

Soft news in original videos. Adaptation to *TikTok* of the main Spanish online media

Suandi Estrada-García; José Gamir-Ríos

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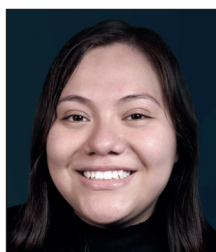
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Suandi Estrada-García ✉

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1307-2954>

Universitat de València
Facultat de Filologia, Traducció i
Comunicació
Avinguda de Blasco Ibáñez, 32
46010 València, Spain
suanes@alumni.uv.es



José Gamir-Ríos

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5379-6573>

Universitat de València
Facultat de Filologia, Traducció i
Comunicació
Avinguda de Blasco Ibáñez, 32
46010 València, Spain
jose.gamir@uv.es

Abstract

Since the beginning of 2020, media around the world have started and intensified their *TikTok* activity to gain notoriety and reach young people, their main user group. However, as with other previously popularized social media, such as *Facebook* or *Twitter*, the platform's logic is different from that traditionally employed by the media system when developing information products. The objective of this paper is to analyze the degree of adaptation to the logic of this network for the activity developed on it by the Spanish media. For this purpose, a combined methodology of quantitative and content analysis was applied to 446 videos posted by the official user accounts of *20 Minutos*, *Antena 3 Noticias*, *El Diario*, *El Mundo*, and *El País*—the five media outlets with the largest online audience in that period—from the time the accounts were created until January 31, 2022. Specifically, we studied the activity developed, the notoriety achieved, and the interaction obtained, as well as the most common formats, topics, protagonists, and brand identity elements. The results show that the main Spanish media have tried to adapt to the entertainment logic of the platform both with the use of native editing resources as well as through the creation of original materials, predominantly soft news, about entertainment, celebrities, and lifestyle. The videos that gain more notoriety are those that are more adapted to this logic. However, the Spanish media analyzed post less frequently than international media, obtain fewer views, and register lower engagement levels; in addition, they do not use their presence on this social network to promote their other editorial products.

Keywords

Digital journalism; Legacy media; New media; Social media; Hybrid media system; *TikTok*; Short videos; Native videos; Soft news; Hard news; Content analysis; Spain.

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1. Introduction

The coexistence of legacy media with the new media that have emerged as a result of the popularization and generalization of internet access in Western countries has consolidated a hybrid media system in the last decade (Chadwick, 2013) where supply has multiplied, fragmenting audiences and boosting transmedia consumption (Jenkins, 2006). The horizontal communication model generated by the new media –including both digital journalistic media and social networks– has not only enabled the transition to a stage of mass self-communication (Castells, 2009) in which digitally literate citizens can become producers of information (Jenkins, 2006) but has also forced legacy media to seek new, generally younger, audiences so as to continue playing a relevant role in the public sphere (Ibarra-Herrera, 2020). In fact, the involvement of new audiences can contribute to expanding the media message if the media take advantage of the possibilities offered by transmedia consumption (Scolari, 2013).

To this end, media and journalists should adapt their practices, routines, and content to the social media logic, which is used by 57% of the global population for information according to data from the latest edition of the *Digital News Report* (Newman *et al.*, 2022). This has already occurred in new online media (García-Orosa; López-García; Vázquez-Herrero, 2020; López-García, 2015; Salaverría; Martínez-Costa, 2021) and on *Twitter* (Aruguete, 2017; Lasorsa; Lewis; Holton, 2012). Since 2020, this has also begun to happen on the short video social network *TikTok*, the most downloaded application in the world in 2022 (Briskman, 2022) and the social network that grew the most that year in Spain (*IAB Spain*, 2022). Media and journalists from all over the world are already frequently posting on it (Negreira-Rey; Vázquez-Herrero; López-García, 2022; Peña-Fernández; Larrondo-Ureta; Morales-i-Gras, 2022; Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; Rodríguez-Vázquez, 2021; Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2022).

Previous research on *TikTok* video content, mostly exploratory, has focused on communication issues related to:

- health (Ballesteros-Herencia, 2020);
- politics (Cervi; Marín-Lladó, 2021; Gamir-Ríos; Sánchez-Castillo, 2022; Medina-Serrano; Papakyriakopoulos; Hegelich, 2020; Vijay; Gekker, 2021);
- disinformation and fact-checking (Basch *et al.*, 2021; García-Marín; Salvat-Martinrey, 2022; Sidorenko-Bautista; Alonso-López; Giacomelli, 2021), and
- journalism (Klug, 2020; Negreira-Rey; Vázquez-Herrero; López-García, 2022; Peña-Fernández; Larrondo-Ureta; Morales-i-Gras, 2022; Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; Rodríguez-Vázquez, 2021; Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2022; Sidorenko-Bautista; Herranz-de-la-Casa; Cantero-de-Julián, 2021).

However, no specific media ecosystems have been analyzed –including the Spanish one– despite the fact that 15% of the global population between 18 and 24 years old –those most present on the application– use this platform to get information. In Spain, only 10% do so (Newman *et al.*, 2022), which shows either a different consumption pattern by the audience or a lower degree of adaptation by the media.

Considering the expansion of *TikTok* around the world, as well as its lower use in Spain for news consumption, the progressive incorporation of media and journalists to this network, and their need to adapt to its logic, the aim of this paper is to analyze the Spanish media's degree of adaptation to this platform. For this purpose, a mixed methodology of quantitative and content analysis was applied to the 446 videos posted by the official accounts of *20 Minutos*, *Antena 3 Noticias*, *El Diario*, *El Mundo*, and *El País* –the five media outlets with the most prominent online audience in that period– since the creation of the account and until January 31, 2022. Specifically, we looked into:

- the activity carried out;
- the notoriety achieved, and the interaction obtained;
- formats;
- topics;
- protagonists; and
- the most common brand identity elements.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the results of previous academic contributions related to the object of study, articulated around the five dimensions of analysis, and formulates the research questions. Section 3 explains the materials used and the methods employed. Section 4 details the results. Finally, section 5 relates them to previous research, and section 6 offers the conclusions and limitations.

2. Literature review

Media from all over the world have been trying to position themselves on *TikTok* since the beginning of 2020 through constant and continuous updates to gain notoriety. According to data compiled by Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and López-García (2022), in February of that year, 234 media and television programs were present on the platform, mainly from Europe, Asia, and North America. Although the most prominent media update their accounts more regularly (Klug, 2020; Sidorenko-Bautista; Herranz-de-la-Casa; Cantero-de-Julián, 2021; Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2022) than other actors, such as political parties (Gamir-Ríos; Sánchez-Castillo, 2022), the potential impact of their publications finds a key limitation in the logic of *TikTok* (Peña-Fernández; Larrondo-Ureta; Morales-i-Gras, 2022).

The platform's recommendation algorithm prioritizes engagement (**Bhandari; Bimo, 2022**). It does so, according to the patent review of the parallel application *Douyin* prepared by **Zhao (2021)**, through a distribution strategy that takes into account both the content, genre, subject matter, and popularity of the videos, as well as

“Since the beginning of 2020, media around the world have started and intensified their *TikTok* activity to gain notoriety and reach young people”

the interests of users deduced from their past behaviors and predicting their identities –sex, age, location, occupation. This strategy is also continuously learning: the application divides communities of users with similar characteristics into groups of different sizes and starts distributing videos by the smallest group, allowing only the most successful to move up to the next group in size, and so on. The recommendations are reflected in the “For you” feed (**García-Rivero; Martínez-Estrella; Bonales-Daimiel, 2022**), which is both the access screen to the application and the only consumption space for most users (**Vijay; Gekker, 2021**). This means, in practice, the decentralization of the content displayed (**Zhao, 2021**), which is offered not based on interpersonal connection networks but based on a recommendation algorithm (**Cervi; Tejedor; Lladó, 2021**). All this encourages the creation of mimetic content (**Zulli; Zulli, 2022**) and causes the most popular videos to accumulate the most views and “likes” (**Chen et al., 2019**).

