



Communication
Volume 3, Issue 1, Feb-Jul 2026, pp. 355-366

Engagement Farming in Social Media: An Analysis of How Framing Strategies Drive Online Engagement

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Received on: May 21, 2026 | Accepted on: June 9, 2026 | Published on: July 15, 2026

Abstract

The extensive development of social media has made the creation of content a strategically planned task designed to achieve the greatest level of engagement, sometimes called engagement farming. This research explores the effect of framing strategies and engagement farming tactics on online participation through four viral Indian examples, namely KachaBadam (folk song remix), Indian Mukbang creators (extreme eating), Fashion Haul videos and Rasode Mein KaunTha? remix. The study has adopted a mixed-method qualitative approach by incorporating the use of audio-visual content analysis and textual audience analysis, which can be utilized to understand how the creators apply editing techniques, visual effects, sound design, and attention-grabbing hook, as well as explicit and implicit calls-to-action to transform viewers into active participants. The reaction of the audience (the positive, negative, and humorous/neutral responses) was measured using the stratified sampling of 200 comments on each piece of content, and it was possible to see the way sentiment affects the engagement and the virality. The results show that a high level of dynamic framing, participatory agriculture approach, and emotionally evocative content have a positive impact on a long-term engagement, cross-platform sharing, and content virality. Some of the positive effects include enhanced audience attention, creativity, and community, while the potential negative effects include uncomfortable viewer experience, click baiting, and harm to the creator's reputation. It shows the theoretical applicability of Framing Theory, Uses and Gratifications, and Affective Economics to online behavior.

Keywords: #EngagementFarming #SocialMediaVirality #AudioVisualFraming #AudienceParticipation #DigitalContentStrategies #RetentionEconomy

1. INTRODUCTION

The evolution of social media changed the means of production, distribution and sharing of content, turning once passive viewers into active participants in online ecosystems (Cordero-Gutiérrez et al., 2024). Platformed applications for example YouTube, Tik Tok, and Instagram are not simply tools for communication to be used on a daily basis but are environments in which people have developed complex strategies to engage their audience, to promote an audience response, and to promote follow through with steps to enable engagement (Lupien et al., 2024). This can be generalised under a term engagement farming, which is the intentional use of physical framing techniques that include images, audio clips,

editing techniques as well as explicit and implicit prompts to audiences, simultaneously to encourage the highest levels of audience engagement and sharing potential for content (Vondracek, 2024).

In the case of India, examples of viral trends like KachaBadam, Indian Mukbang content, fashion haul video, and Rasode Mein Kaun Tha? Remix show varying strategies of engagement (Comfort & Eller, 2025), and audience reactions. The content can elicit interest, humor, surprise, and even socially engage the audience, and lead to global exposure, platform engagement, and audience engagement (Tawiah, 2025). The utility of such mechanisms is important to content creators, marketers, and digital strategists who want to capitalize on audience engagement, but even more so from responsible practices of content and ethical practices (Lee et al., 2024). This research study plans to investigate how social media creators can employ framing strategies utilized through audience engagement farming strategies to activate and engage the audience in the content, and to analyze audience responses to content (Mulcahy et al., 2024). The audio-visual content will be analyzed with a written audience response to gain a deeper understanding of the multi-dimensional qualities of online audience engagement and virality (Mahoney, (2024)).

1.1. Scope of the Study

This paper investigates the manner in which the creators of social media apply the principles of framing and engagement farming to encourage viewers and other participants to generate viral content, concentrating on the example of Kolkata and West Bengal and mirroring the general trends of Indian digital culture (Dharta, 2024). Discussing four viral videos, KachaBadam, Indian Mukbang creators, fashion haul videos, Rasode Mein Kaun Tha? remix, it investigates all the types of content and methods of audience involvement (Xu et al., 2024). The study involves audio-visual content analysis that is combined with text to me as a researcher, examining the effect of editing, visual effect, sound, hooks, and explicit or implicit calls-to-action on the viewer behavior and sentiments of positive, negative, or humorously-neutral to cause virality and amplification (Neuhaus & O'Connor, 2025). The study addresses the 2020-2024 timeframe and the both negative and positive implications of the strategies, such as the ethical issues and psychological impact.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Almakaty (2025) used 60 papers to examine framing theory in digital media over the last 2 decades. The emergence of social media, web-based news, and information generated by the end-users transformed the theory of framing that explains the influence of media presentation on the interpretation of the audience, as the review indicates. The social media framing participatory nature, algorithmic curation, disinformation, the inability to cross-culturally interact, and the methodological barriers to digital framing analysis were discussed. Almakaty emphasized that the users of social media consumed and influenced the opinions of people. Algorithms framing, in which automated processing influences frame salience and presence, and how misinformation can be framed to increase or decrease credibility were also discussed in the review. In the analysis, the researchers determined that framing theory has inefficiencies in the digital media space that require longitudinal and cross-cultural studies. It indicated possibilities in the future (Almakaty, 2025).

