

# Participation on Twitter (X) after the death of Verónica Forque and Alex Casademunt

## *Participación en Twitter (X) tras el fallecimiento de Verónica Forqué y Álex Casademunt*



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**Abstract:**

This study analyses the participation on Twitter (X) during the 15 days following the deaths of Veronica Forque (suicide) and Alex Casademunt (traffic accident). The primary objective of the study is to compare the reactions generated on Twitter (X) to the suicide versus the traffic accident of a famous person. To achieve this, the Application Programming Interface Tweet Downloader was used to download batches of tweets (posts) corresponding to each period. Pearson's chi-square test was utilised to identify differences in the messages. Additionally, a content analysis was conducted on a sample of the retrieved tweets (n=621), in which various variables were measured. The results indicate that despite both victims being similarly well-known to the public, Twitter (X) activity was higher in the case of Veronica Forque than in the case of Alex Casademunt. Furthermore, the topic of suicide prompted discussions about guilt (internal and external), preventive measures, and their perceived usefulness compared to the traffic accident, which elicited more expressions of emotions and mentions of the cause of death.

**Keywords:**

Twitter (X); suicide; traffic accident; Veronica Forque; Alex Casademunt.

**Resumen:**

*Este estudio analiza la participación en Twitter (X) durante los 15 días siguientes a los fallecimientos de Verónica Forqué (suicidio) y Álex Casademunt (accidente de tráfico). El principal objetivo del estudio es comparar las reacciones generadas en Twitter (X) ante un suicidio y un accidente de tráfico de una persona famosa. Para ello, se ha utilizado la Interfaz de Programación de Aplicaciones Tweet Downloader desde donde se han descargado los lotes de tuits (post) correspondientes a cada periodo. Se ha utilizado la prueba de chi cuadrado de Pearson para identificar diferencias en los mensajes. También se ha llevado a cabo un análisis de contenido sobre la muestra de tuits recuperados (n=621), donde se han medido diferentes variables. Los resultados indican que, a pesar de que ambas víctimas son personajes similarmente conocidos por el público, la participación en Twitter (X) ha sido mayor en el caso de Verónica Forqué que en el caso de Álex Casademunt y que el motivo de suicidio se presta a comentar la culpabilidad (interna y externa), el enfoque preventivo y la utilidad frente al accidente de tráfico, en donde se observa una mayor expresión de la emotividad y la mención de la causa de la muerte.*

**Palabras clave:**

*Twitter (X); suicidio; accidente de tráfico; Verónica Forqué; Álex Casademunt.*

**1. Introduction**

There are numerous research studies on user engagement on social networks. These studies address topics related to the business sphere (Cuervo-Carabel, Arce-García and Orviz-Martínez, 2022), political communication (Castanho Silva and Proksch, 2022), medicine (Burgess *et al.*, 2022), including studies on COVID-19 (Xie and Liu, 2022), as well as research on communication about mental health (Kelley and Gillan, 2022) and traffic accidents (Suat-Rojas, Gutierrez-Osorio and Pedraza, 2022).

However, despite specific studies addressing suicide on Twitter, now known as X (Durán-Mañes *et al.*, 2023), or on suicide involving famous victims (Müller, 2011), no research to date has been found that examines all these variables concurrently, including traffic accidents, as is undertaken exclusively in this research.

Additionally, there is research on the media impact of news concerning suicides and traffic accidents- along with accidental falls and drownings- in the Spanish digital press (Olivar-Julián, Segado-Boj and Díaz-Campo, 2022a; Olivar-Julián, Segado-Boj and Díaz-Campo, 2022b). These studies highlight disparities in media coverage of these causes of death, highlighting an excess of news related to traffic accidents and significant news silence concerning suicides.

Similarly, there exist studies analysing traffic accidents and suicides among young people (Olivar-Julián, Díaz-Campo, 2020; Scourfield *et al.*, 2019), but a comparative study examining social conversation on Twitter (X) following the deaths of two similarly

famous individuals in the same year, with a very similar number of selected tweets (currently posts) in the sample (321 about Verónica Forqué and 300 about Álex Casademunt) has not yet been undertaken. Such a study will allow for an analysis of the communication differences detected between different causes of death (suicide and traffic accidents).

Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in its potential to compare results obtained with those of previous studies analysing the media coverage of these causes in Spanish digital press. This adds a higher degree of innovation and originality to this research, particularly in the context of examining the impact and social media reactions surrounding two celebrities who significantly influence media coverage.

From all this, it can be inferred that the primary objective of this study is to evaluate and compare the societal impact of both events via the social network Twitter (X) and, more specifically, to analyse the various variables that provide information about user behaviour on this social platform.

In other words, this study will compare the number of tweets containing the victims' full names, analyse mentions of the victims, along with the presence of hashtags, emotionality, and sensationalist features to assess user behaviour on Twitter (X) in their messages following the deaths of Álex Casademunt (due to a traffic accident) and Verónica Forqué (by suicide). Therefore, our objective is not to directly compare a traffic accident with a suicide but rather to measure the impact of these fatal events on Twitter (X), considering victims of similar popularity.

### *1.1. Suicides and traffic accidents*

From 2010 to 2020 (both years inclusive), suicides constituted the leading cause of non-natural deaths in Spain (39,658 fatalities), while traffic accidents (20,960 fatalities) ranked fourth (after accidental falls and drownings) in the ranking of deaths from external causes (INE, 2023).

It is estimated that around 700,000 people worldwide die by suicide each year (WHO, 2023), and the number of deaths by suicide in Spain in 2020 was 3,941 (INE, 2023).

On the other hand, approximately 1,300,000 people die each year worldwide due to traffic accidents (WHO, 2022), while the number of fatalities from traffic accidents in Spain (in 2020) was 1,463 deaths (INE, 2023).

These figures reveal a higher incidence of fatalities from traffic accidents globally, whereas, in Spain, the mortality rate from suicide is notably higher than from traffic accidents.

While traffic accidents have been widely covered in the media, this is not the case for suicides, which have been deliberately silenced to prevent a contagion effect –Werther effect– (Donovan and Boyd, 2021) lo que los medios de comunicación deciden no cubrir puede ser tan significativo como lo que cubren. En este artículo, examinamos la producción histórica del silencio en el periodismo para comprender mejor el papel que juega la amplificación en las prácticas de moderación editorial y de contenido de los medios de comunicación y las plataformas de redes sociales actuales. A través de la lente del silencio estratégico (es decir, el uso de la discreción editorial para el bien público. On the other hand, there are professional recommendations advocating for responsible discussion of suicide to obtain a preventive effect –the Papageno effect– (Durán and Fernández-Beltrán, 2020). These recommendations argue against systematically silencing this reality, highlighting a contrast with the current editorial discretion

intended to promote public welfare. This theory is based on a shift from strategic silence to a new editorial approach of “strategic amplification”, requiring media organisations and platform companies to develop and implement best practices ensuring responsibility and accountability in news content production and the algorithmic systems that disseminate it (Donovan and Boyd, 2021)lo que los medios de comunicación deciden no cubrir puede ser tan significativo como lo que cubren. En este artículo, examinamos la producción histórica del silencio en el periodismo para comprender mejor el papel que juega la amplificación en las prácticas de moderación editorial y de contenido de los medios de comunicación y las plataformas de redes sociales actuales. A través de la lente del silencio estratégico (es decir, el uso de la discreción editorial para el bien público).

The quality of news (defined as convergence with WHO recommendations for journalistic reporting on suicide) is particularly significant in this context since low-quality reporting can lead to suicides through the contagion effect. In contrast, high-quality news reporting can save lives. These findings stem from data from a recent study providing a theoretically significant discovery related to the underlying mechanism of suicide prevention, called the “dampening-the-spikes hypothesis” (Arendt, Markiewitz and Scherr, 2022). This evidence on the importance of quality news reporting has prompted media professionals to advocate for a new type of journalism aligned with constructive and solution-oriented reporting (Lough and McIntyre, 2021).

