



## AUDIOVISUAL DISTRIBUTION OF BRANDED CONTENT THROUGH YOUTUBE: "LEARNING TOGETHER"

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### KEYWORDS

*Audiovisual distribution  
YouTube  
Branded content  
Video  
Advertisement*

### ABSTRACT

*YouTube is one of the primary platforms for the creation and distribution of audiovisual content. Consequently, brands leverage its potential for the dissemination of branded content projects. This paper examines the case of BBVA's "Aprendemos juntos" ("Learning Together"), whose YouTube channel boasts over four million subscribers. The research objectives are to characterize the distribution model and analyse the content to identify its key elements, delving into the fundamental principles of branded content. In order to achieve this objective, a methodology has been devised which employs a quantitative analysis of the channel's videos between 2019 and 2023, in addition to a content analysis of the most significant pieces.*

Received: 14 / 04 / 2024

Accepted: 03 / 06 / 2024

## 1. Introduction

The current advertising landscape is undergoing a period of transformation, the result of various social, cultural, and business changes that have occurred in recent years, coupled with an increasingly evident digitalisation. This transformation is evident not only in the satisfaction of general consumer needs (Alonso and Fernández, 2023), but also in the demand for cultural and entertainment products (García and Sánchez-Bayón, 2021, p. 144).

In the context of information saturation and interconnection between brands and consumers mediated by digital algorithms, branded content functions as an advertising language that enables a distinct type of connection with the target audience that differs significantly from conventional advertising approaches. As Gómez (2023, p. 3) asserts, "The traditional model has evolved, giving rise to a space in which the user assumes an active role in the transmission of the message, becoming a prosumer primarily through social networks". It is not surprising that the term "new advertising" (Costa, 2015, p. 1) has evolved to encompass a broader range of activities. Whereas previously it was limited to vertical increases in sales, it now encompasses the challenge of generating engagement with the brand (Rodgers and Thorson, 2018; Anwar and Salo, 2024).

However, despite the apparent benefits of branded content, its acceptance has been uneven. As stated by professional experts themselves, branded content has been developed more extensively in media companies than in creative agencies (Barbosa and Madrid, 2021), which has led to a series of changes in production processes and the generation of distribution ecosystems.

This paper commences with a theoretical review of branded content in order to elucidate the aforementioned changes. It is therefore necessary to commence by defining this tool, as this is one of the earliest discussions, both within the academic community and among advertising professionals. In an attempt to shed light on the subject, the Branded Content Marketing Association (BCMA) defines it as follows:

Communication assets produced or co-produced by a brand that, through formats that fulfil a role of entertainment, information and/or utility, are distributed outside the advertising space. These assets connect and/or create an audience that voluntarily devotes its attention, viewing, listening or participation, thanks to the relevance of the content. This audience is built through seriality, which strategically promotes the role and values of the brand. (Muñoz, 2021, p. 24)

### 1.1. Branded Content as an Advertising Language

The aforementioned approach is underpinned by a series of notable elements, as identified by the author of the definition himself. Firstly, there is a shift in advertising actions towards the generation of "assets", which can become strategic in the construction of a brand's identity. It is not only a matter of generating specific approaches; it is also necessary to create a network of production in which control is maintained over both the content and the media that are created ad hoc. This can be achieved by taking advantage of the opportunities generated by the digital sphere.

Secondly, branded content represents a language that seeks to generate notoriety and relevance through the aggregation of audiences that come to the content voluntarily. In other words, efforts are oriented towards processes that allow a deep understanding of the target audience, including their lifestyle, their entertainment needs, their media consumption, and in general, the issues that concern them. This is of great importance, as the brand moves from being the entity that interrupts content (in the form of advertisements on television, in the press, or in any other conventional or digital media) to a publisher of relevant content in a specific brand territory (through a pull strategy). In this context, the surge in the consumption of audiovisual products has played a pivotal role in the success of branded content as an advertising language (Martín et al., 2022).

Thirdly, it is important to consider the notion that the audience should be encouraged to dedicate their time and attention voluntarily. In order to achieve this objective, branded content is inspired by formulas that have already been exploited by other entertainment sectors, such as cinema and television. It can be argued that relevant and quality content has consistently been a dominant factor in the engagement of audiences. In this context, the process of catharsis does not begin with the review of content that is relevant to the audience, but rather in the manner in which brands produce and exploit formulas that differ from conventional advertising in order to become new actors in the competition for

attention. Consequently, branded content does not represent a significant departure from conventional advertising narratives; rather, it appropriates successful formulas and employs them through a distribution strategy that represents a significant departure from traditional advertising. In other words, it can be argued that "it is advertising that is chosen" (Barbosa and Madrid, 2021).

