Youth awareness against COVID-19 in Spain and Latin America: analysis of spots on YouTube

Concienciación juvenil frente al COVID-19 en España y Latinoamérica: análisis de spots en YouTube

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. The socio-health and economic consequences of COVID-19 led countries to adopt preventive communication strategies, broadcasted on social media to enhance their exposure. This research examines Spanish and Latin American spots (N=100) that aim at raising awareness among young people about COVID-19 and that were published between 1 September 2020 and 10 January 2021 on YouTube. Methodology. The methodology is mixed: qualitative, by analyzing communicative, technical-narrative, and affective-emotional variables; and quantitative, with a descriptive analysis of the data followed by variance analysis to identify differences in both contents. Results. Sixty-nine percent of the spots magnify the risks, 49% foster the subjects’ identification with what is being told, 33% encourage reflection when faced with a critical situation, and 31% frighten them with the death of relatives. Spanish stories seek to avoid events/parties, promote the use of masks and comply with all health regulations. Latin American ones emphasize social distance, hygiene habits, and adherence to quarantine rules. Spain prioritizes attitude-based stories aimed at modifying behaviors, while Latin America prioritizes procedure-based stories by showing healthy practices. Anonymous citizens, people affected by the virus, singers or health professionals, aged 18 to 35, starred in the Spanish stories, while communicators, soccer players, or famous personalities, aged 35 to 65, starred in the Latin American ones. Conclusions. The cultural factors shared between Spain and Latin America are reflected in the homogeneity of the narratives regarding affective-
emotional variables. Youth portrayal is polarized: either positive models are emphasized, or rule-breakers are highlighted.

KEYWORDS: YouTube; COVID-19; young audiences; spot; preventive measures; advertising; health.

RESUMEN
Introducción. Las consecuencias socio-sanitarias y económicas del COVID-19 llevó a los países a adoptar estrategias comunicativas de carácter preventivo, que difundieron en medios sociales para amplificar su difusión. Esta investigación analiza spots del contexto español y latinoamericano (N=100) orientados a concienciar a los jóvenes frente al COVID-19 publicados durante el periodo de 1 septiembre 2020 a 10 enero 2021 y accesibles en YouTube. Metodología. La metodología es mixta: cualitativa, se analizan variables comunicativas, técnico-narrativas y afectivo-emocionales; y cuantitativa, con análisis descriptivo de los datos y posterior análisis de varianza para identificar las diferencias entre ambos contextos. Resultados. El 69% de los spots interpela a los jóvenes magnificando el riesgo, el 49% favorece su identificación, un 33% invita a la reflexión ante situaciones críticas y un 31% atemoriza con la muerte de familiares. Los spots españoles pretenden evitar reuniones/fiestas, promover el uso de mascarillas y cumplir todas las normas sanitarias, y los latinoamericanos inciden en la distancia social, hábitos de higiene y el respeto de la cuarentena. Asimismo, los españoles priorizan relatos de carácter actitudinal para modificar conductas, y los latinoamericanos priman relatos procedimentales, mostrando prácticas saludables. Ciudadanía anónima, afectados, cantantes y sanitarios de edades entre 18-35 años protagonizan los spots españoles, mientras que en los latinoamericanos son comunicadores, futbolistas o personajes conocidos de entre 35-65 años. Conclusiones. Los factores culturales compartidos entre España y Latinoamérica se plasman en la homogeneidad de las narrativas respecto a las variables afectivo-emocionales. La representación juvenil está polarizada: se enfatizan modelos positivos o se subraya el arquetipo transgresor de normas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: YouTube; COVID-19; jóvenes audiencias; spot; medidas de prevención; publicidad; salud.

CONTENT

Translation by Paula González (Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Venezuela)

1. Introduction

The increase in coronavirus infections -detected after the last quarter of 2020, and the emergence of new variants- has led to an increase in deaths and infections, exceeding the initial data of the pandemic. Therefore, the concern of the countries for the socio-sanitary and economic consequences of COVID-19 in their populations led them to adopt audiovisual communication strategies of an informative-preventive nature through social media (Castillo-Esparcia, 2020; Eghtesadi & Florea, 2020). However, the relaxation of behaviors, derived from accumulated psychological fatigue (Arias et. Al, 2020; González-Casas et al., 2020; Justo-Alonso et al., 2020; Valero et al., 2020), together with the systematic transgression of social distancing norms (family celebrations, clandestine parties, etc.), made their campaigns more aggressive (Macassi, 2020). Many sought a greater emotional
impact to minimize infections and appealed to feelings to raise awareness of health risks -especially among young people.-

Undoubtedly, institutional health campaigns are an opportunity to inform and sensitize the population, to adopt behaviors that stop and prevent diseases. From the psychological theory of health, Pérez-Moedano et al. (2021) describe the models that underlie the different campaigns to mobilize all audiences. Similarly, from an edu-communicational perspective, conceptual discourses are observed, linked to the presentation of data or scientific explanations about the transmission and severity of the virus (Sánchez-Mora, 2020). Some are procedural -close to social behaviorism (Bandura, 1990)- they list action guidelines and healthy behaviors to prevent contagion. And others, of an attitudinal nature (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000), appeal to the risk of the disease and its consequences to provoke changes in the behavior of citizens (Losada et al., 2020).

