

The broadcast of the music video on YouTube. Analysis of the viral capacity of the video clip

La difusión del vídeo musical en YouTube. Análisis de la capacidad viral del vídeoclip

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The appearance of social networks has enabled users to massively share and broadcast content, multiplying its impact. Occasionally, large success quotas are reached in very short time frames, leading to "viral" productions, among which music videos are the most prominent and YouTube is users' preferred platform. **Methodology:** To know the essential bases that explain the viral capacity of a music video, research has been carried out using as a methodological technique the content analysis applied to a sample of 400 video clips, 200 in 2015, and 200 in 2018 following broadcast criteria. **Results:** video clips have evolved, in the 3 years that separate the two analyzes, in aspects such as the language of the songs, their style, or the theme. **Discussion and conclusions:** From the analysis, a change in the musical tastes of the audiences that access this type of content is perceived, and, as a consequence, the evolution towards a new video clip model that users are willing to share through their social networks.

KEYWORDS: viral marketing; video clip; emotions; YouTube; music; music industry.

RESUMEN

Introducción: La aparición de las redes sociales ha posibilitado que los usuarios compartan y difundan masivamente contenidos multiplicando su repercusión. En ocasiones, se alcanzan grandes cuotas de éxito en plazos de tiempo muy cortos, dando lugar a producciones "virales", entre las que los vídeos musicales son las más destacadas y YouTube la plataforma preferida de los usuarios.

Metodología: Con el objetivo de conocer las bases esenciales que expliquen la capacidad viral de un video musical, se ha realizado una investigación utilizando como técnica metodológica el análisis de contenido aplicado a una muestra de 400 videoclips, 200 en 2015 y 200 en 2018 siguiendo criterios de difusión. **Resultados:** los videoclips han evolucionado, en los 3 años que separan los dos análisis, en aspectos como el idioma de las canciones, su estilo o la temática. **Discusión y conclusiones:** A partir del análisis se percibe un cambio en los gustos musicales de los públicos que acceden a este tipo de contenidos y, como consecuencia, la evolución hacia un nuevo modelo de videoclip que los usuarios estén dispuestos a compartir a través de sus redes sociales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *marketing* viral; videoclip; emociones; YouTube; música; industria musical.

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

1. Introduction

1.1. Viral content

The arrival of the so-called web 2.0 has been a real revolution by allowing Internet users to actively participate in this network. The emergence of social networks has enabled content to circulate from one user to another and its impact and repercussion are amplified. In some cases, this type of content achieves great success rates in relatively short periods of time, being dubbed “viral” productions. Among all the different formats that exist on the Internet, video is the audiovisual content that best represents the viral phenomenon (Picazo, 2016).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) define viral marketing as an electronic word of mouth through which a marketing message related to a company, brand, or product is transmitted in an exponentially increasing way, usually resorting to the use of social network applications; the two fundamental elements of the definition are, first of all, a growth or reproduction rate greater than one, which implies that each receiver forwards the message to more than one person; secondly, the use of social networks themselves.

The main characteristic of audiovisual content of a viral nature is “beyond the number of viewings - an important parameter, without a doubt-, the number of these achieved through the massive broadcast that users provide by sharing a video with their contact networks through any route” (Dafonte, 2014, p. 200). Thus, viral videos, those that get the attention of millions of people in a very short time, have become a basic element of the Social Web (Bauckhage, 2015). For viral marketing to work, Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) argue that three basic criteria must be met: the right people must get the right message in the right circumstances; in other words, finding the right people to establish communication; have a memorable and interesting enough message to be transmitted; finally, choosing the right place and time to launch the action, to which is added that “it takes some good luck to unite everything” (p. 257).

Arroyo and Baños point out that “online videos currently function as engines of the advertising sector due to their great capacity for audience segmentation and their ease of evaluating engagement

with their audiences” (2013, p. 618). However, as these same authors state, “it is not so easy to achieve the desired viral effect” (2013, p. 617); according to different researchers, everything seems to indicate “that social media are the most important interfaces to spread the brand message, but this largely depends on the voluntary participation of users (Sarmiento Guede, De Esteban Curiel, and Antonovica, 2017, p. 70-71). Various studies attempt to determine what are the factors that determine the viral success of videos (McNeal, 2012; Texeira, 2012; Dafonte, 2014; Coker, 2016; Picazo, 2016; Janicke 2018; RahilSachak-PatwaNabil, FadaiRobert, and Van Gorder, 2018). For this reason, understanding the reasons that explain the popularity of viral videos can help the advertising sector to create better content (Kong, RizoIU, Siqi & Xie, 2018).

If video is the most consumed and shared format, YouTube is positioned as the main platform from which to access this type of content worldwide (Picazo, 2016). As Arroyo and Baños affirm, social media, increasingly, rely on the presence of viral video to be shared and commented on social networks and, in this sense, YouTube performs a fundamental task as a distributor of those videos, from where they will be made known through social networks. (2013, p. 616)

According to a study carried out in 2016 by Google, the company that owns YouTube, together with comScore, 48% of the online video consuming audience pointed to YouTube as their favorite platform. Thus, despite the high competition that exists in the online video sector, in 2017 80% of the hours spent by users on video consumption were done from YouTube (Pérez, 2017). According to the Alexa ranking, which makes a list of the most popular sites based on a combined measure of unique visitors and page views, YouTube is the second most visited website in the world (Alexa.com, 2019). In this way, YouTube has become an essential tool for the communication strategy of brands (Antolín & Clemente, 2016).

The most viewed videos on YouTube are video clips. When speaking of effectiveness, coverage is, according to Cabrera, “the proportion that represents the number of people that we have impacted in a communication action or a complete campaign regarding the total of our target audience” (1996, p. 65). In the video clip, compared to other types of advertising content such as the spot, it can be seen that the effectiveness or coverage of the first is much higher: compared to the most viewed video clip that is *Despacito* by the artists Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee, which holds the record of visits with more than 6,000 million views, the most played ad on YouTube corresponds to the Samsung brand and has 210 million views. Thus, the video of the Puerto Rican singers gets 28 times more coverage. Both cases, however, are authentic viral products, since according to a study carried out by TubeMogul, less than 1% of the videos present on YouTube exceed one million views. Specifically, according to this study, barely 0.4% of videos exceed this figure. As RahilSachak-PatwaNabil, FadaiRobert, and Van Gorder (2018) point out, the fact that a video becomes viral depends on a wide variety of factors (such as the popularity of the person who shares the video, the quality of the product, its appearance in the media, social trends, etc.) that influence the behavior of individuals to access, view, and share a video. After analyzing different works, Paús and Macchia (2014) identified that there are several characteristics related to the fact that a content is more viral and they grouped these features into three categories: creativity, execution, and external factors.

IFPI noted that, in 2013, 9 of the 10 most viewed clips on the platform were video clips. This trend does not seem to have changed since in 2017 music content represented 1 in 3 visits to YouTube and 21% of the generated income.

LOS VÍDEOS EN STREAMING SUPONEN MÁS DE LA MITAD DEL TIEMPO DE LA MÚSICA CONSUMIDA VÍA STREAMING



Graph 1: music consumption in online media.

Source: IFPI (2018).

Therefore, it can be seen that the YouTube platform has completely transformed how users relate to music. It is what Israel Márquez (2017) calls musical “Youtubification”, referring to the way YouTube has currently revolutionized musical distribution, consumption, and experimentation.

MIDiA Research shows that, while in 2010 music videos took an average of 1,814 days to reach one billion views, in 2017 they only needed 121 days, almost fifteen times less time in just 7 years. This success has caused YouTube to increase its algorithms for recommending and distributing music content (Sánchez, 2018).

