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I am a youtuber musician! Construction of artistic identity through covers and fiction. The case of violinists Taylor Davis and Lindsey Stirling

¡Soy músico youtuber! Construcción de la identidad artística a través del cover y la ficción. El caso de las violinistas Taylor Davis y Lindsey Stirling

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Abstract

The growing audiovisual activity in social networks has turned YouTube into an international creative and social space where user-generated content, media, companies and online communities come together. It has become a digital stage that highlights the figure of the youtuber and, specifically, that of the subject whose artistic and musical talents are expanded through the fictional cover. This study aims to analyse the construction of this profile from its amateur origins to professional status through the examination of Taylor Davis and Lindsey Stirling: North American violinists devoted to music, video games, films, series, among other cultural products. To do this, we explore their channels through a qualitative content analysis, getting closer to a mainstream phenomenon that combines, under the same halo, the fandom universe, music and artistic success through trending cultural products, enabling the construction of a creative, ingenious and latent community in virtual environments: the youtubers of music.

Keywords

Youtuber; cover; fiction; fandom; music; mainstream culture

Resumen

La creciente actividad audiovisual en redes sociales ha provocado que YouTube se convierta en un espacio internacional creativo y social en el que se dan cita contenidos generados por el usuario, medios de comunicación, empresas y comunidades online. Un escenario digital que identifica la figura del youtuber y, concretamente, la de aquel sujeto cuyas dotes artísticas y musicales se ven expandidas a través del cover ficcional. La presente investigación pretende analizar la construcción de este perfil desde su origen amateur hasta el profesional por medio de las figuras de Taylor Davis y Lindsey Stirling: violinistas norteamericanas dedicadas a la música, los videojuegos, las películas, las series, entre otros productos de la Industria Cultural. Para ello, exploramos sus canales mediante un análisis de contenido cualitativo, logrando aproximarnos a un fenómeno mainstream que aún bajo un mismo halo el universo fandom, la música y el éxito artístico por medio de productos culturales de tendencia, facilitando la construcción de una comunidad creativa, ingeniosa y latente en entornos virtuales: los youtubers de la música.

Palabras clave

Youtuber; cover; ficción; fandom; música; cultura mainstream

1. Introduction

Shoot, edit, publish and share. Currently, the accumulation of videos on YouTube has generated millions of views around the world and more than a billion users, which equates to a third of all Internet users (YouTube Statistics, 2018). This has prompted, in the era of media convergence (Jenkins, 2008), the development of large fan communities that are interested in dominant cultural subject matters, as "within a multimedia, multiscreen, delocalized and detemporized communication context, we find ourselves with a fragmented, demanding, rigorous and overall, active audience" (Hidalgo-Marí and Sánchez-Olmos, 2015: 221).

This activity has entailed, in the music sphere, a behavioral change of interest related to those prosumers (consumers and producers of content) (Islas, 2009; Sánchez-Carrero and Contreras-Pulido, 2012), who undertake information and communication-related activities through the production and consumption of musical content in the Web 2.0 (Jiménez-Marín, Elías-Zambrano and Silva-Robles, 2012; Sánchez-Carrero and Caldeiro-Pedreira, 2016). In this process of social recognition through likes and dislikes, the cinematographic, literary, television cultural products, among others, mirror the interest of the fandom community in an online scenario, in which audiovisual platforms such as YouTube reiterate the positioning and the success of User Generated Content (Fernández-Castrillo, 2014). Thus, the popularization of the *youtuber* phenomenon and the exponential growth of amateur music videos have uncovered a new production line that promotes the most-recognized fictional content in the entertainment industry.

In this sense, and with the aim of exploring the existing relationship between *youtuber*, *cover* and *fiction*, the present work aims to analyze the function of cultural products, specifically music covers as resources for the self-promotion and launch of YouTube user's professional careers. For this, a case study was conducted looking at Taylor Davis and Lindsey Stirling: violinists, *youtubers* and fans, who are mainly devoted to songwriting based on soundtracks from videogames, films, television series, animations, among other media products. Thus, their debut on YouTube has generated an artistic-musical phenomenon to be discovered.