As well as other applications for creating and sharing short videos, such as *Byte*, *Snapchat*, and the *Instagram* stories functionality, or the now defunct *Vine*, *Lasso*, and *Musical.ly* (**Anderson, 2020; Lu; Lu, 2019; Shutsko, 2020; Wang, 2020**), *TikTok's* publications are characterized by their extreme shortness, particularly appropriate in today's fragmented consumption context (**Yang; Zhao; Ma, 2019**), by their highly shareable content, and by the simplicity of native editing (**Kaye; Chen; Zeng, 2021; Wang; Gu; Wang, 2019**). On the one hand, some of the most relevant native editing resources are the insertion of text, transitions, stickers, emojis, and visual filters, as well as speeding up or slowing down. On the other hand, the application allows various sound resources, such as the addition of music, voice-overs, and sound effects. The main international media on the platform use some of these tools (**Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2022**).

The application allows uploading and editing pre-existing videos, but it also has three native publishing formats: duets, reactions, and original videos captured through the tool itself. Most of the videos published by the international media who were the pioneers in using the app have been created especially for the platform (**Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2022**), while the remaining minority adapt those published on other networks or already broadcast by the media themselves.

The original native videos usually present specific narrative codes generated by the user community itself. Musical challenges and dances were initially the most consumed and replicated formats (**Wang et al., 2022**). However, the evolution of the tool has led to the diversification of its content (**Schellewald, 2021**), so these videos now share prominence with many others (**Vizcaíno-Verdú; Abidin, 2022**), which is in line with the diversity of users' motivations and interests.

Regarding motivations, a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews with 28 *Douyin* users in China (**Lu; Lu, 2019**) noted that the main expectations for using the tool are relaxation, socialization, entertainment, feeling fashionably, fear of being discriminated against if not present, the illusion of participation in virtual relationships with content generators, and learning about practical issues of daily life. In turn, a survey of 192 users in the same country indicated that the main rewards they expected to obtain were, in order, entertainment, knowledge, positive energy, intelligent recommendation, music, social networks, and commercials (**Lu; Lu; Liu, 2020**). Similarly, from the perspective of uses and gratifications, **Wang, Gu, and Wang (2019)** considered that *TikTok* satisfies five major needs: cognitive, pleasure, personal integration, social, and stress relief. In fact, a survey of 306 adolescents aged 11 to 16 in Denmark (**Bucknell-Bossen; Kottasz, 2020**) found that the main driver of preponderant passive consumption is entertainment gratification.

In terms of interests, the videos that users find most attractive are those that convey positive emotions, prosocial behaviors, and knowledge (**Lu; Lu, 2019**). In line with this, users prefer videos that convey “positive energy” and advocate pro-social behavior, followed by music videos and, in that order, knowledge-sharing, cooking, life advice, tourism, dance, and beauty videos, while news videos only attract 1.9% of users' interest (**Lu; Lu; Liu, 2020**).

The aforementioned motivations and interests are reflected in the topics of user-generated videos. For example, a content analysis of 1,000 posts published in Germany (**Shutsko, 2020**) showed the following frequencies: comedy and jokes, 32.4%; musical performances, 13.7%; tutorials, 8.9%; dancing, 8.8%; animals, 8%; personal relationships, 7.5%; and beauty, 7.1%. Another study of 447 pieces posted by 12 users between 11 and 17 years old from Spain and the United Kingdom (**Suárez-Álvarez; García-Jiménez, 2021**) concluded that the most frequent videos created by them were video selfies, choreographies, music videos, and humorous content.

These types of videos make up an entertainment offering (**Anderson, 2020**) aimed at the younger population (**Balletes-Herencia, 2020**), which constitutes the platform's main audience and whose thematic preferences are concentrated on soft news (**Newman et al., 2022, p. 44**), which obviously is in contrast to the traditional agenda of the news media. Despite this, although in accordance with their nature and function, most of the media-generated content on *TikTok* has an eminently informative purpose (**Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2022**). However, previous research differs

in its majority distribution between topics usually considered hard news (Sidorenko-Bautista; Alonso-López; Giacomelli, 2021) or soft news (Peña-Fernández; Larrondo-Ureta; Morales-i-Gras, 2022). In fact, the media with the highest engagement are specialized on sports and, to a lesser extent, music, youth entertainment, political news, video games, and cooking recipes (Peña-Fernández; Larrondo-Ureta; Morales-i-Gras, 2022).

“The *TikTok*'s logic is different from that traditionally employed by the media system when developing information products. However, the videos that gain more notoriety are those that are more adapted to this logic”

The main motivators for users' active participation on the platform are the desire to expand their social networks, the pursuit of fame, self-expression, and the search for identity (Bucknell-Bossen; Kottasz, 2020). Similarly, a study (Omar; Dequan, 2020) of 385 people, mostly from China, linked contributory consumption to self-expression. Thus, as evidenced by the types of videos most produced, *TikTok* is a social media eminently dedicated to protagonist self-representation (Suárez-Álvarez; García-Jiménez, 2021). This is no different for journalists, who join the platform precisely to reinforce their personal brand and reach new audiences (Negreira-Rey; Vázquez-Herrero; López-García, 2022). Several studies have shown the presence of journalists and media on this platform (Peña-Fernández; Larrondo-Ureta; Morales-i-Gras, 2022). However, the accounts of the latter are not personal, but corporate; moreover, although they sometimes include promotional videos, their aim is linked more to expanding their reach (Vázquez-Herrero, 2020), which in personal accounts is closely related to the actions of the protagonists of the videos (Lu; Lu, 2019; Lu; Lu; Liu, 2020).

The adaptation of their products and the development of new content for social networks are important points in the promotion of the digital brand of the media, which initiate new formats of ephemeral content (stories on *Instagram* or *Snapchat*) or audiovisual microformats (*TikTok*)

“to disseminate their informative pieces and derive traffic to the web, to promote content, to seek interactivity and user participation, or to create thematic sections” (Silva-Rodríguez; Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey, 2022, p. 380).

As part of building and promoting their brand image in the virtual space, journalists and media companies want to increase their audience and give greater visibility to their products (Pérez-Serrano; García-Santamaría, 2021). They use information and self-representation to promote their brand and their products (Negreira-Rey; Vázquez-Herrero; López-García, 2022), although each one makes this adaptation according to their own characteristics and the logic of the selected platform. In this sense, Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and López-García (2022) detected various strategies in the media who are pioneers on *TikTok*: use of the logo (42.9%), presence of journalists (39.1%), presence of the editorial staff (13%), and mention of other own editorial products (8.7%), such as newspapers, websites or accounts on other social networks.

Based on the above review, this paper proposes the following research questions:

RQ1: How often do the Spanish media with the largest online audiences update *TikTok*, and what results do they obtain in terms of views, “likes”, comments, and shares?

RQ2: What duration, editing resources, and formats do these media use, and what visualizations and interactions do they obtain as a result?

RQ3: What topics do they focus on, and which ones get the most views and interactions?