One might think that the strength of the marketing campaigns of the products generated by the cultural industries, especially the record companies, is far superior to the viral disclosure of productions created by users who do not have the promotion and broadcasting capacity of the conventional audiovisual industry. (Pérez, 2011, p. 153)

But it is not always necessary to make high-budget pieces to achieve viral success. An example of this was the video clip *7/11* of the latest album by the artist Beyoncé, which, with a minimal budget, was recorded with a mobile phone in the singer's spare time, and managed to get more than 20 million people to see it in just 3 days. However, as Berger and Schwartz (2011) demonstrated, the most publicly visible products, or those that are more present in the environment, achieve a more immediate, continuous, and general “word of mouth”. If it is transferred to music videos, the contents that have a greater promotion are more likely to enjoy public favor and obtain a greater number of views.

Although music clips have been shown to reach higher levels of popularity than other kinds of videos on the Internet, it is worth asking what are the reasons that lead to these productions to achieve remarkable success, greater than any other type of audiovisual content. A study by Brown, Campbell, and Fischer showed that one of the main reasons for viewing these pieces was the preference of the format by music consumers over listening to songs on the radio (en Selva, 2014, p. 486). However, this does not explain, at least exclusively, the high levels of virality reached by the video clip.

The company Fandistro (2013) points out that the 5 factors behind the success of music videos are: the emotional response, the quality of the song, the effort in creating the videos, and the broadcast of content with which the public can identify. Of them, the only element that seems to be differential regarding other types of videos is the emotional component, a factor in which we will stop.

1.2. Emotions and music videos

If music is based on the transmission of emotions, the video clips accentuate this aspect because “the music video addresses the emotionality of the viewers through the symbolic representation of what is desired, what is prohibited, and what is feared” (Levis, 2004, p. 6). This aspect seems to be a notable factor, since Eckler and Bolls (2011) defend, in their work on viral advertising, that the intention to share and forward a message is greater if the ad has a positive emotional tone. Berger and Milkman (2012) found that content that evokes emotions is more viral than the rest. Baraybar-Fernández and others (2017) verified “that the resource to emotions in audiovisual advertising messages influences the memory, both of the brands and of the messages they transmit” (p. 26).

According to Devra Prywes, Vice President of Marketing at Unruly, 18 feelings make the user decide to share certain content: happiness, joy, amazement, inspiration, hilarity, contempt, disgust, sadness, sympathy, pride, nostalgia, surprise, knowledge, shock, confusion, excitement, fear, and anger. Porter and Golan (2006) point out that, although emotional content has always been key to capture the attention of the public in traditional advertising, the effectiveness of viral advertising is based on increasingly provocative content to get users to share it; according to the results obtained by these authors, advertisers using viral videos seem to believe that using sex, nudity, and violence is what motivates consumers to transmit content online.

However, according to Dafonte (2014, p. 201), the taste for provocative or controversial content that advertisers attribute to high ratings may not correspond to what users want. Eckler and Bolls (2011) show that the degree to which advertising videos are more or less viral is related to the attitudes and intentions that they arouse in viewers. In this way, the intention of forwarding an ad is more favorable when the contents are perceived as pleasant, which also generates positive attitudes towards the brand; conversely, responses become less favorable as the emotional tone becomes more neutral and were unfavorable when the ad is perceived as unpleasant.

Beyond the polarity of emotions, Berger and Milkman (2012) demonstrated that positive content is more viral than negative, but the relationship between emotion and content distribution is more complex: content that evokes high-excitement positive or negative emotions is more viral than content that evokes low-excitement emotions or deactivation. And against the idea that people tend to broadcast more negative news than positive news, they found that positive news are actually more viral.

Bisquera Alzina (2009), analyzes a wide variety of models of emotions, concluding that “there is no classification that has been generally accepted” (p. 89). Based on a study of the classifications made by 23 authors, the majority listing between 6 and 12 emotions, the following classification is established, with 6 negative, 3 positive, and 1 ambiguous emotion.

Table 1: *Psychopedagogical classification of emotions.*

NEGATIVE EMOTIONS	
<i>Primary</i>	
Fear	fear, horror, panic, terror, dread, restlessness, fright, phobia
Anger	rage, wrath, rancor, hatred, fury, outrage, resentment, aversion, exasperation, tension, excitement, agitation, acrimony, animadversion, animosity, irritability, hostility, violence, anger, jealousy, envy, impotence, contempt, acrimony, antipathy, resentment, rejection, suspicion
Sadness	depression, frustration, disappointment, affliction, distress, pain, sorrow, grief, pessimism, melancholy, self-pity, loneliness, discouragement, reluctance, nostalgia, despondency, disgust, worry
Disgust	aversion, disgust, rejection, contempt
Anxiety	anguish, despair, restlessness, insecurity, stress, worry, longing, unease, dismay, nervousness
<i>Social</i>	
Shame	guilt, shyness, shame of others, embarrassment, modesty, decorum, blush, flush, truthfulness
POSITIVE EMOTIONS	
Joy	enthusiasm, euphoria, excitement, happiness, delight, fun, pleasure, shudder, gratification, satisfaction, whim, ecstasy, relief, rejoicing, humor
Love	acceptance, affection, care, tenderness, sympathy, empathy, interest, cordiality, trust, kindness, affinity, respect, devotion, adoration, veneration, infatuation, agape, gratitude, interest, compassion
Happiness	well-being, enjoyment, tranquility, inner peace, bliss, placidity, satisfaction, serenity
AMBIGUOUS EMOTIONS	
Surprise	It can be positive or negative. This family can include: shock, amazement, bewilderment, confusion, perplexity, admiration, restlessness, impatience. Related to surprise, but at the other end of the polarity, may be anticipation and expectation, which are intended to prevent them.

Source: Bisquera Alzina (2009).

Sarah Wood, director of operations of the agency specialized in online video Unruly Media, defends in this sense that the success of a viral is fundamentally determined by the narrative of the work. It is this narrative that leads the Internet user to repeatedly see the video and not the number of visits it accumulates on the Internet. Likewise, Wood points out that you should be aware that viral videos are not made, but they arise.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research objectives

This research focuses on the study of the relationship between different formal and content characteristics of video clips and their success on social networks. The ultimate goal of the research is to establish the essential bases for the construction of a predictive model in which the elements that would give efficacy to a video clip are established. To achieve this general purpose, the following objectives are contemplated:

- Identify the most outstanding characteristics of the video clips that receive the most views on the Internet.
- Describe what are the formal and content aspects that make a music video clip more interesting for the public and, ultimately, go viral.
- Compare the success of the video clips in the two different moments, taking into account the visualizations of the productions that make up the sample.

2.2. Research methodology

To achieve these objectives, a quantitative methodology has been designed that allows knowing the most relevant elements and characteristics of the most viewed video clips on YouTube.

2.2.1. Methodological technique

Content analysis has been used as an essential methodological instrument. For Krippendorff (2019, p. 24), “content analysis is one of the most important research techniques in the social sciences” that can be defined as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other significant matter) in their contexts of use. The concept of context provided by this author is fundamental and must be understood as the frame of reference in which the messages and meanings are developed. It is important because it relates the message to a context (social, cultural, economic) of production and consumption that is very relevant.

For their part, Naccarato and Neuendorf (1998, p. 20) define content analysis “as the systematic, objective, and quantitative analysis of the characteristics of the message”. The technique, which was initially used to research aspects related to communication, sociology, and journalism, has been validated as a research tool in thousands of studies that examine all types of messages, differentiating between formal and content variables. Neuendorf (2017) states that, as a research technique, content analysis is not reserved for media studies or another type of content or message context, and can be applied to written text, transcribed speech, verbal interactions, visual images, characterizations, non-verbal behaviors, sound events, or any other type of message.

With the content analysis technique, instead of interrogating individuals, the message is interrogated; and applied to communication, the content analysis consists of a set of analysis and interpretation processes to which a set of messages generated in certain communication processes susceptible to registration are subjected.