1.1. From video clip to fan vid and cover

In socioeconomic terms, the cultural industry, a concept debated by numerous scholars from the different communication schools (Núñez-Ladevéze and Irisarri, 2015), has been transforming itself in the mothership of the music video, a product or merchandise that, as noted by Sedeño-Valdellós (2007), was characterized from its birth by its profitability for diverse business entities. The concept of cultural industry itself is characterized by a massive serial production including the music, television and marketing industries; making the production, dissemination and distribution of audiovisual pieces dependent on them. That is, the video clip not only traverses through a historic-social process, but also through a set of parameters in which artistic, advertising and media factors intervene.

The historical trajectory preceding the video clip begins at the end of the 20th century, with audiovisual creations that, according to Caro-Oca (2014), would not be able to be conceptually assimilated as contemporary audiovisual and promotional compositions. At that time, the video clip revolved around the cinematographic genre inherited by the performance and the scenic arts until the appearance of Elvis Presley, who was the tipping point for the appearance of the video clip (Martín-Sánchez, 2005). The rock event that stemmed from this figure sparked the consumption of musical products, becoming the driver for audiovisual creation par excellence beginning with the American Golden Age, which gave way to internationally acclaimed groups. In this context, television found a nook through the merger of image, sound and profitability. This idea is highlighted by Holt (2011), who argued that music videos have become music and vice-versa. However, the supremacy of the video clip came from another relationship: advertising and music. This enabled the promotion of a unique format and business model launched in the United States on August 1st, 1981, *Music Television* (MTV). From this point on, a period of growth began in music history, where the narrative was granted free reign, with great artists of the music industry such as Duran or Michael Jackson. In fact, *Thriller* by Jackson (1983) became the parent of the video clip, as it distilled a story with hypertextual references that contributed an aesthetic-narrative value, and which years later, would create a post-narrative-audiovisual narrative trend broadcast on television. Thus, the standard composition was consolidated, in which the image, sound and advertising initiated the pursuit and the application of conventional classical elements, which, up to that time, were unfamiliar to spectators: space, time, editing, color and shape (Martín-Sánchez, 2005). Later, the video clip would become a hybrid of musical and visual components that would loop and decline periodically.

In the 21st century, the internet finally provided a launching pad for amateur music artists and groups in charge of producing and distributing their own content in an intercreative (interactive and creative) process of collaboration and contribution (Fernández-Castrillo, 2014), based on a cultural and participative

scenario (Islas, 2009; Jenkins, 2009). Likewise, this trend led media conglomerates to showcase their products across a variety of platforms. This meant that the transition from television viewer (passive) to online user (Miranda-Galbe and Figuero-Espadas, 2016) implied a constant risk for the different cultural industries in their adaptation to new consumption systems and a proactive, migratory, distrustful, noisy, resistant, critical and constantly networked attitude (Jenkins, 2008). Thus, in this media puzzle, the video clip became a distribution channel, not only for the record companies, but also for prosumers who fostered content that was essentially spreadable (Jenkins, Ford and Green, 2015). From this point on, the *fandom* universe, namely the community that has a relationship and loyalty towards a pre-existing media product of the entertainment industry (Crisóstomo, 2016; Pérez-Gómez, 2015), has been lured to the music field, creating new audiovisual compositions known as fan vid or *vidding*.

Vidding is a product that Coppa (2008) introduces on the basis of the work by Kandy Fong, the first woman who created a *vid* in 1975 from a succession of slides assembled with the song *Strawberry fields forever* by the Beatles (1967) over *Star Trek*. This is defined as an artistic form created by fans where the visual and musical materials from media sources are coupled. The resulting audiovisual product becomes the guiding thread, whose meaning modifies the original, in a personalized, participative and creative chain (Freund, 2011; Guerrero-Pico, 2014; Levin, 2009; Pérez-Gómez, 2009; Turk, 2010; Voces-Fernández, 2015). In fact, these *vids* have been classified into *recuts* (film or series footage that modifies the original meaning or genre), *mashups* (productions that remake scenes with new effects or changes in meaning, and hybridizations), *fan edits* (entire film edits that rework the original piece), *fan trailers* (similar to the original, but focused on characters, plots or relationships with or without intertitles and dialogues), and others (*Anime Music Videos*, focused on Japanese animation; and *vidmanip*, videos with original images of the video clip that insert images from other media texts). Moreover, other authors have classified music videos published on YouTube from a professional to an amateur perspective, as shown on Table 1.

