


# Sociocultural Factors in Times of Global Crisis

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research is to describe the sociocultural factors that emerge in times of global crisis. The study is qualitative. Netnography is used as a research method and Twitter as a data collection instrument. In order to analyze the flow of messages published on Twitter, the model that describes the sociocultural factors proposed by Perez-Cepeda and Arias-Bolzmann is used. Tweets published in times of global crisis around crowdfunding are categorized and classified based on structure and content, which makes it possible to determine sociocultural factors. The findings make it possible to determine that, through the analysis of the semantics used by the users in the tweets, it is possible to determine sociocultural factors, even establish sociocultural factors associated with various social groups. The limitations are that only the social network Twitter and tweets of users who interact with @gofundme official GoFundMe account are used.

## KEYWORDS

Crowdfunding, GoFundMe, Netnography, Semantics, Social Groups, Social Network, Tweets, Twitter

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The global crisis, as the COVID-19 pandemic, is having a strong impact on the society (Siripongdee et al., 2020). Perez-Cepeda and Arias-Bolzmann (2022) indicated that it is important to investigate the sociocultural factors that arise from the interaction between individuals and the society during different global crises, such as what happened with the COVID-19 pandemic. So that, it can be discerned what is meaningful for society, organizations and the academia to know what are the sociocultural factors that emerge in times of global crisis, and thus, based on the sociocultural factors that have appeared in these events, make decisions focused on a specific segment of the community. On the other hand, Schobel (2020) expressed that the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted life in countless ways around the world, and added, the pandemic has caused a negative economic impact, therefore, many people are in serious financial difficulties. For this reason, some legal entities (companies) and individuals (entrepreneurs) try to solve this financial loss by resorting to various types of subsidies, as crowdfunding.

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At the discretion of Simpson et al. (2021), crowdfunding has emerged as a popular complement to raise funds or donations through the use of financial intermediaries, and thus, financially finance projects, products, services and social campaigns. Based on what was stated by these authors, it can be deduced that in times of global crisis, the economic situation of natural and legal persons experiences a lack of financial resources. In addition, it is inferred that natural persons do not have the necessary financial liquidity to promote actions of a different nature, such as those related to the social aspect. To this is added that, it is difficult for new companies or individuals to access fresh financial resources by banking institutions duly regulated by state agencies because the requirements are very demanding to be qualified as a credit subject. It is due to these reasons that, the path that individuals and companies have adopted to seek financing is through crowdfunding, that is, convincing other people or organizations to contribute financial donations to develop projects, products, services and social campaigns with the aim of raising financial funds through the Web platform.

Crowdfunding has become popular worldwide, and is easily accessible through Web platforms (Vidraşcu, 2020). Behl et al. (2021) mentioned that the activities concerning the funds or donations raising through crowdfunding aim to attract contributors to finance a specific cause and in a certain period of time, this process is carried out through digital platforms, and they add, one of the objectives of crowdfunding is to attract individual and group donations in order to collect funds to finance various activities, such as disaster relief actions. It is appropriate to mention that there are multiple digital crowdfunding platforms, but the most important worldwide is GoFundMe (Zenone et al., 2020). In the opinion of Snyder and Cohen (2019) GoFundMe is the most dominant platform when it comes to crowdfunding, this platform specializes in attracting donations for different categories of social purposes, for example, health. It is important to cite what was expressed by Saleh et al. (2021), a big amount of categories for GoFundMe campaigns related to COVID-19 tell poignant stories of the widespread and destructive effect that the global crisis triggered by COVID-19 has had on society. It is important to note that crowdfunding platforms have links to different social networks, for example with Twitter (Hong et al., 2018).

For their part, Jin et al. (2014) stressed that Twitter is especially effective in communicating with audiences that actively participate in social crisis events. This example shows how, through a tweet, it is invoked the use of the crowdfunding platform “Hey guys, I lost my grandmother to Covid and as her next of kin I’m raising money to help pay for funeral expenses. If you don’t mind donating or simply retweeting, below is the GoFundMe page link and my cash app is \$TheColby. Thank you all! [@gofundme](https://t.co/sbDGcanaz4)”. Based on these criteria, the objective of this research is to describe the sociocultural factors related to the group of people who interact with the Twitter user @gofundme in times of global crisis.

In relation to the above, the following research question (RQ) is posed: How do sociocultural factors related to the group of people who interact with the Twitter user @gofundme influence in times of global crisis? In addition, other questions are set to guide the investigation process. RQ1: What is the structure of the tweets posted by users who interact with @gofundme?; RQ2: What are the issues addressed by users who interact with @gofundme?; RQ3: How are the issues addressed by users who interact with @gofundme conceptualized?; RQ4: What are the sociocultural ideologies related to the issues addressed by users who interact with @gofundme?

On the other hand, studying what people say about crowdfunding in times of global crisis is important for two reasons. First, Arnould and Thompson (2007) when promulgating the theory of consumer culture (CCT) stated that the exchange of information through the use of images (photos), texts and objects (videos) leads to describe the way in which people consume Internet and give meaning to information through multiple social spaces. Making an analogy of crowdfunding with the criteria of Arnould and Thompson (2007), it can be interpreted that, in times of global crisis, the virtual community gives meaning to the messages (tweets) that they consume on the social network Twitter according to the way in which they are constructed, that is, the form they are written and how people embed images (figures-photos), texts (strings of words and signs) and objects (videos) in the

message. According to Küçükömürlü and Özkan (2018), the attribution of meaning underlies the cognitive process that manifests itself through language, allowing people to interact with each other. Consequently, people need to build or choose places to interact with other people and make sense of things (Lawrence & Dover, 2015). Second, it is pertinent to indicate that virtual spaces where people interact, consume and publish messages, do so through digital communication channels. Consequently, the implementation of digital communication channels promotes the production and consumption of information, which allows to know the sociocultural factors of the people who interact in them (Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2020). Based on the criteria established, it can be specified that this research provides relevant information on the sociocultural factors around crowdfunding in times of global crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and from there, generate new knowledge that will help as a source of research for studies aimed at identifying the behaviors of people in times of global crisis within virtual environments. For example, the current research identified that when writing and publishing messages by users who interact with @gofundme, the purpose lies in publicizing fundraising campaigns without the need to converge in times of global crisis.

