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Original Contents, Celebrities and Proximity. How Netflix Spain used Instagram to Bring its Catalogue to Young People during the Pandemics

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Abstract. This study focuses on how Netflix Spain harnessed Instagram to acquaint young people with its catalogue during the Covid-19 pandemic, with the sudden increase in OTT consumption. This led Netflix Spain to adapt its social media strategies and production release dates to a situation without parallel and in the face of intense competition. We analyze the messages during the state of alarm in Spain (from 15 March to 21 June of 2020), when Netflix was the most consumed OTT service. Netflix promoted recently released productions and used proximity strategies, both to GenZ and to Spanish audience, such as toning down with humor the daily problems of lockdown, using juvenile slang ("crush", "shipping"), referring to the habits of young people (taking selfies, sending audio messages) and using the social media of the cast of their most popular series, promoting them as "Netflix celebrities" and emphasizing their good-looks and sexual attractive.

Keywords: Netflix Spain; Instagram; Generation Z; OTT; lockdown; transmedia narratives

[en] Contenidos originales, celebridades y proximidad. Cómo Netflix España utilizó Instagram para llevar su catálogo a las audiencias jóvenes durante la pandemia

Resumen. Esta investigación analiza cómo Netflix utilizó Instagram para hacer llegar su catálogo a las audiencias jóvenes durante la pandemia, con el repentino incremento del consumo de OTT. Esto llevó a Netflix a adaptar sus estrategias de redes sociales y las fechas de estreno a una situación incierta y con una intensa competencia. Se analizan los mensajes emitidos durante el estado de alarma en España (desde el 15 de marzo al 21 de junio de 2020), durante el cual fue la OTT más consumida. Netflix promocionó las producciones recientemente estrenadas y usó estrategias de proximidad hacia la Generación Z y la audiencia española, como bromear con los problemas cotidianos del confinamiento, usar jerga juvenil ("crush", "shipear"), referirse a las costumbres de los jóvenes (hacerse selfies o mandar audios) y usar los perfiles en redes de los actores de sus series más populares, convirtiéndolos en "famosos de Netflix" y enfatizando su atractivo.

Palabras clave: Netflix España; Instagram; Generación Z; OTT; confinamiento; Narrativas transmedia

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1. Introduction

Instagram has become a valuable tool in the communication strategies of television channels, both traditional broadcasters and over-the-top (OTT) services such as Netflix (Martín-Quevedo *et al.*, 2021). Instagram, after WhatsApp, is the most widely used social media network in Spain (Iab Spain & Elogia, 2020). This content sharing platform is particularly popular among younger audiences (Zeko *et al.*, 2019), and

it plays a crucial role in the transmedia universes of serialised fiction (Vázquez-Herrero *et al.*, 2019; Castelló-Martínez, 2020).

At the same time, Netflix Spain stands out for having developed a signature style on social media, regardless of content (Pereira-Villazón & Portilla, 2020; Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018a; Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo; 2018b). However, research to date has highlighted the challenges of developing a strategy tailored to the Span-

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ish market with a catalogue of US-produced content (Martín-Quevedo et al., 2019; Martín-Quevedo et al., 2021). Although Netflix Spain went live in October 2015, it only began producing Spanish series for its catalogue, such as Las chicas del cable (Cable Girls), and purchasing rights to series such as Velvet in 2017. By 2018, the streaming platform had substantively increased its number of original Spanish dramas, thrillers, comedies and even adventure series adapted to the tastes of the Spanish market (Wayne & Cascajosa, 2020). Besides popular titles such as La casa de papel (Money Heist), Paquita Salas and *Elite* (*Elite*) from 2020 and 2021, Netflix's catalogue of original series included, among others, El vecino (The Neighbour), Alguien tiene que morir (Someone Has to Die), El desorden que dejas (The Mess You Leave Behind) and Los favoritos de Midas (The Minions of Midas) (Such, 2020).

The Californian company became one of the great success stories during the lockdowns imposed in many countries in March and April 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, when it gained almost 16 million new subscribers worldwide and 36% more viewers in the week of 16 March 2020 in the United States (Lee, 2020). Compulsory home confinement in Spain coincided with the launch of the new streaming service Disney+ from one of the world's best-known and most-loved brands. However, despite the competition, Netflix established itself as the most consumed OTT platform during this period (AIMC, 2020).

Therefore, it is relevant to know how Netflix Spain, despite fierce competition, succeeded in bringing its catalogue closer to the young market, eager to consume during the health pandemic, while steadily driving its productions for this audience.