Table 1: Types and subtypes of online music videos

Primary music videos	Music video subtypes			
Traditional	Classic music video (original and professional)	Alternative version (studio material)	Live music	
User appropriation	<i>Still video</i> (fixed image with original music)	Lyrics (fixed image with lyrics)	Embedded lyrics (original video with lyrics)	Illustrated by fans (original audio with new visual content)
By-products	Cover (musical reinterpretation)	Dance (dance representation based on an original)	Parody (humorous interpretation)	Other by-products: <i>remixes</i> , <i>karaoke</i> , etc.

Source: author created from Liikkanen and Salovaara, 2015.

Therefore, throughout its journey, and starting in the eighties, the professional video clip distributed by the music industry has given way to the appearance of *vids* and covers within a context coined *The Cover Age*. In this music universe, the cover is recognized as the rendition and reinterpretation of songs by established artists or groups, inspired by the karaoke and remix atmosphere and in turn, subdued to the control of the Re mode: a constant of repetition, retrieval, reincarnation, recycling, redesign and reprocessing (Plasketes, 2005; 2010). Thus, the musical reinterpretation based on the original composition creates, within *fandom* communities, an interest that is motivated by musical exploration through emotion, meaning and fiction (Rasmussen, 2016), which is also presently underpinned by audiovisual and social platforms such as YouTube.

1.2. The violin as fictional and artistic expression of Taylor Davis and Lindsey Stirling

The multicultural cosmos of YouTube has created a mainstream trend for music and the video clip (Illescas-Martínez, 2017), understood as the prevalence of some cultural content over other (Martel, 2011). This is where Taylor Davis and Lindsey Stirling coexist.

The first artist, a violinist and videogame lover, has observed in the platform a means to merge her interests: music and fiction. Her channel currently counts with more than 2 million subscribers and more than three million views ^[1], so that this YouTube celebrity (Lange, 2007) attests to being a proud fan of videogames,

anime (Japanese animation) and movie soundtracks. On her webpage she credits her mother for her success, by allowing her to enjoy her favorite videogames after her violin classes ^[2]. Therefore, this *youtuber's* fame, since creating her channel on April 29th, 2010, has been solidified not only for her musical talent, but also for the passion and interest shared with a *fandom* community who adores the fictional music videos. For example, take a look at those covers that become authentic video clips. In fact, Taylor has launched eight albums so far, from which five contain covers interpreted from original pieces corresponding to the entertainment industry: *The anime and game collection*, *Melodies of Hyrule: Music from The Legend of Zelda*, *Legendary Movie Music*, *Game on: 2 player mode* (Taylor Davis & Lara de Wit) and *Gaming Fantasy*.

Taylor's musical career has also turned into numerous tours around the world, the creation of her own record label (*Highwind Records*), participation in fiction conventions, events and educational institutions, and collaboration as an ambassador for the anti-bullying campaign *I am a witness* (I Witness Bullying, 2016). Her webpage, also displays all the information related to this *youtuber's* personal brand: from strategies for learning and improving violin playing, to music, videos, photographs, products, etc.

On the other hand, and with more than 10 million subscribers and almost 2.2 billion views ^[3], the *youtuber*, violinist, artist and ballerina Lindsey Stirling is among the most renowned female music celebrities on YouTube. Since the moment she started to dance at home with her family to melodies by Mozart and Beethoven, and began to study music theory when she was only 5 years old, she has become a symbol of self-improvement and bliss, just as explained on her webpage after the launch of her original album *Shatter Me* ^[4].