RQ4: Who are the protagonists of the videos published, and which protagonists obtain more views and interactions?

RQ5: Do the Spanish media with the largest online audiences use brand identifiers on *TikTok*? If so, which are the most common?

3. Materials and methods

To answer these questions, we analyzed the 446 videos published on the official *TikTok* accounts of *20 Minutos* (@20m), *Antena 3 Noticias* (@a3noticias), *El Diario* (@eldiario.es), *El Mundo* (@elmundo.es) and *El País* (@elpais) from the time the accounts were created until January 31, 2022. These are the five Spanish media that had the largest online audience in 2021 according to the *Digital News Report* for that year (Newman et al., 2021), the latest available at the conceptualization stage of this work. The selected accounts represent two types of media, newspapers, and television, far from the information consumption habits of the younger population (Herrero-Curiel; La-Rosa, 2022; Newman et al., 2022); that which uses *TikTok* the most (*IAB Spain*, 2022), and their editorial policies cover a broad ideological spectrum, from social democracy to liberal-conservatism. The links to the videos, the accompanying texts, and the figures associated with their impact were obtained via an automated process on February 3, 2022.

The paper studies five dimensions of the communication developed on *TikTok* by the main Spanish online media:

- activity, notoriety, and interaction (RQ1)
- format (RQ2)
- subject matter (RQ3)
- protagonism (RQ4), and
- brand identification (RQ5).

For this purpose, it combines an exclusively quantitative analysis (RQ1) with the classic quantitative-qualitative methodology of content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2016) (RQ2, RQ3, RQ4 and RQ5). The methodological strategy is similar to that applied in previous studies on the use of the platform (Gamir-Ríos; Sánchez-Castillo, 2022; Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2022).

As in previous research (Gamir-Ríos; Sánchez-Castillo, 2022; Peña-Fernández; Larrondo-Ureta; Morales-i-Gras, 2022; Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2022), the quantitative analysis has compared several metric indicators to answer RQ1, referring to activity. On one hand, the update of the media accounts, considering the weekly frequency of publication. On the other, the notoriety of their videos, which observes the number of views achieved. Finally, the interaction generated by the publications, which considers the average number of “likes”, shares, and comments obtained by the videos, as well as the corresponding rates relating these variables to the views.

To respond to RQ2, RQ3, RQ4, and RQ5, the content analysis applied a codebook developed from the previous literature review and articulated around the four remaining dimensions, disaggregated into the 13 variables shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Analysis variables and categories

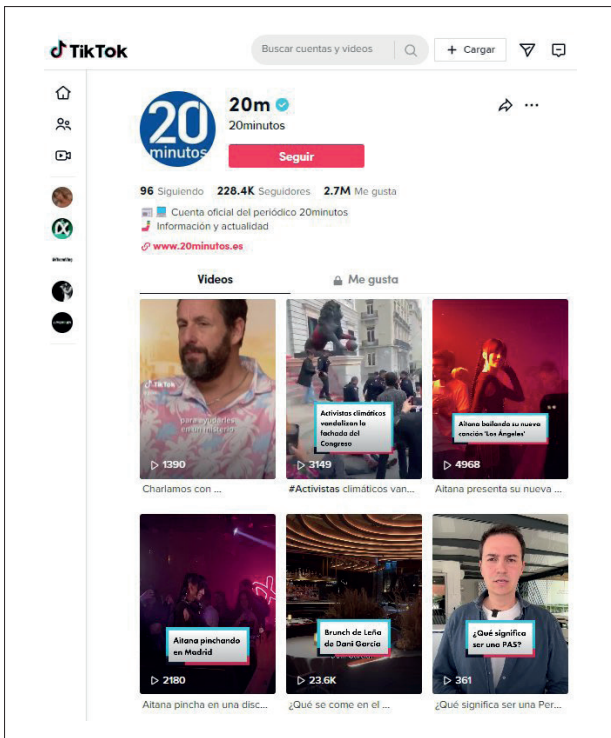
Dimension	Variable	Categories and subcategories	
Formal	1. Length		Up to 15 seg / Up to 1 min / Up to 3 min / Photo composition
	2. Direct sound		Present / Absent
	3. Voice-over		Present / Absent
	4. Other added sound		Present / Absent
	5. Text		Present / Absent
	6. Stickers		Present / Absent
	7. Narrative code	Native	
	Non-native		TV news / Interviews / Statements / B-roll / Other
Thematic	8. Topic	Hard news	Foreign affairs / National politics / Economy or business / Education or health / Science or technology / Environment or natural disaster / COVID-19
		Soft news	Entertainment or celebrities / Lifestyle / Arts and culture / Sports / Self-promotion / Non-informative
		Compilation	/
Protagonism	9. Protagonist	With protagonist	Journalist / Political or institutional personality / Celebrity / Specialist / Anonymous people / Animal / Object / Other
		Without protagonist	/
Brand identification	10. Journalist		Present / Absent
	11. Logo		Present / Absent
	12. Allusion to other news		Present / Absent
	13. Allusion to other editorial product		Present / Absent

The formal dimension (RQ2) studies the length (V1) of the videos; the presence in them of different sound resources, such as direct sound (V2), voice-over (V3), and other added sounds (4); the use of graphic elements, such as text overlays (V5) and stickers (V6); and the narrative code used (V7), which distinguishes between native formats, such as reactions, duets and original videos, and non-native formats, mainly composed of pre-existing fragments. Variables 2 to 6, which are dichotomous, partially replicate those employed by Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and López-García (2022) for the study of the editing of videos published on the platform. The categorization of Variable 7 extends that applied by Gamir-Ríos and Sánchez-Castillo (2022) for the description of narrative codes. The sub-categorization of the non-native narrative codes has been developed by the authors.

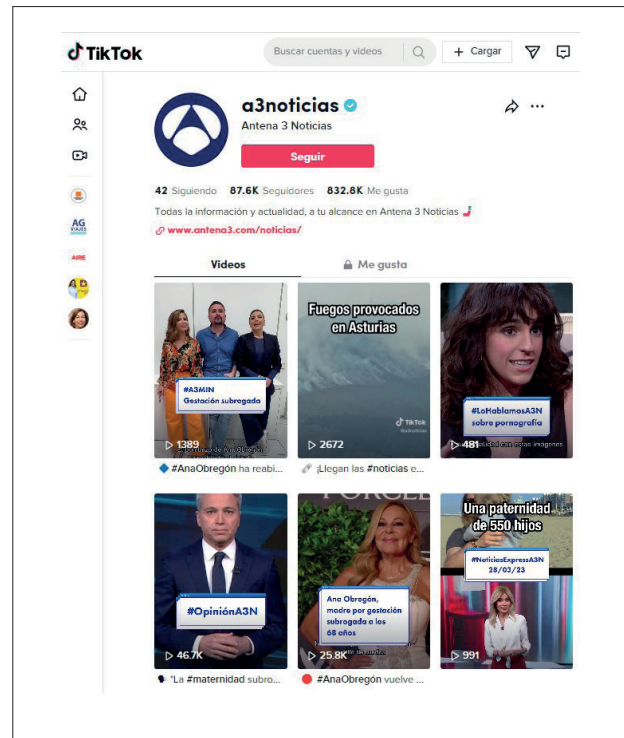
The thematic dimension (RQ3) analyzes the predominant theme in each piece (V8), with a first-level categorization that considers the classic distinction between hard news and soft news (Patterson, 2000; Reinemann *et al.*, 2011), to which a third one, news compilation (Sidorenko-Bautista; Alonso-López; Giacomelli, 2021), has been added for cases in which the inclusion of several pieces of information expands the thematic spectrum to the point of making its concreteness impossible. The primary categories of hard news and soft news have been disaggregated to a second level according to the options contemplated in the 2016 *Digital News Report* (Newman *et al.*, 2016). Despite the academic controversy regarding its thematic distinction (Reinemann *et al.*, 2011), the use of this source and no other derives from the convenience of relating the contents to the informative interests of the young audience (Newman *et al.*, 2016).