The spread of this virus, associated with social interaction, has disrupted culturally pre-established social habits both in Latin American countries and in Spain. The lives of young people -educated in socialization- have been affected by this disruptive element that has caused a conflict of values (Macassi, 2020). This has led to transgressive behaviors, increased by the low perception of some young people about the risk, convinced of the lower impact in their age range. For this reason, health institutions, media, youth organizations, universities, etc., developed and published -in social networks such as YouTube- audiovisual stories directed and/or carried out by young people to promote greater identification with the youth audience, appealing to their responsibility.

In this sense, this exploratory study analyzes spots from the Spanish and Latin American sociocultural context -accessible on YouTube- aimed at raising awareness among young people about COVID-19. The prioritized communication strategies, the technical-narrative resources, and the affective-emotional aspects they use are described.

2. Youth and health awareness campaigns

The communication strategies to raise awareness among young people about health risks of various kinds, can be of different types, according to the theoretical review carried out: a) informative, to explain phenomena, disease transmission processes, causes and consequences linked to unhealthy behaviors, appealing to experts, simulations, demonstrations, etc. (Cuesta et al., 2011; Rodríguez et al., 2018); b) storytelling, recreating easily identifiable stories where the plot is related to the described phenomenon, seeking to empathize and involve the audience and highlighting their identity traits to mobilize them (Hermann-Acosta, 2020); c) testimonials, whose protagonists tell their own experiences and give the story a higher level of emotional involvement, challenging the audience with a persuasive character (López-Hermida & Illanes, 2013); and d) music clips, starring singers of various musical genres, which bring together audiences with different sensibilities and tastes, whose message is conveyed through lyrics that can flow from social denunciation in rap (Requeijo & Márquez, 2020) or hip-hop to prevent the scourge of bullying (Del Moral et al., 2014).

In general, advertising campaigns aimed at young people seek to approach them from complicity and humor to provocation and even insult. They use colloquial language, with vocabulary and expressions typical of their slang and/or ethnographic context (Morales, 2020). Their persuasive capacity resides in the harmonious conjugation of creativity and empathy, creating messages with double-meaning twists and metaphors that favor their affective-emotional bond (Castello & Del-Pino, 2019). They seek to recreate shared scenarios where they establish their relationships, facilitating their identification and projection with the story. Likewise, they appeal to their leisure preferences linked to the mechanics and dynamics of video games, to raise awareness of social
problems (Paredes, 2018), establishing an analogy with the behavioral approach that explains their behaviors and consequences, at an individual and group level. Similarly, they use social networks and media to generate a flow of opinions regarding the issue that arouses them (Saavedra et al., 2020), evidencing their emotional response, through hashtags, comments, mentions, likes, etc.

Likewise, preventive health campaigns of different types (smoking, teenage pregnancies, etc.) are usually supported by a voice-over that describes the action and challenges the audience, making it a participant and jointly responsible for the narrated events. Oral discourse becomes relevant, whose common thread falls on different types of protagonists: a) healthcare workers, with an informative and didactic nature (Pérez-Moedano et al., 2021), accompanied by texts, animations, infographics, etc. (Burgos-García, 2019); b) affected people, narrating their own experiences (López-Hermida & Illanes, 2013); c) communicators, warning of the risk and engaging the population in a common cause (Martínez, 2020), celebrities (singers, soccer players, etc.), or influencers, taking advantage of their recruitment power and proximity to persuade and raise awareness among their followers (Torres & Mirón, 2020); or d) promoting the mirror effect, empowering an anonymous citizenry to project themselves -being part of their own group-, and empathize, by establishing affectionate family relationships.

Focusing the analysis on awareness campaigns against COVID-19, it is found that the spots are considered ideal narrative resources to tell stories and emotionally involve the audience. Likewise, international political-health institutions, aware of the media power of social media, have opted for the strategic use of YouTube as a vehicle for mass dissemination of news about COVID-19 -as Gil et al. (2020) point out. This platform allows them to reach young people through short and shocking messages (coronavirus preventive spots), to share content on other networks, contributing to its viralization by promoting collective awareness and mobilization (Basch et al., 2020a, 2020b). Specifically, in Spain and Latin America -contexts with shared socio-cultural traits- these types of stories have proliferated to especially sensitize the youth population to stop contagion.

3. Objective

This research studies Spanish and Latin American spots (N=100) aimed at raising awareness among young people about COVID-19, -published in the period 01/09/2020- 10/01/2021 and accessible on YouTube-, to: 1) analyze the communicative, technical-narrative, and affective-emotional variables that define them; and 2) determine the existence of differences between both origin contexts.

4. Methodology

4.1. Method

A mixed methodology is adopted: a) qualitative, focused on the content analysis of a sample of 100 spots linked to awareness campaigns against COVID-19, using an instrument designed ad hoc, which allows collecting qualitative data from each spot, attending to communicative, technical-narrative, and affective-emotional variables. It was validated -after a consensus and a priori definition of each indicator- from the review and systematic viewing of the spots by three expert coders in edu-communication (210 minutes each), during February 2021. Cohen's Kappa inter-coder reliability test yielded k=.897 (p<.000), obtaining high reliability as k>.700. And, b) quantitative, derived from the descriptive statistical treatment of the collected data, and subsequent variance analysis (ANOVA) to find out the existence of significant differences depending on the socio-cultural context to which the spots belong, following the criteria of Hair et al. (2014) and López-Roldán and Fachelli (2016) for social studies. The Variance Analysis or ANOVA compares the averages of the data relative to the
variables that define the spots of both contexts, considering the differences between the averages statistically significant between the two groups when $p \leq 0.050$, so only those cases that meet it will be indicated in the results. The SPSS v.24 program was used.