The content of this document is structured as follows: First, background information related to the global crisis is addressed, focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic, crowdfunding and social networks. Second, a review of the literature on social factors, Twitter, crowdfunding and the literature gap is analyzed. Third, the research approach and methods are described. Fourth, the categories and classifications that arise from the research are presented. Fifth, the conclusions are drawn and supported from the findings. And finally, implications, recommendations, limitations and future research are provided.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Global Crisis and Social Factors

The COVID-19 pandemic is the first global crisis to appear in a digital age (Fenwick et al., 2021). A global crisis event as the COVID-19 pandemic generates local and regional uncertainties, therefore, it rapidly affects the global economy (Mukherjee & Mukherjee, 2021). In the opinion of Karabag (2020), the spread of the coronavirus has created a global, regional, national, political, social, economic and commercial crisis. Adams (2020) added, the concerns in the current global crisis are not only biological, but also psychological, sociocultural, and spiritual. “To face the challenge of the global crisis, it is necessary for individuals, organizations and society to survive and prosper in the fight against the virus, as well as economic and social shocks” (de Castro et al., 2021, p 52). On their part, Suyanto et al. (2020) indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has forced people to develop new social constructions to face the so-called new normal, and added that social change can occur in many ways, such as that linked to economic activity. On the other hand, according to Litam (2020), social inequalities and policies related to COVID-19 can disproportionately affect minority groups and people from lower socioeconomic groups. Therefore, surviving during the COVID-19 pandemic requires creating supportive communities, sharing tools and knowledge (Bozkurt et al., 2020). It is appropriate to indicate that, what was mentioned by Bozkurt et al. (2020) is aligned with what is promulgated by GoFundMe in its terms of service, where, on June 2020 on the Web platform they indicate: “COVID-19 NOTICE: since GoFundMe tries to help people and companies affected by COVID -19, is collaborating with various third parties to help users cross-campaign to drive more support” (*GoFundMe*).

Therefore, it can be indicated that the consumption of information concerning crowdfunding becomes important for society in general, it is also a valuable mechanism to guide people about the vicissitudes that people go through, especially in situations of extreme complexity such as the ones generated due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Casero-Ripollés, 2020). Taking into consideration the criteria mentioned, it is deduced that the information that flows through

different virtual communication channels, how social networks and Web pages lead to become aware of the sociocultural factors that emerge in times of global crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2022).

## 2.2 Social Networks and Twitter

Different people, organizations and governments around the world are using social networks to communicate with each other, and consequently, address issues related to the global crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Bania, 2020). Similarly, many people express their opinions and aspirations on social networks (Rahman et al., 2021). Social networks and the Internet are essential as information and communication resources (Litam, 2020). They are also important spaces where public opinions are expressed, where discourse flows naturally and it is closer to reality versus the information collected through surveys and experiments (Wang & Tao, 2021). Besides, Akbulut et al. (2020) indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has made social networks play an important role in increasing citizen participation in virtual communication channels. Within these communication channels, Behl et al. (2021) mentioned that there are activities focused on raising funds or donations through the crowdfunding mechanism. For their part, Jin et al. (2020) revealed that the activities carried out through social networks to attract donations have a positive impact on the results of crowdfunding, and they add, there is a theoretical and practical need to discern the dynamics of the impact of the activities of the networks throughout the crowdfunding process. According to Vidraşcu (2020), online audiences find out about crowdfunding projects through communication technologies, such as mobile Internet and social networks.

Internet-oriented social networks present new business and service opportunities, including charitable and globalized activities such as crowdfunding (Kubheka, 2020). The information regarding crowdfunding that is published in the virtual communication channels, is designed to attract the crowd, the offer can be announced on the company's website, as well as through interaction with the social networks Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram (Elder & Hayes, 2021). In the opinion of Hong et al. (2018), most crowdfunding platforms offer functions on their Web pages to share information on social networks through the Twitter and Facebook buttons. But, regarding the social network Twitter Jin et al. (2014) mentioned that this network is especially effective in communicating with audiences that actively participate in social crisis events. In their own view, Woo et al. (2020) emphasized that despite the spread of multiple digital platforms, Twitter remains at the heart of the social media landscape. Finally, Battisti et al. (2021) mentioned that, in comparison to the social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram o LinkedIn, Twitter has become overtime in an interesting field of study for financial news circulation methods, playing a central role in the spread of news about crowdfunding. Based on these criteria, it can be said that during global crises such as the one generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the information consumed through the social network Twitter is relevant for society in general, and, consequently, for users. that publish and consume information about crowdfunding.

## 2.3 Cloud Computing and Crowdfunding Platform

Regarding services based on cloud computing technology, Cai (2018) mentioned that, Cloud computing is the practice of using a network of remote servers hosted on the Internet to store, manage, and process data, rather than a local server or personal computer. Zhang et al, (2022) mentioned that these services have been being used for a long time and have become the new business model; various types of organizations with the aim of creating and sharing applications and resources can adopt its applicability. Moreover, Kaur and Bala (2021) when referring to cloud computing indicated that, it is a platform that offers a customizable infrastructure where applications can be configured prior to execution. In addition, the scalability of cloud computing also enables processing and analysis much faster than Big Data (Hashem et al., 2015). From another point of view Parry and Bisson (2020) stated that, Cloud computing has revolutionized some areas of economic activity, such as the financial

market. Regarding finance market, Nour (2022) explained that unlike the legacy infrastructure associated with banks, financial technology is focused on the implementation of new technological tools, such as artificial intelligence, big data and cloud computing, and thus, making the customer experience convenient, accessible, functional and personalized. Additionally, Nour (2022) remarked that innovations in financial services have given place to fintech as a disruptive technology that is now shaping the future of the financial sector through services like crowdfunding.

Crowdfunding platforms have become an increasingly important business phenomenon and object of research (Short et al., 2017). Likewise, crowdfunding platforms have become an area where social approaches and innovative products can be exhibited around the world (Sirma et al., 2019). In the opinion of Yasar (2021), in crowdfunding platforms individuals, institutions or professional investors come together to finance creative projects, social projects or companies. At the discretion of Koch et al. (2021), crowdfunding platforms offer project initiators the opportunity to acquire funds from the crowd through the Internet, for this reason, they have become a valuable alternative to traditional sources of financing. These platforms have gained popularity, consequently, they need a constant flow of funds to achieve their objectives, especially as the frequency and intensity of disasters in the world have increased over time (Behl et al., 2021). Moreover, online platforms such as GoFundMe have given place to an innovative financing method called crowdfunding (Belleflamme et al., 2014).