Regarding Twitter (X), no evidence that posting tweets about suicides trigger a contagion effect has been found (Sinyor *et al.*, 2021)few have explored suicide-related social media events and their potential relationship to suicide deaths. Aims: To determine whether Twitter events were associated with changes in subsequent suicides. Methods: Suicide-related Twitter events that garnered at least 100 tweets originating in Ontario, Canada (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016). These messages have even been observed to focus on raising awareness, making this social network a constructive space for sharing preventive resources (Spates, Ye and Johnson, 2020).

It is also relevant to note that Twitter (X) has software capabilities that enable automated analysis of sentiments and emotions (Korani and Mouhoub, 2020), lexical usage (Sarsam *et al.*, 2021), hate speech (Arce-García, Díaz-Campo and Cambronero-Saiz, 2023). It also facilitates the identification of temporal patterns of suicide, which can serve as valid mechanisms for detecting and intervening in suicide online on a broad scale (Luo *et al.*, 2020).

## 1.2. Twitter (X) as a social network

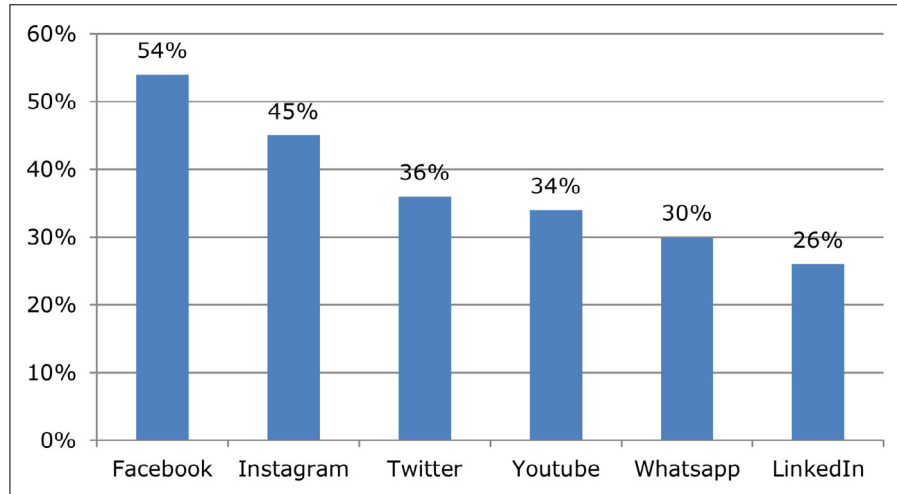
Social media platforms have become public spaces where users freely share personal opinions, exchange ideas, and promote social mobilisation (De Maio and Shae Rodriguez, 2022). This participation is facilitated by user-friendly interfaces, immediacy, and the opportunity to interact with public figures, media actors, and other citizens (Suau-Gomila *et al.*, 2017).

Twitter (X) stands out among these platforms as one of the most widely used globally (Babvey, 2021; Elliott-Maksymowicz, Nikolaev and Porpora, 2021; Kircova, 2021) and in Spain, it ranks among the most widely used alongside Facebook (Sánchez Conde, 2022). Currently, Twitter boasts 309 million active users worldwide (Bukhari *et al.*, 2021) and 4.2 million users in Spain (Statista, 2022). Comparative studies on the commercial use of social media in Spain indicate that Twitter (X), Facebook, and Instagram rank among the top three platforms, surpassing other significant networks such as YouTube, WhatsApp or LinkedIn (see Figure 1).

Moreover, media outlets’ use of Twitter (X) to cultivate a community among their followers indicates this social network’s importance. This data, coupled with the ability to use retweets (now referred to as “Re posts), mentions, or hashtags, further

enhance its utility and the concept of transparency, a widely accepted norm in digital journalism (Van der Wurff and Schönbach, 2011). Above all, these features represent new ways to forge connections and foster community (Durán-Mañes, 2023).