4.2. Sample

This is a non-probabilistic sampling, spots published in the period 1/09/2020- 10/01/2021 were selected through the YouTube search engine, according to three descriptors: thematic (“coronavirus spot”), audience (“youth”), and geographic (indicating the name of each Latin American country, and Spain), considering that the order of appearance is determined by the number of views and scope. The spots were selected according to the following criteria: a) aimed at young audiences; b) aimed at raising awareness and preventing COVID-19. Thus, after eliminating the repeated ones, the sample was made up of a total of 100 spots, 50 Spanish and 50 Latin American, which together presented 4,037,383 views at the time of the query (01/10/2021): Argentina (11), Brazil (2), Chile (3), Colombia (3), Costa Rica (3), Cuba (1), Ecuador (2), Honduras (1), Mexico (8), Nicaragua (2), Panama (1), Peru (6), Puerto Rico (4), El Salvador (1), and Uruguay (2) (see identification and visualization data in Annex).

4.3. Instrument

The instrument called COTEC AF -an acronym of the variables it covers- was created. It served to analyze the spots, identifying the communicative variables pointed out by Yañez and Cusot (2018), technical-narrative (Ortiz, 2020), and affective-emotional (González-Oñate et al. al., 2019; Tomba et al., 2018), together with the categories that make up each one (Table 1).
### Table 1. COTECAF: COMunicative, TEChnical-narrative, and AFective-emotional variables of anti-COVID 19 spots.

#### 1. Communicative variables

1.1. Main objective:
- Use of masks
- Hygiene habits
- Social distancing
- Gatherings/parties
- Respecting quarantine
- Respecting all the rules

1.2. Preferential incidence scope:
- Conceptual (informs or presents data)
- Procedural (indicates phases of processes)
- Attitudinal (elicits behavioral changes)

1.3. Strong idea/slogan:
- Personal care
- Elderly care
- General care
- Respecting rules
- Responsibility
- Prevention

1.4. Psychological theory of learning:
- Positive modeling
- Negative modeling
- Constructivist
- Behavioral

1.5. Predominant character of the message:
- Educational
- Threatening
- Blaming
- Motivating
- Proactive
- Reflective
- Exhortative

#### 2. Technical-narrative variables

2.1. Adopted narrative strategy:
- Humor/sarcasm
- Provocation/insult
- Musical
- Storytelling/short story
- Demonstration
- Testimony
- Informational
- Fiction
- Simulation (real-animation)/video game
- Documentary

2.2. Message support:
- Dialogues
- Voiceover
- Animation
- Text/infographics
- Images
- Music/sound
- Oral speech

2.3. Profile of the protagonists/common threads of the message:
- Healthcare workers
- Communicator (actors/comedians/influencers)
- Singer
- Soccer player
- Citizens
- Affected people
- No protagonists

2.4. Stage:
- Soccer field
- Hospital
- Cemetery
- Disco
- School context
- Street/terraces
- Home
- Filming studio
- Natural landscape

2.5. Type of predominant shots:
- ECS
- CS
- MS
- FS
- WS
- EWS

2.6. Color:
- Tonal
- White/black
- Combination of both

2.7. Lighting:
- Natural
- Artificial

#### 3. Affective-emotional variables

3.1. Challenge the audience to (multiple choice):
- Encourage identification
- Inform
- Promote reflection
- Modify behaviors
- Persuade
- Alert/frighten with death
- Increase the notion of risk

3.2. Positive emotions/feelings elicited in the audience (multiple choice):
- Hope/Empathy
- Solidarity
- Compassion
- Trust
- Sympathy
- None

3.3. Negative emotions/feelings it generates in the viewer (multiple choice):
- Rejection
- Sadness
- Rage/anger
- Fear/alertness
- Guilt
- Restlessness/anxiety
- Impotence
- None

3.4. Negative attitudes embodied in characters (multiple choice):
- Selfishness
- Indifference
- Irresponsibility/unconsciousness
- Remorse
- Transgression
- None

3.5. Positive attitudes embodied in characters (multiple choice):
- Responsibility
- Cooperation
- Awareness
- Commitment
- Respect
- None

**Source:** self-made
5. Results

After analyzing the spots, it is observed that, regarding the type of production, 94% are institutional, 4% are produced by commercial agencies or NGOs, and 3% are produced by young people. 55% are led by a mixed group, 18% by male characters, 18% by female characters, and 9% are text animations. Concerning the ages of the protagonists, 8% are under 18 years old, 47% are between 18-35 years old, 15% are between 35-65 years old, 3% are over 65 years old, 18% include intergenerational groups, and 9% lack protagonists as they are animations with texts (Table 2).

Table 2. Percentage distribution of spots according to the age of the protagonist and sociocultural context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages of protagonists</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18 years of age</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-35 years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-65 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>6.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 65 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergenerational</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text animation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: self-made

It is found that, as a whole, the spots are starred by young people aged 18-35 years. When performing the contrast of averages -using the variance analysis (ANOVA)-, significant differences are detected depending on the context, since the Latin American spots choose protagonists of 35-65 years (p < .000). Likewise, there are differences regarding the objective of the spots and the age of their protagonists. Those who prioritize the use of masks are led by people aged 18-35 years (p < .039). The spots focused on social distancing are interpreted by people over 65 years of age (p < .031), appealing to their vulnerability and need for care. Those who refer to social gatherings or parties are led by intergenerational groups (p < .009), and those who aim to comply with all the rules do not include protagonists (p < .001), given their informative text component.