Snyder and Cohen (2019) indicated that GoFundMe is the dominant platform for charitable crowdfunding and is also used for a variety of services. On crowdfunding platforms as the popular GoFundMe site, users can create fundraising campaigns using text, photos, and videos, and then send them via emails, text messages, or social media platforms (Bassani et al., 2019). These actions that can be performed on GoFundMe, are summarized in the legend displayed on the website, where it is clearly stated “By raising funds or donating for assistance against the coronavirus, we can all do our part and provide support. and the help we so badly need”. Based on the criteria set out, it can be inferred that the publication and consumption of information on the crowdfunding issue that is collected from users who interact with GoFundMe on social networks will be relevant to determine the sociocultural factors to be investigated.

## 2.4. Literature Gap

Perez-Cepeda and Arias-Bolzmann (2022) expressed that linguistics is the fundamental basis of natural languages. In the opinion of Mahfouz (2020), the structure and organization of language is affected at all levels by the various functions for which it is used. The use of language aims to build and maintain identities and social relationships and even define the boundaries of communities (Nguyen et al., 2016). On the other hand, Halliday et al. (2014) indicated that language promulgates three simultaneous metafunctions: an ideational function of representing experience, an interpersonal function of negotiating relationships, and a textual function of organizing information. In addition, the semantics that people use when structuring a message is a type of functional knowledge that reveals sociocultural factors (Liang et al., 2016). Regarding sociocultural factors, Perez-Cepeda and Arias-Bolzmann (2020) recommended observing how people interpret the information they consume in digital media and how the information influences sociocultural factors. For which, they propose to use the model that describes cultural factors (Pérez, 2019; Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2020; Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2021; Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2022) in order to compare sociocultural contexts that arise from studies on social domains taking as a source of information the conversations that flow on the social network Twitter.

Regarding crowdfunding, Radu and McManus (2018) stated that with the growing popularity of crowdfunding as a means to obtain resources of various kinds, such as financial, they recommend analyzing GoFundMe publications. Consequently, it can be inferred that the publications made through the GoFundMe social network Twitter are made by people from different sectors of society, therefore, certain sociocultural factors may be similar or dissimilar. In this sense, Behl et al. (2021) said that there are innate differences in the characteristics of people who participate in different

types of crowdfunding platforms. But, it is evidenced that Behl et al. (2021) in the research did not address sociocultural factors. Considering the exposed criteria as a starting point, it is time to support where the gap in the literature for the present investigation lies with previous investigations. Hervé et al. (2019) researched about -Determinants of individual investment decisions in investment-based crowdfunding- explicitly indicated that, when examining crowdfunding, it is essential to consider social factors, because they are the ones that allow us to draw a broader picture of investment behavior in crowdfunding. Addressing the same idea, Siemens et al. (2020) in the study -The influence of message appeal, social norms and donation social context on charitable giving: investigating the role of cultural tightness-looseness- mentioned that it is important to determine the social factors, in order to collect them, and in this way obtain a deeper insight into donation motivations, as well as explore how donation levels can vary according to the moment of the request. Finally, Waszkiewicz and Kukurba (2020) when studying -Crowdfunding and Financial System Models- said that, a high level of digitalization and innovation is not a previous requisite to the development of crowdfunding, and added, that is necessary to incorporate in the research a deeper analysis using social factors. Based on the presented recommendations, it can be expressed that the literature gap focuses on determining what are the sociocultural factors in times of global crisis, manifested on Twitter about crowdfunding.

Based on the above, the following proposition are formulated: P1: The semantics used by users who interact with @gofundme when structuring a message on Twitter is a type of functional knowledge that reveals sociocultural factors. P2: The demonstrations on Twitter about crowdfunding make it possible to establish sociocultural factors from the messages published on Twitter.

### 3. METHOD

The present study is descriptive and uses the qualitative approach. According to Arnould and Thompson (2005), qualitative research is used in the social sciences in order to understand the behavior and consumption patterns of individuals in different environments. Kozinets (2002) mentioned that to carry out qualitative research, one of the methods is netnographic because it leads to the study of cultures and communities through the Internet, and consequently, it allows acquiring significant knowledge of consumers who interact in digital environments. From the point of view of Heinonen and Medberg (2018), the netnographic method is ideal for investigating in virtual spaces, since people feel comfortable sharing private reflections about themselves. Based on these criteria, the netnographic method is used for the current investigation. Taking Kozinets (2002b) as a reference, it is necessary to keep two stages in mind when using netnography: (a) the questions must be prepared in advance to identify the communities and forums that will be studied; and (b) become familiar with online forums where members of the community to be studied interact. Following these recommendations, the RQs and the decision to take as a user @gofundme were raised. It is necessary to indicate that, within the crowdfunding platforms, GoFundMe is the predominant one (Snyder & Cohen, 2019).

Regarding social networks Sanderson et al. (2014) indicated that they are communication channels in virtual environments where social issues are addressed. For their part, Schmittle and Sanderson (2014) stated that the social network Twitter is a platform where important cultural issues are discussed in general. In the same direction, Segerberg and Bennett (2011) stated that Twitter is the most used social network on issues of social crisis. Based on this background, Twitter is used for data collection. In addition, the R Studio software is used to collect tweets and the information is stored in Excel (Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2020; Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2021; Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2022). At the conclusion of the data mining process, 2,180 tweets were collected. In order to analyze the content of the tweets, the information is migrated to the ATLAS.ti software. It is appropriate to indicate that ATLAS.ti is a useful tool for academic research, especially for social science disciplines, and helps to quickly identify specific topics related to the proposed research (Gualda & Díaz, 2020; Hwang, 2008). Also, it provides the researcher with analysis, comparisons and conclusions of qualitative data (Pérez, 2019).