The protagonism dimension (RQ4), with a single variable of an equally categorical nature (V9), has been prepared by the authors after an initial approach to the corpus.

The dimension referring to brand identification (RQ5) uses dichotomous variables to study the presence of the media's journalists or recognizable personalities (V10), its logo (V11), allusions to specific news published by the media itself



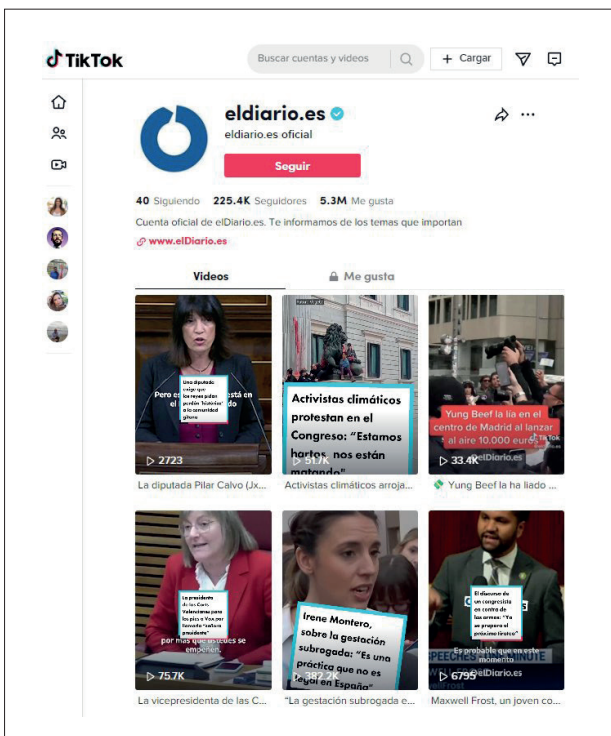
<https://www.tiktok.com/@20m>



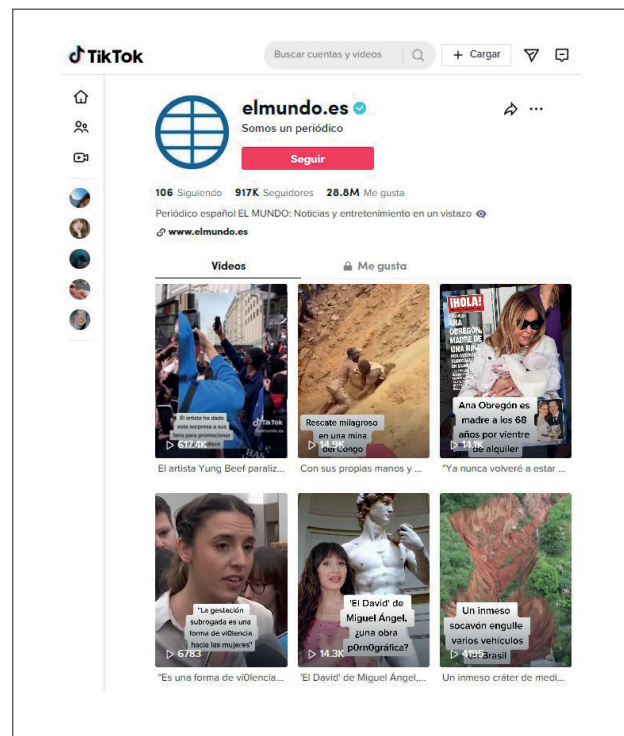
<https://www.tiktok.com/@a3noticias>

(V12), and allusions to some other editorial product of the media (V13), such as its website, a television program or a printed newspaper. The variables partially replicate those used by Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey, and López-García (2022).

Coding was carried out by one of the two authors. The test performed by both of them independently and separately on 11.2% of the sample (n=50), offers Krippendorff's Alpha coefficients –calculated using ReCal software (Freelon, 2013)– always above 0.8. This corroborates the reliability of the results (Igartua, 2006).



<https://www.tiktok.com/@eldiario.es>



<https://www.tiktok.com/@elmundo.es>

4. Results

4.1 Activity, notoriety, and interaction analysis

The quantitative analysis of the activity carried out by the five media (RQ1) shows very unequal results (Table 2) in terms of the age and frequency of updating the accounts, the notoriety of publications, and the interactions obtained.

Regarding the first aspect, at January 31, 2022, *Antena 3 Noticias* had been on the platform for 110 weeks, followed by *El Mundo* with 37 weeks, *20 Minutos* with 23, *El Diario* with 18, and *El País* with 16. The media with the highest frequency of publication was *El Mundo* (6 videos per week), followed by *El Diario* (3), *El País* (2.8), *20 Minutos* (1.7), and *A3 Noticias* (0.7).

Table 2. Activity, notoriety, and interaction on TikTok of the Spanish media with the largest online audience

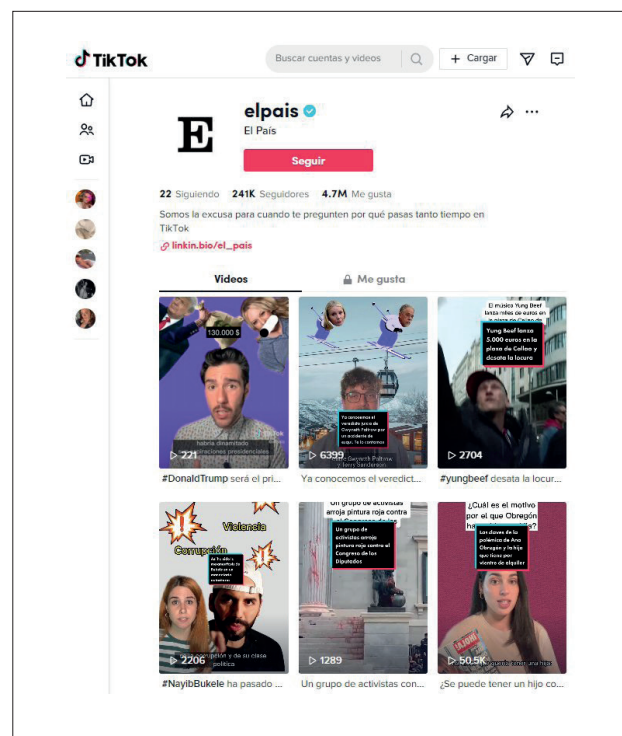
	<i>20 Minutos</i>	<i>A3 Noticias</i>	<i>El Diario</i>	<i>El Mundo</i>	<i>El País</i>
Account	@20m	@a3noticias	@eldiario.es	@elmundo.es	@elpais
Start of the activity	19/8/2021	19/12/2019	23/9/2021	14/5/2021	11/10/2021
Published videos	41	81	56	223	45
Weekly update frequency	1.7	0.7	3.0	6.0	2.8
Views	2,841,717	3,419,407	498,628	15,063,241	2,689,760
Views/video	69,310	42,215	8,904	67,548	59,772
Likes	66,922	193,398	27,998	1,133,043	233,605
Likes/video	1,632	2,388	500	5,081	5,191
Likes/view	2.35%	5.66%	5.62%	7.52%	8.68%
Shares	21,339	8,019	974	56,550	28,717
Shares/video	520	99	17	254	638
Shares/view	0.75%	0.23%	0.20%	0.38%	1.07%
Comments	1,231	3,720	2,264	17,044	5,349
Comments/video	30	46	40	76	119
Comments/view	0.04%	0.11%	0.45%	0.11%	0.20%

Regarding the second aspect, notoriety, the media with the most views was *El Mundo* (15,063,241), in line with its high activity. It was followed by *A3 Noticias* (3,419,407), despite being the account with the lowest update frequency, *20 Minutos* (2,841,717), *El País* (2,689,760), and *El Diario* (498,628). However, the videos published by *20 Minutos* obtained an average number of views higher than those of the other media: 69,310 per video compared to 67,548 for *El Mundo*, 59,772 for *El País*, 42,215 for *A3 Noticias*, and a much lower 8,904 for *El Diario*.