Consequently, the process of generating branded content commences with an understanding of the manner in which a brand's audience allocates its attention and time. According to data from Statista (2024), the percentage of Spaniards who consume online games, listen to music or watch TV or films on the internet has risen from 20% in 2005 to 82% in 2020. However, it is not only the generalised consumption of digital and, predominantly, audiovisual content that is a concern. The paradigm shift is more profound than previously thought. The consumption of audiovisual entertainment has now become one of the main sources for the generation of collective and individual identities (Soto, 2023). This is substantially favoured by distribution through audiovisual content platforms and streaming platforms.

## ***1.2. Changes in the Distribution of the Audiovisual Product***

In accordance with the aforementioned principles, the distribution of audiovisual and advertising content represents the intermediary stage between production and the ultimate consumer (Matamoros, 2009, p. 100-101). Furthermore, as Miñarro (2013) elucidates, distribution is also the activity that allows the commercialisation or monetisation of an audiovisual product (p. 12). Consequently, the content distribution phase and the selection of the optimal exploitation windows represent a pivotal stage in the production process.

The field of distribution has undergone significant transformation in recent years. In particular, the emergence of new business models and platforms that distribute content on demand via the Internet, known as OTT (over the top), has altered the conventional television market. As Vacas-Aguilar (2021) explains, this growth has been accompanied by the emergence of new forms of content consumption (p. 2). Indeed, as Barlovento's "Monthly report on the behaviour of television viewers" indicates, audiovisual consumption remains on television as a medium, although consumption of traditional television is decreasing, while hybrid consumption is increasing, which is related to other uses of the television, including video and streaming platforms, games, radio, etc. (Barlovento, 2024, p. 3). According to the report "Digital Society in Spain 2023," 53.1% of Spaniards stated that they had watched television programs over the Internet in 2022 (Fundación Telefónica, 2023, p. 108). Similarly, 73.4% of Internet users also stated that they had used connected televisions to access online content in the last three months (Fundación Telefónica, 2023, p. 108). It is evident that a novel audiovisual consumption model is evolving, in which the internet, mobile devices and connected devices have become indispensable tools for the distribution and exhibition of products.

Among the most widely used platforms in Spain, YouTube is worthy of mention. In 2023, it was one of the most visited domains in the country, with 36.6 million unique visitors. Furthermore, users aged between 25 and 34 spent the longest time online (Barlovento, 2023a, p. 3). Additionally, YouTube is the platform where internet users spend the most minutes per day. This figure is 14.1 minutes, which places YouTube ahead of Facebook.com, TikTok.com and Instagram.com (Barlovento, 2023a, p. 6). Furthermore, 42.8% of Spaniards report utilising their television to access YouTube video playback (Barlovento, 2023b, p. 2).

It can therefore be concluded that the consumption of audiovisual products via the Internet has acquired a significant degree of relevance, with YouTube occupying a prominent position among the platforms with the largest audiences on the Internet. A more detailed analysis reveals that YouTube is a platform dedicated to video sharing that also exhibits the characteristics of a social network. YouTube was established in February 2005 and, since 2006, has been owned by the company Google, which was subsequently renamed Alphabet (Orduña-Malea et al., 2020, p. 3).

Conversely, an examination of YouTube's official mission statement reveals the following: "Our mission is to give everyone a voice and show them the world" (YouTube, 2024a). This statement serves to illustrate the platform's motivation to provide users with a voice, thereby enabling them to disseminate information about global events. This mission is also reflected, from a quantitative perspective, in the number of videos hosted on the platform. According to the company itself, more than 500 hours of content are uploaded to YouTube every minute around the world (YouTube, 2024b).

In terms of its business model, the basic version is provided free of charge to users, although advertisements are displayed. In addition, there is a subscription-based version, known as YouTube Premium. This option allows users to watch videos without advertisements, download content to access it without an internet connection, access the YouTube Music service, play videos in the background from mobile devices, and so forth. (YouTube, 2024c) The price of the individual mode in Spain is 11.99 euros per month, following a free trial period of one month. It is also noteworthy that the platform does not impose any financial obligations on content creators; access to video uploading is provided at no cost.