1.1. Netflix Spain's promotional strategy and use of social media. From a global strategy to a local approach

Netflix's investment in content is built on the premise of achieving a social conversation that translates into new customers while retaining existing ones (Neira, 2020). When casting for series and films, Netflix takes into account the number of followers the actors have on social media since they become an asset for creating a fan base that instantly guarantees a potential audience for the content in which the actors star (Neira, 2020). Grandío (2015, p. 23) defines fans as "an active audience characterised by high consumption, gratification, and engagement, both emotional and social, with the product that is the object of their devotion". Even before the company adopted this selection process, many actors had gained more followers after appearing on the streaming platform. In any event, this led to the 'Netflix celebrity', which the company coined to refer to the brand as a launchpad for a new generation of global stars (Chmielewski, 2018). In Spain, this strategy began – on an international level – with faces including the cast of La casa de papel, showing how Netflix was contributing to making the actors in its productions hugely popular on social media. Indeed, the release of its series saw a significant surge in their followers on social media. Just three months after the premiere of *Élite* – Netflix's second Spanish series for young people – the number of people following the cast on Instagram soared from 10,000 and 30,000 to over a million (Beer, 2019).

Since then, investment in 'Netflix Originals' has continued unabated, and this content has grown in popularity as the brand consolidated itself globally through awards won at traditional industry galas such as the Oscars or the Baftas, most notably for the film *Roma* (Ormanli, 2019). Netflix Originals "are in-house productions over which the company has exclusivity, but the formula they may adopt in practice may vary" (Neira, 2020, p. 41). Despite these differences, Netflix's catalogue classifies all the titles it holds exhibition rights to as Originals, which bear the initial 'N' logo on the poster of the series, film, show or documentary (Penner & Straubhaar, 2020).

Netflix also creates specific content for young people (Raya-Bravo et al., 2018; Fedele; 2021), including the hits Stranger Things (Alaminos-Fernández, 2020), 13 Reasons Why (Carter et al., 2020) and Sex Education (Vázquez-Rodríguez et al., 2020). It subsequently decided to do the same in the Spanish market and opened its first European production centre in Madrid in 2019 (Castro & Cascajosa, 2020). The release of *Élite* on 1 January 2018 was announced by the tweet "Generation Z is coming. These are the new faces of #Elite, Netflix's new Spanish original series." (Castelló-Martínez, 2020, p. 16). Interestingly, the announcement was not made on Instagram, the platform most widely used platform by the series' target audience in Spain and the one to which the generation aged 16 to 24 is native (IAB SPAIN & Elogia, 2020). Notwithstanding, Netflix went on to join Instagram to reach this age group (Martín-Quevedo et al., 2019; Amorós-Hernández & Segarra-Saavedra, 2020).

Thus, the proximity factor became an additional element for Netflix Spain's communication strategy, which in Spain stood out for its storytelling tailored to the local market (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b; Doñate-Ventura, 2020; Amorós-Hernández & Segarra-Saavedra, 2020), despite lack of a specific catalogue for this young audience (Martín-Quevedo et al., 2019; Martín-Quevedo et al., 2021). However, Netflix developed a customised communication strategy for its series produced in Spain, such as Paquita Salas (Doñate-Ventura, 2020) or *Elite* (Castelló-Martínez, 2020). Products with a higher degree of cultural proximity – understood as the "affinity that local consumers feel for the content" (Cornelio-Mari, 2020, p. 2) - connect better with consumers by relating to their way of life. Hence the importance of national celebrities. Netflix previously used the proximity factor in markets as diverse as Mexico (Cornelio-Mari, 2020), Brazil (Penner & Straubhaar, 2020), Israel (Wayne & Castro, 2020) or Korea (Ju, 2020), where it succeeded in strengthening its brand positioning through its Netflix Originals, thus setting itself apart from its rivals (Penner & Straubhaar, 2020).

Netflix, a pioneer of binge watching, focuses its promotional efforts on encouraging viewers to watch its content in the first few days after release. Thus, a favourable response to a series draws in new audiences (Neira, 2020). Élite has become the world's most binge-watched series, that is, watching an entire series, back to back, in one sitting (Castelló-Martínez, 2020). Indeed, Netflix has a promotional strategy aimed at binge-watchers, who share more posts and memes about themselves, which, along with the cast's popularity, helps generate more interest in the content. In this way, releases of entire seasons at a time prompt more conversation than a series aired weekly (Neira, 2020).

1.2. Social media communication in the transmedia context

Netflix's Instagram strategy makes sense in the context of transmedia storytelling, which helps to build and retain groups of loyal consumers (Vázquez-Herrero *et al.*, 2019). According to Jenkins (2006), the characteristic of transmedia storytelling is not the plurality of media but the specific input that each medium contributes to the totality of a narrative. Thus, each point of contact can be understood independently without having to know the others.

Indeed, expanding the story across different media for different audience profiles is one of the distinguishing features of transmedia narrative (Scolari, 2009). Audience entry points can be very diverse: "animation, previews, apps, audio, T-shirts, promo cards, CDs, cinema, comics, mail, records, infographics, games, books, manga, merchandising, telephones, action figures, theme parks, radio, virtual reality, social networks, magazines, stamps, postcards, theatre, television, offline and online video games, web comics, webisodes, web TV" (Scolari, 2013, p. 14).

