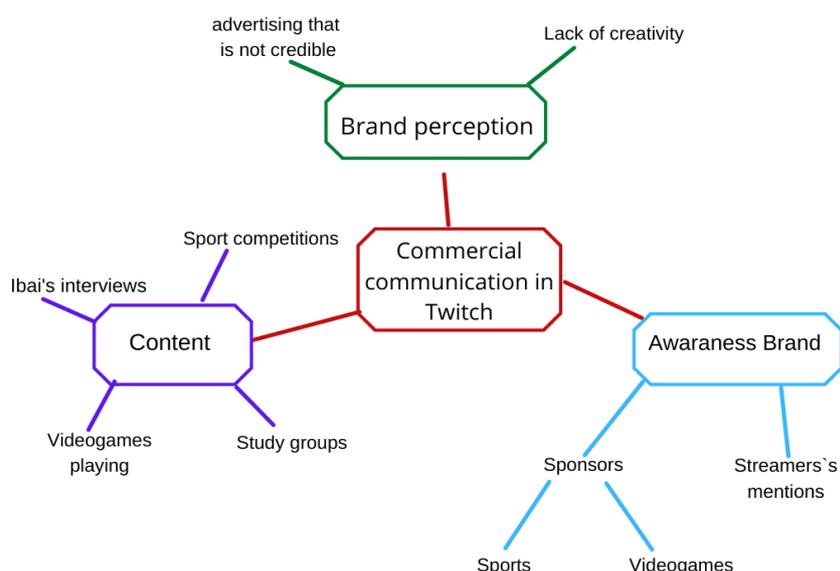


Figure 4. Focus group topics

Source: Own Elaboration.

3.2. Expert interviews

The previous focus group is complemented with interviews by experts on this topic. The main conclusion drawn from these interviews is that not all brands can have a presence on Twitch, since its usability means that the main speaker of the messages are the streamers and not the brands directly. Furthermore, professionals agree that it is a social network that represents a higher cost for the brand, since the content is not generated directly by the brand.

Marketing experts emphasize that brand communication has evolved because now the user is a priority and he/ she has become a key element in any strategy; the advertising message has been moved to the second place. Therefore, the presence of brands on this platform has led to the emergence of new communities.