A further examination of the platform's features reveals the potential for interaction with users and viewers of uploaded videos. In this manner, YouTube enables the insertion of comments, the marking of content with a "like" or "dislike", and the sharing of videos. Furthermore, users are permitted to subscribe to their preferred channels, thereby enabling them to receive notifications and have the content highlighted on their user portal. Furthermore, YouTube offers the option of distributing live videos (and not only time-shifted), as well as the option of short videos, which are commonly referred to as 'shorts'. Consequently, a plethora of tools is available for the generation of audiovisual content, accompanied by a monetisation plan that allows the channel to become profitable as it grows in production, engagement and users.

With regard to the type of content distributed by the platform, given its nature as a mass medium and the large number of videos hosted, it can be observed that there is a great heterogeneity in genres and characteristics. Indeed, previous studies have analysed YouTube from different perspectives, including educational and informative contexts (Anzola-Gómez and Rivera-Rogel, 2023; Franco, 2017). This is exemplified by Orduña-Malea et al. (2020), who differentiate the platform from others such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and Facebook. "YouTube is distinguished from other services in that it is not merely a platform for entertainment but also a source of reliable news and didactic material, a means of maintaining family relationships and strengthening professional relationships" (p. 2).

Conversely, YouTube can be regarded as an efficacious instrument for the "dissemination of messages through videos, with the objective of achieving a viral effect through the utilisation of digital marketing techniques (...)". This is in accordance with the findings of Arroyo et al. (2013, p. 332). Furthermore, as the authors indicate (2013), videos can retain their popularity on the platform due to search engines and the capacity to disseminate messages through the functionalities that facilitate content sharing (p. 333). A subsequent section will examine the implications of this feature for the present study.

YouTube has transformed the advertising landscape due to its unique qualities and its ability to attract any target audience with the promise of access to the largest audiovisual catalogue in the world. For advertisers, this platform offers the possibility of creating their own channel as an alternative to conventional television (Ha, 2018), with a global reach and total control of both content distribution and audience data. As evidenced by Bergaz et al. (2021), numerous brands have leveraged the advantages of YouTube as an audiovisual content distribution platform, including Budweiser, Cutty Sark, Adidas, Renault, Puma, and Red Bull. These companies have effectively utilized YouTube as a platform for creating a distinctive brand identity through the creation of Brand TV (p. 172).

## 2. Design and Method

In order to continue with the course of this research, it is necessary to define the methodology that has been designed in order to understand, from an empirical and systematic perspective, the possibilities that are offered by OTT platforms in order to distribute branded audiovisual content. In this context, this research is based on the study of a paradigmatic case. Before proceeding to define the formal object of this research, it is necessary to specify the method employed, which is the case study. This is defined by Walker (1983, p. 42) as "an examination of an example in action". As Stake (2013) elucidates: "A case study is the study of the specificity and complexity of a single case in order to understand the activity of the case under important circumstances" (p. 12). It is a methodological tool that enables the analysis and understanding of complex phenomena.

Accordingly, we posit that the analysis of a paradigmatic example will permit us to commence with a singular case in order to subsequently, inductively, be able to characterise the distribution of an audiovisual branded content project from a general point of view.

The formal object and protagonist of this research is the YouTube channel BBVA's "Learning together"<sup>1</sup> ("Aprendemos juntos") (@AprendemosJuntos), promoted by the BBVA company as part of one of the most awarded Spanish-produced branded content actions in advertising festivals. As indicated in the description provided by BBVA (2024), "At BBVA, we hold the conviction that a more fulfilling existence in a more sustainable world is attainable. The objective is to provide society with the necessary tools to address the significant challenges that lie ahead". The bank has identified a new area of interest, education, which is not directly related to its core business but aligns with its brand purpose.

BBVA disseminates its message through the YouTube platform as its principal distribution channel. The channel was established on 5 January 2018 and, as of February 2024, has amassed over four million subscribers. Consequently, the channel may be considered a paradigmatic example and a benchmark for its high penetration of a specific branded content product on YouTube (with some videos exceeding 20 million views). Indeed, this case has been previously analysed by other authors from the perspective of advertising strategy and media planning (Sánchez et al., 2023). The objective of this research is to characterise the distribution model and to identify the key factors that contribute to the success of the content.