The Norwegian series *Skam*, made for teenagers, is a classic example of enhanced use of social media by fictional characters and is a benchmark for a transmedia strategy on social media platforms. (Bengtsson et al., 2018). Although this series was aired linearly on a public service channel in Norway, the episodes were divided up and broadcast weekly on the channel's website, as if they were happening in real-time. The narrative was simultaneously fed with extra content from the characters' online activities (photos, SMS, emails) and frequent updates of their Facebook, Instagram or YouTube profiles (Villén Higueras & Ruiz del Olmo, 2020). "Thanks to this renewed vision, the protagonists cultivated their identities more naturally and analogously to the way users themselves would" (Villén Higueras & Ruiz del Olmo, 2020, p. 34), thus drawing the interest of young audiences.

Not all of these products are relevant to narrative expansion; some take on a promotional or advertising dimension or as a portal to the product (Rodríguez-Ferrándiz *et al.*, 2014). However, they must delve sufficiently enough to retain the audience's interest, which helps spread the content (Jenkins *et al.*, 2015).

Social media make it easier for audiences to engage in creating and sharing content (Alonso González & García Orta, 2017), not to mention setting up communities (Merino Arribas, 2013). Moreover, information exchanges and interaction generate a shared experience, strengthening a sense of belonging to a community (Quiroga Macleimont, 2016). Online communities have become more meaningful in the new sharing economy (Schor, 2014), where value for the user comes not from having, but from sharing with peers, generating collective knowledge in which the community tends to be represented and included.

Finally, the creation of digital platforms enhances timeless consumption of content, a practical strategy for OTT services such as Netflix. "It is known where transmedia narratives begin, but never where they end" (Scolari, 2016, p. 178). Fans' contributions are critical to transmedia storytelling for extending the life of an audiovisual product (Jenkins *et al.*, 2015). Thus, giving the characters of the stories their own Facebook and Instagram profiles expands the narrative, prompts interaction and immerses the follower in the macro-story recounted.

2. Objectives and methods

This study analyses how Netflix Spain uses Instagram to acquaint young people with its catalogue.

To this end, two main research questions were formulated. The first concerns the streaming platform's general posting strategy with a view to ascertaining the communication characteristics of Instagram. The second question, expressly referring to the content that Netflix posts about on Instagram, seeks to determine the type of titles it uses in its communication strategy.

Q1. What is Netflix's posting strategy on Instagram?

The answer to this question takes into account the type of posts (about the brand or the catalogue titles); the objective (to determine the promotion of content); the resources employed (use of actors as a key factor of the 'Netflix celebrity' and the development of transmedia narratives); and the emotional and cognitive elements (proximity and celebrities as a local adaptation strategy) that make posts go viral.

Q2. What is Netflix's posting strategy for its catalogue titles on Instagram?

This question takes into account the type of titles Netflix posts (whether they are Spanish youth series); its content posting strategy (to analyse the promotion of series for immediate consumption); and engagement (likes, comments and views as new audience metrics).

A content analysis was performed on Netflix's posts on Instagram between 15 March and 21 June. An analysis table was drawn up based on previous research (Al-Rawi; 2017; Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018a; Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b; Martín-Quevedo et al., 2019; Martín-Quevedo et al., 2021). This table was adapted to the main objectives. The concept of proximity as defined by Cornelio-Marí (2020) and the classification of Netflix Originals by Pen-

ner & Straubhaar (2020) were followed. In other words, this was done without itemising the type of original content and differentiating between 'core content' and 'acquired content'. After collecting the titles about which Netflix had posted, they were searched in the catalogue to establish whether they were classified as original; whether they were series; their genre according to the platform's parameters and their age rating. For example, *Élite* is classified as a Netflix original series: TV mysteries, Crime TV Shows Drama, recommended for 16+.

Table 1. Analysis of Netflix Spain's Instagram Profile

		Table 1. Analysis of Neurix Spain's instagram Profile	
Formal characteristics identi-	•	Link	
fying the post		With or without text	
7 5 1		Date of post	
Content referred to		Platform/brand: refers to Netflix as a brand or the platform's characteristics.	
Coment referred to		Content: refers to content in the catalogue.	
		Title: refers to a specific series, documentary, film or show.	
		27	
		 Name of title Various titles 	
Purpose of the messages (non-	-	Inform	
exclusive categories)			
exclusive categories)	•	Survey	
	•	Merchandising	
	•	Game or competition	
	•	Generic promotion of the brand and the on-demand content service.	
	•	Promotion of specific content of a particular series, film or documentary.	
	•	Encourage participation	
	•	Give opinions	
	•	Offer suggestions	
	•	Others	
Resources that accompany the	•	Link to a social media platform	
text (as many as are used)	•	Mention	
	•	Link to the Netflix website	
	•	External link	
	•	Hashtag	
	•	Emoticon	
	•	Meme (GIF format)	
	•	Reproduction of a tweet	
	•	Image	
		o Actor	
		o Character	
		O Do images of faces or close-ups feature?	
		o Gender (man, woman, both, blank if none or cannot be ascertained)	
	•	Video	
		o Preview	
		o Trailer	
		o Promo	
		 Expanded content such as interviews 	
		o Making-of	
		o Other	
Appealing emotional and cog-		Positivity (good news)	
nitive elements in the post that	1	Negativity (bad news)	
make them go viral	 Unexpected or wow Celebrities Entertainment 		
6 - ' 			
		Social magnitude (includes four dimensions: economic, cultural, public and political)	
		Humour	
	-	Proximity (tailored to the market or culture)	
	:	Sexuality (relationships)	
		Sexuality (relationships)	