This *youtuber* began her journey into the audiovisual network par excellence on May 20th, 2007, and from that moment on, she has achieved outstanding awards and planned many tours, among other events. Among her first awards, the following are noteworthy: Billboard Music Awards in 2015, German Echo Music Awards in 2014 and 2015, Streamy Awards in 2013, YouTube Awards in 2013 and 2015, and Shorty Awards in 2016. In fact, her talent led her to participate in *America's Got Talent*, a television program broadcast by NBC in the United States, which unveils artistic talented individuals who compete for international promotion (NBC, 2018). Ultimately, it is about a musical phenomenon whose fictional content has evolved into an original composition of success among a cultivated community.

Consequently, Taylor and Lindsey join a phenomenon in which sharing and producing videos is no longer so much a mechanism of social integration, but a means of identity construction in virtual environments (Montes-Vozmediano, García-Jiménez and Menor-Sendra, 2017). In fact, Linares-Bahillo, Aristegui-Fradua and Beloki-Marañón (2019) describe YouTube as a support for entertainment, learning and the exploration of these identities and realities, where a development is manifested by the vocational self-image and self-definition as a *youtuber* (Pérez-Torres, Pastor-Ruiz and Abarrou-Ben-Boubaker, 2017), understood as such those video bloggers (vloggers) who regularly broadcast videos in a channel within the platform (Jerslev, 2016).

2. Methodology

As previously described, the main objective of the study is to explore the corporate/brand image configuration for two female *youtubers* dedicated to music and the use of fictional content as a means of self-promotion. In this way, a series of specific objectives are established that will enable an approach to their work as successful and outstanding personalities, and to establish a solid methodological and exploratory corpus. With this, we intend to:

- 1) Prospectively describe the trajectory of both Taylor Davis and Lindsey Stirling.
- 2) Delve into their musical-fictional preferences and trends online.

For the first objective, the state of the art will be examined, which will allow us to approach the musical context in YouTube and to delve into the trajectory of both artists. With that in mind, a non-probabilistic, convenience sampling was conducted, based on a series of characteristics related to the nature of the research study (Hernández-Sampieri, Fernández-Collado and Baptista-Lucio, 2007). Thus: 1) gender (as it was Kathy Fong, a woman, the first person to assemble audiovisual and fictional content from the Cultural industry); 2) number of subscribers (more than a million); 3) having disseminated original musical content supported by the music industry; and 4) belonging to the classical instrument-genre (violin).

Using a qualitative methodological approach to enable an empirical, exploratory orientation, linked to real phenomena with a predictive purpose (Krippendorff, 1990), and by means of a content analysis, we registered a total of 277 music videos from Taylor's and Lindsey's channels, in order to analyze those covers

with content that versioned a soundtrack derived from the entertainment and cultural industry (ranging from series and movies to videogames and Japanese animations). A set of categories and variables were applied to obtain an overview and to enable comparisons or classifications using spreadsheets (De Garay-Senties and Herrera-Garza, 2004), observing and theorizing the social phenomena. This allowed us to apply a semiotic view in the interpretation of the final results (Sánchez-Olmos, 2015).

In order to detect covers derived from cultural industry soundtracks, a first qualitative categorization was performed with variables and recording units (Krippendorff, 1990), which would facilitate their classification until May 5th, 2018. These were established through the operationalization of concepts into variables (Strauss and Corbin, 2002), considering the visible particularities of the music videos:

- 1) Type of musical content (fictional, original or others such as *videoblogs*). This variable facilitated the identification of versioned pieces or the *youtuber's* original works, in order to analyze the predominance of a trend over the other.
- 2) Original cultural product (music, television, videogame, film, animation). In case of a cover, its original platform was identified to verify its musical pre-existence.
- 3) Name of the original fictional product. This factor enabled more in-depth knowledge about the musical trends of the Music industry in virtual environments.
- 4) Number of views. Lastly, the popularity of the pieces was observed.