Finally, in terms of interactivity, *El Mundo* led all indexes in absolute terms, with 1,133,043 “likes”, 56,550 shares, and 17,044 comments, in line with its higher frequency of updates and higher average number of views. It is followed by *El País* in all cases, with 233,605 “likes”, 28,717 shares, and 5,349 comments, despite being the last of the media analyzed to create an account. However, *El País* was the one that registered the best interaction averages, with 5,191 “likes”, 638 shares, and 119 comments per publication. It also obtained higher rates of “likes” and shares per view, 8.68% and 1.07%, respectively. *El Diario*, on the other hand, had the highest rate of comments per view (0.45%).

4.2. Format analysis

The study of the format of the videos (RQ2) reflects clear trends in terms of duration and in terms of the presence of sound and graphical editing resources, but not in terms of narrative strategies. Regarding the first aspect, as shown in Table 3, most of the videos published by the analyzed media were between 15 seconds and 1 minute long. Videos in this range almost monopolized the publications of *El Mundo* (94.2%) and *El Diario* (89.3%), and were widely predominant in those of *El País* (75.6%) and *20 Minutos* (65.9%). *A3 Noticias* was the only media in which videos with a length of under 15 seconds predom-



<https://www.tiktok.com/@elpais>

inated (50.6%), although those of up to 1 minute were very close (44.4%). Videos between 1 and 3 minutes in length only recorded significant frequencies in *20 Minutos* (22%) and *El País* (20%), while the presence of photographic compositions was residual or non-existent.

Table 3. Length of the videos posted on *TikTok* by the Spanish media with the largest online audience

	20 Minutos		A3 Noticias		El Diario		El Mundo		El País	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Up to 15 sec	5	12.2	41	50.6	4	7.1	3	1.3	2	4.4
Up to 1 min	27	65.9	36	44.4	50	89.3	210	94.2	34	75.6
Up to 3 min	9	22.0	0	0.0	2	3.6	10	4.5	9	20.0
Photo composition	0	0.0	4	4.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	41	100	81	100	56	100	223	100	45	100

However, as shown in Table 4, the videos with the highest average number of views were those between 1 and 3 minutes long (109,591), followed by compositions (102,552), in both cases above the average. Both recorded a similar average number of interactions (“likes”, comments, shares): 8,929 and 8,942, respectively.

Table 4. Views and interactions of the videos posted on *TikTok* by the Spanish media with the largest online audience according to their length

	Total	Views		Interactions	
		Total	Average	Total	Average
Up to 15 sec	55	2,268,658	41,248	109,041	1,983
Up to 1 min	357	18,546,147	51,950	1,387,500	3,887
Up to 3 min	30	3,287,740	109,591	267,866	8,929
Photo composition	4	410,208	102,552	35,766	8,942
Total	446	24,512,753	54,961	1,800,173	4,036

In relation to sound resources and graphical elements, the study offers results that coincide in terms of their presence but divergent in terms of their distribution. As shown in Table 5, the five media studied make intensive use of some of the native editing resources analyzed, which evidences the predominance of videos edited using the application. However, only text overlays are predominant in the videos of the five media, reaching a frequency of 88.9% in the case of *El País*, 87% in *El Mundo*, 80.4% in *El Diario*, 75.6% in *20 Minutos* and 69.1% in *A3 Noticias*. On the other hand, the presence of voice-over is only a predominant feature in two of them –*El Mundo* (65%) and *El País* (60%); the presence of other added sounds in three of them – *El Mundo* (93.7%), *El País* (93.3%) and *20 Minutos* (80.5%); and the presence of stickers in one –*El Mundo* (74.4%). Thus, *El Mundo* is the only media that uses the four native editing resources analyzed, while *El País* uses three (voice-over, other added sounds, and text overlays); *20 Minutos* uses two (other added sounds and text overlays); and *A3 Noticias* and *El Diario* use only one (text overlays). The presence of direct sound, the only non-native sound mode studied, is predominant in *20 Minutos* (68.3%), *A3 Noticias* (66.7%), and *El Diario* (60.7%), the media that least uses native resources.

Table 5. Sound resources and graphical elements of the videos posted on *TikTok* by the Spanish media with the largest online audience

	20 Minutos		A3 Noticias		El Diario		El Mundo		El País	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Direct sound	28	68.3	54	66.7	34	60.7	58	26.0	11	24.4
Voice-over	9	22.0	9	11.1	14	25.0	145	65.0	27	60.0
Other added sound	33	80.5	38	46.9	21	37.5	209	93.7	42	93.3
Text	31	75.6	56	69.1	45	80.4	194	87.0	40	88.9
Stickers	2	4.9	40	49.4	9	16.1	166	74.4	13	28.9

* The coding of the sound resources and graphic elements was carried out in response to a multiple-choice question. The percentages of the presence of their categories were calculated over the total number of videos published by each media.

In addition, as shown in Table 6, videos that use voice-over, other added sounds, and text overlays obtain a higher average number of views and interactions than those that do not, whereas those that do not use direct sound or stickers record more views and interactions than those that do.

Table 6. Views and interactions of the videos posted on *TikTok* by the Spanish media with the largest online audience according to their sound resources and graphical elements

		Total	Views		Interactions	
			Total	Average	Total	Average
Direct sound	Absent	261	15,712,852	60,202	1,159,656	4,443
	Present	185	8,799,901	47,567	640,517	3,462
Voice-over	Absent	242	10,314,086	42,620	713,925	2,950
	Present	204	14,198,667	69,601	1,086,248	5,325
Other added sound	Absent	103	4,896,664	47,540	399,240	3,876
	Present	343	19,616,089	57,190	1,400,933	4,084
Text	Absent	80	2,789,909	34,874	158,895	1,986
	Present	366	21,722,844	59,352	1,641,278	4,484
Stickers	Absent	216	13,595,622	62,943	969,539	4,489
	Present	230	10,917,131	47,466	830,634	3,611

Finally, with regard to narrative codes, detailed in Table 7, videos produced using native formats almost monopolize the publications of *El Mundo* (99.1%), *El País* (97.8%), and *20 Minutos* (90.2%), the media that obtained the highest average number of views per video, almost always exclusively due to the creation of original videos for the platform. On the other hand, both *A3 Noticias* and *El Diario* mostly use videos whose footage is made up of fragments not originally conceived for *TikTok*, with frequencies of 65.4% and 58.9%, respectively. In the first case, through fragments of their TV news programs (37%) and B-roll (25.9%); in the second, through statements (32.1%), interviews (16.1%), and B-roll (10.7%). Only *El Mundo* and *A3 Noticias* make a small use of duets (1.3% and 1.2%, respectively).

