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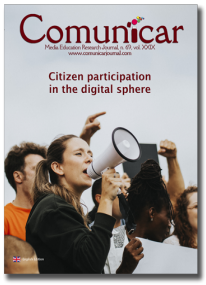

Young people and social networks: Between the democratization of knowledge and digital inequality

Jóvenes y redes sociales: Entre la democratización del conocimiento y la inequidad digital

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ABSTRACT

The growing access to the Internet, devices, and social media has revolutionized communication processes and democratized access to information and content creation. However, several researchers have shown that although access to the Internet is readily available, the virtual world is a mirror of the society in which we live where digital inequity exists. Several studies present evidence that social status does not affect the presence of social network users, but it does affect the way it is used and content creation, although it concerns studies that were mostly carried out in European and North American contexts. This research explores the socioeconomic profile of young people concerning the consumption and creation of content, and the virtual world of adolescents related to social inequalities found in the real world. This study followed an exploratory quantitative design by means of a survey that was applied to 2,115 high-school students from high-performing educational institutions in Ecuador. The results highlight three units of analysis: (1) reasons for using the platform (2) time of consumption (3) type of content that young people create. In line with previous studies, it points out how the socioeconomic environment has an effect on how young people use social networks. Similarly, it shows an increase in the democratization of content creation processes.

RESUMEN

El creciente acceso a Internet, dispositivos y redes sociales ha revolucionado los procesos de comunicación y democratizado el acceso a la información y la creación de contenido. Sin embargo, varios investigadores han mostrado que, si bien el acceso al Internet es fácilmente alcanzable, el mundo virtual es un espejo de la sociedad en la que vivimos existiendo inequidad digital. Varios estudios presentan evidencia de que el estrato social no afecta la presencia de usuarios en las redes, pero sí afecta su uso y la creación de contenido, si bien se trata de estudios desarrollados mayoritariamente en contextos europeos y norteamericanos. La presente investigación explora el perfil socioeconómico de los jóvenes en el consumo y creación de contenidos, y el mundo virtual de los adolescentes en materia de desigualdades sociales encontradas en el mundo real. La investigación siguió un diseño cuantitativo exploratorio a través de una encuesta que fue aplicada a 2,.115 estudiantes de educación secundaria y bachillerato de instituciones educativas de alto rendimiento de Ecuador. Los resultados dan cuenta de tres unidades de análisis: 1) razones de uso de la plataforma; 2) tiempo de consumo; 3) tipo de contenido que crean los jóvenes. En consonancia con estudios anteriores, se señala cómo el entorno socioeconómico tiene un efecto en cómo los jóvenes usan las redes sociales. Al mismo tiempo se muestra un auge en la democratización de los procesos de creación de contenido.

KEYWORDS | PALABRAS CLAVE

Social networking sites, YouTube, participation, content, young people, socioeconomic level.
Redes sociales, YouTube, participación, contenido, jóvenes, nivel socio-económico.

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1. Introduction

The concept of knowledge has had diverse connotations in different cultures and societies throughout history. According to Raddaoui (2012), the systems for the creation and dissemination of knowledge were traditionally characterized by their elitism since only certain privileged classes had the possibility of creating content for the masses. According to García-Leiva (2017), the arrival of the Internet made the creation and distribution of content simpler, faster, and more economical – thus permanently changing the present and future of knowledge generation.

Studies about the Internet and social networks normally focus on access, leaving aside fundamental problems of inequality, which are represented by how users utilize social media (Micheli, 2016). This is important for adolescents, considering that social networks use has had a major influence on their daily lives. Therefore, this study aims to determine whether the socioeconomic status of young people affects in any way their participation in social networks, especially the YouTube platform. Other demographic factors such as gender, age, race and ethnic origin were not considered seeing that one wishes to determine whether participation in young students' social networks follows a pattern of 'social reproduction' that is geared towards the (re)production of discrimination processes and 'digital inequality' (Bourdieu, 1973 as cited in Micheli, 2016). Previous studies (Hargittai, 2008) have concluded that Internet use tends to reproduce patterns of social stratification; however, there are no definitive results with respect to the subject matter.