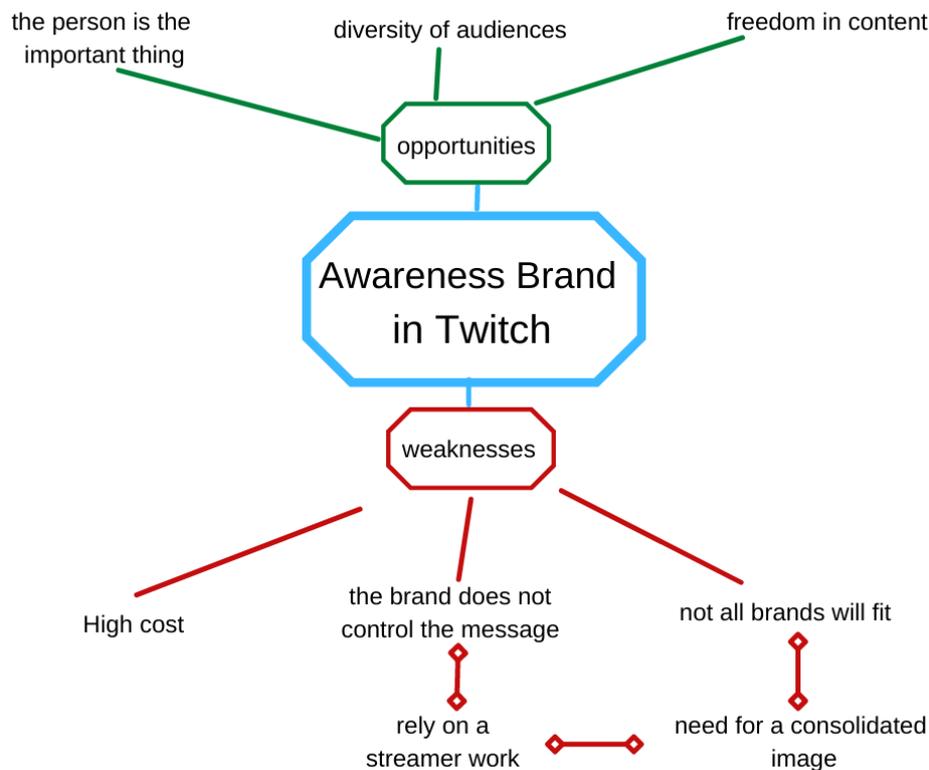


Figure 5. Expert interviews

Source: Own elaboration.

In addition to mentioning the opportunities and weaknesses that this platform has in commercial communication strategies. The experts confirm that brands must have a clear communication strategy and that the best formula to achieve success is to know perfectly the keys of the medium, together with the keys from the brand and to understand the target.

The experts also agree that Ibai is one of the most influential characters on Twitch and that his success is thanks to the humorous and creative content that he generates. He is considered a funny character. Additionally, brands sponsor streaming events or are mentioned by the streamer.

The interviewees referred to the fact that Twitch leverages other platforms to create its own content. As a result, all the followers of this streamer are simultaneously watching a movie

and listening to the streamer comment on it. Twitch works to create community and the sense of companionship. Also users establish that Twitch is used to view content that has nothing to do with video games, an activity for which this social network was initially recognized by the audience.

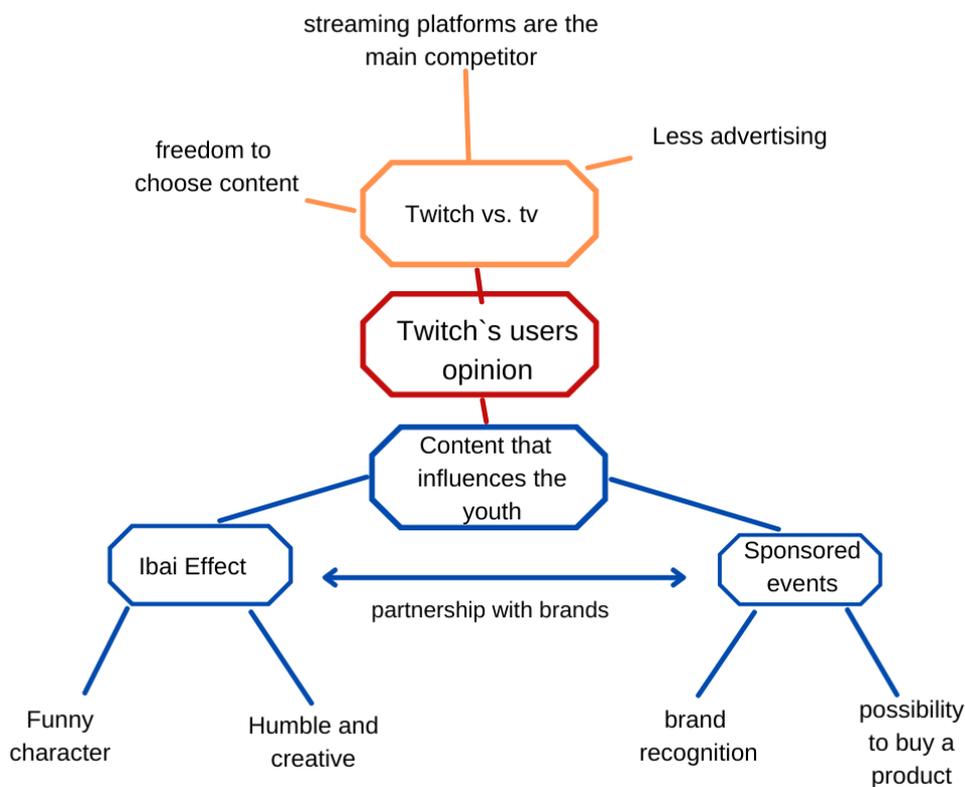


Figure 6. User experiences
Source: Own Elaboration.