In order to address these challenges, a method based on two phases has been designed. The initial phase of the analysis involves a descriptive and quantitative observation of the production, dissemination, and interaction data associated with the selected sample of videos that comprise this channel. In the initial phase of the analysis, the total number of videos produced by the company between 2019 and 2023 was taken as a representative sample. The rationale behind selecting this sample is that it encompasses the only full years in which audiovisual production has been developed. According to the analytical tool Social Blade (2024), the user was created on 5 January 2018, although the first video dates back to 21 January 2018. Since that date, the total number of videos uploaded to the platform is 1,257, although the sample between 2019 and 2023 is 997 audiovisual pieces (including shorts). The most up to date sample is from 26 February 2024.

In this initial phase, the channel has been quantified from a statistical perspective, utilising variables that have been previously investigated by authors such as Montes-Vozmediano et al. (2018). The variables analysed are as follows: title of the video, date of publication, duration of the video, number of views, number of likes, number of comments, hours of publication and category (according to the tags given by YouTube). This approach enables the extraction of information regarding the effectiveness of the distribution of this branded content action via YouTube and the basic indicators of reception and engagement. Consequently, we commence with the initial hypothesis that the channel under analysis represents a successful example of a branded content product that exhibits patterns in its content and has successfully exploited the YouTube tool.

In the second stage, a content analysis is applied, which is qualitative in nature but with quantitative nuances. This tool is based on a synthetic method and allows the gathering of characteristics to structure a general conclusion on the constituent elements of branded content. In other words, content analysis enables the systematic organisation of the information (Sánchez, 2005; Sierra, 1997) pertaining to the units under analysis, thereby facilitating an understanding of the interrelated elements.

The code was applied to a sample of the five videos with the most views, the five with the most "likes" and the five with the most "comments". The selection of this sample reveals a significant finding: some of the units of analysis are reflected in the three lists. It is unsurprising that these audiovisual products serve as a clear illustration of the potential reach and interaction that is conducive to branded content on YouTube. Consequently, the final sample comprises seven videos.

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<sup>1</sup> In the year 2024, the channel is designated "Learning Together 2030" (Aprendemos Juntos 2030), but its @ symbol is "Learning Together" (Aprendemos Juntos), a concept that will be used to name the object of study.



**Figure 1.** Sample of relevant videos (views, "likes" and comments)<sup>2</sup>

Title	Date	Duration	Visualisations	I like it	Comments
Full Version. The neuroscience of emotions. Marian Rojas-Estapé, psychiatrist and author	13/09/2021	54m54s	20.141.148	576K	10.088
"The cruelty of this story belongs to thousands of people". Ousman Umar, social entrepreneur	02/12/2019	56m45s	9.400.586	167K	8.216
V.Complete. "The first lesson about love is personal dignity".Walter Riso, psychologist and writer	24/06/2020	31m51s	17.456.028	254K	7.893
Full Version. Keys to avoid emotional dependence. Silvia Congost, psychologist	14/10/2019	54m12s	20.591.604	261K	4.896
V. Why do we make so many mistakes in love? Walter Riso, doctor in Psychology and writer	24/04/2023	57m	13.440.549	212K	4.427
Full Version. Mathematics for real life. Adrián Paenza, mathematician	11/02/2019	1h9m57s	31.576.056	422K	976
Full Version: The usefulness of the useless in our lives. Nuccio Ordine, teacher and writer	04/03/2019	1h42m29s	12.503.996	140K	254

Source: Figure prepared by the authors based on data from the YouTube channel @AprendemosJuntos (BBVA, 2024).