2.2.2. Sample

The universe of study in this research is formed by the set of video clips broadcasted by record companies through social networks. These communications are part of the marketing techniques and tools used by record labels to achieve wide broadcasting and help to increase sales and open new markets.

Given the number and variety of existing video clips, for this research we have prepared an intentional analysis sample, based on criteria that allow us to generate a coherent, relevant, and viable corpus. These criteria are:

- Video clips present on the YouTube platform.
- Time limit: viral video clips in April 2015 and November 2018.

- Origin: one of the three majors in the music industry (Universal Music Group, Sony Music, and Warner Music Group) or be present on a VEVO channel, the main music video distribution channel.
- Those videos that, although having obtained a great impact in the number of visits, correspond to concerts that have not been created with a directly promotional purpose and, therefore, are not performance-type music clips, have been excluded.

From the corpus bounded according to the relevant criteria for the research, the finally used sample consisted of 200 video clips that met the requirements.

To develop the content analysis, a series of variables are established around the object of study that allow an exhaustive explanation of the studied phenomenon. In this research, the analysis of both formal and content variables is carried out.

2.2.3. Variables

The different variables are distributed in three blocks:

Descriptive variables that allow identifying each of the video clips in the sample:

- Song title.
- Year of broadcast.
- Video length.
- Song length.
- Year in which the song is released.
- Label.
- Director.

Variables related to the artist:

- Artist's name.
- Artist's country of origin.
- Presence of the artist in social networks when the video clip was released to the market. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have been selected as reference social networks for being three of the most used tools.
- If the artist has experience in the music market and if it had a hit before the video clip that is present in the list, using as reference the Top Ten of the Billboard list or its Latin equivalent.
- Indirect promotion factors in the three months before or in the six months after the video clip was released. Taking into account the conclusions of Berger and Schwartz (2011), according to which the most publicly visible products or those most present in the environment are more likely to enjoy public favor, it is included in this point: if there has been any type of controversy around the video clip or the singer, if the video clip has been parodied, if any famous person appears, and if the artist has performed in prime-time in the United States.

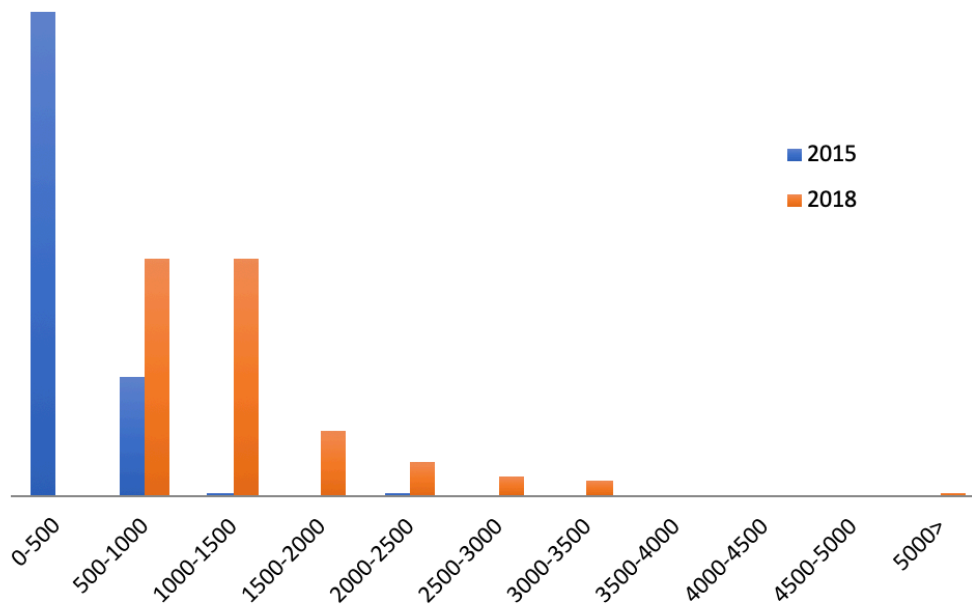
Variables related to the video clip:

- Song lyric language: when mixing multiple languages, which is common today, it has only been considered bilingual when there is a balance in the use of two languages or if a phrase or stanza is used repeatedly in more than a language.
- Increase in the number of visits to video clips. We analyzed the average number of views of the video clips that are part of the sample in 2015 and 2018.
- Position of the video clip in the list of the most visited, in each of the two periods.
- Emotions transmitted by the video clip: the Bisquera Alzina (2009) classification has been used, which differentiates the following categories:
 - Negative emotions: fear, anger, sadness, disgust, anxiety, and shame

- Positive emotions: joy, love, and happiness
- Ambiguous emotions: surprise
- The theme of the songs: given the variety, for this variable there were no predetermined categories, establishing the themes as the videos were viewed. The following are differentiated: love, heartbreak, personal growth, sexual attraction, fun, pride, and a category is established for other themes not included in the previous ones and with a very low frequency.
- The musical style of the songs: to define the genre of each video clip, the classification of two major musical platforms, Apple Music and Amazon Music, has been followed, establishing the following categories: pop, hip-hop, pop/hip-hop, Latin, alternative, dance, soundtrack, rock, R&B/soul, and Latin-salsa. The category "other" is added for those video clips that cannot be integrated into the previous ones.
- The rhythm of the song: the tempos of *adagio* (70-90 bmp), *andante* (76-110 bmp), and *allegro* (110-168 bmp) have been taken as a reference, which has served to classify the songs in the following categories: ballad, mid-tempo, and rhythmic.
- Provocative content: according to the approaches of Porter and Golan (2006), who affirm that the effectiveness of viral advertising is based on increasingly provocative content, the presence in video clips of sexual content or nudity and violence is analyzed.
- Video clip style: the classification prepared by Sedeño (2007) that distinguishes the following categories has been taken as a reference:
 - Dramatic or narrative: a story is told under the classical dramatic structure.
 - Musical or performance: the musical event, concert, or studio, or an aesthetic illustration of the melody is shown; it only acquires a scenographical character without reference to another element. The goal is to recreate a concert experience by showing the viewer that the most relevant thing is the recording of the music.
 - Conceptual: in which an abstract or surreal atmosphere or aesthetic is created where the musical feeling is expressed.
 - Mixed: in which we find a combination of the previous categories.

3. Results

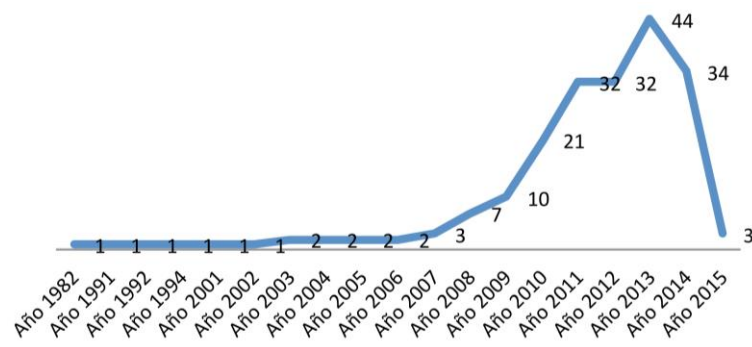
First, it stands out the difference in the number of visits required to be included in the viral video list for each of the two years analyzed. 61% of the video clips in the 2018 sample exceed 1,000 million views, compared to the 1% that reached this mark in 2015. In this way, the last video clip of 2018 (*Stay* by Rihanna ft. Mikky Ekko), with its 738,404,842 views, would have ranked 12th in the 2015 ranking. And number 1 of 2015 (*Gangnam Style* by Psy), with 2,289,374,494 views would not have occupied any of the first 15 places on the 2018 list (led by *Despacito* by Luis Fonsi ft. Daddy Yankee with 5,692,876,189 views).



Graph 2: millions of video clip reproductions.
Source: self-made.