### 3.1 Sampling

Social environments are spaces where people meet and interact, in the same way that occurs in social networks (Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2022). Even Giesler and Thompson (2016) stated that in social networks you can find debates regarding institutional, political, social and economic trends which would explain the behavior of the market related to the social network Twitter, it allows instant interconnection and communication between users from all over the world, therefore, Twitter can be considered as a social environment and a source (input) of information. Within the characteristics of Twitter, it can be highlighted that: (a) any user can publish one or more tweets; (b) each tweet can contain 280 characters or less; (c) the predetermined messages are public; (d) the tweets can include content such as photos, videos, links to other websites; and (e) they can be published at the moment the user agrees. considered appropriate depending on the relevance of the event. It should be noted that each event could even trigger a series of events related to sociocultural aspects. This all starts with a simple question that Twitter asks: What is happening now? Concerning to the events, Giesler and Thompson (2016) stated that the temporal nature of events can be determined in hours, days, months, or even years. Supported on this criterion, Carretta et al. (2013) in order to answer the research question, What are the links between the media and information on financial markets?, it was considered as study dates from May 21 to 30, 2012, and thus tracked the flow of tweets that converge around the hashtag #spread, finding that the influence of traditional media is still relevant, and that blogs, especially financial ones, are increasingly important in the dissemination of news on the social network. Based on these criteria, this research takes as the date of analysis the month of June 2020, then, during that month, the global crisis generated by the COVID-19 continued to grow throughout the world. As a result, in this period of time, 2,180 tweets were obtained from users who interacted with @gofundme.

R script in RStudio:

```
library(ROAuth);  
library(twitteR);  
library(streamR);  
library(csv);  
reqURL <- "https://api.twitter.com/oauth/request_token"  
accessURL <- "https://api.twitter.com/oauth/access_token"  
authURL <- "https://api.twitter.com/oauth/authorize"  
options(httr_oauth_cache=T)  
consumer_key <- "xxxxxxxxxxxx"  
consumer_secret <- "xxxxxxxxxxxx"  
access_token <- "xxxxxxxxxxxx"  
access_secret <- "xxxxxxxxxxxx"  
setup_twitter_oauth(consumer_key, consumer_secret, access_token,  
access_secret)  
setwd("/FileCrowdfunding")  
terms <- c("@gofundme -filter:retweets")  
terms_search <- paste(terms, collapse = "OR")  
BDMax <- searchTwitter(terms_search, n=3200, since = '2021-06-01',  
until = "2021-06-30")  
BDMax <- twListToDF(BDMax)  
write.table(BDMax, file = "/FileCrowdfunding/BDMax.csv", append=T,  
row.names=F, col.names=T, sep=",")
```

## 3.2 Data Analysis

In order to analyze the tweets, the non-exclusive class is adopted to determine the categories and the exclusive class to classify them. According to Zimmer and Proferes (2014), the non-exclusive class means that the content of the message can belong to multiple categories or classifications; on the contrary, the exclusive class corresponds to a single category or classification.

### 3.2.1 Categorization

First, for the categorization of tweets, the six categories recommended by Luo et al. (2015): (a) URL-Link: link in the tweet that leads to other websites that contain texts, images or videos; (b) COM-Comment: opinions or comments posted on the tweet to express any judgment or sentiment; (c) TAG-Hashtag: combinations of words preceded by the pound sign (#) to quickly search for a particular topic; (d) RWT-Retweet: tweets received and forwarded without modification; (e) MSG-Message: the message per se; and (f) MET-Mention: the recipient of the tweet (See Table 1).

### 3.2.2 Classification

Secondly, tweets are classified. For this purpose, criteria of several researchers that address social, cultural issues and related to global crises such as the COVID-19 are considered. Reviewing different authors, it is identified that, (Jimenez et al. 2021) considered that in times of global crisis within society great uncertainty and lack of information are created, which motivates people to increase their search for information. For that reason, the dissemination of information in the various conventional means of communication, social networks and specifically the social network Twitter is one of the critical information channels through which the public seeks information to learn about issues concerning the global crisis, such as COVID-19 (Sadasri, 2020). So, it can be said that social networks are digital platforms used by people with the desire to consume and share information on various topics such as social, commercial, economic and political (Ghounane, 2020). Conversely, Hong et al. (2018) expressed that, when fundraising campaigns are created on crowdfunding platforms and are publicized through social networks such as Twitter, they influence the audience more, as well, when they focus on prosocial objectives. Even Sakamoto et al. (2017) indicated that, when society interprets that the campaigns focus on the social, reciprocity arises, that is, people are willing to help each other. In the same direction, Chen et al. (2021) added that social connection through the combination of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations has positive effects on donation intentions by sponsors.

**Table 1. Categorization, classification - prepared by the authors**

Non-exclusive Categorization	Quantity	%	Exclusive	Quantity	%
			Classification		
MSG-Message	2180	26,03%	Information	1199	55,00%
MET-Mention	2087	24,92%	Sociocultural	483	22,16%
URL-Image-Link	1215	14,51%	Reflection	203	9,31%
RWT-Retweet	1072	12,80%	Complaint	160	7,34%
TAG-Hashtag	791	9,44%	News	41	1,88%
COM-Comment	705	8,42%	Rudeness	37	1,70%
URL-Text-Link	236	2,82%	Politics	23	1,06%
URL-Object-Link	89	1,06%	Religion	21	0,96%
			Humor	13	0,60%
Total - Non-exclusive	8375		Total - Exclusive	2180	



In another vein, the crowdfunding system has been seen as beneficial, but there is little exploration on the impact of human rights in online fundraising campaigns, therefore, during these campaigns it is necessary to develop an ethical framework to facilitate respect for people and protect human rights Kubheka (2020). Based on the criteria of Kubheka (2020) it can be inferred that, people are much more reflective when consuming information that is publicized about crowdfunding, and especially when they show that social factors are involved, therefore, that reflection is becomes an influencing element when deciding whether or not to contribute to the campaign, as well as, it can trigger people to post messages approving or rejecting the content of the message. From another order of ideas, Alarcón-Zayas and Bouhaben (2021) said that in times of global crisis such as that caused by the COVID-19, citizen interactions mediated by mobile devices serve to denounce brawls between citizens, and praise all kinds of police action, as well as, as a means of reporting when the integrity and repression of citizens is affected in most cases by the police forces, and they add, information such as these become viral on the Internet and maintain popular attention, until, end up arousing the interest of the official media after days of being uploaded, shared, discussed, interpreted and covered massively through social networks. In the opinion of Olimat (2020), television, newspapers and social networks continue to be the dominant resources through which breaking news about the global crisis such as the COVID-19 is transmitted. Ghounane (2020) added that social networks are communication channels that people use to share information for commercial, economic and political purposes. On the other hand, Perez-Cepeda and Arias-Bolzmann (2022) identified that in times of global crisis the content of the messages published by people on the social network Twitter can contain religious themes, humor or rudeness. Based on the criteria set out, it can be determined that according to the content of the tweets focused on crowdfunding and published in times of global crisis, they are classified as: information, sociocultural, reflection, complaints, news, rude, politics, religion and humor. Table 1 presents the nine classifications and Table 2 shows some tweets related to the classifications.