Some research papers (Hargittai & Walejko, 2008; Blank, 2013; Hoffmann et al., 2015) have established that there is a relationship between participation in social networks and the socioeconomic level of young people, which is measured by factors such as family income and that of the parents. In this respect, Blank (2013) clarifies that users of less privileged contexts create more content than their counterparts.

Our research contributes to this conversation in various ways. On the one hand, previous studies utilized data from the United States and Europe. In this sense, this is one of the first analyses that have been carried out in a Latin American context, i.e. whose social, political, educational and economic reality is a far cry from the aforementioned countries. On the other hand, the sample consists of students receiving secondary school education from high-performing institutions from throughout country. For this reason, there is ample diversity in the responses. Finally, the incorporation of socioeconomic variables such as income and the level of education of parents are related with YouTube usage and creation–i.e. fundamental aspects that we believe should be analyzed in detail, especially in Latin America.

1.1. Social networks

Over the last decade, social networks have been intensely introduced in the lives of millions of people who belong to various contexts and socioeconomic levels of society. According to Romero et al. (2013), the social network capacity that is provided to communicate and connect people has resulted in a great number of users utilizing them with diverse objectives—ranging from the creation of businesses to communication with friends and family members.

Shiau et al. (2017) assert that social networks are the new way in which people interact and form relational ties. One of the earliest definitions of social networks was provided by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 61), who affirm that social media are "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content". Web 2.0 is a term that has been used to describe the new way in which users began to use the Web, thereby creating contents that are continually modifed by users on a collaborative basis. For this reason, one may conclude that Web 2.0 is a social creation that fosters collective intelligence and which goes beyond the one directional communication of Web 1.0 (Latorre, 2018). Social networks have certain particularities that make them unique. For example, users can create a list of contacts that is visible to other members of the same network, they can upload and share photos and videos not only among their personal contacts, but also globally, as well as write comments on other people's profiles, and send private messages among users (Fardoun et al., 2012), create content, develop profiles for a website or application and participate in groups and networks with specific themes (Obar & Wildman, 2015).

The first social networks started operating at the beginning of the 1990s, with 'Six Degrees' being the first in 1997. However, the most popular ones appeared at the beginning of 2000. MySpace and LinkedIn first started operating in 2003, while YouTube made its first appearance in 2005. Moreover, a year later, in 2006, Twitter and Facebook were founded, with Instagram having its debut in 2010. Currently, there are 3.8 billion active users of social networks, i.e. with a penetration level of 49% in the world's population and with an annual growth of 9.2%. The most predominant social networks are: YouTube, with 1.9 billion users (YouTube, 2019), which is followed by Facebook, with 1.95 billion; Instagram, with 928.5 million; and Twitter with 339.6 million (We are Social & Hootsuite, 2020).

This study focuses on the participation of students on YouTube as it is one of the most disruptive platforms within the current media ecology. Since its creation, it has become one of the greatest platforms in the world to access, search, view, share, and create video content, among other specific uses implemented by its users. (Pires et al., 2019). According to Castillo-Abdul et al. (2020), it went from being a website for recording and reproducing videos to becoming a social network that is based on its interactiveness and the creation of contents, which are of a multiple nature such as: lifestyle, games, sports, fashion, etc. For Bautista-Sancho (2012: 124), YouTube creates "countless communities based on the unlimited types of interests in which infinite forms of social relations are developed", which feed on a continuing source of creativity coming from young people and adults. According to Vizcaíno-Verdú et al. (2019), it is the young public that has made YouTube into a space for the creation of ideas and customs by means of digital and cultural hybridization, i.e. where groups are formed based on their common interests instead of being in sync with a social and cultural profile –thus developing cognitive, emotional, and social skills and fostering the building of identities.