Table 7. Narrative codes of the videos posted on *TikTok* by the Spanish media with the largest online audience

	20 Minutos		A3 Noticias		El Diario		El Mundo		El País	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Native	37	90.2	28	34.6	23	41.1	221	99.1	44	97.8
Reaction	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Duet	0	0.0	1	1.2	0	0.0	3	1.3	0	0.0
Original video	37	90.2	27	33.3	23	41.1	218	97.8	44	97.8
Non-native	4	9.8	53	65.4	33	58.9	2	0.9	1	2.2
TV news	0	0.0	30	37.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Interviews	2	4.9	0	0.0	9	16.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Statements	0	0.0	0	0.0	18	32.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
B-roll	2	4.9	21	25.9	6	10.7	2	0.9	1	2.2
Other	0	0.0	2	2.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	41	100	81	100	56	100	223	100	45	100

As shown in Table 8, videos that use native formats have a higher average number of views than those that do not, with the opposite occurring in terms of interactions. By category, the videos that obtain the most plays and interactions on average are those composed of B-roll (100,486 and 9,187, respectively), followed by original videos (56,503 and 3,979).

Table 8. Views and interactions of the videos posted on *TikTok* by the Spanish media with the largest online audience according to their narrative codes

	Total	Views		Interactions	
		Total	Average	Total	Average
Native	353	19,743,807	55,931	1,389,735	3,937
Reaction	0	0	0	0	0
Duet	4	24,748	6,187	932	233
Original video	349	19,719,059	56,502	1,388,803	3,979
Non-native	93	4,768,946	51,279	410,438	4,413
TV news	30	1,076,422	35,881	86,364	2,879
Interviews	11	189,467	17,224	10,135	921
Statements	18	270,083	15,005	18,798	1,044
B-roll	32	3,215,551	100,486	293,987	9,187
Other	2	17,423	8,712	1,154	577
Total	446	24,512,753	54,961	1,800,173	4,036

4.3. Thematic analysis

The analysis of the predominant topics of the videos (RQ3) shows a clear trend toward the publication of soft news. As shown in Table 8, soft news is predominant in *20 Minutos* (80.5%), *A3 Noticias* (71.6%), *El País* (66.7%), and *El Mundo* (63.7%). Among them, *20 Minutos* and *El Mundo* prioritize lifestyle news (39% and 21.5%, respectively); *A3 Noticias*, entertainment or celebrity news (23.5%); and *El País*, arts and culture (31.1%). The presence of soft news is such a majority in these media that the only topics considered hard news that exceed or approach a frequency of 10% are the environment in *El País* (13.3%), the economy in *20 Minutos* (7.3%), national politics and COVID-19 in *A3 Noticias* (8.6% and 9.9%, respectively), and, once again, the pandemic in *El Mundo* (8.5%). These frequencies are, in any case, lower than those afforded by the same media to the second most important soft news: entertainment/celebrity and art and culture in *20 Minutos* (17.1% in both cases); non-news items in *A3 Noticias* (22.2%); entertainment/celebrity in *El Mundo* (16.1%); and entertainment/celebrity and lifestyle in *El País* (15.6% in both cases). On the other hand, only *El Diario* opted mostly for hard news (69.6%), particularly news on national politics (39.3%) and the environment (12.5%).

Table 9. Topics of the videos posted on *TikTok* by the Spanish media with the largest online audience

	<i>20 Minutos</i>		<i>A3 Noticias</i>		<i>El Diario</i>		<i>El Mundo</i>		<i>El País</i>	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Hard News	8	19.5	23	28.4	39	69.6	59	26.5	14	31.1
Foreign affairs	1	2.4	3	3.7	0	0.0	10	4.5	2	4.4
National politics	1	2.4	7	8.6	22	39.3	6	2.7	1	2.2
Economy or business	3	7.3	1	1.2	3	5.4	3	1.3	0	0.0
Education or health	1	2.4	0	0.0	4	7.1	13	5.8	4	8.9
Science or technology	1	2.4	1	1.2	2	3.6	2	0.9	0	0.0
Environment or natural disaster	1	2.4	3	3.7	7	12.5	6	2.7	6	13.3
COVID-19	0	0.0	8	9.9	1	1.8	19	8.5	1	2.2
Soft News	33	80.5	58	71.6	17	30.4	142	63.7	30	66.7
Entertainment or celebrities	7	17.1	19	23.5	10	17.9	36	16.1	7	15.6
Lifestyle	16	39.0	4	4.9	0	0.0	48	21.5	7	15.6
Arts and culture	7	17.1	0	0.0	4	7.1	32	14.3	14	31.1
Sports	3	7.3	2	2.5	1	1.8	18	8.1	0	0.0
Self-promotion	0	0.0	15	18.5	2	3.6	8	3.6	1	2.2
Non-informative	0	0.0	18	22.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.2
Compilation	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	22	9.9	1	2.2
Total	41	100	81	100	56	100	223	100	45	100

The most viewed video related to hard news was published by *El País* and was dedicated to the remuneration of internships included in Vocational Training studies (01/20/2022, 1,445,084 views). The most viewed articles published by *El Mundo* (09/21/2021, 1,227,397) and *20 Minutos* (09/20/2021, 182,677) referred to the volcano erupting on the Canary Island of La Palma (09/20/2021, 182,677). That of *A3 Noticias*, to the health personnel dedicated to the containment of the COVID-19 pandemic (03/19/2020, 260,427). That of *El Diario*, to a parliamentary answer of the second vice-president of the Spanish Government and Minister of Labor, Yolanda Díaz, to the then deputy spokesperson of Vox in the *Congress of Deputies*, Macarena Olona (12/02/2021, 73,659).

In turn, the video with a soft news theme that obtained the most views was published by *El Mundo* and focused on the personality of the Spanish tennis player Rafa Nadal (01/31/2022, 1,772,697). The most viewed of those published by *20 Minutos* explained three different ways to wear a scarf (12/09/2021, 444,862). The one from *El País* explained the reason why the packaging of *Sugus* pineapple-flavored chewy candies is blue (12/14/2021, 381,994). *A3 Noticias* showed a plague of rats in the Madrid municipality of Alcorcón (01/09/2020, 344,466). *El Diario* recommended three Spanish films starring women (10/08/2021, 77,909).

As shown in Table 10, publications related to hard news recorded higher average views and interactions than those dealing with soft news. By category, the videos with the highest average number of views were those related to foreign affairs (116,751), sports (113,951), education or health (106,368), and environment or natural disasters (100,433). Those with the most interactions were sports (12,293), followed by education or health (10,424), foreign affairs (7,934), and environment (6,114).