The analysis is based on a code developed by the authors of previous work, including Arroyo et al. (2013), López-Villafranca and Olmedo-Salar (2019) and Oliva et al. (2021). In particular, the following variables have been constructed:

- Visual characteristics:
  - Types of shots: a classification of the most common types of shots used, along with their associated characteristics and audiovisual production techniques. The origin of audiovisual sources and their nature will also be analysed (Arroyo et al., 2013 and Oliva et al., 2021).
  - Staging: specifically, the scenarios in which the action takes place are addressed in order to ascertain whether this is fixed or variable, as well as their most representative characteristics and their link to the subject matter dealt with (Oliva et al., 2021).
  - Textual elements: whether there is textual support and its function is analysed (Arroyo et al., 2013 and Oliva et al., 2021).
- Narrative characteristics:
  - Characters in the action: the number of characters, their role and level of prominence (Arroyo et al., 2013).
  - External actions: the actions taken by the characters and the actions they undertake (Arroyo et al., 2013).
  - Video structure and editing: to determine if there is a fixed structure that is replicated, the blocks into which the audiovisual piece is divided, the editing transitions used and stylistic resources (Oliva et al., 2021).
- Sound Characteristics: The primary audio resources utilized will be analyzed, encompassing both musical elements and dialogue or sound and environmental effects (Arroyo et al., 2013 and Oliva et al., 2021).
- Use of YouTube tools: analysis of video descriptions, use of hashtags, video thumbnails and titles (Oliva et al., 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Data updated as of 7 March 2024.

Finally, a further qualitative analysis of creative and advertising strategies has been developed.

- Characteristics of branded content:
  - Integration of the brand in the content: the role of the brand in the audiovisual product has been identified.
  - Attribution strategy using visual elements (brand cues).
  - Storytelling: the themes around which the stories revolve have been described.
  - Sweet spot (Fontini, 2001): The territory explored by the brand has been analysed.
  - Functional and emotional benefits linked to the brand.
  - Suggested experience typology: the units of analysis have been coded according to whether the suggested experience is social bonding, self-identity, utilitarian, humorous, aesthetic, awe-inspiring or discerning (Waqas et al., 2021, in Llorente et al., 2022, p. 130-131).
  - Role of the target: the role that the target assumes has been described.

The objective of this study is to characterise the content of the "Learning Together" channel and the utilisation of the YouTube platform as a vehicle for the distribution and dissemination of the content of a specific branded content product. To this end, the code described above will be applied.

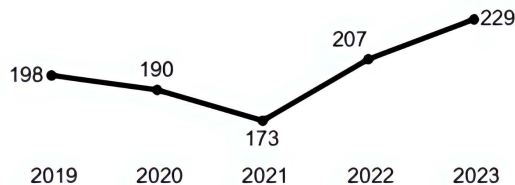
### 3. Results

This section will present the findings of the research. These will be presented subsequently, as a common thread, in conjunction with the aforementioned variables.

#### 3.1. The Quantity and Frequency of Audiovisual Production

Firstly, it can be observed that the channel's audiovisual production has remained consistent over the past five years.

**Figure 2.** Evolution of the channel's audiovisual production (2019-2023)



Source(s): Figure prepared by the authors based on data from the @AprendemosJuntos YouTube channel (BBVA, 2024).

It can be observed that the number of videos produced annually has consistently exceeded 100, with an arithmetic mean of approximately 200 videos per year. The figures demonstrate a high degree of homogeneity, with no significant fluctuations in the quantity of audiovisual content produced. Furthermore, an increase in content was observed from 2022 onwards. It is also noteworthy that in that year, the channel began uploading short videos, with a maximum length of 60 seconds. Between 2019 and 2023, 95 video shorts were published, which also contributed to an increase in the quantity of produced content and its subsequent distribution.

Conversely, Figure 3 illustrates the monthly distribution of publications on YouTube. In this regard, we observe a degree of consistency in the distribution, given that the channel consistently publishes content on a monthly basis, which ensures a continuous flow of material for the project. The months with the greatest number of published videos are November (with an average of 23 videos), October (with an average of 21.2 videos) and June (with an average of 20 videos). Conversely, August is the month with the lowest level of audiovisual production.

A content analysis of the most relevant videos (views, "likes" and comments) revealed that they were published in four of the five years under investigation: 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2023. The months of

publication were February, March, April, June, September, October and December. This variety precludes the possibility of establishing a correlation between the success of the videos and the month or year of publication. Furthermore, all of the videos were published between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. (in the afternoon), with the exception of one video, which was published at 10:25 p.m.

**Figure 3.** Distribution of audiovisual production by month (2019-2023)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
enero	23	20	12	15	28
febrero	19	14	11	12	16
marzo	17	13	14	14	20
abril	16	17	14	11	15
mayo	17	20	14	14	23
junio	18	34	14	15	19
julio	12	5	8	18	18
agosto	7	6	4	10	14
septiembre	18	14	14	21	24
octubre	18	25	24	18	21
noviembre	18	14	26	34	23
diciembre	15	8	18	25	8

Source(s): Figure prepared by the authors based on data from the @AprendemosJuntos YouTube channel (BBVA, 2024).