1.2. Social networks, inequality and digital exclusion

Social networks constitute one of the most important tools for communication. Their effectiveness, accessibility, cost, and the possibility of facilitating conversations in real-time enable them to play a fundamental role not only as a means of communication, but also as instruments that influence political, economic, social, and educational decision-making at a global level (Al-Rahmi & Othman, 2013). This is a positive step since they have become the port of entry for part of the population that was 'digitally excluded', e.g. in developing countries, or in disadvantaged segments of the population (Correa, 2016). According to Micheli (2016), the fact that the usage of the Internet has become so ubiquitous does not mean that social inequality has disappeared, or that it has not contributed to the digital world. Furthermore, the author asserts that digital inequality should be explored in the world of social networks since the types of activities that are organized and the opportunities that exist via the web could become –after having overcome the obstacle of access by factors such as digital skills and knowledge – a source of inequality.

At this point, it is important to highlight the fact that although there is access and a level of familiarity with social networks, it does not mean that there is no equality in their usage by family members with underprivileged socioeconomic profiles and who have on average fewer digital skills and mostly use the Internet for enjoyment instead as activities for the development of intellectual capital (Hargittai, 2008; Micheli, 2016).

1.3. Social networks and our youth

At present, adolescents and young people spend countless hours on social networks (Fardoun et al., 2012). For Cipolletta et al. (2020), adolescents are a social group that are highly dependent upon social networks since 94% of adolescents between 13 to 17 years of age use social networks, while more than half of them (56%) are online various times a day. According to Boyd (2014), this has an explanation since social networks affect issues such as the creation of identity, social life, digital literacy and academic life. For Sánchez-Díaz-de-Mera and Lázaro-Cayuso (2017), it is important to understand how young students from secondary schools, i.e. those who grew up in a digital eco-system mediated by social networks, interact in a digital world. This is not only shaping their learning processes, but also their social development. Conversely, social networks provide social capital, which could be harnessed by young people with limited financial resources to carry out specific tasks, acquire skills, or achieve certain goals such as accessing

employment opportunities (Baumer, 2018). With respect to the question of interaction and the creation of knowledge, social networks facilitate a new eco-system whereby users not only consume information, but also generate it - thus converting themselves into "pro-sumers", namely those who make social networks a means of production and consumption (Briciu & Briciu, 2020). For Hargittai (2008), the socioeconomic and family background of a young student such as his/her race, ethnic origin, and the level of schooling of his/her parents do not reflect an influence (a statistically significant relationship) on social network usage. However, these socioeconomic background factors seem to affect how and why they use them, that is, whether they are being used for educational and professional growth purposes or entertainment.

According to Anderson and Jiang (2018), a phenomenon that has caused considerable change in the social network use is the ownership of smartphones, which has become a ubiquitous device among young people. In countries such as the United States, 95% of adolescents are reported to have a smart phone, and of that figure, 45% are said to be online almost constantly. Additionally, the authors found that although it is clear that Facebook has traditionally dominated competition by attracting the attention of users, there has also been a turn in the preference in their usage among American youths since approximately a third said that they had visited Snapchat (35%) or YouTube (32%) more often, while 15% said the same about Instagram. In comparison, 10% of adolescents said that Facebook was the online platform that they used more frequently. In addition, fewer youngsters cited Twitter, Reddit, or Tumblr as the site that they visited regularly.