3.3. Survey

The survey had 420 answers from men and women between 14- 50 years old, and the 34% of the sample were young people (aged 14-21) who use Twitch. Another important note is that men have a higher usage percentage than women. Additionally, the lowest consumption peak is at 21 years of age and the highest at 16 years of age.

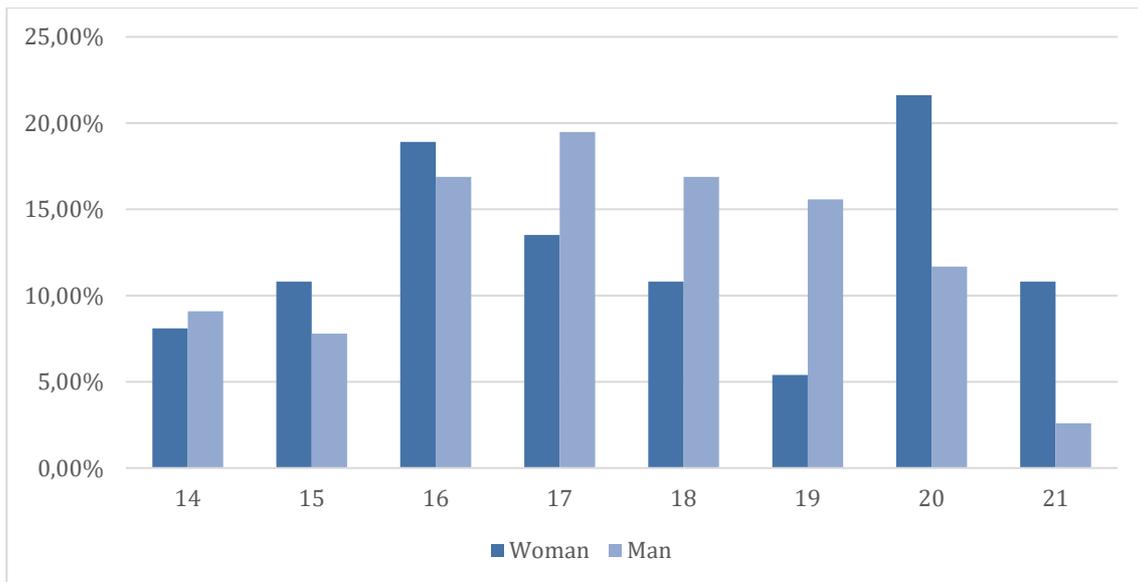


Figure 7. Young people on Twitch

Source: Own Elaboration.

According to the data, Twitch users are most likely to consume gaming content (whether live games or other types of content) and Ibai's Twitch channel. The third favorite type of content is reactions to YouTube videos.