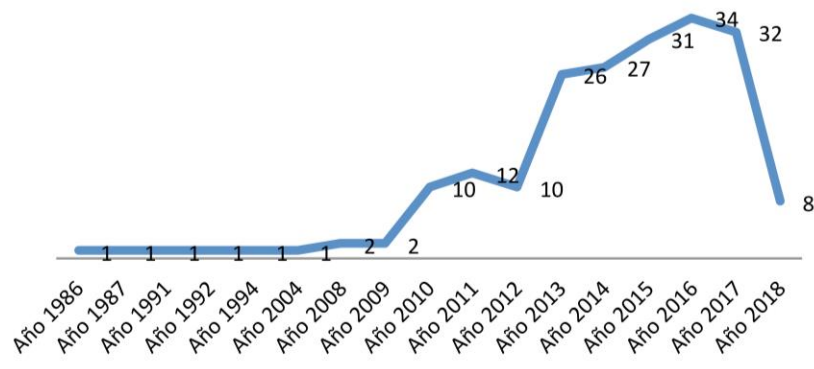
Regarding this point, of the two hundred video clips that make up the 2018 sample, 88 had already been on the list analyzed in 2015. 70 of them had lost positions, 16 had improved since 2015, and 2 of them held the same position in both rankings (*Bailando* by Enrique Iglesias ft. Descemer Bueno & Gente de Zona, in 10th place, and *Counting Stars* by One Republic, in 12th place).

Thus, of the video clips with the most accumulated views in 2015, only 4 songs are from the last century: the oldest is Michael Jackson's classic *Thriller* (1982), which is ranked in 156th place with 229,541,377 views; in the 149th place, with 239,775,040 views, is the song *Smells Like Teen Spirit* by Nirvana (1991); in 80th place, with 359,107,924 views, is *November Rain* by Guns N' Roses (1992); and in 171st place, is *Zombie* by The Cranberries (1994), with 218,523,803 views. The years with the most songs are 2013 (44 video clips), 2014 (35), 2012 (32), 2011 (32), and 2010 (21). From 2015 only 3 songs enter the list: *Sugar* (Maroon 5) in the 117th place, *Love Me Like You Do* (Ellie Goulding) in the 163rd place, and *Elastic Heart* (Sia) in the 173rd place, although the time from its release to the analysis suggests that they were still far from obtaining their maximum number of views.



Graph 3: years of production of the songs of the 2015 sample.
Source: self-made.

In the video clips with the most accumulated views in 2018, we find 5 songs which release date is before the year 2000: *Take on Me* by A-Ha (1986) in the 185th place with 775,227,291 views; *Sweet Child of Mine* by Guns N' Roses (1987) in the 182nd place with 787,055,572 views; *Smells Like Teen Spirit* by Nirvana ranked in the 175th place with 807,073,512 views; from 1992, Guns N' Roses also repeats in this 2018 list with *November Rain* (1992), in the 109th place with 1,056,813,745 views; and, lastly, from 1994, in the 178th place, *Zombie* by The Cranberries, with 803,667,100 views. In the sample, the years with the most songs on the list are 2016 (34 video clips), 2017 (32), 2015 (31), 2014 (27), and 2013 (26). From the year in which the analysis is carried out, 2018, we have 8 songs, of which it stands out that six are in Spanish (*Te boté* –in the 56th place with 1,377,754,727 views–, *X, Dura*, *El farsante*, *Sin pijama*, and *Dame tu cosita*) and two in English (*Girls Like You* and *God's plan*).



Graph 4: years of production of the songs of the 2018 sample.

Source: self-made.

3.1. Results related to the artist

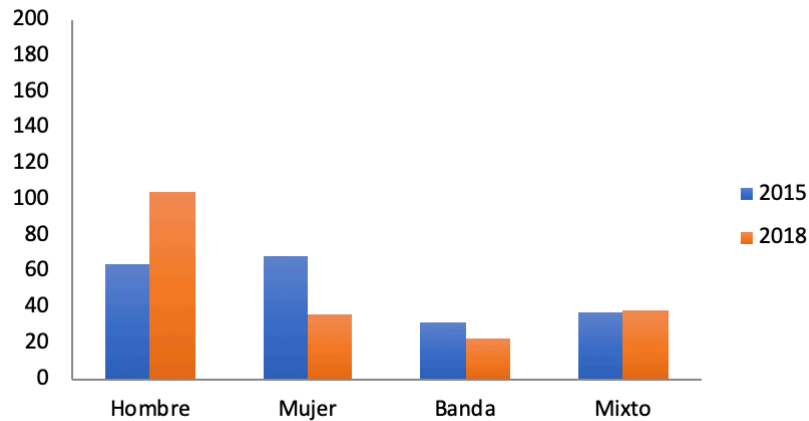
The first place of the 2015 list is held by PSY, the Korean singer who rose to fame worldwide in 2012 with his *Gangnam Style*. With 2,289,374,494 views, he became a musical phenomenon that repeated success in 2013 with *Gentleman*, a song that is at number 9 on this 2015 list with 816,923,850 views. To his *Gangnam Style* could be added the 557,050,318 views obtained by the version he made with the South Korean singer Hyuna, which is ranked in the 32nd place on that 2015 list.

Of the individual artists, 67 of the 200 video clips correspond to women and 64 to men. The singer with the most video clips on this list is Rihanna with 11 productions, seven solo and 4 with other artists. The second in the number of video clips in the sample is Katy Perry with 10, 2 of them in collaboration with other artists. With 9 video clips is Justin Bieber, 4 of them solo. Bruno Mars, One Direction, and Taylor Swift follow with 7 video clips. Pitbull (6), David Guetta (5), Eminem (5), Lady Gaga (5), and Miley Cyrus (5) also stand out.

The first place on the 2018 list is occupied by Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee with the song *Despacito*; this video clip, from 2017, reaches 5,692,876,189 views. Luis Fonsi repeats in this list with *Échame la culpa*, this time along with the singer Demi Lovato, in the 31st place with 1,659,303,173 views.

The singer with the most video clips on this list is the Colombian artist J Balvin with 9 songs, 2 solo and 7 with different artists, with Spanish being the predominant language in his works. With 8 video clips, the second is also Colombian singer Maluma; 4 of his successes are collaborations with other

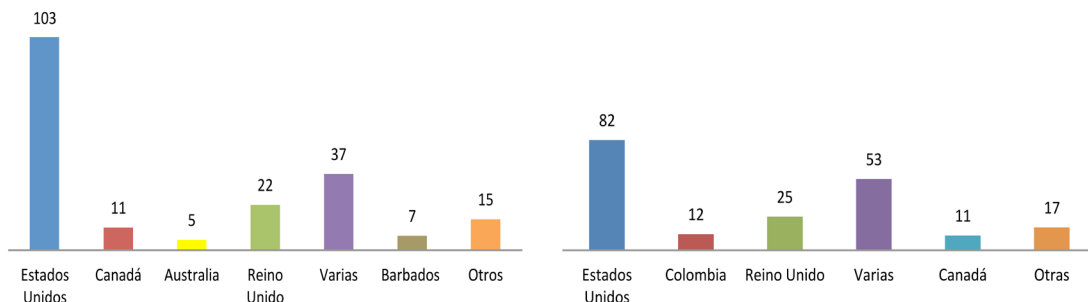
singers, and, as in the case of J Balvin, the predominant language is Spanish and Latin style. Behind them, with 7 video clips is singer Rihanna; with 6 video clips, Katy Perry and Bruno Mars; and with 5 video clips, Ariana Grande, Enrique Iglesias, and Shakira appear. Regarding the genre of the artists who have obtained a position, individually, in this list, the presence of men stands out, with 104 of the 200 video clips, the presence of women being quite small (only 36 pieces); on the other hand, 22 video clips correspond to bands, the rest (38) being collaborations between artists of different sexes.



Graph 5: sex of artists.
Source: self-made.