	■ Animals			
	 Children 			
	 Usefulness 			
	• Epic			
	■ Magic			
Engagement with the post	 No. of likes 			
	No. of comments			
	 No. of views in the case of a video 			
Content rating	 Series 			
	Core content (originals)			
	Third-party content			
	Platform classification			
	■ Age rating			

Source: own elaboration.

The sample spans the state of alarm, declared in Spain due to the Covid-19 health crisis, from 15 March to 21 June 2020. As set out above, this period shaped media consumption (Gil *et al.*, 2020); and the streaming platforms, the primary beneficiaries (Ortega & Santos, 2020), grew considerably (Montaña *et al.*, 2020), with Netflix leading the way.

3. Results

3.1. Overall strategy of posts on Instagram

During the period under study (15 March – 21 June 2020), Netflix Spain published 281 posts on its In-

stagram account. As shown in Figure 1, most of these were about the content available in the Net-flix catalogue (65%). Although the company continued posting about the brand and the platform during the state of alarm (21%), it did so on fewer occasions. Furthermore, its posts were not exclusively related to the content and brand (14%). This trend suggests that the platform targeted people who already formed a part of Netflix's audience, thereby highlighting its catalogue rather than the platform or its brand features.

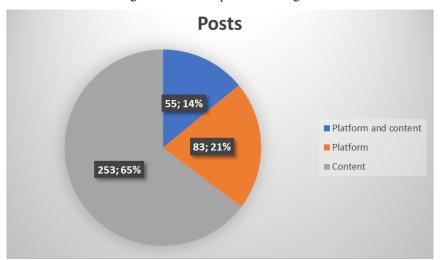


Figure 1. Netflix's posts on Instagram

Source: own elaboration.

An evident focus was also noted on positioning specific programmes (Figure 2). Of the posts on content, 47% alluded to a title (218 posts), and 46% (216 posts) explicitly mentioned the title (text message). Thus, only two of these posts

provided no clear information on the audiovisual content, making it difficult for an unfamiliar user to know to which series the images belong. On the other hand, 7% of the posts (31) referred to several titles.

Figure 2. Netflix's posts on Instagram about content

Source: own elaboration.

3.1.1. Objective of posts

If the content is key, it is only natural that these posts – figure 3 – seek to promote it (59%, 251 posts). To achieve this positioning in the consumer's mind, Netflix posted messages about its content written in language tailored to Generation Z. One example is the post "Summer Lovers is our favourite category of crush. Summertime: Series now available⁴" (29 April 2020). This message encapsulates the essence of the series (summer love) through the word 'crush'.

These messages form a part of Netflix's strategy on Instagram to bring its content closer and, to a lesser extent, promote (20%, 84 posts) or provide information about the Netflix brand (10%, 43 posts). Thus, the message mainly announces content that is available or when it will be released. This post, for example, announces the release of Valeria by referring to Spaniards' experience of confinement: "I don't know what we want more, for it to be 8 pm⁵ to go out for a walk or for it to be 8 May for #ValeriaNetflix to come out" (6 May 2020⁶). The content most publicised included

Spanish series such as Élite (6 posts), La casa de papel (4 posts) and Valeria (4 messages).

To a lesser extent, Instagram was used to encourage audience participation (6%, 26 posts). Élite (5), La casa de papel (2) and Valeria (2) featured prominently in this category, as did the American comedy series Never Have I Ever (2). Thus, fans of Élite were challenged to specify what sort of trouble they would get into with a scholarship at Las Encinas – the school attended by the series' characters (posted on 19 March 2020). Regarding *La casa de papel*, fans were asked to share their opinions by responding to questions such as "The moment of truth has arrived: WHO MAKES YOUR BLOOD BOIL MORE, GANDÍA or ARTURITO (2)? #LCDP4" (14 April 2020⁷). Followers of Valeria were prompted to post "If such WhatsApp groups existed, which one would you have to be in? #ValeriaNetflix" (10 May 20208), and to seek a connection between the series Never Have I Ever and the audience's habits: "And don't say 'I've never' done it, we know you have" (2 May 2020⁹).

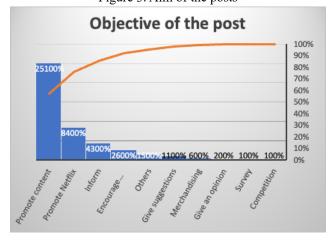


Figure 3. Aim of the posts

Source: own elaboration.

https://www.instagramconfian.com/p/B_jj_mpgtV4/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

On 2 May 2020, for the first time during the period of compulsory home confinement in Spain, adults were permitted to go out to take exercise between 8 and 11 pm.