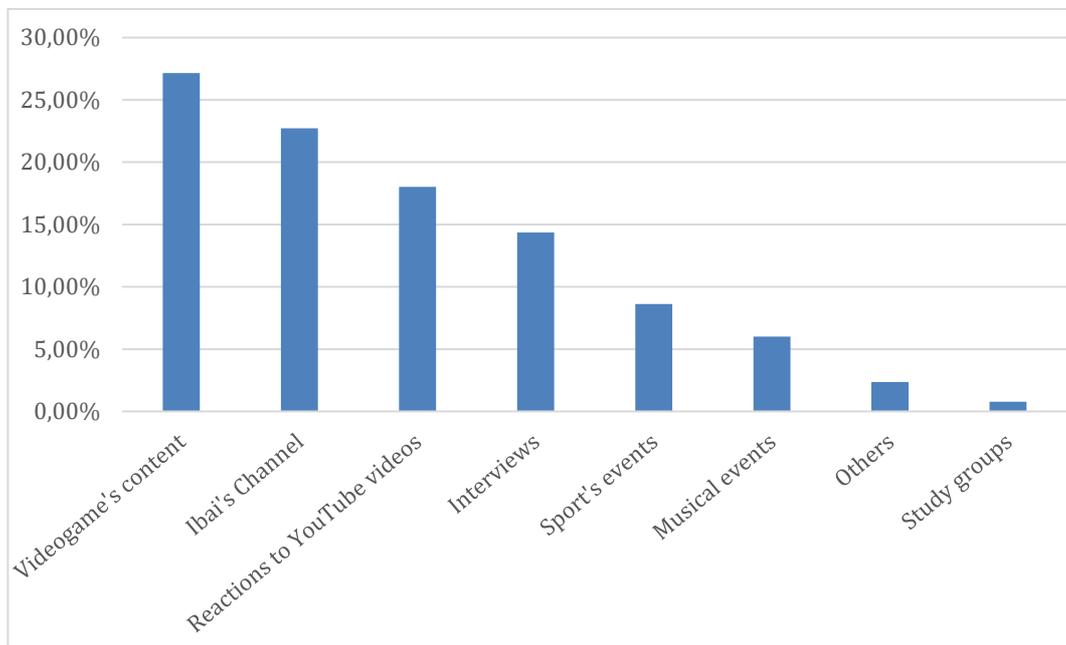


Figure 8. Content on Twitch

Source: Own Elaboration.

Another important observation refers to different types of videos which were spontaneously mentioned by the participants. Women claim to consume study group videos, an aspect that

had already been mentioned in the focus group. They mention, although to a smaller extent, videos of just chatting or ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response). According to Chase (2020b), Just Chatting has been the most consumed category of 2020 on Twitch. This fact about the types of videos consumed on Twitch confirms what Chase (2020a) stated, "live streaming is getting much larger and more global, non-gaming content is on the rise". Undoubtedly, sponsorship is the formula that has the greatest impact on young people through Twitch, as this is how they see most brands on this social network. In addition, young people also point out that on numerous occasions they see brand logos during the streams, stating it makes them feel annoyed.

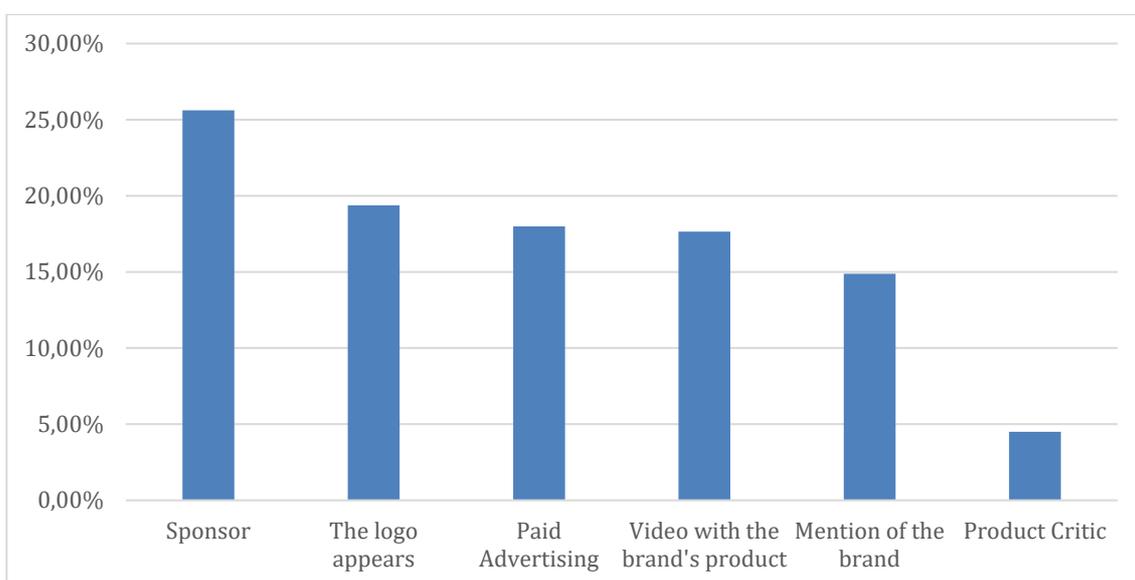


Figure 9. Brand advertising on Twitch.