By nationalities, in 2015 the artists of the United States stood out, with more than half of the titles analyzed, in addition to some video clips that appear in the "Various" category in which singers of this nationality participate. Second is the United Kingdom with 22 video clips, 7 of them from the group One Direction. Third place is occupied by Canada with 11 songs, followed by Barbados with Rihanna's 7 solo video clips. At the end of the list are Belgium, Brazil, Ireland, and Mexico with a single song. Some countries, such as Spain, do not appear on the list since they do not have any artist who has performed alone; this is the case of Enrique Iglesias with 3 video clips, all of them in the section corresponding to various nationalities.

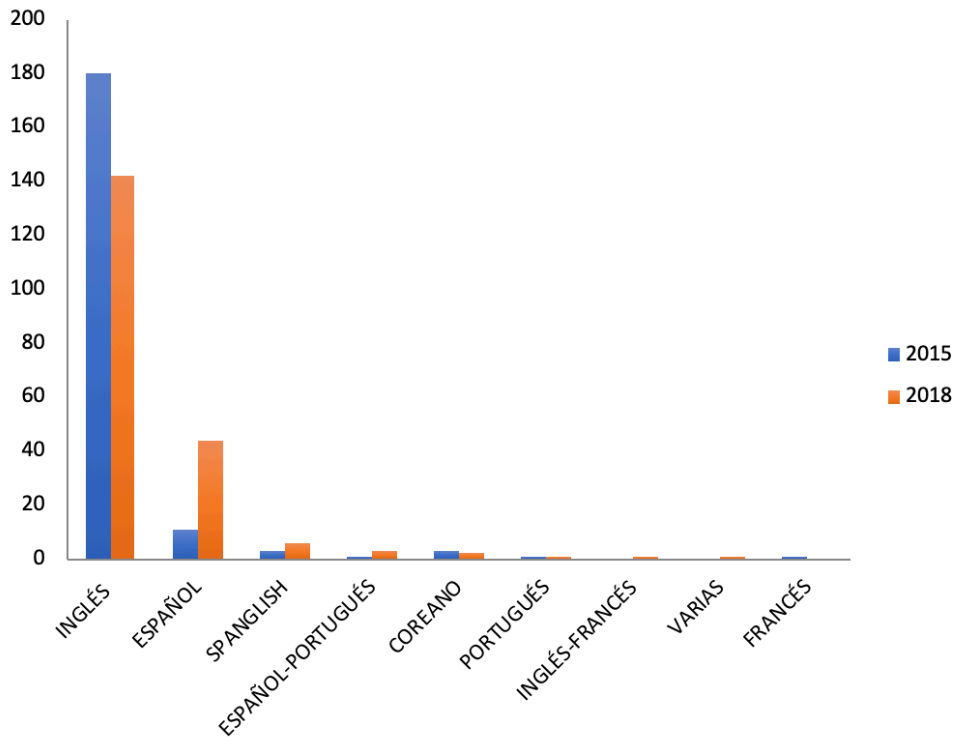
Regarding the nationality of the singers, in 2018 the artists of the United States stand out with 82 titles. Second is the United Kingdom with 25 video clips. On the podium in 2018, Colombia ranks third with 12 songs. With a single song are Brazil, Holland, Ireland, Jamaica, and Norway, among others. It stands out that the songs in which artists of various nationalities participate are quite numerous (53 productions), the result of the increase in the collaborations of singers from different countries.



Graphs 6 and 7: nationality of artists 2015 (left) and 2018 (right).
Source: self-made.

The most used language in the 2015 video clip sample is English (180 video clips), with a big difference compared to the second one which is Spanish (11). 3 video clips are in Korean and 3 others use Spanish and English. The rest corresponds to one video clip in French, another in Portuguese, and a piece that combines Spanish and Portuguese.

This variable undergoes a notable change in the 2018 list. Thus, although English still is the most widely used language (142 video clips), Spanish experiences a notable increase (44). Another 6 video clips use a mix of English and Spanish, while one uses Spanish and Portuguese. There are also 2 in Korean, 1 in Portuguese, 1 in English and French, and lastly, another in which several languages are used.



Graph 8: language of the song.
Source: self-made.

Regarding the presence of the artist in social networks when the video clip was released to the market, in the 2015 list we found some cases in which none of the social networks used as a reference existed (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram); this is the case of 9 video clips, some of them released during the 80s and 90s. There are also 13 cases in which, although these social networks already existed, the artists were not in them then (productions before 2010). At the time of releasing the rest of the video clips (178), the artists did have a presence on social networks. Most of the artists were on Facebook (174) and Twitter (173) and, to a lesser extent, Instagram (100), the last social network to be created and enjoy massive success. At the time of the release of 99 of the video clips, the artist was present on all 3 social networks.

Of the sample used in 2015, more than 75% of the artists (154) had a previous hit to the one that appears in that year's list. Concerning what we have called indirect promotion factors, we can see how 187 video clips of the 200 were parodied, in 51 some famous person appeared, and 132 artists

performed in prime-time television in the United States. Regarding these factors, in 26 cases there has been controversy with the singer and in 22 there has been with the video clip itself.

Regarding the 2018 sample, in terms of the artist's presence on social networks when the video clip was released to the market, there is only one singer who did not have a social media account: this is the case of Beyoncé and her song Halo, of 2008, which was also in the 2015 sample. Apart from this case, unless its release date was before the date of creation of the analyzed networks (6 video clips), the artists had a presence on social networks at the time of releasing these video clips (193). Most of the artists were on Facebook (191), on Twitter (189), and, again less intensively, on Instagram (152), because at the time of the release of 17 of the video clips, this social network did not yet exist. In 149 video clips, on the contrary, the artist had a presence on the 3 social networks. On the other hand, practically 75% of the artists (151) had a previous hit to the one that appears in the 2018 list.

Regarding what we have called indirect promotion factors, it can be seen how only 7 video clips of the 200 that make up the sample were not parodied, in 54 some famous person appeared, and 118 artists performed in prime-time television in the United States. On the other hand, in 23 cases there has been some type of controversy with the singer and in another 29 there has been with the video clip itself.

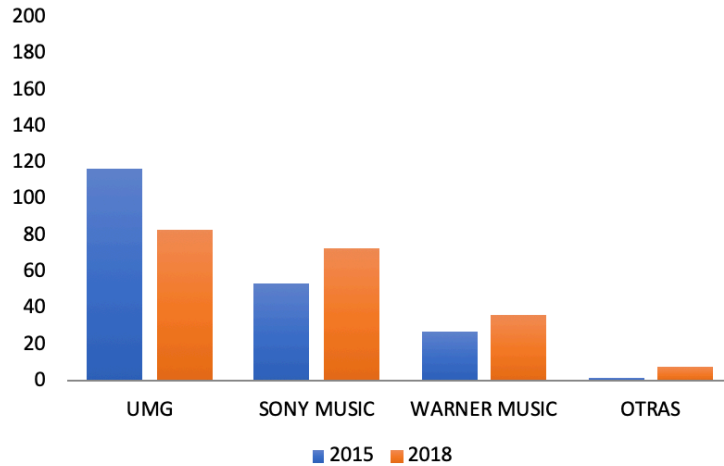
3.2. Results related to the video clip

The duration of each video clip is very variable. In the 2015 sample, Michael Jackson's *Thriller* stands out above the rest with its 13:43, although the song only lasts 5:57; above 9 minutes, there is also the video clip *Alejandro* by Lady Gaga (the song lasts 4:34) and November Rain by Guns N' Roses, although in this case, the difference between the duration of the video clip (9:16) and the song is just 10 seconds. At the opposite end, with less than 3 minutes, the Portuguese song *Ai si eu te pego* by Michel Teró and *Bad* by David Guetta ft. Showtek and Vassy appear.