In Ecuador, only 45.5% of families have access to the Internet (INEC, 2019) – with the 15 to 29 age group being the one that used social networks the most from their mobile phone (with 94.1%), followed by youths younger than 15 years, which comprised 93% (Ministry of Telecommunications, 2016). According to the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC, 2019), Facebook was used by 55.4% of Ecuadorians, followed by WhatsApp, with 52%, and other social networks such as Instagram, with 18.2%; and finally YouTube, with 15.4%, respectively (Rodríguez, 2020). Finally, Halpern et al. (2020) indicate that there have been efforts by governments from all over the world to guarantee global access of ITCs. Notwithstanding, the digital gap has been maintained especially in secondary education. The authors also highlight the Chilean study regarding the management of information, communication and digital ethics, i.e. where it was shown that only 1.8% of young college students would only have an advanced level of skills and digital competences, which would be an indicator for a need for improvement and investment in the education and development of the digital competences of young students.

1.4. Creation of content

Access to the Internet and social media has made content creation become a much more accessible task by facilitating the arrival of a new generation of journalists, critics, and artists who have self-published their work to the detriment of the domain of mass media which, although continue to exist, no longer enjoy the status of sole providers of information. According to Blank (2013), self-publication or 'personal publication' not only includes text (as a blog), but also music, photos, videos, books, pamphlets and other products that can be created at little to nothing and distributed via the Internet to global audiences.

Social networks have not only opened up possibilities for receiving information unidirectionally but have also provided an opportunity for average citizens to be content creators. Thus, social networks have become a point of convergence for individuals with the same interests. In fact, various educational institutions use them to publish their resources, videos, research projects, etc. (Rosemary et al., 2013). Conversely, their usage has been popularized as a tool for students to carry out projects and tasks by means of the creation of videos or the publication of blogs – i.e. two of the most commonly assigned tasks, especially from the onset of the global pandemic to the beginning of 2020.

As a society, we are progressively adapting to the phenomenon of social networks. The impact that their usage will have in the next few years cannot be measured since their accelerated growth and continuous transformation make it difficult to project the long-term impact it will have on social and educational processes. This dynamic has greatly affected the roles of users as the creation of knowledge is bidirectional. According to Blank (2013), there is a strong relationship between demographic variables and content creation, i.e. where age is one of its most consistent predictors, and because young people

tend to create more content than older persons (Blank & Dutton, 2012). Blank (2013) asserts that there are two perspectives regarding social stratification and content creation: the first one is centered on the fact that Internet accessibility provides unprecedented participation opportunities and increases 'individual autonomy' in the selection and content creation. The second perspective is that self-publication increases 'individual freedom' and facilitates the participation of people from all social spheres in an unprecedented number of debates, which is positive since it increases the diversity of information and opinions in the civic sphere.

2. Material and methods

This research was carried out by following an exploratory quantitative design. The method selected allowed us to identify how a phenomenon occurs within a real context (Creswell & Poth, 2018), that is, to explore, describe, and understand the social and educational reality (Yin, 2011) regarding the usage and interactions of social networks by young people, namely YouTube and its relationship with socioeconomic levels. The research instrument was designed within the framework of the project "Youtubers and Instagramers: Towards a management model of learning", which was developed by the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja in the call for research proposals from 2019-2021 (PY2583). This instrument aims to analyze the dimensions of media competences proposed by Ferrés and Piscitelli (2012) within the context of YouTube and Instagram. It was a survey consisting of 44 closed questions with nominal and ordinal measurements. Its validation was carried out by international experts, including research professors from Spain, Portugal, Brazil and Peru. The reliability of the survey via Cronbach's Alpha provided an index of 0.791 as a result (Ríos-Hernández et al., 2020). 2,115 students were surveyed from high-performing educational institutions in Ecuador and voluntarily authorized their participation by means of a written document, which was optional and anonymous. At the time of the questionnaire, they had an average age between 12 and 18, and were studying in the eighth, ninth, and tenth year of secondary school and during the first, second, and third years of high school in the national school system.