“The main Spanish media have tried to adapt to the entertainment logic of *TikTok* both with the use of native editing resources as well as through the creation of original materials, predominantly soft news, about entertainment, celebrities, and lifestyle”

Table 10. Views and interactions of the videos posted on *TikTok* by the Spanish media with the largest online audience according to their topics

	Total	Views		Interactions	
		Total	Average	Total	Average
Hard News	143	9,219,116	64,469	648,590	4,536
Foreign affairs	16	1,868,022	116,751	126,946	7,934
National politics	37	901,674	24,370	39,712	1,073
Economy or business	10	42,500	4,250	2,100	210
Education or health	22	2,340,105	106,368	229,319	10,424
Science or technology	6	104,689	17,448	3,171	529
Environment or natural disaster	23	2,309,953	100,433	140,614	6,114
COVID-19	29	1,652,173	56,971	106,728	3,680
Soft News	280	14,619,182	52,211	1,093,195	3,904
Entertainment or celebrities	79	3,202,271	40,535	165,743	2,098
Lifestyle	75	3,889,453	51,859	217,001	2,893
Arts and culture	57	3,393,608	59,537	334,285	5,865
Sports	24	2,734,814	113,951	295,043	12,293
Self-promotion	26	515,013	19,808	30,935	1,190
Non-informative	19	884,023	46,528	50,188	2,641
Compilation	23	674,455	29,324	58,388	2,539
Total	446	24,512,753	54,961	1,800,173	4,036

4.4. Analysis of the protagonism

The observation of the protagonism of the videos (RQ4) reveals that a large majority of the updates published by the five media analyzed presents a clear protagonist, animated or inanimate. As shown in Table 11, the presence of protagonists is almost total in the videos by *20 Minutos*, with a frequency of 97.6%, and very prominent in *El Diario* (87.5%), *El Mundo* (85.2%), *A3 Noticias* (84%) and *El País* (80%). In addition, four of the media show a clear trend toward videos starring their own journalists or collaborators: 53.7% in the case of *20 Minutos*; 37.7% in *El Mundo*; 37% in *A3 Noticias*; and 35.6% in *El País*. As with the subject matter, only *El Diario* is not part of this general trend, with a greater prominence of political or institutional personalities (42.9%) as opposed to journalists themselves (23.2%), who are in second place. Public celebrities are the second most frequent protagonists in *20 Minutos* (19.5%) and *El Mundo* (17.9%), while in *El País* they are specific objects (22.2%), and in *A3 Noticias*, anonymous people (17.3%).

Table 11. Protagonists of the videos posted on *TikTok* by the Spanish media with the largest online audience

	<i>20 Minutos</i>		<i>A3 Noticias</i>		<i>El Diario</i>		<i>El Mundo</i>		<i>El País</i>	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Without protagonist	1	2.4	13	16.0	7	12.5	33	14.8	9	20.0
With protagonist	40	97.6	68	84.0	49	87.5	190	85.2	36	80.0
Journalist	22	53.7	30	37.0	13	23.2	84	37.7	16	35.6
Political or institutional personality	1	2.4	10	12.3	24	42.9	6	2.7	1	2.2
Celebrity	8	19.5	9	11.1	7	12.5	40	17.9	4	8.9
Specialist	2	4.9	1	1.2	0	0.0	2	0.9	0	0.0
Anonymous people	2	4.9	14	17.3	0	0.0	18	8.1	0	0.0
Animal	0	0.0	3	3.7	1	1.8	8	3.6	2	4.4
Object	4	9.8	1	1.2	3	5.4	19	8.5	10	22.2
Other	1	2.4	0	0.0	1	1.8	13	5.8	3	6.7
Total	41	100	81	100	56	100	223	100	45	100

In turn, as shown in Table 12, videos with a clear protagonist obtained higher average views and interactions. Among them, those starring celebrities (83,045 and 6,749, respectively) and journalists from the media itself (56,093 and 3,920) stand out.

Table 12. Views and interactions of the videos posted on *TikTok* by the main Spanish online media according to their protagonist

	Total	Views		Interactions	
		Total	Average	Total	Average
Without protagonist	63	2,257,797	35,838	227,553	3,612
With protagonist	383	22,254,956	58,107	1,572,620	4,106
Journalist	165	9,255,356	56,093	646,874	3,920
Political or institutional personality	42	1,107,611	26,372	45,982	1,095
Celebrity	68	5,647,027	83,045	458,962	6,749
Specialist	5	84,697	16,939	915	183
Anonymous people	34	1,993,785	58,641	124,857	3,672
Animal	14	443,656	31,690	39,392	2,814
Object	37	1,194,672	32,288	83,887	2,267
Other	18	2,528,152	140,453	171,751	9,542
Total	446	24,512,753	54,961	1,800,173	4,036

4.5. Brand identification analysis

The analysis of brand identity (RQ5) indicates that the five accounts analyzed use elements that help to identify and promote the media that publishes the videos. As shown in Table 13, *El Mundo* is the one that uses them most frequently (96.9%), followed by *A3 Noticias* (79%), *20 Minutos* (75.6%), *El País* (71.1%) and *El Diario* (69.6%). The presence of journalists, collaborators, or well-known personalities of the media itself in the piece, as well as the logo, are the two brand identification elements most used by *El Mundo* (81.6% and 86.1%, respectively), *A3 Noticias* (43.2% and 40.7%), and *El Diario* (26.8% and 51.8%). The most used elements by *El País* are a recognizable personal presence (60%) and mentions of its own news (17.8%), an aspect that is also present in *El Diario* (12.5%). *20 Minutos* uses personal presence predominantly (75.6%). *A3 Noticias* also makes intensive use of mentions of its editorial products (42%), which are also present, although less frequently, in *El Diario* (10.7%).

Table 13. Elements of brand identity in the videos posted on *TikTok* by the Spanish media with the largest online audience

	20 Minutos		A3 Noticias		El Diario		El Mundo		El País	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Without elements	10	24.4	17	21.0	17	30.4	7	3.1	13	28.9
With elements*	31	75.6	64	79.0	39	69.6	216	96.9	32	71.1
Journalist	31	75.6	35	43.2	15	26.8	182	81.6	27	60.0
Logo	3	7.3	33	40.7	29	51.8	192	86.1	4	8.9
Allusion to other news	1	2.4	3	3.7	7	12.5	4	1.8	8	17.8
Allusion to other editorial product	0	0.0	34	42.0	6	10.7	10	4.5	0	0.0
Total	41	100	81	100	56	100	223	100	45	100

* The coding of the elements of brand identity was carried out in response to a multiple-choice question. The percentages of the presence of their categories were calculated over the total number of videos published by each media.

5. Discussion

This work has investigated the adaptation to *TikTok* of the Spanish media with the largest online audience: *20 Minutos*, *A3 Noticias*, *El Diario*, *El Mundo*, and *El País*. On one hand, we studied the activity developed, the notoriety achieved, and the interaction obtained from the date their accounts were created until January 31, 2022 (RQ1). On the other hand, we analyzed the formats (RQ2), topics (RQ3), protagonists (RQ4), and brand identity elements present (RQ5) in the videos published during this period.

In terms of activity (RQ1), the frequency of publication varies greatly, ranging from 0.7 videos per week for *A3 Noticias* to 6 for *El Mundo*, with no clear update pattern based on duration, presence on the platform or the digital native nature of the media. These frequencies are below those detected in the main international media. Of the 19 international media that were verified in February 2020, included in the work of Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey and López-García (2022), 12 published around two videos per week; the other seven, more than four. Another paper on the activity of 13 major international media during the first four months of 2020 (Sidorenko-Bautista; Herranz-de-la-Casa; Cantero-de-Julián, 2021) found even higher weekly posting frequencies: seven accounts posted up to two videos a week; one posted five; two posted around 10; and three posted 20 or more. Another analysis conducted over a similar period on 46 non-native

digital media and 31 native digital media in the United States (Klug, 2020) shows that the accounts of the online versions of traditional media have a very low publication volume if the regional ones are taken into consideration as well as the nationals; the results of our study closely mirror them.