Table 2: Content categories and variables

Link	Title of the video	Musical content typology	Original cultural product	Name of original fiction	Number of views
-	-	Fictional, original or others	Music, television, film, animation and videogames	-	-

Source: author created

From this first analysis, a predominance of progressive fictional or original content throughout the 2010 to 2018 period was also observed.

Following the same categorization system, the fictional references found in the five most-viewed fictional music videos in both channels were described in a second phase through:

- 1) References of fictional wardrobe and/or scenarios. This variable answered to evident aesthetic-narrative aspects (Scolari, Masanet, Guerrero-Pico and Establés, 2018) that provide meaning to the musical piece beyond the composition itself.
- 2) References to fictional objects. Just as the previous category, this aspect facilitated the re-signification of the audiovisual composition in its totality.

Table 3: Categories and variables related to fictional references in the five most-viewed videos.

References to fictional wardrobe and/or scenario		References to fictional objects	
Yes	No	Yes	No

Source: author created

Consequently, the trajectory of both channels were prospectively categorized through:

- 1) Number of current subscribers.
- 2) Number of estimated subscribers in the next year.
- 3) Number of estimated subscribers in the next 5 years.

Table 4: Broadcast categories and variables of the YouTube channel

Channel	Number of subscribers	Number of subscribers in the next year	Number of subscribers in the next 5 years
Taylor Davis	-	-	-
Lindsey Stirling	-	-	-

Source: Author created.

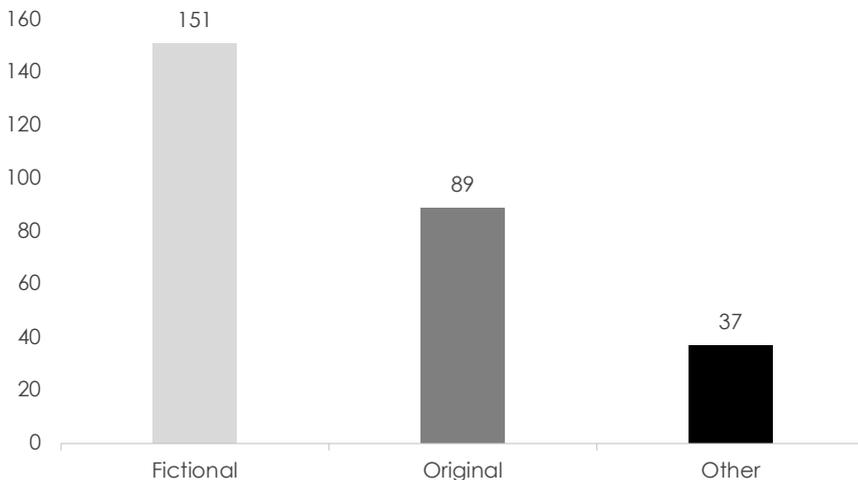
In this last case, SocialBlade.com (2018) was used. It is a space certified by YouTube as an original portal for statistical data certified by the platform that facilitates the interpretation and achievement of the objectives presented and the data required.

3. Results

After conducting a literature review and recording the data in the three tables for exploratory analysis, the information needed for the interpretation of variables was obtained, extrapolating the results in understandable and concise figures that answer the objectives proposed.

First, a total of 173 videos were tallied from Taylor Davis' YouTube channel and 104 in Lindsey Stirling's, for a total of 277 videos^[5]. In this first classification, the product of the channels was viewed separately and also as a set. Thus, Taylor had 126 fictional videos, 25 original ones (original compositions) and 22 videos comprised of news and videoblog content, among others. In the case of Lindsey, the number of original videos amounted to 64, followed by 25 fictional and 15 in the other category. The grouping of all the videos resulted in the slight dominance of the cover of fictional content with a total of 151 videos, followed by 89 original ones and 37 with other content, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Type of audiovisual content in Taylor Davis and Lindsey Stirling's channels.



Source: author created.