For the quantitative analysis, the data from the student surveys were processed mathematically and systematically using SPSS (v.22.0). Three variables were utilized: 1) sector of the educational institution: urban or rural; 2) monthly family income; and 3) level of education of the household representatives as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the sample

		Recount	% of N columns
Sex	Male	972	46.0%
	Female	1143	54.0%
Educational institution sector	Urban	1850	87.5%
	Rural	265	12.5%
Monthly family income	Less than $500	930	44.0%
	From $501 - $1,500	906	42.8%
	More than $1500	279	13.2%
Level of education	No formal studies or primary school	199	9.4%
	Secondary Schooling	696	32.9%
	University: Tertiary (Bachelor's) and Fourth Level (MA/Ph.D.)	1220	57.7%

Validation of the data was carried out by triangulating the results and the corresponding relationship with the theoretical framework, which underpinned the analysis of the results in order to approximate valid and reliable interpretations. Ethical aspects were taken into account during data collation by means of permits so as to direct the information towards educational aims. The administration of the data was managed objectively and was combined with the collated evidence. Finally, the dissemination of the data took into consideration the privacy of the participants and was linked with the institutional policies involved in the study.

3. Results

The results are shown in three categories or units of different analyses: 1) Reasons for using the platform; 2) Time of consumption; and 3) Type of content that young people from secondary education and high school create.

3.1. Reasons for usage

The data were analyzed to determine the main reasons for using YouTube among the following alternatives: 1) Entertainment; 2) Education; 3) Work; 4) Generating online contacts; 5) Generating offline contacts.

Table 2. Reasons for using YouTube

Entertainment		**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Monthly family income	Less than $500	835	95	89.8%	10.2%
	From $501 - $1500	848	58	93.6%	6.4%
	More than $1500	270	9	96.8%	3.2%
Total		1,953	162	92.3%	7.7%
Level of education	Without formal studies and primary education	167	32	83.9%	16.1%
	Secondary	629	67	90.4%	9.6%
	Third (B) and fourth level (MA/PhD)	1,157	63	94.8%	5.2%
Total		1,953	162	92.3%	7.7%
Sector of educational institution	Urban	1,725	125	93.2%	6.8%
	Rural	228	37	86.0%	14.0%
Total		1,953	162	92.3%	7.7%
Education					
Monthly family income	Less than $500	690	240	74.2%	25.8%
	From $501 - $1500	672	234	74.2%	25.8%
	More than $1500	206	73	73.8%	26.2%
Total		1,568	547	74.1%	25.9%
Level of education	Without formal studies and primary education	143	56	71.9%	28.1%
	Secondary	540	156	77.6%	22.4%
	Third (BA) and fourth level (MA, PhD)	885	335	72.5%	27.5%
Total		1,568	547	74.1%	25.9%
Sector of the educational institution	Urban	1,391	459	75.2%	24.8%
	Rural	177	88	66.8%	33.2%
Total		1,568	547	74.1%	25.9%
Work					
Monthly family income	Less than $500	285	645	30.6%	69.4%
	From $501 - $1500	255	651	28.1%	71.9%
	More than $1500	56	223	20.1%	79.9%
Total		596	1,519	28.2%	71.8%
Level of education	Without formal studies or primary education	56	143	28.1%	71.9%
	Secondary	233	463	33.5%	66.5%
	Third (BA) and Fourth Level (MA, PhD)	307	913	25.2%	74.8%
Total		596	1,519	28.2%	71.8%
Sector of educational institution	Urban	523	1,327	28.3%	71.7%
	Rural	73	192	27.5%	72.5%
Total		596	1,519	28.2%	71.8%
Generating online contacts					
Monthly family income	Less than $500	87	843	9.4%	90.6%
	From $501 - $1500	80	826	8.8%	91.2%
	More than $1500	11	268	3.9%	96.1%
Total		178	1,937	8.4%	91.6%
Level of education	Without formal studies or primary education	13	186	6.5%	93.5%
	Secondary	66	630	9.5%	90.5%
	Third (BA) and Fourth Level (MA, PhD)	99	1,121	8.1%	91.9%
Total		178	1,937	8.4%	91.6%
Sector of educational institution	Urban	143	1,707	7.7%	92.3%
	Rural	35	230	13.2%	86.8%
Total		178	1,937	8.4%	91.6%
Generating offline contacts					
Monthly family income	Less than $500	26	904	2.8%	97.2%
	From $501 - $1500	22	883	2.4%	97.6%
	More than $1500	6	273	2.2%	97.8%
Total		54	2,060	2.6%	97.4%
Level of education	Without formal studies or primary education	6	193	3.0%	97.0%
	Secondary	20	676	2.9%	97.1%
	Third (BA) and Fourth Level (MA, PhD)	28	1,191	2.3%	97.7%
Total		54	2,060	2.6%	97.4%
Sector of educational institution	Urban	44	1,805	2.4%	97.6%
	Rural	10	255	3.8%	96.2%
Total		54	2,060	2.6%	97.4%