Finally, the categorization and classification found as a result of the analysis of tweets are mapped in the model that describes the cultural factors proposed by Perez-Cepeda and Arias-Bolzmann (2020). See Figure 1.

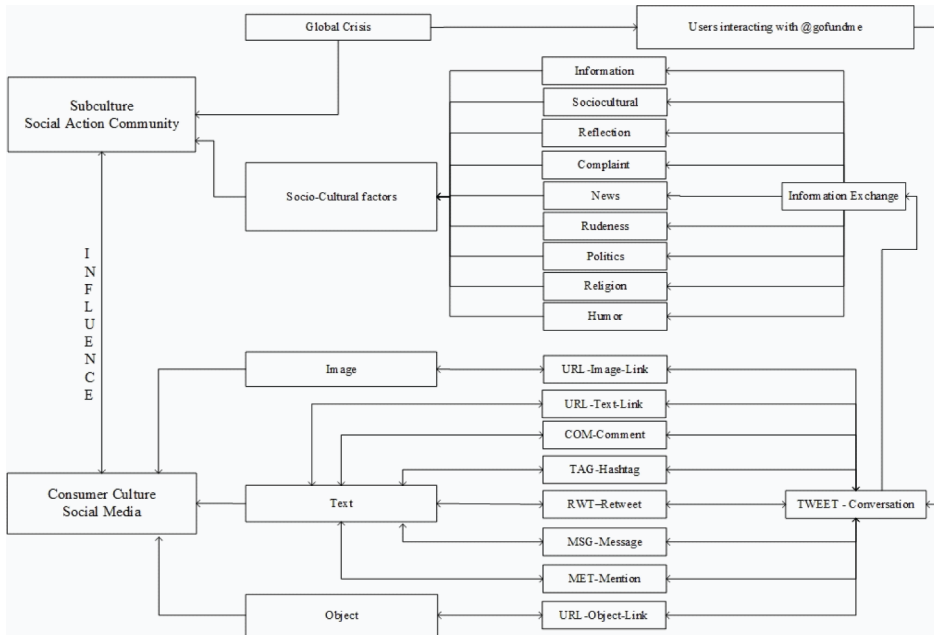
## 4. RESULTS

**RQ1:** What is the structure of the tweets posted by users who interact with @gofundme? It is observed that 26.03% tweets are within the MSG-Message characteristic, that is, the writing of each of the messages is done through text, images (photos), objects (videos) or the combination of these, this structure has the purpose of communicating to society some type of information regarding crowdfunding. Likewise, it is distinguished that 24.92% tweets have the “@” sign inserted in the message (MET-Mention), that is, they mention other target users that in the opinion of the issuer are important in order that the message is consumed by the mentioned users. It is also seen that, the writing of the messages includes links to other virtual spaces with the purpose of supporting or enhancing the content of the message that is published for the consumption of other users, thus, 14.51% tweets have links to show images (URL-Image-Link), followed by 2.82% tweets with links that only present texts (URL-Text-Link), and finally 1.06% tweets whose links show videos (URL-Object-Link). Also, it is appreciated that 12.80% tweets are forwarded without modifying their content (RWT – Retweet), which denotes that the users who consume the information give meaning to the content of the message and want other users to also consume the information. In addition, it is distinguished that in the structure of the messages 9.44% make use of the sign “#” (TAG-Hashtag) in order to highlight words that are relevant to the user that structures the message, and that facilitates the search for information on the social network Twitter regarding a specific topic. Likewise, it is observed that 8.42% messages have