Regarding the duration of each video clip, in 2018 only one video clip exceeds 9 minutes long (again *November Rain* by Guns N' Roses); above 8 minutes is *Last Friday Night* by Katy Perry, a 2011 video clip, which was also on the 2015 list. Below 3 minutes there are 5 video clips, one of them (*Ai si eu te pego* by Michel Teró), already appeared in the previous list.

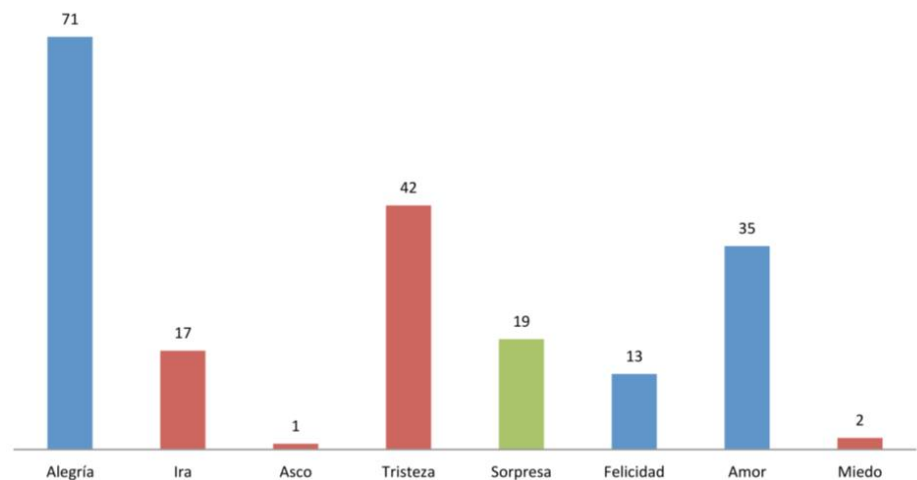
Regarding the director of the video clips, Jessy Terrero has directed 10 of them (4 by the singer Maluma), predominantly in Spanish, Latin-style, 8 for the Sony Music label, and 2 with the participation of Universal Music Group. Emil Nava also stands out, with 7 video clips in the sample of different artists and record labels, all of them in English and focused on Pop and Dance. Josep Kahn and Juan Pablo Valencia have directed 6 video clips each, the first for the Universal Music Group label (minus one for Sony Music), in English and of different musical styles; on the contrary, the video clips directed by Juan Pablo Valencia are, fundamentally, in Spanish and in a Latin style.

Within the 2018 sample, director Anthony Mandler stands out, who has directed 12 video clips, always for Universal Music Group with different artists (Eminem, Rihanna, Taylor Swift, etc.) of various styles. The second director with more works is David Rousseau, with Sony Music for hip-hop and pop songs.



Graph 9: record labels producing the song.
Source: self-made.

Regarding the valence of the emotions transmitted by the 2015 video clips, the highest percentage corresponds to the video clips that communicate positive emotions (119 video clips), with joy being the most frequent emotion with 71 video clips. Negative emotions are reflected in 62 video clips, with sadness being the most frequent emotion in this category with 42 productions; among the negative emotions, neither shame nor anxiety is transmitted through these video clips. Surprise, considered an ambiguous emotion, appears in 19 video clips.



Graph 10: type of emotions of the video clips in 2015.
Source: self-made.

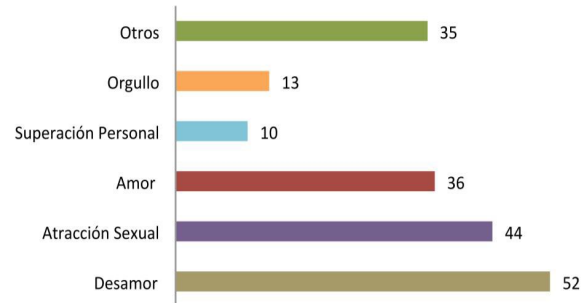
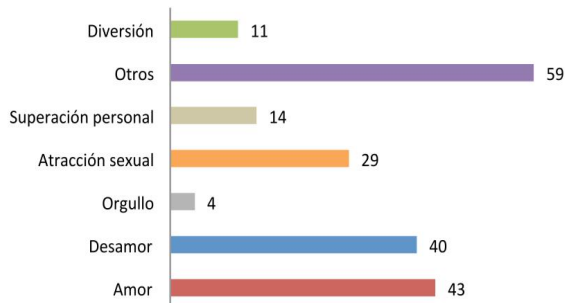
In 2018, the most frequent emotions correspond to productions that transmit positive valence (133 video clips), highlighting joy as the emotion that is most repeated with 65 pieces; secondly, love (53 video clips). The number of video clips that transmit negative emotions is 45, being sadness, with 33, the most frequent emotion in this category; among the negative emotions, as was the case with the 2015 sample, neither shame nor anxiety is transmitted through the video clips analyzed in 2018. As for surprise, it is transmitted in 22 video clips.



Graph 11: type of emotions of the video clips in 2018.
Source: self-made.

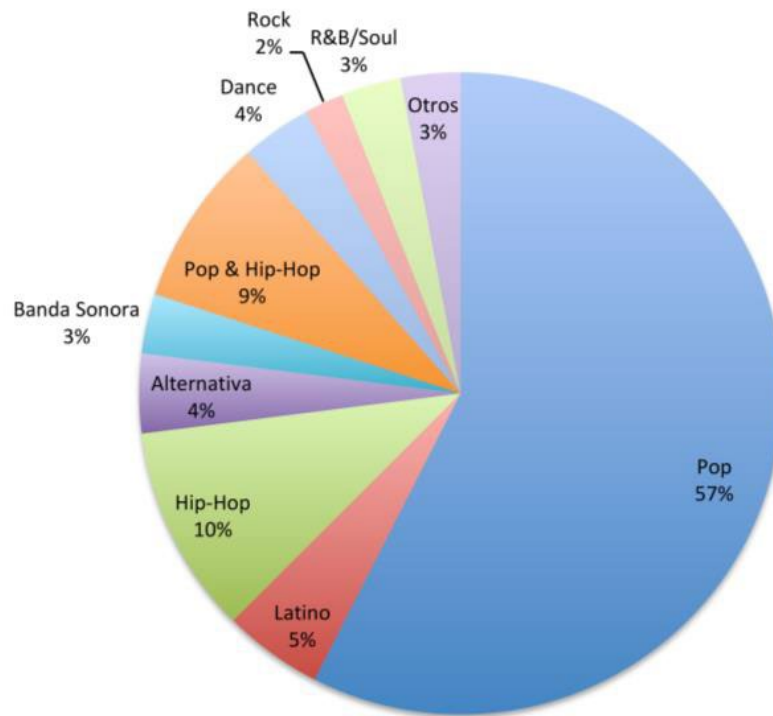
Regarding the themes of the productions, in the 2015 video clips we find a great variety. A classification with 5 themes is established, as explained in the section dedicated to variables, in addition to a sixth category (“others”) with a very low frequency, which includes murder (1 video clip), terror (1), support for the American football team (1), damage to loved ones (1), war (1), the soccer world cup (2), and suicide (2). On the 6 main themes, love is the most repeated argument, being present in 43 video clips, followed by heartbreak with 40 video clips; the themes with less presence in this sample are pride (4 video clips) and fun with 11 examples.

As for the themes of the video clips in 2018, the most present in this sample is heartbreak with 52 video clips, followed by sexual attraction with 44, and love with 36; the least frequent are personal growth (10 video clips) and pride (13 video clips). In the “others” category (35 video clips), we find, once again, a wide variety of themes, among which stand out: criticism of money, hangover, suicide, soccer world cup, single motherhood, and others.