⁶ https://www.instagram.com/p/B_1x8G2A8ET/?utm_source=ig_ web_copy_link

https://www.instagram.com/p/B--EyC0IipI/

https://www.instagram.com/p/CAAV-7hIiDJ/?utm_source=ig_web_ copy_link

https://www.instagram.com/p/B_sL-msAhuR/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

3.1.2. Resources used in the posts

Table 2 shows the resources used, as well as the characteristics of the images and videos posted. Following Instagram's essence, images were the most used resource (478 images), averaging 2 images per post,

with 10 being the maximum number of photos posted. Some of the resources used were more typical of Twitter, such as the mention feature (438) – used mainly to tag the accounts of the actors in the photographs – and the hashtag (240), which is extremely useful for classifying the content posted about.

Table 2. Resources used in Instagram posts about the Netflix catalogue's titles

Resources used in the post about the title		Image		Video	
Social media link	0	Actor	42	Preview	5
Mention/tag	438	Character	157	Trailer	6
Website link	0	Faces or close-ups	141	Promo	17
Hashtag	240	Both	56	Making off	2
External link	0	Male	51	Expanded content	15
Emoticon	113	Female	85	Other	7
Meme	4				
Image	478				
Video	50				
Reproduction of a tweet	26				

Source: own elaboration.

However, the mention, in this case, is linked to Instagram's features. Although the images chiefly featured the actors in character (147) instead of actors themselves (42), Netflix mentions the actors in the series. As shown below, the cast of the youth series became the platform's new media stars for its Instagram audience. The actors also use the network to create their own personal brand by uploading photos rather than posting texts or opinions, more typical of other networks such as Twitter.

An example of this approach is found in the post "Today's walk is #OuterBanks", which also alludes to the possibility of having a stroll after confinement. Netflix used four photos from the series in this post, tagging its young cast, all of whom are on Instagram.

Faces or close-ups are mainly used to emphasise the personage. This resource was more frequently used with female characters (85 compared with 51 men), mainly due to the positioning of *Valeria*, one of the most promoted series, about a group of female friends.

Videos were also posted (50), including promos (17) and expanded content (15). Ten promos for *Élite* allude to Spaniards' recent experience of confinement. Likewise, a video posted on 31 March refers to the characters of the series getting dressed for a video call, who beneath their uniform are wearing pyjamas¹⁰ Another post about the pandemic is found for *La casa de papel*, in which it refers to fans binge watching the series. Posted two days after the release of the series, the promo links the pandemic with the word 'resist', which also characterises the series.

The expanded content (15) was provided exclusively for *Élite* to mark the cast's tour of Spanish cities to promote the new season of the series. Examples included each cast member creating a 'pincho' in Bilbao, taking their characters as a reference¹¹. Thus, Instagram was used to expand the transmedia universe of the series.

Although Netflix focused its strategy on Instagram without including links to other social media or the Internet, it did use Twitter to reproduce posts and to promote the brand by alluding to the essence of streaming and confinement.

3.1.3. Emotional and cognitive elements

Examples of social magnitude and proximity included humour relating to the pandemic and the consequent imposition of home confinement in Spain and many countries. Of the 17 posts featuring these characteristics, the proximity factor was particularly prominent for *Élite* and La casa de papel (see Figure 5). However, there was also a post promoting different titles where Netflix refers to the famous celebrity gossip magazine *Hola* (*Hello*), for which it created its own version (*Holi*) with headlines in a language tailored to Generation Z ('gossip').

As with the proximity factor, the celebrity factor was also found, primarily in posts about series *Élite* (18 posts) and *La casa de papel* (16 posts), in which Netflix refers to the actors rather than the characters they play. Frequently, this posts also feature the sexuality element. This type of post tends to mention the actors and emphasise their good looks.

In this kind of messages, the actors are usually tagged – a recurrent resource used in the previous sec-

https://www.instagram.com/p/B-ZqFM0qutT/

https://www.instagram.com/p/B-SZA13CM7V/

tion. Thus, of the 89 posts with this resource, 42 included a tag. The aim was to highlight the series' main cast, especially that of *Élite* (14 celebrity-based messages with a mention), in contrast with the other youth series such as *Valeria* (6), *Summertime* (4), *Outer Banks* (2) or *Esta mierda me supera* (*I Am Not Okay*) (2). When the post was specifically about the actor, the unexpected or wow factor was used (28 messages out of 42). This factor was also used to promote *Élite* (21 posts).

The emotional and cognitive elements Netflix used to make its Instagram posts go viral (Figure 4) included a high degree of social magnitude (25%, 121 posts) and the proximity factor (16%, 79 posts). Netflix also used a celebrity-based strategy (18%, 89 posts) and the wow factor (14%, 71 posts). Elements such as humour (7%, 36 posts), negativity (5%, 25 posts), children (4%, 19 publications) and sexuality (4%, 18 publications) featured less.