Source: Own Elaboration.

The advertising formats mentioned in Figure 9 are the ones that generate audience awareness of different brands on this platform. Related to this, respondents were asked to mention two brands they remembered seeing on Twitch in order to know the brands with the greatest notoriety on this social network. Regarding this question, we found that the top 5 brands remembered spontaneously by young people are Amazon, PlayStation, Cola-Cao, Red Bull and Fortnite, in that order.

At the same time, respondents were asked to rate through a Likert scale the communication of the brands with the most presence on Twitch according to 2btube (2020). However, given that there is currently no Twitch-specific brand ranking, a YouTube one was used as it was understood that they are interconnected platforms. In fact, it can be said that the choice of

this ranking has been wise to discover with the surveys that the third most watched video type on Twitch are reactions to YouTube videos.

According to this assessment, it is worth noting that the most highly valued brands are PlayStation, FIFA and Fortnite respectively, all of which have a rating of over 88%. In the case of PlayStation, 95.7% of the answers consider its communication as a good one. In contrast, we find the case of L'Oreal, BBVA, My Protein and Vodafone, which are the worst rated brands (below 25%). In a similar way, they are also the least recognized by young people, especially the brand My Protein.

It is important to mention that respondents were asked about how they would like brand advertising in these social networks to be. The following word cloud in figure 10 shows that users consider the most important factor for brand communication is not to be annoying. Based on these results, audiences prefer a short, humorous communication on Twitch. Besides, they are interested in brands offering some kind of reward; for example, gift/discount codes or sweepstakes.

They emphasize that advertising should not cut the content, as they find it really annoying. However, they state that advertising through sponsorships and collaborations does not bother them. They also consider it important that the brand is related to the streamer with whom they collaborate, as well as that the collaborations have to be innovative.

Twitch users believe that advertising can be done without being intrusive; for example, brands can use subtitles during the streaming. They further mention branded content as an interesting tool, as well as the sponsorship of events or live sections.



Figure 10. Word cloud about better advertising on Twitch

Source: Own Elaboration

Regarding the most consumed streamers, Ibai stands out in first place with a significant advantage (60 mentions), followed by AuronPlay (25), EIRubius (12), IlloJuan (9), Xocas (6) and TheGregf (5). The rest of the streamers obtained between 1 and 3 mentions.

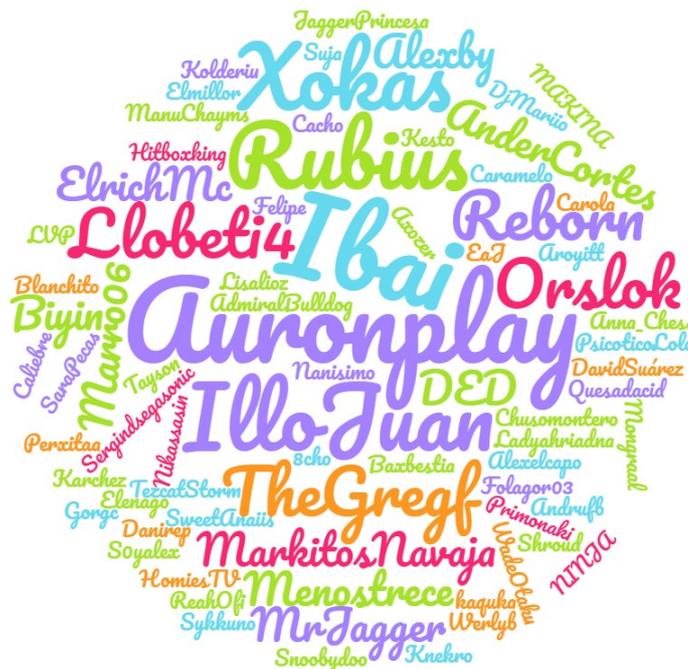


Figure 11. Word cloud about the most viewed streamers

Source: Own elaboration

4. Conclusiones y discusión

According to the literature reviewed (Pires & Simon, 2015; Sjöblom et al., 2019; Blanco, 2020; Wohn & Freeman, 2020) and the experts opinion, both agree that the user becomes the most important element in advertising on new platforms. However, when we contrast this with the opinion of users, we found that they perceive ads as an intrusive element in Twitch. For this reason, when it comes to the presence of brands, what has greater acceptance are sponsored events. This was also reflected in the surveys, which named Amazon, PlayStation, Cola-Cao, Red Bull and Fortnite as the brands most recognized and best rated by users.