5.1. Communicative variables

- Priority objective

Although the use of masks and hygiene habits (hand washing and use of hydro-alcoholic gel) are generalized practices, there are still spots in this regard, 6% and 4% respectively, which urge citizens to their fulfillment. 13% refer to the maintenance of social distance, and more specifically, 22% emphasize the need to avoid large gatherings or parties due to the proximity of the Christmas holidays. And given the number of infections, and the need to stay isolated to protect others, 5% make an explicit call to respect quarantine. However, 50% of the spots induce compliance with all prevention regulations (Table 3).
Table 3. Percentage distribution of spots according to the priority objective and sociocultural context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority objective</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of masks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene habits</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social distancing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gatherings/parties</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting quarantine</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting all the rules</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: self-made

Subsequently, the ANOVA shows significant differences according to the sociocultural context and the objective of the spots. Thus, Spanish ones try to persuade the audience to avoid social gatherings and mass parties, promote the use of masks, and, in general, comply with all health regulations (p <.044). Meanwhile, Latin American ones refer to social distancing, hygiene habits, and respecting quarantine (p <.009). Likewise, taking into account the geographical location where the countries are located and the objective of the spot, significant differences are observed. In South America they focus on avoiding meetings or parties and respecting quarantine (p <.014), in Central America they promote hygiene habits and the use of masks (p <.000), and in Latin American countries located in North America they refer to social distancing (p <.001).

- Preferential area of incidence

55% of the spots have an attitudinal character, seeking to provoke behavioral changes in the audience, appealing to reflection on the consequences of irresponsible acts and emotionally involving them. 42% deal with procedural aspects related to hand washing, the proper way to put on the mask, maintaining 1.5 m of social distance, ventilation of spaces, etc. And 3% address conceptual issues about the virus and its form of contagion, providing information on the evolution of the pandemic, without emotional nuances (Table 4).

Table 4. Percentage distribution of spots according to the area of incidence and sociocultural context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of incidence</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>9.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: self-made

The subsequent ANOVA, contrasting the area of incidence and the sociocultural context, shows that Spanish spots prioritize stories of an attitudinal nature (p <.004), and Latin American ones, those of a...
procedural nature, aimed at promoting healthy practices (p < .010). Furthermore, when considering age and setting, it is observed that procedural spots are starred by people aged 18-35 years (p < .006), while attitudinal ones are starred by subjects aged 35-65 years (p < .000).

- **Slogan/Strong idea**

30% of the slogans: “take care of yourself and take care of everyone”, “take care of your elders”, “let's practice *citizenship*”, “for you and others”, “take care of yourself, take care of them”, “let's all take care of each other”, “the best gift is to take care of ourselves”, “keep taking care of yourself”, etc., refer to the value citizens’ care. Specifically, 9% to personal care, 6% specifically directed to the care of the elderly, and another 15% to care in general, within the risk context linked to the Christmas holidays. 26% of the slogans refer to respecting rules: "let's avoid gatherings" (spot 51), "game over" (spot 34), "stay home, close the door to contagions" (spot 18), "don't catch an outbreak" (spot 9), “the last cup” (spot 16), “this is not a game” (spot 22), etc. 24% refer to personal responsibility: "your responsibility saves lives" (spot 10), "do you get it?" (spot 32), "if you mess it up, you mess it up for all of us" (spot 42), "COVID doesn't kill alone, don't be an accomplice" (spot 88), "what COVID took away" (spot 8). And 20% call for prevention: “avoid outbreaks” (spot 4), “at Christmas, you decide who you sit with” (spot 28), “being young doesn't protect you” (spot 35), “Christmas without COVID” (spot 76), “let's not lower our guard” (spot 89), etc.

When comparing the averages through ANOVA- of the type of slogans adopted in the spots according to the sociocultural context, no differences were found, they all converge on the same idea of care, responsibility, and prevention.

- **Underlying psychological theory of learning**

Bandura's modeling theory (1990) emphasizes that human learning is based on the imitation of models, where reinforcement is vicarious. In the analyzed spots, it is observed that 60% use models and 44% invite the audience to adopt healthy behaviors, exhibiting positive behaviors, while the remaining 16% propose counter-models, show reprehensible behaviors with a tragic end, seeking to discourage. Another 25% are ascribed to constructivist postulates (Bruner, 1988), they provide a barrage of shocking visual and sound stimuli (cemetery, coffin, dying heartbeats, ragged breaths, etc.), seeking the complicity of the viewer to elaborate the story based on their experiences, previous knowledge, and association of ideas.

On the other hand, 15% of the spots adopt behaviorist formulas, of a *Skinnerian* nature, focusing on negative reinforcements -or punishments- linked to irresponsible or selfish behaviors, turning the stories into black and showing the harsh reality of the disease: tubed people in hospitals or death. And, they usually use expressions and word games such as: peeling daisies: “I get it, I don’t get it, I get it,…”; “this time it's in your hands” (spot 33); or, appealing to the risk of taking it as a game with negative connotations: “this is not a game” (spot 22), “Game Over” (spot 34), or from chance: “pim, pum, now it’s your turn” (spot 47).

Nor were differences found regarding the psychological theory that supports the spots depending on the socio-cultural context, since they start from similar postulates.