Emotional and cognitive elements used to make posts go viral MAGIC 0 **EPIC** USEFULNESS CHILDREN ANIMALS **SEXUALITY PROXIMITY HUMOUR** SOCIAL MAGNITUDE ENTERTAINMENT **CELEBRITIES** UNEXPECTED OR WOW **NEGATIVITY POSITIVITY** 20 100 120 140

Figure 4. Emotional and cognitive elements used in the posts

Source: own elaboration.

Humour also appeared in *Élite* (10) and the comedy series *Valeria* (9). An attempt was made to connect the latter with its audiences' consumption habits: "Upload a photo to Instagram and make sure you look good in it. Sorry not sorry. #ValeriaNetflix" (8 May 2020¹²)"; "The 10 commandments of Saint Friendship. #ValeriaNetflix" (9 May 2020¹³) or "do you have enough Whatsapp audio messages for 3 seasons? Valeria says YES. #ValeriaNetflix" (16 May 2020¹⁴).

Examples of negativity include routines/habits that Spaniards could not follow or perform due to home confinement: "The toughest sprint of your life:

from the living room to the bedroom after watching #TheShining" (13 June 2020¹⁵) or "We won't be having parties this summer, but we will be making declarations of love on stage. The film #UnderTheSunOfRiccione arrives 1 July" (17 June 2020¹⁶).

Finally, the use of a cognitive or emotional element was strongly influenced by the title on which the post was based. Figure 5 shows the elements most frequently used for the main series on which Netflix posted in the period under study.

https://www.instagram.com/p/B_7zSjfgn2x/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

https://www.instagram.com/p/B_9xTkDAWnK/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

https://www.instagram.com/p/CAQe0J5IqHU/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

https://www.instagram.com/p/CBYVHbhoro_/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

https://www.instagram.com/tv/CBiEgXLgqf-/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Main cognitive and emotional elements used in posts about titles in the catalogue Jugando con fuego Outer Banks Control Z Valeria Yo nunca Sex Education A tres metros sobre el cielo La casa de papel Élite 10 60 70 20 30 50 80 ■ Celebrities Humour Unexpected or wow

Figure 5. Main emotional and cognitive elements in the main titles used in Netflix's post strategy on Instagram

Source: own elaboration

3.2. Posting strategy of the Netflix catalogue on Instagram

During the state of alarm, as many as 54 different titles from Netflix's catalogue were mentioned. Apart from eight titles (*Kardashian, The 100, The Blood Tree, Glow, Rec, Riverdale, Toy Boy* and *A Modern Cinderella*), all the content came from Netflix's 'core' catalogue. In other words, the streaming platform classifies these as originals. Furthermore, except for two titles, they were series or serialised products, including the reality series *Too Hot to Handle* and *Kardashian*.

Table 3 shows that the proximity factor features predominantly in posts for *La casa de papel*, *Valeria* and *Élite* – all of these Spanish fictions. In this period, Netflix placed greater emphasis on positioning productions released during the state of alarm. This table also indicates how the content positioned on Instagram targeted young people with series of these characteristics and content chiefly aimed at over sixteen-year-olds. The promoted titles appeared in *Mi vida en serie*, a Netflix Spain promotional show aired on its YouTube channel. However, it is not in the catalogue.

Table 3. Posts on titles referred to in at least four posts or more.

Content	No. of posts	Platform classification	age	Release
A3MSC	12	Romantic TV Dramas, TV Shows Based on Books, Teen TV	16	29-abr
		Shows.		
Control Z	13	Teen TV Shows, Mexican TV Shows, TV Dramas.	16	22-May
Elite	34	TV Mysteries, Crime TV Shows, Spanish.	16	13-March
Jugando con fuego	6	Wedding & Romance Reality TV, Competition Reality TV, Re-	12	17-April
		ality TV.		
La casa de papel	38	TV Shows, Spanish , TV Thrillers.	16	03-April
Sex Education	6	British, Teen TV Shows, TV Dramas.	16	17-January
Valeria	20	Spanish TV, Romantic TV, Comedies	18	08-May
Outer Banks	6	Teen TV Shows, TV Dramas, TV Action & Adventure.	12	14-April
Never Have I Ever	4	Teen TV Shows, TV Dramas, TV Comedies.	12	08-May
Las chicas del cable	4	Spanish, Romantic TV Dramas, Period Pieces.	16	3-July

Source: own elaboration.

Figure 6 shows how the series that was the subject of Netflix's Instagram posting strategy are closely related to releases and the company's wish to form part of the social conversation during a given period. Thus, *La casa de papel* was released on 3 April, and promo content for this series remained steady throughout that month, even with several posts on the same day. The same approach

was adopted for Élite – released at the onset of the confinement – (13 March), Valeria (8 May) or Control Z (22 May), the subject of the most posts in the month it was released. All the series in Figure 6 were premiered during the months under study (March, April, May or June) except Sex Education, which came out in January, and Las Chicas del Cable, released in July.