**Figure 1. Ranking of commercial use of Social Networks in Spain in 2022**



Source: Acebes and Montanera, 2022

## 2. Method

In this study, tweets from Twitter (X) related to two famous individuals, Verónica Forqué Vázquez-Vigo (@veronicaforque), a Spanish actress and director who received four Goya awards and Alejandro (Álex) Casademunt i González (@alex\_casad), a Spanish pop singer, actor and television presenter, both deceased in the same year (2021) are analysed. Their successful careers and achievements in the entertainment and performing arts industries indicate comparable levels of fame and recognition.

The similar number of tweets recorded in this study for both individuals also indicates a similar level of fame and popularity, thereby justifying their comparison.

Verónica Forqué died by suicide on 13 December 2021 in Madrid (*El País*, 2021a) while Álex Casademunt died in a traffic accident on 2 March of the same year in Mataró -Barcelona- (*El País*, 2021b).

Following her death, the actress's Twitter (X) account was suspended, making it impossible to retrieve her number of followers (Twitter, 2022b). In contrast, the singer Álex Casademunt's account remains active and has 58,200 followers (Twitter, 2022a).

This study analysed tweets about these two famous individuals during the 15 days following their deaths. The objective was to observe different user behaviours in their posts, considering that social media has become a tool for disseminating emotional messages and offensive, insulting, or hateful opinions (Theng *et al.*, 2021).

Twitter's (X) Application Programming Interface (API) Tweet Downloader was used with academic research access to Twitter's API v2 to obtain tweets referencing the individuals studied. This tool has been used in recent studies (Kumari et al., 2024).

The search process involved entering «Veronica Forque» (without accents or Boolean operators) between 13 December 2021 (12:00 PM. UTC) and 28 December 2021 (12:00PM. UTC) and «Alex Casademunt» from March 2 2021 (12:00PM. UTC Time) to 17 March 2021 (12:00 PM. UTC). These time intervals encompassed the 15 days following each individual's death.

The initial search yielded 168, 951 tweets for Verónica Forqué and 57,554 tweets for Álex Casademunt. This volume of information was deemed unmanageable for this study. Consequently, only “verified” tweets were considered (using the “verified tweets” filter). Additionally, the search process included applying filters for “with mentions”, capturing only tweets mentioning @veronicaforque and @alex\_casad. Another search was filtered using “with hashtags”.

This process led to the downloading of several batches of tweets for each individual/period. The CSV files obtained from Twitter (X) API Twitter Download were subsequently converted into Excel files. Results from the three search types for each individual were consolidated into a single file. Duplicates, blank text entries, entries lacking date references, or containing other errors were removed. This resulted in 1,713 tweets about Verónica Forqué and 1,175 tweets about Álex Casademunt. A stratified random sampling approach was applied to these Tweet sets to achieve a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error. This yielded 300 tweets about Álex Casademunt (AC) and 321 tweets about Verónica Forqué (VF).

To facilitate visual comparison of the previously presented data, a summary table has been created to consolidate all information from this process (see Table 1).

**Table 1. The number of posted tweets downloaded, debugged and selected**

File name	Posted tweets	Downloaded tweets	Debugged tweets	Tweets selected as a sample
VF + verified	4,367	7,654	1,713	321
VF + verified + mentions	1,455	2,916		
VF + verified + <i>hashtags</i>	952	1,864		
AC + verified	2,159	3,079	1,175	300
AC + verified + mentions	443	733		
AC + verified + <i>hashtags</i>	509	811		

Source: created by the authors

The information retrieved via Twitter's (X) API encompassed the following expansions and fields: «*id, text, created\_at, author\_id, in\_reply\_to\_user\_id, lang, author, entities, referenced\_tweets, media y geo*», corresponding to the terms «identification, tweet text, created\_at\_author\_id, in\_reply\_to\_user\_id, lang, author, entities, referenced\_tweets, media, and geo».