**Table 2. Description of Tweets, conceptualization, ideology - prepared by the authors**

Topics	Example Tweets	Conceptualization	Ideology
Information	Tweet 1536 Cr_Funding: Please #Support Today to my #GoFundme Campaign. #gofundme #gofundmedonations #gofundmecampaign #gofundmeplease @GoFundme #payitforward #donate @broughnation #charity #fundraising Help #Fund Today to my #GoFundme PLZ #RT! Click Below <a href="https://t.co/AzMQ433Yup">https://t.co/AzMQ433Yup</a>	Inform the virtual community of the social approach that supports the donation campaigns and encourage their participation	It is founded that the content of messages based on social approaches can trigger feelings and emotions that move the human being and lead him to help others through donations
Sociocultural	Tweet 38 @MaisieWrites: #StopAsianHate The inspiring folks @EndRacismVirus have teamed up with @gofundme to launch the #StopESEAHate Community Fund! This fund will provide resources to East and South East Asian organisations, creating a lasting social change.?? <a href="https://t.co/hnW9jMpJHn">https://t.co/hnW9jMpJHn</a>	Make visible events that affect society in a positive or negative way	They are characterized by motivating human social behavior using sociocultural events aligned to collective beliefs that are compatible with certain segments of society.
Reflection	Tweet 1134 @AteMoth: Hey @gofundme Are you happy to offer a platform for someone who tweets violent threats against women like this? If so, you should be utterly ashamed of yourselves <a href="https://t.co/H5ZDEnZ1SW">https://t.co/H5ZDEnZ1SW</a>	Carefully analyze events in the environment where different social groups or subcultures are involved, with the purpose of forming an opinion regarding the events to later make a decision	They are based on the sensitivity of society to the aggression of human rights regardless of the subculture or group that people belong to.
Complaint	Tweet 515 @gosdaigua: @gofundme what is this? What is going on with this man's money? Many of us supported this and more than one month later you are keeping the money? @missantropez @patgato <a href="https://t.co/mU1Dv6lCmr">https://t.co/mU1Dv6lCmr</a>	Express disgust, claim or protest regarding a particular event from which people feel affected	They are based on ethics, equality and peace, which are externalized to society with the aim that some member who consumes the complaint can provide a solution to the problems expressed by those who feel that their rights or interests have been harmed
News	Tweet 1436 @nexcubed: Nex Cubed Portfolio Company, @WowYow, was featured in the @sdut Business section this week as the company has recently attracted some top-tier entrepreneurial investors in Andy Ballester, Co-Founder of @GoFundMe, & Brad Chisim, ex-Google. Full article: <a href="https://t.co/nrDw4YinGB">https://t.co/nrDw4YinGB</a>	Communicate recent and relevant events of public interest and the virtual community that consumes a topic related to crowdfunding. The frequent use of links within the message supports the news	It is established through the narration of events and the construction of reality.
Rudeness	Tweet 354 @PoohPenelope: @FreeBeacon @gofundme @alexvester2020 Go fund me is probably run by homosexuals. And worships satan. Their father.	Expressing in a rude way the feelings that derive from a dissatisfaction that occurred in some process or organizational structure of an organization such as Gofundme	Are based on the use of vulgar and offensive semantics
Politics	Tweet 1167 @InsurgentHunter: Hey @gofundme you keep letting these Capitol Insurgents on your platform... What gives? <a href="https://t.co/MLhzQGjkC3">https://t.co/MLhzQGjkC3</a>	Show the views, criteria and positions of people on crowdfunding based on political events that are generated at the regional, global or regional level.	They are based on the way in which social actors give meaning to political events based on the socio-political currents and social factors that shelter them.
Religion	Tweet 1098 @iCarlyFan2009: God, Father Of Jesus. Lord Of Our Sky. See what happened on the news, Than help us put a stop to it. Help Us Help Others.... Please support my GoFundMe campaign: <a href="https://t.co/6puTFHY4Xt">https://t.co/6puTFHY4Xt</a> @gofundme #BlackLivesMatter #TakeAStand #SpreadLove "Also Try PayPal: <a href="https://t.co/QH3T0yvFdE">https://t.co/QH3T0yvFdE</a> "	Demonstrate religious beliefs in times of global crisis	They are based on beliefs, traditions and symbols related to divinity that are important to users who consume information
Humor	Tweet 1445 @martysg: Now, given that @elizabethsg24 is clearly a good luck charm, we are starting a @gofundme to send her to every game of the playoffs until we win the Cup	Expressing in a humorous way the actions that can be performed through crowdfunding	It relies on the mockery, irony, occurrence, sarcasm, insult of the information that is consumed

Figure 1. Model describing sociocultural factors in times of global crisis



Adapted from Perez-Cepeda and Arias-Bolzmann (2020) - prepared by the authors

been the object of opinions or comments by users in order to express judgment or feeling about the information they have consumed on digital channels. Table 1 shows the various categories with their respective percentage. Based on the results, it can be determined that, in the structure of the tweets, the frequent use of data composed of the combination of images, texts and objects is evidenced, which allows describing how people consume information in multiple social spaces (Arnould & Thompson, 2007). As a result, it can also be stressed that the way messages are structured allows people to consume information and interact with each other, and in this way make sense of things (Lawrence & Dover, 2015; Küçükömrürler & Özkan, 2018; Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2022).

**RQ2:** What are the issues addressed by users who interact with @gofundme? It is evident that the topics addressed by users who interact with @gofundme correspond to: information (55.00%), sociocultural (22.16%), reflection (9.31%), complaint (7.34%), news (1.88%), rudeness (1.70%), politics (1.06%), religion (0.96%) and humor (0.60%). It is appropriate to indicate that these classifications validate the criteria of several authors: information (Jimenez et al., 2021); sociocultural (Sakamoto et al., 2017; Ghounane, 2020; Chen et al., 2021); reflection (Kubheka, 2020); complaint (Alarcón-Zayas & Bouhaben, 2021); news (Olimat, 2020); rudeness (Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2022); politics (Ghounane, 2020); religion and humor (Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2022). By way of illustration, Table 2 shows the classifications and tweets that refer to each of them are exposed. On the other hand, it is necessary to express that some of the authors state the topics that are addressed in times of global crisis, but do not highlight the priority of each one of them within the context of global crisis. While, Perez-Cepeda and Arias-Bolzmann (2022) indicated that in times of global crisis (COVID-19) the priority of the topics addressed in the social network Twitter are: sociocultural, information, reflection, news,

politics, humor, rudeness, economy, and religion. But, the present investigation in a global crisis environment (COVID-19) and focused on the crowdfunding system shows that there are common themes with those exposed by Perez-Cepeda and Arias-Bolzmann (2022) except complaint and the economy. This difference allows us to infer that the economy is not significant in the context of the global crisis focused on crowdfunding, because crowdfunding is a mechanism to raise funds or donations through the use of financial intermediaries to financially finance projects, products, services and social campaigns (Simpson et al., 2021), which is far from economic activity, whose focus is related to the production, exchange and consumption of goods or services. Under this same scenario, it can be inferred that the complaints are filed due to incidents of fraudulent behavior by the creators of campaigns and the inactivity of crowdfunding platforms to prevent them (Cumming et al., 2021). The analysis of the results reveals that, for the present investigation, the topics have the following order of importance: information, sociocultural, reflection, complaint, news, rudeness, politics, religion, humor.

**RQ3:** How are the issues addressed by users who interact with @gofundme conceptualized? It is important to indicate that social networks are useful to understand how people interact with each other (Mathur, 2019). Therefore, to deduce how the topics addressed by the users who interact with @gofundme are conceptualized, it is necessary to analyze the content of the tweets and thus infer how the users represent in an abstract way an idea regarding the topics they consume in the different environments social, to later publish messages aligned based on the perception they have attributed to the messages. For his part, Kozinets (2001) expressed that people conceptualize topics according to the way messages are structured (text, images, objects). On the other hand, according to Gleason (2018), it is important to observe and explore the interactions between users in order to explain the conceptualization of the topics covered in social networks. Even Pérez (2019) pointed out that the interactions between the participating users allow them to relate and compare meanings. Thus, when reviewing the information and sociocultural classifications, it is evident that the tweets published by users who interact with @gofundme in times of global crisis are loaded with social information that they wish to disseminate to the community about personal or collective misfortunes, and in this way, encourage people to collaborate economically, which leads to deduce that users have the perception that informing society about social misfortunes promotes people's sensitivity. Regarding the tweets that contain topics of reflection, it can be observed that users have the idea that the content of the information leads them to carefully and carefully consider the objective of the message, and thus make decisions based on their discernment. With reference to the denunciations and rudeness, it can be inferred that, when users see sociocultural factors violated, they think that by expressing this discomfort in the content of the messages, it promotes the brooding of society, but this brooding can trigger anger which is externalized through messages written and published with rude words or content. On the other hand, users have the feeling that recent news of public interest, social or political nature should be published, disseminated and supported in the media. Besides, it is identifiable that users have the appreciation that messages with religious connotations sensitize the society that consumes and interacts in the exchange of information. Finally, users consider that writing messages with humorous content is a way of expressing feelings towards a certain event. Table 2 shows the conceptualization of each topic.