In the entertainment category, the usage of YouTube increased on the basis of socioeconomic status. Students with lower incomes and those whose parents had a lower education level tended to use YouTube to a lesser degree than their more privileged counterparts. Moreover, only 86% of the students who lived in rural areas used YouTube for entertainment purposes versus 93.2% of students who lived in urban areas.

In the education category, there are no significant variations between the level of family income and YouTube usage for educational purposes. However, there is a variation with regard to the family representative's level of formal studies – the latter being the group of students whose parents have secondary school qualifications and who use YouTube for educational purposes (77.6%), which is followed by the next group who have third level (BA) and fourth level (MA/PhD) qualifications, i.e. with

72.5%. Finally, the group with no formal studies or primary education is 71.9%. As with the previous category, students from urban areas use YouTube more for educational purposes than the students from rural areas.

In the employment category, there is evidence that young people with lower family incomes (30.6%) use YouTube to improve their employment profile in a greater measure than those students with higher income (20.1%). On the other hand, students with parents who have no formal studies or only primary education (28.1%) and secondary education (33.5%) are those who use YouTube more to learn about employment. Moreover, the students whose parents have a university education (25.2%) are those that use the platform less for these purposes. No significant difference in this category was found among students who live in urban and rural areas.

With regard to the category of generating online contacts, the students with lower earnings (9.4%) are those that used the platform more to generate these types of contacts. A decreasing pattern is observed in this category since the students with higher income are those that use the platform less for these purposes (3.9%). Variations regarding the level of education of the family representative in this category were negligible. It was observed in the rural area that there was a greater tendency than in urban areas to use the YouTube platform to generate online contacts. Finally, with regard to generating contacts offline, there is a slight tendency of students with a less privileged socioeconomic profile to use YouTube for this purpose in a greater measure than their more privileged counterparts (Table 2).

3.2. Time usage

With regard to time usage, it was discovered that the young people with a moderate usage of the platform (less than 1 hour a day) had an inverse relationship with family income, that is to say, the higher the earnings, the less the platform was used. However, when analyzing the figures for higher usage, namely the group of 1 to 3 hours and 4 to 6 hours, it was found that the greater the income, the greater the usage of the platform. On the other hand, the same pattern follows for the academic profile of the household representatives as moderate usage (less than 1 hour daily) follows a decreasing pattern. However, a more prolonged use of Youtube shows that the higher the parents' educational level, the greater was the use of the social network. Finally, there is a clear universal tendency in the urban sector to consume more content than in rural areas (Table 3).