The analysis sheet is composed of a set of variables selected from previous studies (Arafat *et al.*, 2022) the quality of news reporting of suicide has not been assessed in Iran adequately specially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Aim: The study aimed to evaluate the quality of online news reporting of suicidal behavior in Iran against the World Health Organization (WHO; Olivar-Julián *et al.*, 2022; Singh *et al.*, 2022; Thienel *et al.*, 2019) and includes the following fields «Message, Date, No. of Characters, No. of Words, Drugs (mention of substances that cause addiction), With Hashtag, With Mention, Retweets, Preventive focus (whether alternatives that could have prevented the incident are presented), Sensationalism (whether WHO recommendations for suicide news reporting are breached, irrelevant data that demean the news or details of the injuries or the event itself cross the threshold of the descriptive) Emotionality (appeal to feelings), Mention of Cause (reference to the cause or reason for the suicide or accident), Gender, Age, Collectives, Internal Blame (the victim's own), External blame (anyone other than the victim), Conflict (situation where two or more people with different interests confront each other), Unusual (situation that exceeds the normality of the event itself, Utility, Humour and Sexuality».

In the case of the preventive focus, messages proposing preventive measures or suggesting ideas preventing such incidents' recurrence were considered. For the conflict variable, instances causing discomfort due to comments or behaviours of third parties were evaluated, such as the case of the Master Chef programme in the tweets about Verónica Forqué or from specific journalists in those about Álex Casademunt.

Regarding the presence of sensationalist features, the methodology used in comparable studies (Bazaco, Redondo and Sánchez-García, 2019; Laroche *et al.*, 2014) has been taken into account, informed by guidelines from the World Health Organisation (WHO) concerning the detection of sensationalism in reporting on suicides (Artiles, Rodríguez-Caro and Méndez, 2002). Based on these data, a content analysis was conducted on a sample of retrieved tweets (n=625).

Intercoder reliability was determined through a pretest of 100 tweets (50 from each analysed account, selected randomly) coded by two of the study's authors. The results (Cohen's Kappa) value of 1 (perfect) for all variables except for «sensationalism», which achieved a value of 0.94 (almost perfect). For the statistical analysis, frequency calculations were performed to determine the presence and absence of each variable in tweets related to Álex Casademunt and Verónica Forqué. Pearson's chi-square test of association was employed to identify specific differences in the characteristics of messages mentioning each account. This test compares the observed frequency of particular variables (in this case, the presence of specific message characteristics) with a purely probabilistic distribution that corresponds to a directly proportional allocation. Therefore, the tests allow us to determine whether the number of messages exhibiting a particular characteristic in each group is higher or lower than would be expected, indicating whether there is a greater tendency to observe specific characteristics in each group.

This test provides us with two values: the chi-square and the p-value. The larger the first and the smaller the second, the less likely it is that the observed distribution occurred by error. The p-value can be interpreted approximately as the probability that such a distribution could occur purely by chance (for instance, a value of 0.05 suggests that such a distribution could occur 5% of the time). The standard significance threshold of p equal to or less than 0.05 was applied. Cases below this value show a significant difference

in the presence of a particular trait in the tweets about Álex Casademunt and those referring to Verónica Forqué. This means that there is a tendency for a specific set of messages to more frequently exhibit a particular characteristic.

This approach will allow us to evaluate how Twitter (X) users behave in their posts following the death of two highly popular individuals who have lost their lives due to markedly different causes (a traffic accident and suicide).

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Descriptives

The most prevalent feature in the analysed messages was sensationalism, followed by emotionality, conflict and mention of the cause of death and in contrast, humour, preventive focus, utility, mention of collectives, sexuality and drugs exhibited minimal presence.