**RQ4:** What are the sociocultural ideologies related to the issues addressed by users who interact with @gofundme? Brock (2018) highlighted the importance of reviewing conversations in order to carefully separate and examine repetitive discussions on sociocultural aspects, and in this way critically analyze technical and cultural discourse. In the opinion of Hamedani and Markus (2019), it can be determined through this critical analysis of the messages, if the ideologies identified follow the same pattern, and they added that sociocultural patterns mark or guide the actions of,

and at the same time, strengthen, reflect, challenge or change these sociocultural patterns. Even Askegaard and Kjeldgaard (2002) expressed that when identifying sociocultural ideologies, it should be taken into account that people have free will to exchange information using text and images. From this criteria, the sociocultural ideologies related to the issues addressed by the users who interact with @gofundme? are determined: (a) Information, the content of the messages are based on social approaches which can trigger feelings and emotions that move the human being; (b) Sociocultural, are characterized by motivating human social behavior using sociocultural events aligned to collective beliefs that are compatible with certain segments of society; (c) Reflection, they are based on the sensitivity of society to the aggression of human rights regardless of the subculture or group that the people belong to; (d) Complaint, are based on ethics, equality and peace, which are externalized to society in order that some member who consumes the complaint can provide a solution to the problems expressed by those who feel that their rights or interests have been harmed; (e) news, is established through the narration of events and the construction of reality; (f) rude, are based on the use of vulgar and offensive semantics; (g) politics, are based on the way in which social actors give meaning to political events based on the socio-political currents and social factors that shelter them; (h) religion, are based on beliefs, traditions and symbols related to divinity that are important to users who consume information; and (i) humor, relies on mockery, irony, wit, sarcasm, insult of the information that is consumed. Table 2 presents the sociocultural ideologies identified in the tweets posted by users who interact with @gofundme?

Taking into consideration the RQs, the propositions is answered:

- P1:** The semantics used by users who interact with @gofundme when structuring a message on Twitter is a type of functional knowledge that reveals sociocultural factors. Accepted. It is confirmed that the semantics used by users when posting tweets allows us to intuit that there are sociocultural factors such as: information, sociocultural, reflection, complaint, news, rude, politics, religion and humor. It is important to note that, to strengthen linguistic expressions (message structure), users use the combination of MSG-Message, MET-Mention, URL-Image-Link, RWT – Retweet, TAG-Hashtag, COM-Comment, URL-Text -Link, and URL-Object-Link (Luo et al., 2015). Therefore, it can be indicated that, through the analysis of the semantics used by the users in the tweets, it is possible to determine the sociocultural factors (Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2020; Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2021; Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2022).
- P2:** The demonstrations on Twitter about crowdfunding make it possible to establish sociocultural factors from the messages published on Twitter. Accepted. It is evidenced that the demonstrations on Twitter about crowdfunding made it possible to determine that there are nine factors: information, sociocultural, reflection, complaint, news, rudeness, politics, religion and humor. It is worth noting that the sociocultural factors that emerge from this research are similar to studies carried out on the homosexual subculture (Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2020), refugees (Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2021) and the COVID-19 pandemic (Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmann, 2022), therefore, it is possible to determine that the manifestations on Twitter lead to determining the associated sociocultural factors of various social groups.

Based on the sociocultural factors that the aforementioned research yielded, and comparing them with current research, it is corroborated that there are common and uncommon sociocultural factors (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Twitter and sociocultural research - prepared by the authors**

Research	Factores socioculturales										
	Human Rights	Rude	Gender Equality	News	Political	Reflection	Socio-cultural	Information	Humor	Economic	Religion
Influence of Ecuadorian Homosexual Subculture in Consumption Culture: Study about Information Consumption on Twitter	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Refugee information consumption on Twitter	X			X		X	X			X	X
Sociocultural factors during COVID-19 pandemic: Information consumption on Twitter		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

## 5. CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Tweets

Taking the findings of this research as a starting point, it can be concluded that both the Internet and social networks serve people to express through messages their feelings, emotions and aspirations related to events that occur within or outside their sociocultural environment (Rahman et al., 2021; Litam, 2020; Wang & Tao, 2021). Also, it can be concluded that natural, legal and governmental persons are making use of social networks to consume and publish messages, that is, to communicate with each other, which agrees with Bania (2020), but it is evidenced that in the social networks users in times of global crisis not only address issues related to the global catastrophe, but also various issues, such as those related to crowdfunding. On the other hand, it is ratified that the use of social networks has increased in times of global crisis such as that generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, this is due to the need for people to stay informed about the events that happen to world level, either by knowing what concerns the pandemic per se or by the consequences that the global crisis leaves in different spheres such as social, cultural, political, economic, commercial, among others (Akbulut et al., 2020; Karabag, 2020). By concatenating social networks with crowdfunding, it is possible to determine that crowdfunding projects are disseminated to society through virtual communication channels, which are in accordance with Vidraşcu (2020) and Kubheka (2020). Likewise, it is concluded that the mechanism for the dissemination of campaigns regarding the raising of funds or donations can be carried out from any type of device (mobile - personal computers) with access to the Internet and social networks (Behl et al., 2021). But, it cannot be determined that the dissemination of crowdfunding campaigns through social networks has a positive impact, this conclusion is reached based on the analysis of the messages related to the complaints and rudeness, which differs from what was expressed by Jin et al. (2020), when they indicated that social media activities have a positive impact on crowdfunding results.