- **Predominant character of the message**

States have emphasized certain messages in their institutional spots in an attempt to persuade citizens. Thus, 23% have a proactive tone, inviting them to adopt specific measures related to
compliance with regulations. 20% are educational messages, stating health measures and showing action guidelines. Another 20% adopt a guilty tone, presenting situations that show the consequences of the lack of responsibility of young people, for example, using a metaphor that identifies not keeping quarantine with going outside with a loaded gun (spot 10). 11% induce reflection on undesirable events that can be avoided by changing their attitude. 10% are threatening, highlighting images of patients in hospitals and cemeteries and incorporating recurring sounds (heartbeats, rhythms, degrees, respirator, etc.) that surround the story in an atmosphere of unease. 8% reflects a motivating character, betting on positive messages impregnated with hope. And, another 8% denote a concern for the victims, urging to ensure the health of all.

The variance analysis between the predominant character variables of the message and the sociocultural context did not show significant differences, since the spots from both contexts cover a great variety of approaches, and do not especially stand out for their predominant character.

5.2. Technical-narrative variables

The technical-narrative variables that define the studied spots include the identification of the adopted narrative strategy, the preferred message support, the selected protagonists or common threads, the chosen settings, the prevalence of a certain type of shot, and the chosen color and lighting.

- Narrative strategy

32% of the spots opt for storytelling, of which half (16%) are stories starring young people who are in places of leisure with friends, sometimes transgressing health regulations, showing them as irresponsible asymptomatic and blaming them for the contagions. And, the other half of these spots recreate everyday scenes, where young people interact through tablets, mobiles, using WhatsApp, etc., underlining their commitment to the health of the most vulnerable and mobilizing more communities. On the other hand, 16% use the testimony as a narrative resource, presenting those affected, influencers, healthcare workers, etc., to alert young people about the severity of the disease. 14% appeal to simulation, interspersing real and fictional elements, and some even use the forward and backward mechanics of video games (with the joystick), and their language (game over) to connect with youth. 13% have a demonstration tone, linked to explaining procedures to comply with health regulations (putting on a mask, social distancing...), as well as censuring reprehensible behavior.

To a lesser extent, 12% participate in the informative genre, mostly animations, diagrams, and informative texts for educational purposes: what is the virus, how is it transmitted, and how can contagions be avoided. 5% adopt the music video clip format, starring singers and/or rappers popular with young people, ensuring the reception of the message. 4% resort to humor or sarcasm to reduce the dramatic effect of the pandemic, caricaturing everyday situations linked to respecting rules, represented by well-known comedians who promote responsible attitudes. 3% adhere to the documentary genre, exposing data to provide scientific rigor to the provided information. And a marginal 1% resort to provocation and insult (“don't be an idiot” (spot 46), with direct and aggressive interpellations in the second person and the imperative mode.

Nor were significant statistical differences found after carrying out the ANOVA between the variables narrative strategy adopted in the spots and their reference context, given that there is a great variety, there is no particular priority for this type of communication related to health.
Message support

In 85% of the spots, images are the main support of the message, mostly accompanied by different sound elements to emphasize it, aware that an image is worth a thousand words (graph 1). 58% incorporate infographics or explanatory texts, relative to the norms or data on the evolution of the pandemic (infected and deceased). 41% use music or sound settings, establishing contrasts between: festive and funeral music, disco songs and the sound of an ICU, or appealing to the cultural meaning of the ringing of a church bell that remembers the deceased (spot 23); others use song lyrics to interpellate young people in a challenging tone (spot 42).

38% choose to use voice-over to promote reflection, almost always, to verbalize the protagonist's thoughts tinged with remorse. 34% use characters to deliver a direct oral speech, with an exhortative and proactive nature, appealing to the responsibility and commitment of young people. Animations represent 19%, they use comic characters or illustrations with didactic and playful value to exemplify compliance with regulations, opening the range to younger audiences. And, 14% rely on dialogues between characters, often young people who comment with their friends about the inconvenience of organizing parties to avoid contagion in their family environment, providing arguments to dissuade or raise awareness in this regard (Graph 1).

Graph 1. Preferential support used to convey the message

Source: self-made

Nor were significant differences found regarding the priority given to the support of the message in the spots depending on the socio-cultural context, both coincide in the use of similar supports.

Protagonists/common threads

57% of the protagonists of the spots correspond to anonymous citizens, to facilitate the projection of the audience with their peers, almost always represented by members of the family unit, emphasizing the kinship bond (child/mother, grandchildren/grandparents, widowed grandmother, etc.) appealing to the responsibility of caring for the elderly and underlining the commitment of young people to social causes (24%). However, 33% blame young people for the illness and death of family or friends for breaking the rules. It is also observed the special victimization of the female gender (infected and deceased grandmothers or mothers), and the incrimination of the male gender as accomplices of the contagions. However, the figure of the superwoman embodied in Susana Distancia (spot 83: Mexico) empowers women as protectors.
On the other hand, 14% of the spots are starred by well-known communicators or characters (actors or singers) (3%), comedians, soccer players: Maradona (2%) (spots 53-61) and influencers, given their great impact with audiences. Only 8% are carried out by healthcare workers because they can offer greater credibility given their proximity to the reality of the disease. Similarly, 7% present those affected who emotionally tell about their conditions in the first person. 9% do not have protagonists, given the animated support and informative nature (table 5).

### Table 5. Percentage distribution of spots according to the protagonist's profile and sociocultural context.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protagonist</th>
<th>Latin America</th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anonymous citizenry</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicators or well-known characters</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare workers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affected people</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer player</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without protagonists</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: self-made

After the ANOVA, it is found that the Spanish spots significantly stand out for being led by anonymous citizens, affected people, singers, and healthcare workers (p <.000), while in Latin American spots, the protagonists are communicators or well-known characters (preferably soccer players) (p <.033). Differences are also evident according to the age of the protagonists. The spots featuring an anonymous citizenry include people aged 18-35 or intergenerational groups (p <.013), as expected.