A summary table of the aforementioned results has been created, showing both the frequency of these variables in the studied news and their corresponding percentages (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Frequency and percentages of the characteristics observed**

Characteristics	N.º	%
Sensationalism	163	26.2
Emotionality	130	20.9
Conflict	116	18.7
Mention of cause	97	15.6
Age	50	8.1
External blame	31	5.0
Internal blame	13	2.1
Humour	11	1.8
Preventive focus	10	1.6
Utility	8	1.3



Collectives	3	0.5
Sexuality	1	0.2
Drugs	0	0.0
Mention of gender	0	0.0
Unusual	0	0.0

Source: created by the authors

The disaggregated data for each individual reveals a greater presence of emotionality, mentions of the cause of death, and reference to the age in the case of Álex Casademunt (AC). Conversely, tweets about Verónica Forqué (VF) demonstrate a higher percentage of internal blame, external blame, utility and humour, albeit with relatively lower values (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Frequencies and percentages of observed characteristics disaggregated**

	AC		VF	
	N.º	%	N.º	%
Preventive focus	0	0.0	10	3.1
Sensationalism	85	28.3	78	24.3
Emotionality	89	29.7	41	12.8
Mention of cause	60	20.0	37	11.5
Age	37	12.3	13	4.0
Collectives	1	0.3	2	0.6
Internal blame	1	0.3	12	3.7
External blame	2	0.7	29	9.0
Conflict	49	16.3	67	20.9

Utility	0	0.0	8	2.5
Humour	0	0.0	11	3.4

Source: created by the authors

An analysis of all the data gathered from the tweets about Verónica Forqué reveals the presence of variables such as preventive focus (3.12%), utility 2.49%) and humour(3.43%), which do not show any activity in the case of Álex Casademunt. These results obtained from the tweets about Verónica Forqué become even more prominent when considering messages that mention and directly appeal to the user (preventive focus 5.33%, utility 5,33% and humour 6.67%).

In tweets about Verónica Forqué, higher values of internal blame (3.78%), external blame (9.03%) and conflict (20.87%) were recorded, with internal blame slightly higher (5.88%) when those tweets included hashtags.

Concerning the conflict, the overall percentage of tweets about Verónica Forqué remained consistent (20.87%) when including a hashtag (19.61%) or mentioning a user (22.67%). However, for Álex Casademunt, the general data (16.33%) rose to 21.95% when hashtags were used and decreased to 14.08% when a user was mentioned.

Regarding emotionality, the results indicate a higher presence of this variable in Álex Casademunt’s tweets (29.67%) compared to Verónica Forqué (12.77%).

The analysis reveals significant levels of sensationalism in tweets related to both Álex Casademunt (28.33%) and Verónica Forqué (24.30%), with an even higher occurrence of this variable in the tweets that include a mention (Álex Casademunt: 33.80%, Verónica Forqué: 29,33%).

On the other hand, for Álex Casademunt (AC), the mention of the cause of his accident is present in 20% of the tweets, increasing to 26.83% when accompanied by a hashtag but decreasing to 11.27% when a specific user is mentioned.

In Verónica Forqué’s case (VF), her cause of death is mentioned in 11.53% of the messages, which remains similar when a user is mentioned (12%) but significantly lower when a hashtag is included (3.92%).

Table 4 below summarises these results, indicating the presence of each variable in percentages.

**Table 4. Percentage proportion of the observed characteristics**

Feature	VF Total	AC Total	VF Hashtag	AC Hashtag	VF Mention	AC Mention
Preventive focus o	3.12	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.33	0.00
Utility	2.49	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.33	0.00
Humour	3.43	0.00	1.96	0.00	6.67	0.00

Sex	0.31	0.00	1.96	0.00	1.33	0.00
Sensationalism	24.30	28.33	13.73	19.51	29.33	33.80
Emotionality	12.77	29.67	17.65	21.95	13.33	22.54
Mention of cause	11.53	20.00	3.92	26.83	12.00	11.27
Internal blame	3.78	0.33	5.88	0.00	1.33	0.00
External blame	9.03	0.67	7.84	2.44	10.67	0.00
Conflict	20.87	16.33	19.61	21.95	22.67	14.08

Source: created by the authors

### 3.2. Results of the chi-square

The chi-square test confirms the comparisons identified in Table 3. This test did not identify significant relationships between the analysed cases and the presence of sensationalism  $\chi^2(1, N=621)=1.30, p=.254$ - or conflict:  $-\chi^2(1, N=621)=2.10, p=.147$ -.