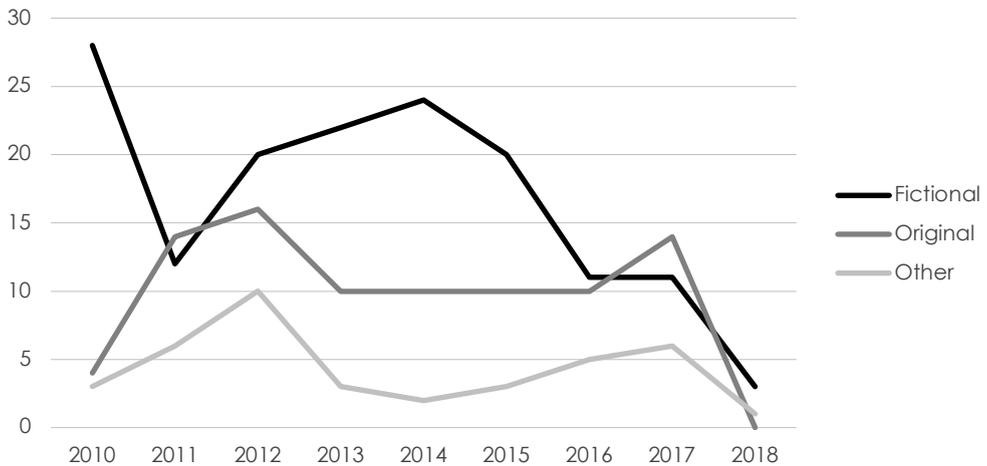
In this case, it should be noted that as a whole, the cover of fictional content prevailed. Although it is true that this typology is dominant only in the case of Taylor (who displays characteristics that differ from Lindsey's in terms of subscribers, objectives, interests, production, etc.). This point prompts the expansion of the sample in future studies in order to determine the prevalence of one audiovisual trend over another according to the musical *youtuber* figure.

Additionally, the fictional and original trend line was analyzed dating back to 2010 (first year of publication of Taylor Davis that coincides with Lindsey Stirling, despite the latter one starting in 2007), with the goal of

establishing a starting point and a prospective view of both *youtubers'* interest for one type of content or another. Figure 2 shows the overlap of the different types of contents, so that the eminently fictional cover shows pronounced variations. This aspect invites to rethink and delve into the videos of the most significant point in time (2010) and the least significant one (2016). Since these are products that reinterpret existing soundtracks, they could be subjected to a broad range of factors such as: debuts of musical movies such as *The Great Showman* (2017) or *The Beauty and The Beast* (2017), television series, etc. In this sense, it should be noted that the year 2018 was not taken into account as the lowest inflexion point, since the total number of products for that year was not recorded at the time of analysis (May of the same year), which could have modified the result.

In terms of the trend in original music videos, it is clear that it has remained stable over the years, with a positive outlook for 2017 and beyond. This is an important consideration that calls for comparison with the fictional cover which in 2017, had a decreased influence.

Figure 2: Typological trends of audiovisual content from 2010 to 2018



Source: Author created.

With regard to the second categorization of the variables, they were related to the content of the five most-visualized fictional covers in both channels, in order to detect if in their content, they displayed aesthetic aspects characteristic of the original fiction product.

In this way, it is observed in table 2 that the wardrobe and/or the scenery are some of the most-utilized resources in this type of cover on YouTube (9 out of 10 videos display this particularity). In fact, the most-visualized video for Taylor Davis, *He's a Pirate*, from *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* (2003) sets the scene on cliffs overlooking the ocean with clothing reminiscent of the pirate film by Disney. Likewise, in the cover of the videogame *Skyrim*, by Lindsey Stirling, aside from the wardrobe and the scenarios, special effects were added starting with objects from the game itself (swords, magic balls, etc.).