Regarding notoriety, with the exception of *El Diario*, which always obtains lower figures, the average number of views is between 40K and 70K. On the other hand, interaction is led by *El Mundo*, the media with the highest frequency of updates and the highest average number of views. The average number of views per video is between 1.6K and 5.2K; also excluding *El Diario*. Both figures are higher than those detected in international media in the initial phase of their presence on the platform (Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2022), but far below the averages observed in news accounts in a later period (Peña-Fernández; Larrondo-Ureta; Morales-i-Gras, 2022), as are shares and comments. In their study, Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey and López-García (2022) observed an average of 23.1K views, 1.4K “likes” and 13.5 shares; the rate of “likes” received per view was 8%. Based on a longer period, another study on 23,174 videos from 143 accounts belonging to media and journalists from 25 countries (Peña-Fernández; Larrondo-Ureta; Morales-i-Gras, 2022) found higher average views and interactions for corporate accounts: 250,483 views, 22,855 “likes”, 575 shares and 301 comments. Another analysis on 28,234 Spanish-labeled videos related to the COVID-19 pandemic published between March and May 2020 (Ballesteros-Herencia, 2020) –not exclusively journalistic– detected an average of 26,352 “likes”, 351 shares and 254 comments.

Regarding the format (RQ2), the predominant length of the videos of all media is between 15 seg and 1 min, with the exception of *A3 Noticias*, which started its activity on the platform during a period of footage limited to 15 seg. This is congruent with the average duration of 22 seg detected in international media (Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2022) and is in line with both the current fragmented consumption scenario (Yang; Zhao; Ma, 2019) and the preferences of young audiences on *TikTok* (Cheng-Stahl; Literat, 2022).

In relation to native editing resources, the five media studied make intensive use of some of the sound and overlay possibilities analyzed, with text overlays being the most frequently used option. Both aspects are in line with what Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey and López-García (2022) observed in the international context, in which the most used native editing resources were text (49%), transitions (24.5%), some type of stickers (17.9%), visual filters (11.4%), emojis (10.3%) and speeding up or slowing down (7.1%), with a minority of 33.2% of the videos not presenting any of them. Our study also shows that the media that make the most use of these resources (*El Mundo*, *El País* and *20 Minutos*) are the ones that obtain the highest average number of views.

Finally, native formats predominate with respect to narrative strategies, especially videos originally conceived for the platform, which is also congruent with the global trend detected by the same study (Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2022), according to which 85.3% of the videos published by the international media pioneers in using the platform have been created especially for the platform. This shows that, as in the rest of the world, the Spanish media have understood the need to adapt to the logic of this social network. In fact, the only two media in which the adaptation of pre-existing material is superior to the publication of original content, *A3 Noticias* and *El Diario*, are also the ones that obtain the lowest number of views per video.

In relation to the topic of the publications (RQ3), soft news predominates globally, again with the only exception of *El Diario*, which opts for hard news on national politics. In particular, the presence of entertainment and celebrity videos is remarkable, as well as those dedicated to lifestyle and, to a lesser extent, those dedicated to art and culture. This is in line with the results of some previous research. On one hand, the work of Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey and López-García (2022) found that 58.2% of the content generated on *TikTok* by the media have an eminently informative purpose, compared to 24.5% with humorous intention, 16.8% for promotional purposes and 0.5% dedicated to challenges; among those with informative purpose, news stood out, mostly dedicated to current issues, with the COVID-19 pandemic and celebrities being the most frequent topics. On the other hand, the research by Peña-Fernández, Larrondo-Ureta and Morales-i-Gras (2022) detailed the predominance of curious and light-hearted content as a complement to the main activity of the media and journalists, with a minority of accounts offering current affairs information adapted to the characteristics of the platform’s language. However, the work of Sidorenko-Bautista, Alonso-López and Giacomelli (2021) on the videos published by thirteen verifying media in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic showed the predominance of economic, climate, and technological content, among others (29%), followed by topics of social interest (23%), political (18%) and health (17%).

In terms of protagonism (RQ4), journalists are the most recurrent, again with the exception of *El Diario*, in whose videos there is a greater presence of political and institutional personalities; in addition, there is a prominent presence of celebrities, with interviews with sportspeople, musicians and influencers.

“ The Spanish media analyzed publish less frequently than international media, obtain fewer views, and register lower engagement levels; in addition, they do not use their presence on *TikTok* to promote their other editorial products ”

The findings regarding themes and protagonism are congruent with the information preferences of the Spanish population (Martínez-Costa; Sánchez-Blanco; Serrano-Puche, 2019) and, in general, of young people (Newman *et al.*, 2016). This shows an effort by the main Spanish media to adapt to the algorithmic functioning of the social network (Bhandari; Bimo, 2022; Zhao, 2021) and to satisfy, to the extent that their informative function allows it, the motivations and interests of the user community (Bucknell-Bossen; Kottasz, 2020; Lu; Lu, 2019; Lu; Lu; Liu, 2020), although because of their nature it is not possible for them to replicate the most frequent content on the platform (Shutsko, 2020; Suárez-Álvarez; García-Jiménez, 2021). The presence of journalists is also in line with the start of content generation by professionals (Negreira-Rey; Vázquez-Herrero; López-García, 2022; Peña-Fernández; Larrondo-Ureta; Morales-i-Gras, 2022). Thus, the analyzed media are in line with the trend of international media to use a light tone, although they are among the minority that offers current information adapted to the characteristics of the platform's language (Peña-Fernández; Larrondo-Ureta; Morales-i-Gras, 2022).

Finally, despite the main brand identifier (RQ5) being generally the journalist themselves, the presence of the media logo is also notable, a way of protecting the copyright of the images and audios they generate or provide (Shutsko, 2020), in an inverse relationship to that detected globally (Vázquez-Herrero; Negreira-Rey; López-García, 2022). However, the scarce references to other news of the media or other editorial products of their own, such as printed newspapers, podcasts, websites, television programs or social networks, denotes the lack of connection of their presence on *TikTok* with their main activity. Thus, the analyzed media use *TikTok* to disseminate their brand among the young population, but not to establish cross-relationships with their products that would serve to promote them and increase their audience.

6. Conclusions

Spanish media have tried to adapt to the entertainment logic of the platform both in the use of native editing resources and in the creation of original materials and the development of soft news content. In fact, the media that gain the most notoriety on average are those that have adapted more to this logic, i.e., those that opt for soft news through original videos that use native resources. However, they publish less frequently than international media, their videos get fewer views, and their accounts register lower levels of engagement, probably as a result—except in the case of *A3 Noticias*—of their limited age on the platform; in addition, they do not take advantage of their presence on the network to promote their products.

This paper has some limitations, derived from its exploratory nature and the limited presence of Spanish media on *TikTok* at the time of its conceptualization. The first aspect implies the existence of scarce previous literature, which has prevented the establishment of hypotheses. The second aspect has made it impossible to form a corpus that would be representative of the Spanish media ecosystem as a whole; we consider, however, that the sample selected, composed of the five media with the largest online audience in the period analyzed, is sufficiently relevant to be representative of its apex. Future research may focus on the production of content for this platform from the newsrooms, i.e., on the adaptation to *TikTok* of the practices and routines of professional journalists, as was done at the time with respect to *Twitter*. They may also evaluate the journalistic quality of such content, as well as the interaction of the audience with it through the comments and whether they serve to articulate debates inherent to a deliberative conception of public opinion.

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