- **Settings**

24% of the spots develop their plot in *streets or terraces*, young people’s places for socializing, and 1% in *discos* and festive atmosphere. 18% are set at *home*, where intergenerational family gatherings take place, stressing the risk involved in not keeping health standards. Another 18% have been developed in *filming studios* to transmit direct messages, the majority carried out by communicators. 17% use the *hospital* as a setting to highlight the danger of the disease, recreating a suffocating atmosphere, and 1% place the viewer in a *cemetery* (fig. 1 and 2). From a more positive perspective, 7% use *natural landscapes* to invite compliance with the rules. Only 3% are located in *school contexts* to emphasize the rules of hygiene and distance. 2% are framed in a *soccer field*, where Maradona represents the promise of victory against the virus, alluding to the glory days of the Argentine team. And, 9% of the animations or information panels do not have a specific setting.
**Predominant shot types**

60% of the spots use medium shots or close-ups, to focus the audience's attention. Specifically, 38% who opt for the *medium shot* focus on the interlocutor, showing their posture and illustrating ways to wash their hands, put on masks, etc., and 22% prioritize *close-ups* of characters (communicators, affected people, singers, etc.) that directly challenge the viewer: “You already know what you have to do” (spot 14), “Don't be an idiot” (spot 46), “Because of me, you're not going to get infected” (spot 37), etc., seeking to empathize with the viewer and promote their reflection. For their part, the 23% who prioritize the *wide shot*, place the protagonists in outdoor settings and usually associate the message with social distance. Marginally, only 4% use the *American shot* in everyday situations at home and, in the same proportion, another 4% opt for the *extreme close-up* to show the faces of intubated people in hospital beds, underlining the pain and impotence in the face of disease (Fig. 3 and 4). 9% of the spots are information panels or animations, no shots stand out.

**Color and lighting**

It is observed that in 82% of the spots the natural color prevails, 11% combine black and white with color to contrast the drama (hospital) with the party (disco), or to draw attention to the chromatic element with didactic purposes, by exemplifying the ways of contagion of the virus, or identifying the infected person in a social context (Fig. 5 and 6). Only 7% use black and white to increase the drama of the story, especially in spots in Argentina and Mexico. Regarding lighting, 62% opt for *artificial light*, while the remaining 38%, being filmed outdoors, use *natural light*. 
It should be noted that the variables setting, type of predominant shot, and color and lighting of the spots do not offer differences depending on the Latin American or Spanish socio-cultural context, they use similar resources.

5.3. Affective-emotional variables

- Purpose of the interpellation to the audience

74% seek to modify behaviors and habits in citizens concerning health standards. 69% challenge, especially young people, to increase the risk notion of the disease. 49% favor the identification with the story of the protagonists appealing to the mirror effect. 33% promote reflection, showing critical situations. 31% scare with the death of family members and loved ones, in Spain it is done implicitly (respirator sounds, heart rate drop, etc.), while in Latin America it is more explicit by showing a coffin. 30% are focused on persuading them to comply with hygienic standards (mask, hydroalcoholic gel, etc.). And 23% have the purpose of informing about the virus and its ways of contagion (Graph 2).

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Modify behaviors and habits in citizens</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the risk notion of the disease</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favor the identification with the story of the protagonists</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote reflection, showing critical situations</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scare with the death of family members and loved ones</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuade them to comply with hygienic standards</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform about the virus and its ways of contagion</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

Graph 2. Purpose of the interpellation to the audience

- Positive emotions/feelings that the spots arouse in the audience

44% appeal to the solidarity of the audience and the commitment to the care of their fellow citizens, in several spots, patriotism is exalted ("Peru First" (spots 89-90), "Touring our country" (spot 74),...
“Live like Galicians” (spot 30), etc. 23% arouses trust in viewers, generally linked to healthcare worker profiles that star in the spots and communicators or well-known people who deserve social recognition. 17% promote empathy with the story and the protagonists. 13% provoke sympathy based on the humorous tone of the spot, the optimistic message of the lyrics of a song, etc. 12% provoke compassion linked to dramatic stories of people suffering in hospitals. 8% raise hope when verifying committed and responsible youth that complies with the rules to avoid contagion. It should be noted that 29% of the spots do not convey positive emotions or feelings. Nor were differences found in the reference Spanish or Latin American context since the spots resort to shared emotions (Graph 3).

Graph 3. Positive emotions/feelings that the spots arouse in the audience
Source: self-made

- Negative emotions/feelings that the spots arouse in the audience

35% of the spots generate anxiety or uneasiness by showing the impact of non-compliance with rules, such as the participation of young people in parties, without a mask, and without keeping social distance, etc. Similarly, 33% raise fear or alertness in the audience when noting the evolution of the pandemic, as well as those who acoustically and visually recreate the ICU, cemetery, crematorium, etc. 20% causes sadness by showing grandparents in situations of vulnerability and loneliness. 16% evoke a feeling of guilt in the youth audience for their irresponsible acts. 14% cause impotence when contemplating situations where the rules are transgressed, putting the health of others at risk. 12% generate rage or anger when the consequences of these transgressive and selfish behaviors lead to the death of close relatives. 5% generate rejection in the face of stories starring young people who do not acknowledge the seriousness of the situation. And finally, 37% do not generate negative feelings in the audience (Graph 4).
Graph 4. *Negative emotions/feelings that the spots arouse in the audience*

Source: self-made.