Table 5: Fictional references in the 5 most-visualized covers

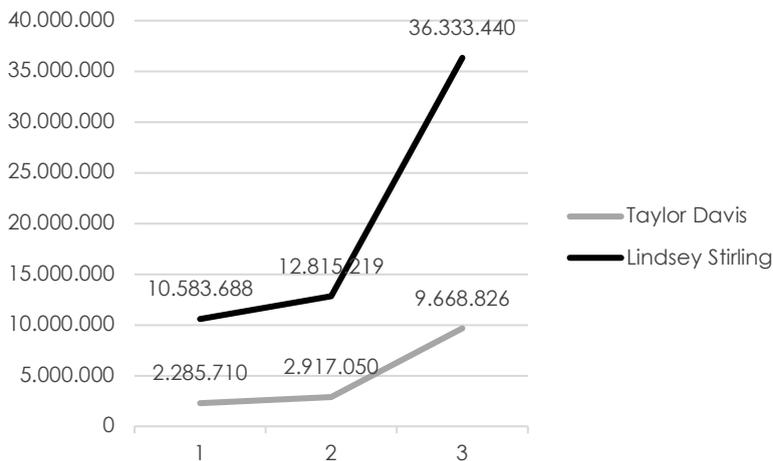
Fictional Cover by Taylor Davis		
Title and access to the video	Fictional wardrobe and/or scenery	Fictional objects
He's a Pirate (Disney's Pirates of the Caribbean Theme) Violin Cover – Taylor Davis https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnJ7uOK4nYg	Yes	No
Naruto – Sadness and Sorrow (Violin Cover) – Taylor Davis https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mF3DCa4TbD0	No	No

My Heart Will Go On (Titanic) Taylor Davis – Violin Cover https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFdIhmQ-ek	Yes	No
Fairy Tale Theme (Violin Cover) Taylor Davis https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o87hNhgfZvl	Yes	No
Now We Are Free (Gladiator Theme) – Violin Cover – Taylor Davis https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZUcEmREZ9Y	Yes	No
Fictional Cover by Lindsey Stirling		
Skyrim – Lindsey Stirling & Peter Hollens https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSLPH9d-jsl	Yes	Yes
Lord of the Rings Medley – Lindsey Stirling https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQiNVk_u0po	Yes	No
Phantom of the Opera – Lindsey Stirling https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCL94-MsxYc	Yes	Yes
Zelda Medley- Lindsey Stirling https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3KUyPKbR7Q	Yes	Yes
Assassin's Creed III – Lindsey Stirling https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOg8Cz9yfWg	Yes	Yes

Source: Author created

As for the last categorization on the future projections related to the subscribers in YouTube, and according to statistical data from the *Socialblade.com* platform in May of 2018, there is a positive steady number of subscribers that is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Prospective trend of subscribers in Taylor Davis and Lindsey Stirling's YouTube channels



Source: Author created.

Here, the evolution of both artists is observed, considering their current dedication to the channel, with the results pointing to a notable increasing tendency of popularity. These data also suggests a comparison with the tendency of fictional and/or original content in future studies extrapolated to a larger sample, with the objective of recognizing the success of this specialized fictional music *youtuber* community. Taylor Davis shows an increase of subscribers of 323.01%, and Lindsey Stirling of 243.3%. Thus, these results are discussed and the main conclusions of the study presented in the following section.

4. Discussion

Throughout the results section, a series of important parameters were observed dealing with the *youtuber* musician phenomenon; raising new questions in the study of identities in this platform.

First, and as deduced from a first analysis of the variables related to the balance between fictional or original content, in Taylor Davis' channel, a clear dominance of the fictional cover was detected. Although Lindsey Stirling displayed a slight prevalence for this typology, her differentiation from her peer suggests an in-depth analysis of the interests and preferences of other *youtubers* in terms of types of content.

As for the trendline of the fictional production throughout 2010 and 2018, a pronounced variation was observed in the case of the cover in both channels. This factor should be taken into account in future research studies, as the success of the *youtuber's* production could be altered by the popularity of the original musical product of the moment (film musicals, television series, etc.).

Likewise, the prospective line of original content remains stable and growing in the period examined. If both variants are compared, one can sense the prevalence of fictional content in the early years of launching the *youtuber's* channel as a means to appeal to their followers, later directing their production to mainly original content. In other words, this suggests a tendency towards an increase of original content over the fictional as the *youtuber* acquires subscribers, views and likes (fame).