Therefore, the paradigm change in commercial communication relies on the public relations actions that are implemented by the brands. Since brands do not have their own Twitch channel, they lose control over their messages and depend on the prescriber who mentions or uses their product. For this reason, it is necessary to have a solid image and good reputation that cannot be undermined by these uncontrolled collaborations.

Based on the information gathered, it is a fact that in 2020 platforms such as Twitch have become a global digital trend, causing brands to look for innovative options in their content. Twitch is a space for entertainment, relaxation, socialization and community creation. The brands are being formed in the understanding of this new way of consumption. Consequently, they are more interested in reaching a diverse audience and because of this, they must change their storytelling, usability and recognition models.

An important change in media consumption is the increase of time that users spend online, because it should be noted that young people can stay connected in Twitch for up to 6 consecutive hours. In addition to being a tool of entertainment, the consumption of this social network has also been transformed. In fact, half of the respondents say they use these platforms to study in groups and to follow study tips. Twitch has gained an educational purpose, for example the Twitch ASMR videos, which are videos that induce relaxation and calmness to viewers, "the image is a secondary element and all the protagonism falls on the sound" (EcoDiario, 2018).

The fact that young people are interested in this type of content highlights that they are not only looking for entertainment on Twitch, but also want to find tools to improve their performance in their studies, take care of their mental health, or to have tips for their day-to-day life.

Moreover, it can be concluded that young people find in Twitch a place to share activities with other young people like them; we can sustain this observation thanks to the statements of the focus group and interviews, where the users mentioned different collective activities that they frequently do. Such as studying in groups, where the streamer establishes the studying and breaks timing. Another example is the joint viewing of movies between the streamer and his community.

As for streamers, only the most recognized ones can be considered influencers. Their influence on their followers and the relationship they establish with the brands are the reasons why streamers can be considered as a new type of influencer. The influence is seen in the number of views of their video streamings and in users remembering the brands and products that each streamer mentions.

In fact, authors such as Blanco (2020) mention this figure, referring to them as "influencers gamers" (p.247). However, it is not advisable to generalize. Just as we do not consider all Instagram profiles as influencer profiles, this should not apply to Twitch either. An influencer in Twitch will depend on the number of followers and engagement he generates, as well as the type of content that he produces.

Related to the interaction between users and streamers, just chatting videos represent an opportunity for brands, as this format encourages the interaction of the streamer with the audience through chatting. Therefore, brands could take advantage of these conversation environments through collaborations with the streamer so that the brand is also involved in this flow of information between these communities. As Chase (2020) stated, "just chatting has rooted a type of non-gaming content. Just Chatting enabled streamers to have deeper conversations surrounding important social topics", for example awareness of #MeToo and the Black Lives Matter movement. The data of this work confirm that Twitch can be used as a *window of expression*. This space for expression should be free, diverse, generate humor and help to connect with people who have a similar opinion and interests. Therefore, the role of the streamer should be emphasized in any marketing campaign.

Woodcock & Jhonson (2019), marketing experts and users indicated the importance of the authenticity of streamers when making collaborations with brands. Specifically, we found that this aspect is very important for young people, so we can say that authenticity is a key in commercial communication on Twitch.

The young people in the interviews pointed out that one of Ibai's attractions was his authenticity, humor and humility. Experts confirm that Ibai's ability to attract young audiences en masse to his channel has been a factor that has encouraged brands to want to be present

in his content. There is an "Ibai Effect " because it is taken into account that he is one of the most consumed streamers by the young people; 100% of the surveys answered that they follow Ibai contents.