- **Negative attitudes embodied in the characters**

62% of the characters who star in the spots do not show objectionable negative attitudes. 33% show irresponsible or unconscious attitudes, for not wearing a mask, not keeping a safe distance, sharing objects that can be vehicles of contagion. 17% manifest with a selfish attitude, concerned only with their enjoyment and benefit. 14% adopt transgressive behaviors attending mass parties, drinking from shared bottles, etc., with serious risk for them and their environment. And, 1% show indifferent young people, oblivious to the consequences of their actions (Graph 5).

Graph 5. *Negative attitudes embodied in the characters*

Source: self-made

- **Positive attitudes embodied in the characters**

62% of the young protagonists of the spots are aware of the need to comply with the established sanitary regulations. 45% reflect a responsible attitude, wear masks in crowded places, wash their hands, and use hydroalcoholic gel. 38% portray young people committed to ending the pandemic, inviting others to follow in their footsteps, especially by limiting their social contacts. 22% feel
called to actively cooperate in solving the health problem, leading the campaigns themselves, and challenging their peers. Another 22% show young people respectful of the rules to avoid the contagion of their relatives. 29% of the spots do not show characters with positive attitudes.

![Graph 6. Positive attitudes embodied in the characters](source)

**Source:** self-made

In all the affective-emotional variables that define the analyzed spots, no statistically significant differences were found depending on the context of reference, since convergence is perceived in the representations that allude to shared emotional imaginary.

6. Discussion and conclusions

As in similar situations, traditionally the health institutions of Spain and Latin America have emphasized the educational function of certain health campaigns (Orozco, 2010). In this case, in the face of COVID-19, they have strategically spread spots on YouTube, aware of its power to attract youth. Generally, the stories directed at young people do not remain alien to their interests and tastes, the use of social networks as a means of communication and interaction (WhatsApp messages, video calls, hashtag, etc.), as well as the recurrence of video games highlighting their aesthetics as a narrative formula (Muñoz & Segovia, 2019).

The shared elements between Spain and Latin America reflected in the analyzed spots -beyond the language- facilitate the understanding of meaning by appealing to common cultural traits such as the family as the axis of the story, the relevant role of grandparents, gatherings and celebrations with family and friends; leisure and socialization (parties, dancing, and alcohol consumption); and, the national sentiment linked to the country or region of origin. Furthermore, all the stories and experiences are impregnated with emotions and feelings that involve the viewer on the affective-emotional level. Often, realistic stories are used where a character recounts their experience in the first person about a painful situation, which favors empathy and increases solidarity with vulnerable groups.

Specifically, in the analyzed spots, despite contemplating elements of the socio-cultural context of origin -which respond to its conditioning factors and peculiarities-, few differences are observed.

The objective of the spots has a differential component depending on the socio-cultural context, so Spanish ones focus on persuading the audience to: comply with all health regulations, avoid social
gatherings or mass parties, and wear masks, understanding that the relaxation of the measures and the proximity of the Christmas holidays could increase infections. On the other hand, Latin American spots especially refer to social distancing, hygiene habits, and respecting quarantine, given the increase in infections on those dates. Moreover, there are differential nuances related to the geographical location of the countries: in South America, they are concerned with avoiding social gatherings or parties and with respecting quarantine; in Central America, they promote hygiene habits and the use of masks; and in Latin American countries located in North America, they focus on raising awareness about the need for social distancing.

Similarly, concerning the area of incidence, it is observed that Spanish spots prioritize stories of an attitudinal nature, seeking behavioral changes in young people; and Latin American ones bet on formulas of a procedural nature, they give guidelines on preventive hygiene habits. Likewise, it is perceived that the Spanish spots are quite heterogeneous regarding the profiles of their protagonists since they choose a wide range: anonymous citizens, affected people, singers, and healthcare workers. While Latin American spots bet on the impact of the prestige of communicators, well-known personalities, and soccer players, convinced of their persuasive capacity. Likewise, it is found that Spanish spots opt to a greater extent for protagonists aged between 18-35 years, in an attempt to make young people identify with the message they transmit, causing the mirror effect. Unlike Latin American ones that include people aged 35-65 years, generally to sensitize the youth audience to the risks of the elderly, appealing to their solidarity and responsibility.

In both contexts, there is a tendency to represent youth around two polarized groups. On the one hand, they show young people as exemplary role models, responsible for their actions, aware of the problem, and respectful of the rules, and even presenting them as mobilizing agents, committed to the well-being and health of all, by inviting their peers to cooperate. And, at the opposite pole, there are representations linked to reprehensible behaviors, portraying them as irresponsible due to their low perception of risk, because although they understand the rules, they do not always accept or comply with them, coinciding with what Torralbas et al. (2020) point out in their research on the Cuban context.

There is also great homogeneity in the affective-emotional components of these stories. A tendency to increase the feeling of guilt and to frighten with the death of oneself or relatives is perceived, showing, on the one hand, individual transgressive behaviors (skipping the curfew, not wearing a mask in shared spaces...); and on the other, collective transgressions (participating in massive clandestine parties). This is the same criticism of Arévalo (2021), alluding to the coverage of news about COVID-19 starred by young people. In the Peruvian context, Macassi (2020) considers these behaviors as cultural habits acquired in shared social settings, supported by discourses that invite youth transgression as an archetype. In this sense, a new line of research would be required aimed at verifying the opinions of the youth audience regarding the used narrative strategies, their degree of identification and empathy with the adopted discourses, as well as the level of awareness that these types of spots give. In this way, new spots could be built that allow a representation of youth away from stigmatizing stereotypes, with a proactive character that invites them to adopt healthy and responsible behaviors.