Table 3. Duration of daily usage of YouTube

		Less than 1 hour	From 1 to 3 hours	From 4 to 6 hours	From 7 to 9 hours	More than 9 hours
Monthly family income	Less than $500	39.4%	43.9%	12.6%	2.4%	1.7%
	From $501 - $1500	27.0%	49.4%	18.4%	2.8%	2.4%
	More than $1500	19.8%	55.7%	19.0%	2.9%	2.6%
Total			31.5%	47.8%	15.9%	2.7%
Level of education	Without formal or primary education	49.2%	38.6%	9.5%	1.6%	1.1%
	Secondary	35.6%	44.7%	15.2%	2.4%	2.1%
	Third level (BA) and fourth level (MA, PhD)	26.3%	51.0%	17.4%	3.0%	2.3%
Total			31.5%	47.8%	15.9%	2.7%
Sector of educational institution	Urban	30.7%	48.7%	15.9%	2.5%	2.2%
	Rural	36.9%	41.8%	16.1%	3.6%	1.6%
Total			31.5%	47.8%	15.9%	2.7%

3.3. Creation of content

With regard to the type of content that young people create, there is evidence to prove that the socioeconomic profile of the students had a slight influence on the type of content that the young people created. Specifically, eight categories of different types of content were analyzed by participating youth which were the following: 1) Entertainment, 2) Education, 3) Video games, 4) Technology, 5) Viral Content, 6) Fashion and beauty, 7) News, and 8) Personal events. Table 4 displays the results of preferences in the creation of content for the sample, which is mostly homogeneous, but has slight variations between categories and sub-categories.

The first part of the table gathers data regarding the classification of content, i.e. where family income is a variable. The result shows that for the entertainment, education, and technology categories there was an inversely proportional trend, that is to say, that students with fewer financial resources were those that

created more contents in these categories. With regard to the video game and personal event categories, the students belonging to the middle-class were those that created more content. Finally, with respect to the fashion and beauty and information (news) categories, the students with resources on opposite poles of the spectrum were those that created more content, whereas students with middle income families did not create the same level of content as their counterparts. The second part of the table shows the results of content classification depending on the level of formal studies of the family representative. A decrease is seen in the creation of content for entertainment, education, technology and information (news), that is to say, the lower the level of formal studies of the family representative, the more content created in those disciplines. On the other hand, in the video game, viral content and personal event categories, a proportional trend was observed that states that when the parents' level of formal study is high, there is an increment in the creation of content in these categories. Finally, in the fashion and beauty category one sees a similar trend to that of the first table in which the opposite poles of the educational spectrum are those that create more content, while the group whose parents have secondary education is the one that creates less content in this category.

The third part of the table shows that in the urban area there is a light preference to create content in the fields of fashion and beauty, information (news), and personal events, while in rural areas it shows a slight trend in creating contents in entertainment, education, video games, technology and viral content (Table 4).

Table 4. Type of content that students create in Youtube

Variables		N		Entertainment	Education	Video games	Technology	Viral Content	Fashion and Beauty	Info. (news)	Personal Events
Monthly family income	Less than $500	930	F	312	165	106	93	71	78	73	16
			%	33.5%	17.7%	11.4%	10.0%	7.6%	8.4%	7.8%	1.7%
	From $501 - $1500	906	F	289	138	129	68	69	63	38	25
			%	31.9%	15.2%	14.2%	7.5%	7.6%	7.0%	4.2%	2.8%
	More than $1500	279	F	78	30	37	22	23	21	18	5
			%	28.0%	10.8%	13.3%	7.9%	8.2%	7.5%	6.5%	1.8%
	Total	2,115	F	679	333	272	183	163	162	129	46
			%	32.1%	15.7%	12.9%	8.7%	7.7%	7.7%	6.1%	2.2%
Level of education	Without formal studies or primary education	199	F	74	48	12	22	12	17	20	3
			%	37.2%	24.1%	6.0%	11.1%	6.0%	8.5%	10.1%	1.5%
	Secondary	696	F	232	127	98	71	55	46	50	14
			%	33.3%	18.2%	14.1%	10.2%	7.9%	6.6%	7.2%	2.0%
	Third and Fourth Level	1,220	F	373	158	162	90	96	99	59	29
			%	30.6%	13.0%	13.3%	7.4%	7.9%	8.1%	4.8%	2.4%
	Total	2,115	F	679	333	272	183	163	162	129	46
			%	32.1%	15.7%	12.9%	8.7%	7.7%	7.7%	6.1%	2.2%
Sector of the educational institution	Urban	1,850	F	590	284	228	155	142	144	118	44
			%	31.9%	15.4%	12.3%	8.4%	7.7%	7.8%	6.4%	2.4%
	Rural	265	F	89	49	44	28	21	18	11	2
			%	33.6%	18.5%	16.6%	10.6%	7.9%	6.8%	4.2%	0.8%
	Total	2,115	F	679	333	272	183	163	162	129	46
			%	32.1%	15.7%	12.9%	8.7%	7.7%	7.7%	6.1%	2.2%