Figure 6. Distribution of posts about series over time

Source: own elaboration.

The characteristics of the most liked posts (table 4) indicated the need for the proximity strategy. Nine out of the ten titles are Spanish (the only foreign title is *I am not okay*). The proximity factor would also explain why the brand's posting strategy gave less relevance to teen series and releases of second seasons during this period, such as *Outer Banks* or *Never Have I Ever*.

In any event, *La casa de papel* was not only the series for which Netflix made the most effort in its communication strategy; it was the one that

was released on 3 April, a significant date in the pandemic. La casa de papel, Élite (released on 13 March) and Valeria (8 May) yielded the most likes. In addition, some of these posts included references to confinement, such as 'resistance', a major plot topic, and the one about morale raising. A post for Élite also ponders what it would be like to stay at home with its cast. Finally, the celebrity factor appeared in five of these messages; besides alluding to the actor, he or she was tagged in the shared photograph.

Table 4. Posts about content with most 'likes'

Series	Date	Message	No. of likes
La casa de papel	04/04/2020	Showing love worse than Denver. #LCDP4	1129582
Elite	19/05/2020	The last day of school is always the saddest and we almost flooded Las Encinas saying goodbye to Carla, Lu, Valerio, Nadia and Polo #ÉliteNetflix	1006007
La casa de papel	08/04/2020	The people who always know what to watch is The Resistance. #LCDP4	803601
Valeria	14/04/2020	If it's not clear to you, seek out your friends urgently. All episodes of #Valeria arrive on 8 May.	748411
La casa de papel	24/03/202		742201
La casa de papel	09/04/2020	Not even Achilipú can raise my morale. #LCDP	683744
Élite	23/03/2020	24h with them? We already dreamt about it, but it was better to live it #Élite3	626771
Élite	24/04/2020	What it would be like being at home with them ♥ #Élite3. @ @ester_exposito @aron.piper @dannapaola @omarayuso @ itzan.escamilla	458142
La casa de papel	03/04/2020	Not even Denver should laugh at this, and we mean it \$\infty\$ #LCDP4	404799
I am not okay	21/03/2020	WHAT NOW? #EstaMierdaMeSupera	388465

Source: own elaboration.

As for the most commented-on posts (table 5), a new and relevant positioning was again found in messages for *La casa de papel*. These messages encouraged participation (7 of the 10 most com-

mented-on posts). In addition to the Spanish series – again including Élite and Valeria – this ranking also included Control Z, Summertime and Never Have I Ever.

Table 5. Posts on most commented-on content

Series	Series Date Message		No. Of comments
La casa de papel	14/04/2020	The moment of truth has arrived: WHO MAKES YOUR BLOOD BOIL MORE, GANDÍA GO OF ARTURITO P? #LCDP4	13600
La casa de papel	03/04/2020	Let it all out about #LCDP4 as if it was your anger against Gandía.	10400
Élite	25/03/2020	Nadia hasn't had it easy in #Élite3, but you, what do you get: GUZMADIA's shipping ♥ or Nadia and Lu's friendship ♥?	8498
Elite	19/05/2020	The last day of school is always the saddest and we almost flooded Las Encinas saying goodbye to Carla, Lu, Valerio, Nadia and Polo #ÉliteNetflix	7835
Control Z	27/05/2020	It's your first day at school. Who would you prefer to take you on the welcome tour? Javier ♥ or Raúl 🞝? #ControlZ	6859
La casa de papel	12/04/2020	Exes as predictable as Palermo. #LCDP4	4803
Never Have I Ever	08/05/2020	If you've finished with #YoNever you have enough evidence to make up your mind. Who do you like more for Devi, Paxton o Ben ??	4638
La casa de papel	0De5/04/2020	No, we don't know anything about the next season. IT'S JUST BEEN RELEASED #LCDP4	3586
Summetime	15/04/2020	SUMMERTIME. THE. SERIES. That's it All the episodes on 29 April.	3548
La casa de papel	03/04/2020	Not even Denver should laugh at this, and we mean it ♥ #LCDP4	3261

Source: own elaboration.

Finally, the proximity factor was used in the videos for *Élite* (7 posts) and *La casa de papel* (3 posts) because they are Spanish series. Six of these posts used the ce-

lebrity factor as well as mention and tag the series' characters. Therefore, the celebrity factor of Netflix's content was one of the most liked and most viewed resources.