Another argument that supports this "Ibai Effect" is the influence that the streamer has on his audience. One of the milestones achieved has been to surpass Cuatro in audience for the 2020 Bells, an example that demonstrates the ability to attract young audiences to his channel. Similarly, other actions can be highlighted, such as the fact that the LaLiga has designate him as the official narrator of professional matches to attract younger audiences, or the fact that the matches of the Copa América 2021 are being broadcast free of charge through his channel, thus becoming the media with the greatest coverage that will broadcast the competition in Spain, since the match is only broadcasted on two local tv channels throughout the country. In addition, this represents "a total paradigm shift in terms of sports broadcasting and boosts Twitch and its streamers as possible transmission channels" (TTV News, 2021).

Companies need to have a presence in social networks in order not to lose interaction with their audiences (Mir, 2016; Costa, 2013). However, as it is a platform where the message can be temporary (it is not mandatory to share the recording of the live stream on a deferred basis). The message is no longer the most important element for brands, because it has been replaced by the user. So the communication strategy has to focus on the target and the prescriber rather than on the advertising message itself.

For all that, this paper concludes that Twitch is an innovative platform where brands have to appear and it represents a change in the content for the commercial communication. The pattern of consumption in Twitch involves humor, creativity, long video streamings, collective virtual activities and freedom of expression about any topic.

Also we find that users do not find a benefit from brands on Twitch. So, brands cannot pretend to sell their products through ads, but must evolve their speech and focus on creating attractive content for their audience. In conclusion, brands need to establish specific strategies for each network, and be aware that not all products fit on all the digital media.

The commercial communication necessarily has to adapt their message to the different platforms on which they are present and to offer quality content according to the medium. Conventional paid advertisements become annoying for young people, causing rejection to that brand. As well, according to the results obtained, users demand that ads be more creative, brief and offer some kind of benefit such as discounts or gift codes. People want to receive something in exchange for watching advertising.

In Twitch brands have no interest in owning a channel, so they depend on streamers content. Therefore, they delegate the responsibility of their messages to streamers without having control over them. The companies have to trust their messages to the streamers and this issue represents the risk of losing control over the brand's own image. This is a big difference with other social networks; for example, on Instagram where several influencers posted the same text or photo with the exact description requested by the sponsoring brand. Precisely this loss of control over the messages makes it necessary to have a consolidated reputation for brands that want to be present on Twitch, mainly because the messages that streamers transmit are not programmed by the brands and there is a risk that messages with values contrary to the brand are transmitted despite being a channel related to its audience.

Consequently, the streamer becomes a prescriber, adopting an important role in the communication of brands. Nevertheless, unlike in other social networks, advertising is not usually the most important source of income for these new influencers. In contrast to the importance of the streamer, it is worth noting that in Twitch we find a prevalence of the person over the content of the channel. Specifically, for young people it is common to follow channels because of the person who stars in it rather than consumption revolving around the type of content. The case of Ibai perfectly reflects this situation of Twitch.

Finally, we can emphasize the need for greater quality control and age filters on these platforms; not only to better understand the target and, therefore, improve the effectiveness of advertising messages, but also to protect underage youth, who may be using these platforms as escape routes to get to see the content they are interested in without adult supervision, because Twitch audience belongs to a young age group.

Young people are looking for their own, innovative content that does not have the sole purpose of selling. For them, interaction with brands on these platforms is not important, so they demand content on current issues and related to their personal interests: this valuable content will help to build loyalty among young users and make them future consumers of these brands.

Regarding the limitations of this study, it may be mentioned that the sample of respondents is not representative, although it can offer a fairly close view of the reality of this social network. For future research lines, it would be useful to replicate this methodology using more surveys and in-depth interviews in order to study the "Ibai effect" on young people with greater detail. Similarly, it would be interesting to analyze Instagram and Twitter profiles of

the most recognized streamers with the purpose of demonstrating their influence in the audience and to argue why Twitch streamers are the new influencer generation.

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