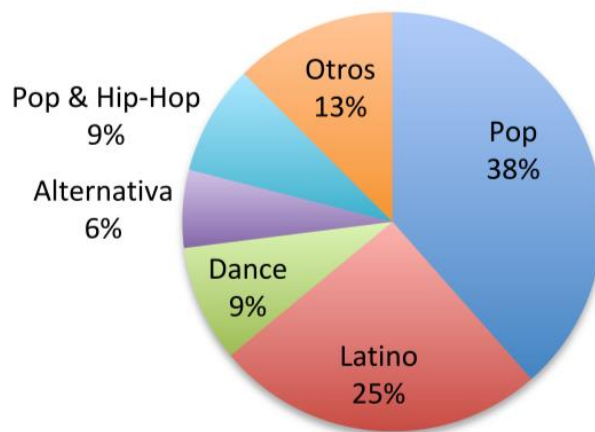
Graphs 12 and 13: theme of the songs 2015 sample (left) and 2018 (right).
Source: self-made.

According to the classification of the musical style of the songs, in 2015 pop was the most repeated style with 115 representatives, followed by hip-hop with 21 video clips, and the mix of pop and hip-hop with 17. The least frequent styles among the sample are Latin-salsa with a single video clip and rock with 4.



Graph 14: musical style of the song in 2015.
Source: self-made.

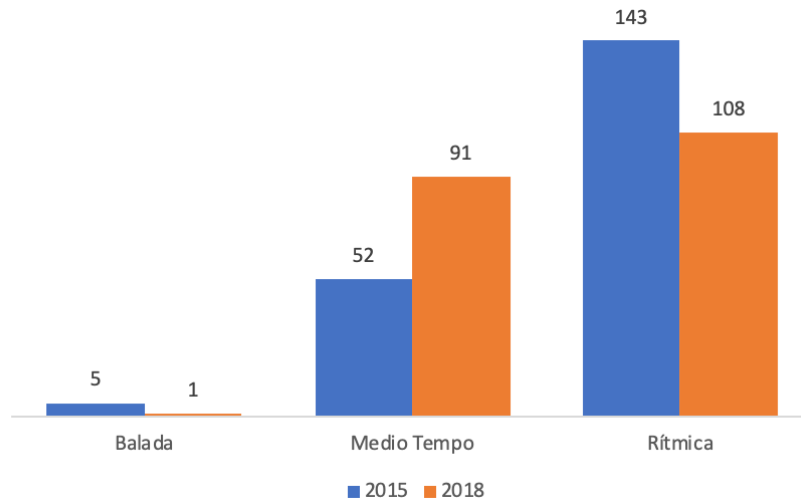
In the 2018 sample we found that the most repeated style continues to be pop with 77 songs, followed by Latin music with 51; the third place is occupied by dance (18). The less frequent styles are again the soundtrack and rock with three video clips.



Graph 15: musical style of the song in 2018.
Source: self-made.

In the variable “rhythm of the song” in 2015, we find that the most frequent in this sample is the rhythmic song with 143 video clips, followed, at a long distance, by the mid-tempo with 52, the ballad closing this variable with only 5 video clips.

In 2018, the rhythmic song predominates with 108 video clips, followed, at a short distance, by the mid-tempo with 91; the ballad is the least frequent with only 1 video clip.



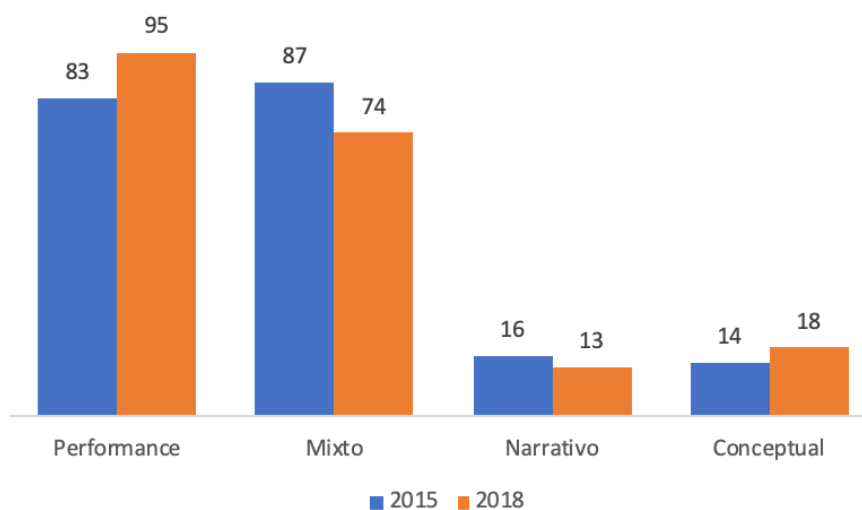
Graph 16: rhythm of the song.
Source: self-made.

The analysis of the presence of provocative content in the 2015 video clips offers the following results: 63 video clips have sexual content and 31 include violent content. Besides, 19 of them present the 2 types of provocative content.

This same analysis of provocative content in 2018 indicates that 83 video clips have a sexual theme and 49 include violent elements. 26 of the productions include both sexual and violent content.

Lastly, the most frequent video clip style in 2015 is the one that mixes several different trends with 87 analyzed songs, followed by a performance with 83; the two least frequent styles are the conceptual one with 14 pieces and the narrative one with 16.

The most frequent video clip style in 2018 is a performance with 95, followed by mixed with 74; the narrative style is the least present in the sample, only 13 productions; somewhat more represented is the conceptual one with 18.



Graph 17: aesthetics of the video clip.
Source: self-made.

4. Discussion and conclusions

After analyzing two samples of 200 viral video clips each, at two different times, April 2015 and November 2018, the first conclusion of the work is that a change in trend is observed in the tastes of the public of this type of communication products. You can also see a notable change in the style of the songs on each list: although pop continues to be the most frequent style in both samples, in 2015 it represented 67.5% of the total videos analyzed, while in 2018 it represents 38.5%, which indicates a drop of 29%; on the contrary, Latin music goes from 5% in 2015 to 24% in 2018, with an increase of 19%.

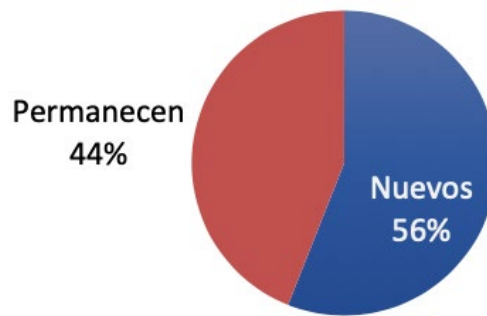
The analyzed videos show a change in style: while in 2015 the mixed trend predominated with 87 songs from the sample (83 performance), in 2018 this performance style is the most represented with 47.5% of the sample (95 songs); this data coincides with the results obtained by Sedeño Valdellós, Rodríguez López, and Roger Acuña (2016) who conclude in their research that there is a predominance of performative music videos.

There is also a clear change in the language of viral video clips since English, although it still is the most widely used language, falls from 90% in 2015 to 71% in 2018, while Spanish goes from 5.5% in 2015 to 22% in 2018. This is symptomatic of a change in the trend in musical taste: increased attention to a type of Latin music in which Spanish is the primary language used.

A significant aspect is to see how the percentage of viral video clips that transmit positive emotions has increased and a decrease in those that transmit negative ones; the former have gone from 59.5% in 2015 to 66.5% in 2018, while the latter have gone from 31% in 2015 to 22.5% in 2018, in line with the conclusions of Eckler and Milkman (2012), who defend that positive content is more viral than negative; other authors have demonstrated the importance of generating positive emotions for a video to be shared (Eckler and Bolls, 2011) or the influence on the memory of emotions (Baraybar-Fernández and others, 2017). This point is related to the rhythm of the songs; music has a great influence on the mood of people, and those songs that have a faster and more marked rhythm are the ones that get the most coverage in this sense; this situation may be because music with a faster rhythm normally transmits more positive emotions than slower rhythms.