Table 6. Posts about content with the most viewed videos

Series	Date	Message	No. Of views
		They can take away CARMUEL's dreams but never his ma-	
Élite	16/03/2020	caroni. #Élite3	1681349
Élite	31/03/2020	Yes, underneath our uniform we wear pyjamas. #Élite3	1379390
		The second part of the show of @alvaroricoladera	
		brings us all the gossip from Las Encinas. It could only be	
Élite	20/03/2020	him. #Élite3	1349116
La casa de papel	12/04/2020	Exes as predictable as Palermo. #LCDP4	1310851
		Dibbs we tour Madrid with	
Élite	24/03/2020	@dannapaola 👆 #Élite3	1271080
		After finishing the course from party to party, @leitisene and	
		@sergiomomo have to take the final exam. @AlvaroRicoLa-	
Élite	31/03/2020	dera is the teacher, TREMBLING. #Élite3	1266607
La casa de papel	17/04/2020	Magüi foresaw everything about #LCDP4.	1074996
		These are the 'Suspiros de España', but Spain is currently hol-	
La casa de papel	01/04/2020	ding its breath until Friday. #LCDP4 arrives in 2 days.	1003661
		We NEVER want the show of @alvaroricoladera to end.	
		Today's guests: @ester_exposito, @sergiomomo, @clau-	
Élite	27/03/2020	diasalas_, @leitisene and @miguel_bernardeau	932989
		Today's guests: 'The @alvaroricoladera show' is over but not	
		our love for him.	
		Final guests: @@dannapaola, @itzan.escamilla, @miguel_	
Élite	02/04/2020	bernardeau, @omarayuso and @ester_exposito	904512

Source: own elaboration.

4. Conclusions

Previous research has shown how Netflix communicates its values adequately and makes good use of social media (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018a). It has also been demonstrated how the streaming platform targets Generation Z on Instagram (Martín-Quevedo *et al.*, 2019). This study shows how Netflix Spain adapted its global approach to a local geared towards the Spanish market to connect with young Spaniards and bring its catalogue closer to them.

Firstly, Netflix's strategy of creating productions catering to local tastes (Penner & Straubhaar, 2020; Wayne & Castro, 2020; Cornelio-Mari, 2020; Ju, 2020) was also reflected in how these Spanish youth series were promoted at the over-16s on Instagram. This proximity factor, which makes consumers feel a closer connection, as pointed out by Cornelio-Mari (2020), involves using resources that make this possible. Thus, the casts of the series are tagged or mentioned in posts wherever possible, giving fans an additional element of access to and an extension of the online audiovisual story parallel to transmedia narratives. By following Netflix Spain on Instagram, fans are granted more contact with the stars of their favourite series, including those of veteran series, such as Elite and La casa de papel, and newcomers such as Valeria. This also indicates the company's interest in establishing itself as a launchpad for its stars – in this case, Spanish stars - through the "Netflix celebrity". The proximity factor is also reflected in the streaming platform's messages expressed with a slang familiar to its young audience, as seen in "crush", "shipping" or "gossip", and also referring to their communication habits, as seen with the emphasis in WhatsApp audio messages or in uploading a selfie to Instagram if you look gorgeous (even if your friends do not look so good) when promoting Valeria. Finally, proximity was highlighted in the analysed period by referring to the audience's concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic, with constant nods to the situations brought about by confinement, addressing some of the most common complains (such as the feeling of being caged), but using humour to make light of them, taking one of the mottos of GenZ ("only good vibes") and transforming it into a brand identity characteristic of Netflix.

Secondly, the promoted content underscores the company's interest in positioning its original series as its main differentiating element (Havens, 2018;

Penner & Straubhaar, 2020). The strategy pursued via Instagram is less about branding (albeit such messages are occasionally found) and more about promoting titles created expressly for young people. Although series such as *Outer Banks* or *Never Have I* Ever (US TV series) were released during the period under study and were subsequently confirmed for renewal, Netflix focused on Spanish productions such as Valeria, whose first season premiered during the state of alarm. Hence, another example of the importance of proximity is corroborated by the results on engagement: the most viewed videos, the most liked and most commented-on posts that prompted engagement and tagging the actors' profiles were about Spanish series. Moreover, Netflix went far when promoting these series, not limiting itself to using images or footage, but creating events, such as the several tours underwent by the cast of Elite, making them feel more as a music band or a group of celebrities than traditional actors.

Likewise, the life expectancy of the series in figure 6 suggests the change in television consumption described by Neira (2020); namely that the proliferation of content suggests viewing of a more ephemeral nature, generating little cultural legacy, in which the content is digested as quickly as it is consumed. Although prime time starts when the viewer decides, the pace set by Netflix indicates that viewers must watch the season soon if they want to be a part of the conversation and avoid spoilers. Apart from two titles, the most promoted series were new releases (Élite, La casa de papel, Valeria, Summer Time, Control Z, etc.). This trend, which has not been followed by other platforms, such as Disney+ or Prime Video, that tend to release the episodes weekly, has a definite impact on how Netflix paces communication in social media.

Finally, Netflix Spain's strategy towards Generation Z perfectly sums up the premise "think globally, act locally". Despite the international success of *Elite* and *La casa de papel*, the streaming platform is wholly committed to a communication strategy that considers the national audience.

Although Netflix dominates the Spanish market, further research should address this proximity factor in the streaming platforms of other global companies, including veteran platforms such as HBO and Amazon Prime Video and newcomers such as Disney+.

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