On the contrary, the results were positive when testing the relationship between the cases and the presence of emotionality  $-\chi^2(1, N=621)=26.7, p<.001$ -, a specific mention of the cause of death  $\chi^2(1, N=621)=8.45, p=.004$ -, a reference to the victim's age:  $-\chi^2(1, N=621)=14.4, p<.001$ -, mention of internal blame:  $-\chi^2(1, N=621)=8.77, p=.003$ -, external blame:  $-\chi^2(1, N=621)=22.9, p<.001$ -, the adoption of a preventive focus:  $-\chi^2(1, N=621)=9.50, p=.002$ -, the presence of utility:  $-\chi^2(1, N=621)=7.57, p=.006$ - and humour:  $-\chi^2(1, N=621)=10.5, p=.001$ -

The tweets about Álex Casademunt included emotive features, mentioning the cause of death and his age on more occasions than would be expected in a proportional distribution. Regarding Verónica Forqué, in comparison, a greater tendency has been identified for the tweets to mention responsibility (external and internal), adopt a preventive focus, and exhibit features of utility and humour (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Distribution of the frequencies observed and expected by case**

<b>Presence of emotionality</b>			
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Alex Casademunt	Observed	211	89
	Expected	237	62.8
Verónica Forqué	Observed	280	41
	Expected	254	67.2
<b>Mention of the cause of death</b>			
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Alex Casademunt	Observed	240	60
	Expected	253	46.9
Verónica Forqué	Observed	284	37
	Expected	271	50.1
<b>Mention of the victim's age</b>			
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Alex Casademunt	Observed	263	37
	Expected	276	24.2
Verónica Forqué	Observed	308	13
	Expected	295	25.8
<b>Mention of internal responsibility</b>			
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Alex Casademunt	Observed	299	1
	Expected	294	6.28
Verónica Forqué	Observed	309	12
	Expected	314	6.72
<b>Mention of external responsibility</b>			
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>

Alex Casademunt	Observed	298	2
	Expected	285	15.0
Verónica Forqué	Observed	292	29
	Expected	305	16.0
<b>Mention of preventive focus</b>			
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Alex Casademunt	Observed	300	0
	Expected	295	4.83
Verónica Forqué	Observed	311	10
	Expected	316	5.7
<b>Mention of utility</b>			
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Alex Casademunt	Observed	300	0
	Expected	296	3.86
Verónica Forqué	Observed	313	8
	Expected	317	4.14
<b>Humour</b>			
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Alex Casademunt	Observado	300	0
	Expected	295	5.31
Verónica Forqué	Observado	310	11
	Expected	315	5.69

**Source: created by the authors**

#### 4. Discussion

Despite traffic accidents generally receiving more media coverage than suicides to avoid a contagion effect (Werther effect) (Donovan and Boyd, 2021) lo que los medios de comunicación deciden no cubrir puede ser tan significativo como lo que cubren. En este artículo, examinamos la producción histórica del silencio en el periodismo para comprender mejor el papel que juega la

amplificación en las prácticas de moderación editorial y de contenido de los medios de comunicación y las plataformas de redes sociales actuales. A través de la lente del silencio estratégico (es decir, el uso de la discreción editorial para el bien público, on the social network Twitter (X), there were more tweets related to the suicide of Verónica Forqué compared to the traffic accident of Álex Casademunt. This trend was observed in both the raw data obtained before the final sample selection and in the final net data.

This result contrasts with other findings from studies on digital media news events, indicating greater coverage for traffic accidents than suicides (Olivar-Julián, Segado-Boj and Díaz-Campo, 2022). Moreover, it is on social media where there is stronger adherence to professional recommendations advocating responsible discussions about suicide to achieve preventive effects- the Papageno effect- and promote utility (Durán and Fernández-Beltrán, 2020). This is evidenced in the results of this study, showing a greater emphasis on prevention and utility in tweets about the suicide (Verónica Forqué) compared to those about the traffic accident (Álex Casademunt).