Regarding the social network Twitter and crowdfunding campaigns, it can be established that the implementation of the Twitter button on Web platforms allows crowdfunding campaigns to be announced, it is inferred that organizations adopt this implementation based on the criteria of Jin et al. (2014) when they expressed that Twitter is especially effective in communicating with audiences that actively participate in social crisis events, and Woo et al. (2020) when they stated that, despite the spread of multiple digital platforms, Twitter remains at the heart of the social media landscape. On the other hand, it is concluded that the way of constructing the tweet is relevant for users, Table 1 shows the density of each of the categories that must be considered when structuring the message:

MSG-Message, MET-Mention, URL -Image-Link, RWT – Retweet, TAG-Hashtag, COM-Comment, URL-Text-Link, URL-Object-Link.

## 5.2 Exchange of Information

Based on the conceptualization and ideology (Table 2) it is concluded that the content of the messages published by the users who interact with @gofundme show a variety of topics such as social, cultural, among others, whose purpose is not only to attract donations by part of the users who consume the information both on crowdfunding platforms and on social networks, for example, Twitter; but also, in disseminating information. This conclusion is in agreement with Sirma et al. (2019) and Yasar (2021) when they stated that crowdfunding platforms are means by which individuals, institutions or professional investors anywhere in the world come together in order to finance, promote, raise funds for creative projects, social projects or companies. In addition, it is concluded that in times of global crisis, the issues that are addressed when interacting with @gofundme do not necessarily revolve around global crises, for this reason, what was expressed by Behl et al. (2021) cannot be confirmed when they indicated that fundraising platforms have gained popularity especially as the frequency and intensity of disasters in the world have increased over time. On the other hand, Snyder and Cohen (2019) mentioned that GoFundMe is the dominant platform for charitable crowdfunding and is also used for a variety of services, which is corroborated, this conclusion is reached when identifying the content of the messages (example tweets Table 2) whose purpose is to create fundraising campaigns or simply publish messages without the need to converge in times of global crisis.

## 5.3 Influence of Social Factors

Without a doubt, the COVID-19 is the first global crisis to appear in a digital age (Fenwick et al., 2021). Therefore, globally it generates local and regional uncertainties, therefore, it rapidly affects the global economy (Mukherjee & Mukherjee, 2021), as well as psychological, sociocultural, and spiritual. The criteria of these authors are corroborated when, when analyzing the content of the tweets published by users, it can be evidenced in the manifestation of feelings, for example: “Tweet 1421: @ AutisticShillManitoba’s anti covid restrictions protestors that were arrested over the weekend are trying to get @gofundme donations for legal defense fees and tickets. Violating # GoFundMe’s cough. @ctvwinnipeg @CBCManitoba @globalwinnipeg <https://t.co/A1K8OafTd7> <https://t.co/rey5bDyF9x>”. However, it cannot be generalized because not all tweets cover topics related to the global crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. But, it can be concluded that, at a time of global crisis, it is necessary to create support communities, share tools and knowledge (Bozkurt et al., 2020). On the other hand, Perez-Cepeda and Arias-Bolzmman (2022) expressed that linguistics is the fundamental basis of natural languages. In addition, Perez-Cepeda and Arias-Bolzmman, (2020) recommended observing how people make sense of the information they consume in digital media and how the information influences sociocultural factors. The criteria of these authors is corroborated, because it is evident that from the content of the messages social factors such as: Information, Sociocultural, Reflection, Complaint, News, Rudeness, Politics, Religion and Humor. In addition, it can be inferred that the structure of how the tweets are written MSG-Message, MET-Mention, URL-Image-Link, RWT – Retweet, TAG-Hashtag, COM-Comment, URL-Text-Link, and URL-Object- Link is generated from the meaning that the user gives to the information they consume in virtual communication channels, that is, it influences sociocultural factors (Arnould & Thompson, 2007; Kozinets, 2001). Finally, to answer the RQ, we refer to the study of Perez-Cepeda and Arias-Bolzmman (2020), who recommended using the model that describes cultural factors with the aim of comparing sociocultural contexts arising from studies on social domains that use Twitter. Figure 1 shows the sociocultural factors that emerge from this research, which are mapped in the model proposed by (Perez-Cepeda & Arias-Bolzmman, 2020).

## 6. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Organizational:** In the first place, it is pertinent that natural and legal persons, prior to developing fundraising campaigns, take into consideration the publications found on social networks, and especially those that refer to complaints and rudeness, because, this type of content gives the guideline to know the origin of the negative feeling that discourages society from collaborating with a social cause. Second, it is essential that organizations that implement crowdfunding platforms on the Web detail the fundraising processes within their use policies, which will give the donor peace of mind to make contributions. Third, it is recommended that government organizations in each country establish a control mechanism for crowdfunding systems, in order to prevent massive fraud or activities outside the legal framework. Finally, any organization that wants to develop fundraising campaigns in times of global crisis or not, know how to structure the messages they publish so that the content has a positive impact on the society that consumes it, that is, know how to combine the messages with text, photos and videos to support the reason for the collection and where the collections will be destined.
- **Researchers:** It is important that not only researchers focused on the social sciences investigate how people in times of global crisis construct, exchange and consume information on social networks. Likewise, it is necessary for researchers to acquire knowledge and expertise in how to analyze the body of the message in order to reveal the sociocultural factors that are immersed in the exchange of information between users of social networks.
- **Academics:** Encourage the use of netnography as a method of investigating online communities, especially in times of global crisis, because the use of the Internet and social networks is more frequent every day. In addition, take the social network Twitter as a data collection instrument in order to identify people's behavior, whether during a global crisis or not.
- **Practice:** Take as a starting point the categories and classifications that are part of the findings of this research (see Table 1), with the objective of structuring messages based on scientific research, and consequently, generate appropriate content to be consumed by determined segments of society and businesses, and then, develop publicity campaigns aligned with social and business strategies.
- **Cloud service providers:** It is necessary that cloud service providers such as RStudio, which allows integrated development for the R programming language, encourage the management of the Rstudio Cloud online platform with the purpose of promoting collaborative work and provide data analysis services that help identify market behaviors in various environments such as organizational, research, academic and practical.

### 6.1 Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of this research lie in: (a) Twitter is only used as an information collection instrument, that is, social networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp or others have not been considered; and (b) The data of users who interacted with @gofundme was taken as a source of information. Therefore, for future research it is recommended: (a) to use other social networks as a data collection instrument; (b) take as a source of information the users of other crowdfunding platforms in order to validate the model that describes the cultural factors proposed by Perez-Cepeda and Arias-Bolzmann, (2020) which has been adapted for this research.



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