Consequently, it can be posited that the management of the "Learning Together" channel is an integral part of a strategic process and a meticulous plan for audiovisual distribution, which enables the consistent dissemination of content due to its quantity and frequency.

### 3.2. Content Fragmentation Strategy

As regards the length of the videos, it is heterogeneous: on the one hand, there are the shorts mentioned above, pieces of 60 seconds or less; in fact, 95 videos fall into this category (9.5% of the total). With regard to the rest of the production, the following can be noted 53% of the videos are up to 10 minutes long; 16% of the works are between 11 and 49 minutes long; finally, 21.5% of the videos are longer than 50 minutes, up to a maximum of one hour and 43 minutes in some cases. Thus, we can observe the high production of short videos and the high production of long videos. This is due to the planning strategy developed by the channel, which allows the production of long content and its subsequent fragmentation into short clips. In this way, the long videos centralise the lengthy speeches of the invited personalities in what are mostly called "full versions"; these long versions are then cut to extract other shorter clips (generally less than 10 minutes). In this way, the same audiovisual piece gives rise to different YouTube videos.

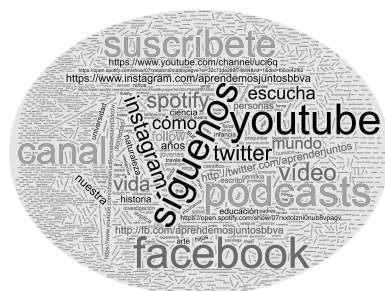
If we analyse the most relevant videos in terms of views, likes and comments, we see that they are all long analysis units, longer than 50 minutes; only one has a shorter duration, just over 31 minutes. In addition, one of the videos not only reaches the one hour mark but exceeds it at one hour and 42 minutes.

### 3.3. Description, Categories, Hashtags, Thumbnails and Titles

It is interesting to analyse how the channel uses the formal elements of the YouTube tool: the description of the videos, the use of hashtags, categories, thumbnails and titles. In order to go deeper into the description of the pieces, a word cloud was extracted in order to identify the most frequently used concepts in the sample; it should be noted that empty words (such as prepositions) were excluded from the visualisation.



**Figure 4.** Word cloud of the most repeated concepts in the description of the videos



Source(s): Figure prepared by the authors based on data from the @AprendemosJuntos YouTube channel (BBVA, 2024).

We can see that the most used words are: "follow us", "Instagram", "Twitter", "Facebook", as well as URLs to the project's Twitter and Instagram accounts. We can therefore see that the description box is being used to disseminate "Learning Together" through all the social networks and related domains; there is a well-planned promotional strategy to link all the media to the videos published and to publicise the rest of the tools used in the project.

In addition, the description is also used to show some information about the video and the protagonist of the video. Among the most recurrent concepts in terms of content, the following stand out "life", "world", "people", "history", "science", "nature" and "education". These are therefore some of the most frequently used words in relation to the content published. In terms of the hashtags used, #LearningTogether, the channel's own concept, stands out. This hashtag is constantly used to identify the project; in addition, some of the videos use conceptual hashtags related to the topics they deal with.

We can also analyse the category used by the channel to label its content. The category 'education' is used in all the videos, which allows us to identify the channel's positioning in this field and in the field of dissemination. This categorisation maintains a clear alignment with the themes mentioned above, which are directly related to the field of dissemination.

The thumbnails are used to identify the protagonist(s) of the video. No photo editing, text insertion or other techniques common on the platform are used. In this case, they are characterised by the fact that they are a real image taken from the conversations in the video and in the same space where they were recorded, without inserting elements on them that go beyond the visual identification of the project. In almost all of them, the medium shot is prioritised in order to identify the protagonist.

The titles of the videos are informative and descriptive; six of the seven videos analysed in depth mention that this is the 'full version', indicating the duration and length of the content for those seeking the full conversation. The only video without this concept contains a literal sentence extracted from the content; it should be noted that this video is somewhat exceptional, as it was uploaded during the covid-19 pandemic and is in the format of a video call. On the other hand, all the videos include in their title the name and profession of the expert and the subject to be dealt with.