Finally, it should be noted that although the sample is large, bearing in mind the selection criteria, there is an imbalance in the representation of spots from some Latin American countries. Perhaps, the different budgetary allocation of their preventive health campaigns has been reflected in the number of spots produced by each country in this period. Some have tried to reach all audiences with a single story of a marked didactic nature (handwashing, use of a mask, social distancing, etc.), in an attempt to provide information to the population (e.g., Nicaragua and Paraguay). Meanwhile, others
ignore these elementary narratives by presenting more elaborate stories that seek to empathize with the youth audience (e.g., Mexico and Argentina), making them participants in daily stories and linked to the culture of the viewing of series in which they are immersed. This decompensation has conditioned the present analysis, making it difficult to deepen the narratives of the spots of each country in particular, as well as the comparison between countries. Likewise, the Spanish sample is more represented because each Autonomous Community has generated its own spots by having had these competencies in health matters transferred to them and having funding for it, unlike the Latin American countries that have mostly centralized these institutional campaigns from their respective Ministries of Health.

7. References


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ResearchGate: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Nerea-Lopez-Bouzas
Dialnet: https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7612808
### Table 1. Spanish spots published between 1/09/2020- 10/01/2021 (consulted on 10/01/2021)

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBKA4iMbxLo | 2,355 | 8 |
| 002  | Andalucía: Concienciación jóvenes (Linares)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LDms_0qT_s&feature=emb_logo | 382 | 1 |
| 003  | Andalucía: #CumpleTuParte #COVID-19  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wJ54egQ9oM | 39,503 | - |
| 004  | Andalucía: Evita los rebrotes  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFacRa95FB8 | 407 | 5 |
| 005  | Andalucía: Hazlo por ti, por mi por todos  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRmjmk9ze-w | 51 | 4 |
| 006  | Andalucía: Jóvenes  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjEHZTgR8Zo | 25,189 | 185 |
| 007  | Andalucía: Campaña Ayto jóvenes whatsapp  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLE7bmQV9Js | 180 | 4 |
| 008  | Andalucía: Lo que el Covid se llevó  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RAm-JX1otQ | 962 | 17 |
| 009  | Andalucía: No te pilles un rebrote  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1J6YGh3y1JU | 1,962 | 23 |
| 010  | Aragón: Tu responsabilidad salva vidas  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KlyMAIJx_w | 2,860 | 27 |
| 011  | Asturias: Sigue cumpliendo las medidas de seguridad contra la COVID  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=expKe7lfzko | 1,658 | 38 |
| 012  | Baleares: Campaña Nadal Govern balear  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0p-Szykbr-w | 1,198 | 23 |
| 013  | Canarias: ¿Impacto de los jóvenes en la pandemia?  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SDzcgcVS10 | 114,704 | 1,3M |
| 014  | Canarias: Uso mascarilla jóvenes (cantante)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_HwODplAs0 | 5,642 | 134 |
| 015  | Canarias: El regalo del abuelo  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VluhRRYn_uM | 285,744 | 2201 |
| 016  | Canarias: La última Copa  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bA9Pc9AzzKQ | 41,499 | 290 |
| 017  | Canarias: Las 8 Islas Canarias luchan contra la COVID-19 en Navidad  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCIlqyiA2oM | 6,438 | 8 |
| 018  | Canarias: Quédate en casa, cierra la puerta a los contagios  
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<td>Extremadura: Me comprometo, jóvenes</td>
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<td>Madrid: ¡Protégete, protégenos!</td>
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<td>Madrid: <em>Game over</em></td>
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<td>Madrid: <em>Influencers</em>: ser joven no te protege del COVID-19</td>
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<td>Madrid: Saltarse la cuarentena</td>
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Table 2. Latin American spots published between 1/09/2020-10/01/2021 (consulted on 10/01/2021)

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<td>Argentina: Evitemos las reuniones [link]</td>
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<td>Argentina: Historia real de un paciente por Fabián Vena [link]</td>
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**Source:** Self-made

Table 2. *Latin American spots published between 1/09/2020-10/01/2021 (consulted on 10/01/2021)*
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<th>Argentina: No hay otra</th>
<th><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGFiCLJ4YbA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGFiCLJ4YbA</a></th>
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<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Argentina: Nadie sale sale campeón solo (Maradona)</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNJ7VMUR_D4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNJ7VMUR_D4</a></td>
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<td>Brasil: Spot Prevenção &amp; Sintomas</td>
<td>IMVF</td>
<td>COVID-19 São Tomé e Príncipe</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iu0yo8eB2ig">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iu0yo8eB2ig</a></td>
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<td>Brasil: Minuto Saúde - Prevenção coronavírus</td>
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<td>Chile: No expongas a nadie</td>
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<td>Chile: Cuidémonos entre todos</td>
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<td>Chile: Esta pandemia la superaremos entre todos</td>
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<td>Colombia: No hay excusas</td>
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<td>Colombia: Coronavirus en 4 enero 2021</td>
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<td>Colombia: Todos estamos unidos frente al COVID</td>
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<td>Costa Rica: Cuidate</td>
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<td>Costa Rica: Día. Merry</td>
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<td>Costa Rica: Personas mayores</td>
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<td>Cuba: Mi taller Spot Covid</td>
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**Source:** Self-made