This data is significant because the media behave very differently and do not usually adhere to the recommendations for journalism professionals by the WHO (Olivar-Julián, Segado-Boj and Díaz-Campo, 2022).

An example of this is the COPOE statement on the media coverage of Verónica Forqué's suicide, which denounces the irresponsible reporting of her death by several media outlets (Confederación de Organizaciones de Psicopedagogía y Orientación de España, 2021).

These contributions are reinforced by the lack of evidence indicating that tweets about suicides can cause a contagion effect (Sinyor *et al.*, 2021) few have explored suicide-related social media events and their potential relationship to suicide deaths. Aims: To determine whether Twitter events were associated with changes in subsequent suicides. Methods: Suicide-related Twitter events that garnered at least 100 tweets originating in Ontario, Canada (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. Moreover, some studies suggest that the approach of these messages raises awareness and creates a constructive space on social networks where preventive resources can be shared (Spates, Ye and Johnson, 2020).

This suggests that the media still needs to shift towards constructive and solutions-oriented journalism. This trend has gained momentum in recent years following a period of self-reflection among journalists who have become aware of the negativity often inherent in news reporting (Lough and McIntyre, 2021; Durán *et al.*, 2023).

Based on this information, new avenues of preventive research on suicide communication via social networks could be developed using specialised software for text descriptions and language analysis (Rajesh Kumar *et al.*, 2020), sentiment and emotions analysis (Korani and Mouhoub, 2020), lexicon analysis (Sarsam *et al.*, 2021) and the identification of temporal patterns in suicide that can be used as effective detection mechanisms and for timely intervention (Luo *et al.*, 2020).

## 5. Conclusions

The results underscore distinct user behaviour among Twitter (X) users in their posts following the deaths of Álex Casademunt (due to a traffic accident) and Verónica Forqué (by suicide). Messages about Álex Casademunt show a more significant presence of emotionality alongside mentions of his age and the cause of his death. Regarding Verónica Forqué, users tend to focus more

on internal and external attributions of blame for the incident, accompanied by a more preventive approach that emphasises the utility of the information conveyed. There are also references to humour related to the actress's professional life.

Concerning the detection of sensationalist traits, both cases exhibit high levels (Álex Casademunt: 28.30%; Verónica Forqué: 24.30%), possibly because both are famous figures. This result is interesting when juxtaposed with the variable "mention of the cause" since the WHO advises against mentioning the cause in news coverage of suicide. Therefore, the frequent occurrence of this variable in the study could be considered evidence of sensationalism.

Therefore, observing that in the case of Álex Casademunt, the mention of the cause of his accident appeared in 20% of the tweets, compared to 11.53% for Verónica Forqué, it could be inferred that in the case of Álex Casademunt, this variable was considered a characteristic of sensationalism (not considered sensationalism in traffic accidents). In contrast, it is considered in the case of Verónica Forqué. Hence, this distinction should be acknowledged to differentiate the significance of both variables.

In any case, the findings of this research encourage further studies on the behaviour of Twitter (X) users regarding their comments on traffic accidents and suicides of famous people in other countries or similar studies that encompass other significant causes of mortality, such as accidental falls and drownings.

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## 7. Specific contributions of each author

	Name and Surname
Conception and design of the work	Francisco Javier-Oliver, Jesús Díaz-Campo and Francisco Segado-Boj
Methodology	Francisco Javier-Oliver, Jesús Díaz-Campo and Francisco Segado-Boj
Data collection and analysis	Francisco Javier-Oliver
Discussion and conclusions	Francisco Javier-Oliver, Jesús Díaz-Campo and Francisco Segado-Boj
Drafting, formatting, version review and approval	Francisco Javier-Oliver, Jesús Díaz-Campo and Francisco Segado-Boj

## 8. Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest contained in this article.

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