Finally, it should be noted that one of the videos analysed implements a YouTube chapter system, which makes it possible to introduce an index in the playback bar, structuring the piece and allowing faster navigation. This tool was not used repeatedly in the channel's videos.

### 3.4. Visual Characteristics

As far as the visual aspects are concerned, the pieces maintain an approach that is oriented towards classic audiovisual production and the audiovisual interview. It should be noted that this component is used for informative and descriptive purposes. Priority is given to medium shots of the protagonists, overall shots (if it is an interview) and general shots to show the environment or the audience in the videos in which they participate. On the other hand, the shots are not simply static, but there are shots with slight camera movements to reframe, describe and create a visual rhythm. The audiovisual sources

used are original, without any external elements or resources; likewise, the set, although it varies between the videos analysed, is characterised by sobriety, with simple backgrounds and nothing overloaded, giving priority to the corporate tone. There are no external decorative elements, apart from props such as chairs and those with which some of the participants interact (a blackboard, a book, etc.). It should be noted that one of the videos was uploaded to the platform during the pandemic caused by covid-19 and therefore has different visual characteristics, since it is a video call made from an external space and not from the set described above.

The textual part plays a residual role, limited to the initial presentation of the project with messages such as: "We learn together", "An educational project for a better life", "A BBVA initiative for a greener and more inclusive future". The text also appears to introduce the title or theme of some of the pieces and the presentation (by means of a poster) of the protagonists, their names and professions; furthermore, the text section reappears at the end, repeating the messages of the project and launching the call to action to "subscribe". In this way, it retains both an informative and a corporate function, recalling the project's slogans.

### **3.5. Narrative Features**

All the videos have a clear protagonist who is characterised as a specialist in a particular field. Furthermore, in two of the videos analysed, there is an interviewer who moderates the dialogue with the protagonist; in most of the pieces, the interviewer is replaced by an audience (audience) who listens to the specialist's masterclass and interacts through questions. In addition, the video shared in June 2020, while maintaining the characteristics of a video call, features only the protagonist, without the interviewer or the audience. Similarly, the role represented by each protagonist is that of a professional, a specialist, a figure of recognised prestige and influence in specific fields: psychiatry, psychology, mathematics, literature and social entrepreneurship. The main action of the experts is to give a lecture and disseminate information on a subject; therefore, the pieces are based on a lecture, masterclass or interview format. This content clearly defines the structure of the pieces, which have initial corporate elements (logos, slogans, title of the talk, etc.), presentation of the speaker, development of the conversation or talk, final acknowledgements and corporate closing with a call to action (subscribe). As far as the editorial resources are concerned, they are in line with the visual techniques mentioned above, which is why the transitions by editing, the fade to black at the end of some of the pieces analysed and the introduction of animation techniques for the corporate visual identity elements stand out.

### **3.6. Sound Characteristics**

Given the nature of the content, live dialogue is given priority in terms of sound. There is little extradiegetic accompaniment, except for the corporate jingle at the beginning and end of the videos, which identifies the project. There are no sound or environmental effects beyond what is recorded diegetically, such as the applause of the audience. In one of the pieces analysed, the voice of the interpreter is introduced in Spanish.

### **3.7. Content Features Linked to Branded Content**

Having analysed the results of the previous sections, it is now time to examine the constituent elements of the branded content produced and distributed by BBVA, starting with the role of the brand in the audiovisual product. Unlike other forms of advertising, the brand does not play a leading role, but rather becomes a sponsor or editor. While it is true that a number of visual elements are always present as brand references, it is also true that their sole function is to attribute this content to BBVA. The visual presence of a logo or a corporate colour allows the ownership of the content to be attributed to BBVA, in the same way that these elements have functioned in traditional television. Far from being negative for the broadcaster, the potential ceding of brand prominence to the characters that capitalise on the content allows BBVA to be associated with the usefulness of the video itself and the tangibility of the brand's purpose.