4. Discussion and conclusion

The socioeconomic profile does not affect the presence of young people in the virtual world. However, this factor, together with the geographical profile, influences the reasons why social networks are used and the time spent on them. The results show that young people with an underprivileged socioeconomic status and who belong to rural areas use YouTube to a lesser degree and for shorter periods of time than their more privileged counterparts who live in urban areas, i.e. those who use this social network for entertainment and for long periods of time. Following Michelli (2016) and Helsper (2012), this fact indicates that the resources of those who are offline tend to expand, that is to say, if a young person has offline leisure time at his/her disposal, he/she will mirror it online.

Moreover, students with a low socioeconomic profile seek to improve their professional profile online to a greater extent than young people with parents with secondary and higher education qualifications. According to Palo and Drobot (2010) the "financial and human capital of the family", that is to say, the

financial resources, abilities, and capacities that the parents possess and put at the children's disposition to develop their professional skills are more tangible in families with high academic profiles. Therefore, the most privileged youths and those with access to these resources do not look for them online. This indicates that the search for social capital (Baumer, 2018) in social networks to improve professional profiles or to seek employment is one of the aspects that show inequities imported from the offline world.

In addition, mirroring the results provided by Michelli (2016), it was observed that the youths with limited financial resources find in social networks a means of extending their online and offline contacts, of expanding their social networks, of making new friends, and gaining visibility – thus taking advantage of the socialization characteristics of the networks, while their privileged counterparts are not so active in the expansion of their contacts. With regard to the creation of content, the youths with privileged profiles and with access to more and better electronic devices (Palo & Drobot, 2010) tend to create more content in the areas of video games, viral content and personal events, whereas the less privileged groups create more content in entertainment, education and technologies. This discrimination or distinction among these themes is explained by what is defined as 'relational terms', that is to say, in the expression of displeasure regarding the preferences of other people with a lower social level than their own (Bourdieu, 1965 as cited in Michelli, 2016).

The point of convergence in the creation of content focuses on the categories of fashion and beauty, and news. This can indicate that – without taking into consideration the profiles analyzed here – both categories show trends in equality and growing democratization among the young participants in this study. Although it is certain that a tendency exists in the democratization of content creation, some trends that reproduce social inequality could be observed. Regardless, youths belonging to all of the analyzed socioeconomic groups create content in a greater or lesser measure in all the categories. Therefore, we could say that there is an ongoing process in the democratization of knowledge by means of the free and active creation of users' contents between the ages of 12 and 18. Finally, the findings from this article provide further details about a theme that has not been analyzed fully in the Latin American context, which reinforces the need to invest more resources in the development of digital competencies in primary and secondary education in Latin America and globally.

5. Author Contribution

Idea, L.A.V., D.R.R., M.I.S.; Literature Review (state of the art), D.Y.G., L.A.V.; Methodology, L.A.V.; Data analysis, L.A.V., D.Y.G.; Results, L.A.V., D.Y.G., D.R.R.; Discussion and conclusions, L.A.V., D.Y.G., M.I.S.; Writing (original draft), L.A.V., D.Y.G.; Final revisions, L.A.V., D.Y.G. D.R.R., M.I.S.; Project design and sponsorships, L.A.V., D.R.R., M.I.S.

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