The increase in provocative content in the 2018 sample compared to the 2015 sample is also evident. In line with the conclusions of Porter and Golan (2006), for whom the effectiveness of viral advertising is based on resorting to increasingly more provocative content to get users to share it, there has been an increase in this type of content since, in 2015, 31.5% video clips had sexual content, 15.5% included violent content and 9.5% of the video clips presented both contents; in 2018, each category has increased: 43.5% of video clips include sexual content, 24.5% have violent content, and 13% have both types.

Another conclusion of the work is related to what we can call high volatility in the consumption of video clips, which has to do, in a way, with the ephemeral nature of the trends that are taking each other's place. That 44% of the video clips in the 2015 sample remain in the 2018 sample can offer a double reading: on the one hand, it can justify that tastes do not excessively change, or, on the other, that musical trends are replaced fairly quickly.

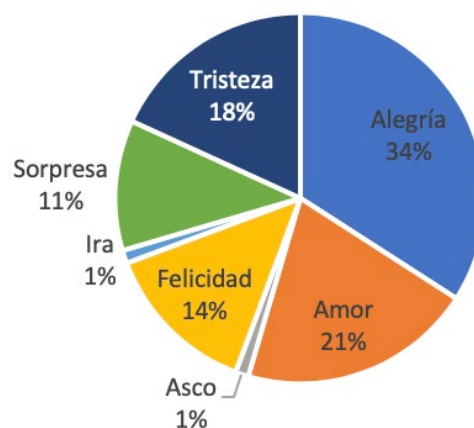


Graph 18: video clips that remain in both samples.
Source: self-made.

If we take into account that the cumulative data of each video clip is being used, it would be logical that the video clips that are longer on the network accumulate more and more visits and improve their position in the ranking of viewings; however, the reality is that most of the video clips have been surpassed by more recent songs. Besides, the vast majority of video clips that are also on the 2018 list (70 out of 88) lost positions, despite having continued to accumulate views.

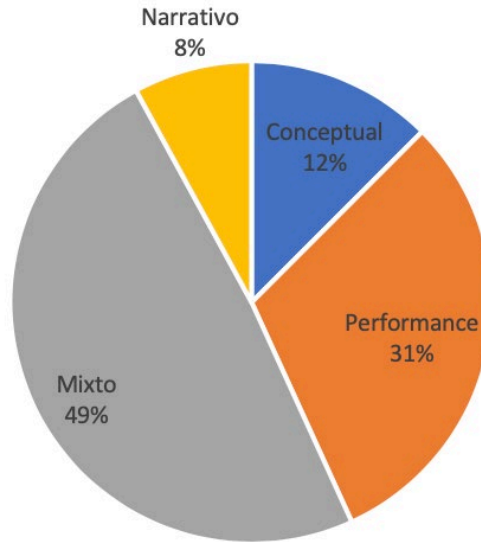
This data leads to another conclusion: the public increasingly consumes this type of product, since the first video of 2018 obtained almost 250% more visits than that of 2015 (*Gangnam style* by Psy); with 2,289,374,494 views, it would not have occupied any of the first 15 places on the 2018 list (led by *Despacito* by Luis Fonsi ft. Daddy Yankee with 5,692,876,189 views). This increase in the consumption of video clips has meant that the number of visits necessary to be in the top 200 has increased considerably: thus, the last video clip of 2018 (*Stay* by Rihanna ft. Mikky Ekko with 738,404,842 views) would have occupied the 12th place in the 2015 ranking. According to the IFPI 2018 report, 86% of consumers listen to music using streaming services; YouTube concentrates 47% of all the time spent listening to music on demand, with young people being the largest users of this type of service. Added to this is the increase in the use of smartphones to listen to music, as well as the rise in the number of Internet users in the world (according to data from the Global Digital 2019 report, the number of Internet users has gone from slightly more than 3,000 million in 2015 to more than 4,000 million in 2018).

It also stands out that, of the 88 songs that remain since 2015 among the most played video clips, 30 of them correspond to those that transmit an emotion of joy.



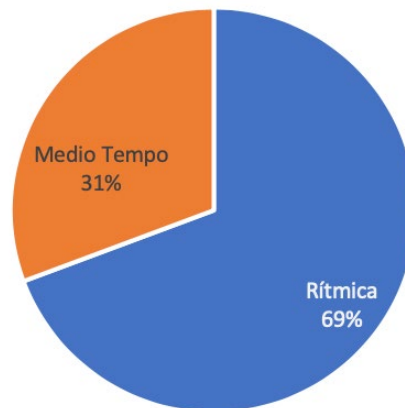
Graph 19: emotions of the video clips that remain in both samples.
Source: self-made.

More notable is the fact that almost half of the video clips that have remained on both lists, exactly 49%, have a mixed type aesthetic. This points to the same trend of the study carried out by Sedeño Valdellós, Rodríguez López, and Roger Acuña (2016) on the aesthetics of the video clips that had the most views in 2014.



Graph 20: visual aesthetics of the video clips that remain in both samples.
Source: self-made.

Besides, most of the songs that have survived both periods are of the so-called rhythmic type.

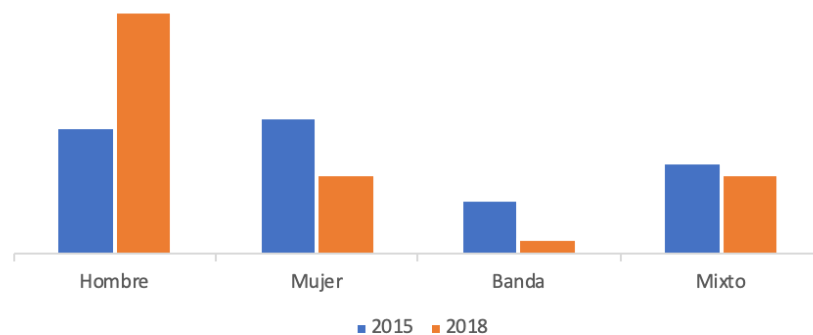


Graph 21: rhythm of the song of the video clips that remain in both samples.
Source: self-made.

Social networks are the origin of the viral effect, allowing to quickly launch a message to a global audience. For this reason, it is pertinent to affirm that the presence of artists on social networks is a factor that influences the results of the video clips and, according to the obtained data, it seems that singers are aware of the importance of being active on social networks as a channel to promote and retain their fans. In the sample analyzed in 2015, 89% of the artists were on social networks and almost 50% of them were on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; in the 2018 sample, 96.5% were on social networks and 74.5% on all three social networks; in only one case, the song was released after the birth of social media. On the other hand, 90% of these productions were by artists with a significant followers' base of a youthful profile.

Within the role that artists play in the success of videos, it also stands out the importance of their musical career and promotion in media other than the Internet. Thus, of the video clips analyzed in 2015, 74% of the artists already had a hit before the video clip present on the list, that is, they had managed to place a song within the Top Ten of the Billboard list or its Latin equivalent, and 76% performed in prime-time television in the United States; in 2018, 75.5% of the artists already had a success previous to the one that appeared in this list and 59% had performed in prime-time in the United States.

Related to this is the use of nudity or sexual content in video clips to scandalize and generate a certain virality. It is worth noting the frequency with which it appears according to the singer's gender. Thus, in 2018, 57% of the video clips in which there was the presence of nudity or sexual nature content belonged to male singers. This high proportion cannot be determined if it is due to the greater presence of songs by male singers in the entire 2018 video clip sample or preference of male singers for the use of this type of material in their music videos.



Graph 22: presence of nudity or scenes of sexual content according to the singer's gender.

Source: self-made.

To conclude, it would be interesting, to confirm the changes in the trend that can be seen in this research, to develop new analyzes that address both the variables related to artists and those related to video clips with the most views on the Internet in a context of highly changing audiovisual consumption that is transformed at every moment.

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