Secondly, it is appropriate to talk about the story, made up of the insights of both the brand and the consumer, and the storytelling used to construct these stories. The themes or insights of the units analysed are linked to transcendental human issues: emotional wellbeing, life and death, poverty

(economic, intellectual, emotional) and wealth, love, childcare, knowledge, culture and social relationships. Addressing these human concerns and giving the stories enough time to provoke reflection are the two actions that make BBVA an agent of social change. What is more, all of these themes revolve around education, precisely because the way in which the stories are told by experts in the field is nothing other than the classic formula of the master session, in which the speakers not only impart knowledge, but also use examples and direct questions to the audience to stimulate debate and reflection. The branded content analysed has a highly developed storytelling that allows the audience to be added not so much for its emotional or commercial impact, but for the transcendence of the message and the benefit in terms of the usefulness of the knowledge transferred. In other words, the functional and emotional benefits of the brand and the product are transcended to achieve the utilitarian benefits of the content.

Thirdly, we have analysed the type of experience proposed by the content, as another of the keys to BBVA's branded content and in accordance with Waqas et al. (2021), cited by Llorente et al. At this point, we can see the complexity of the case in question, as five of the seven types of experience mentioned by the authors are produced, and we can therefore conclude that we are dealing with products whose consumption facilitates a truly transformative experience for the consumer. The units of analysis propose a "social bonding experience" in which users join a community around the content produced by BBVA. Unsurprisingly, the viewers who appear in the videos, representing several socio-demographic profiles, participate in the debate. The units analysed also have thousands of comments, so it can be affirmed that the brand has managed to create a real community of prosumers around this content, who at the same time have a "self-identity experience" and share social values with the brand. In this sense, it is very likely that the orientation of this content towards the creation of a "utilitarian experience" facilitates the activation of the audience without the need to verbalise a call to action, as is done in other advertising genres.

Furthermore, some of the videos incorporate elements of the phenomenon known as the "overwhelming experience," which is defined as the generation of remarkable sensations linked to personal circumstances. This is exemplified by the piece featuring Ousman Umar, a Ghanaian migrant who recounts his journey to Europe and becomes a social entrepreneur who has made a significant contribution to the growth of education in his country of origin.

Finally, the units of analysis can be coded as "experiences of discernment". It should be noted that part of the narrative that shapes the script of these products is oriented towards the cognitive exercise of reflection on the great concerns of human beings, including life, death, love, and so forth.

In general terms, "Learning Together" represents a branded content action that fully exploits the discursive and strategic possibilities of this advertising language. This is achieved through the production and distribution of content that is particularly relevant to society and perfectly aligned with the brand's purpose.

#### **4. Conclusions and Discussion**

In essence, the content in question is branded content that is designed to be useful and is disseminated through the careful selection of experts and topics of maximum interest, not only to the brand's target audience but also to society in general. This content is rarely addressed in the media, and therefore requires time and a high level of audiovisual production.

In the case under consideration, the brand is present but does not interrupt the narrative. Conversely, BBVA gains relevance not for what it does as a company but for what it facilitates as a brand: reflection, knowledge and a transformative experience for a society that, through its views, "likes" and comments, corroborates the interest in education. It can be posited that the case under analysis represents an exemplar of how educational branded content, albeit imbued with clear elements of audiovisual entertainment, can facilitate the aggregation of mass audiences around the values and purpose of the brand.

However, the effectiveness of this branded content action is ultimately contingent upon its distribution model. Although the content visually and in terms of storytelling replicates informative and entertaining television genres, and the themes capture the attention of the target audience, it is the use of an over-the-top (OTT) platform that allows for a constant presence and a massive audience. The data

collected allows us to conclude that YouTube can be used as an effective support for the construction of a Brand TV, with long-lasting content programming and recurrent broadcasting. Moreover, of all the platforms and social networks on which "Learning Together" content is distributed, YouTube is the one that brings together the largest community and, in addition, has the greatest impact and engagement. The seven examples that comprise the sample have viewing figures that exceed the audience of the most watched programme on free-to-air Spanish television in 2023. Furthermore, the audience of this platform is almost automatically positioned as a prosumer, which allows them to not only distribute content but also to generate a real community that feeds back the meaning and purpose of the brand.

In other words, the concept of the "advertiser" is blurred on YouTube because the brand can become the owner of the medium. This allows the brand to exploit the consumption data of its audiovisual content in order to generate opportunities for true connection and interaction with its target audience. This can, in turn, become an agent of social change.

## **5. Acknowledgements**

This research has received partial funding from the Department of Science, University and Knowledge Society, Government of Aragon (Spain) (Research Group S67-23D and Research Group S03-23R).

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