Lastly, and in the case of the fictional content with the greater visualizations in both channels, an imposition in the wardrobe, scenarios and objects belonging to the original cultural product was analyzed. This aspect implies, as shown in the methodology section, that the aesthetic-narrative variables move beyond the musical concept, towards a resignification and expansion of the fictional universe (Vizcaino-Verdú and Sánchez-Olmos, 2018).

5. Conclusions

The *fandom* content created by web users has resulted in substantial numbers of limitless productions, becoming one of their main means of expression. Naturally, this user generated content is translated into audiovisual products exposed to a heterogeneous, multitudinal audience in platforms such as YouTube. However, in this medium, one no longer speaks about a *prosumer* who creates new inter-creative connections (Fernández-Castrillo, 2014), but a *tuber* or *youtuber*, who moves beyond the social network itself in an intent to construct his or her own identity as a public individual (Hidalgo-Marí and Sánchez-Olmos, 2016). Thus, in their trajectory of constant and notable growth, talent and interests come together and become synonymous with fame.

YouTube, the social and audiovisual space par excellence, has become a medium of projection for amateur users who, like Taylor Davis and Lindsey Stirling, improve their career through the number of likes, subscriptions and views. In this order, although we are focusing on two specific cases and on the artistic-musical expressions of fictional content, it would also be interesting to delve into the prevalence of a type of production over another throughout the years with a broader sample, in order to establish a relationship between the first factor and the increase of success of each figure. And, although it may be a limitation to consider the term success as equivalent to the accumulation of subscribers, it is true that businesses, users and the platform itself award this type of social category. That is, thanks to the number of subscribers, a *youtuber* becomes a target for advertising brands and communication media, among others. This means that, as pointed out by Tur-Viñes, Núñez-Gómez and González-Río (2018), creativity, ingenuity, influence and the degree of appropriation of the subjects in YouTube is an undeniable form of paid advertising (Marta-Lazo, 2017), just as the entertainment industry generates new avenues for profit in social networks and the *mainstream* culture (Osuna-Acedo, Gil-Quintana and Cantillo-Valero, 2018). In this sense, it is interesting to point out that the protagonists of this study have acquired great popularity among their followers, who are mainly violinists belonging to the classical genre. An example of rupture that competes with (or endorses) new strategies of music commercialization.

Referring to the achievement of objectives, and in the cases selected, both Taylor Davis and Lindsey Stirling, began their YouTube wanderings in 2010 and 2007, respectively, as mere violinists who longed to merge and show their passion for music and soundtracks. Their growth in the platform (subscribers, number of views, prevalence of one type of content over another, etc.), has facilitated the identification of the keys in the configuration of this specific music figure. YouTube, effectively, has provided them with a enduring artistic manifestation that translates into statistics that project a five-year increase in subscriptions as well as an entire repertoire of actions characteristic of a professional musician: album launches, founding of record companies, tours, collaborations, etc. In this sense, it could be sensed that the user (and a fan) with the same artistic musical talent, could now develop a professional identity (a successful trajectory) through online vehicles such as the YouTube platform in the attainment of personal objectives (tastes, interests and recognitions).

In terms of the two specific objectives relating to the prospective description of both channels and their preferences for fictional or original content, their trajectory and projection join the exploitation of content internationally recognized as belonging to a *mainstream* cultural environment (Martel, 2011). In this manner, the artistic talent of the user was harmonized with her yearning and self-definition as a musician, initiating a promotional deployment of their professional career, inviting future artists and amateurs to join in the phenomenon.

Ultimately, with this approach to the configuration of the artistic-musical identity on YouTube (Pérez-Torres et al., 2018), we offer tools to undertake a more detailed study of the phenomenon, in order to clarify the evolution and trend, the preference for a specific type of fictional or original content, and the success of *youtuber* musicians, through a broader sample that revalidates and unveils new aspects in the community.

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Notes

1. See YouTube channel in <https://goo.gl/WXssBy>
2. See webpage in <https://goo.gl/3AGpmE>
3. See YouTube channel <https://goo.gl/KWCyoa>
4. See webpage in <https://goo.gl/SA8HwR>
5. See complete record in <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.6110540.v1>