Wilk, et al. (2024) analyzed the social media and online news narratives on a destination with a natural disaster in terms of the framing theory. They used thematic analysis of Leximancer on 24,985 online news media articles and 24,985 Twitter posts (now X) to examine frame coupling and frame mirroring. The paper identified how these framing strategies interact and how online brand advocacy (OBA) helps to disseminate positivity and activism in times of disaster. The researchers also highlighted the importance

of user-generated content (UGC) in protecting destination brands and enhancing interaction as one of the implications that can be helpful to tourism marketers in practice (Wilk et al., 2024).

Mendelsohn, et al. (2024) examined Twitter-based social movements using framing strategies on a variety of issues such as guns, immigration, and LGBTQ rights in 2018 to 2019. To identify diagnostic (problem identification and attribution), prognostic (solutions and tactics), and motivational (calls to action) framing strategies, they developed a codebook, annotated dataset and computational models. Their language study revealed similarities of cross-movement in pronouns and deontic modal auxiliaries and revealed that the diagnostic framing was more prevalent in response posts than in the initiating posts. It was the social movement organizations that paid more attention to prognostic and motivational framing than a journalist or a common user (Mendelsohn et al., 2024).

Civila and Lugo-Ocando (2024) compared the use of the framing element in news about international conflicts on Instagram and Twitter with references to the media in Spain and Qatar. They reviewed 251 posts through grounded theory and abductive analysis of content to cognize how affordances of the platforms affected the creation of stories. Their experiment showed that the presence of digital affordances influenced the application of frames and influenced how viewers at the time of receiving news content perceived and comprehended news stories, which is why media communication is taking a new form in digital contexts (Civila & Lugo-Ocando, 2024).

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Here, the study design, data collection procedures, sampling, and methods of analysis were outlined in order to investigate the effects of framing strategies and engagement farming practices on audience interaction among social media.

2.1. Research Design

The proposed research will take a mixed methodology of Qualitative Research to explore how the creators of social media use framing and engagement farming techniques to catalyze audience interaction. The two approaches that complement each other are included in the research:

- **Audio-Visual Content Analysis:** The moviemaking visual, auditory, and editing strategies used to frame content to draw interest and make content more engaging.
- **Text Audience Audiences:** This would be the way audiences would engage with the content (comments, shares, memes, likes), and where the engagement was coming from.

2.2. Area of Study

The research is centered on the content involved in the use of social media in Kolkata, West Bengal, India with a wider relevance to the entire Indian audience. Four real viral cases were chosen to have variety in the type of content and the working mechanism:

1. **KachaBadam-** Folk song remix on Tik Tok and Instagram.
2. **Indian Mukbang Makers** - YouTube extreme eating.
3. **Fashion Haul Videos-** Influencer posts on Shein, Myntra, and Ajio.
4. **Rasode Mein KaunTha?-** Remix Musical remix of Hindi TV dialogues with meme potential.

These examples indicate the virality of countries, nations, and can be used to analyze the different audio-visual framing strategies and viewer engagement behaviors.

2.3. Sampling Strategy

- **Case Selection:** Four purposely selected viral Indian social media phenomena to represent diversity in content type and engagement mechanisms.
- **Audience Responses:** Top 200 audience responses were sampled per post/video using stratified sampling to ensure a variety of positive, negative, and humorous/neutral responses.
- **Period:** 2020-2024 will allow for consideration of new and topical engagement patterns.

2.4. Data Collection

Information used in this research was gathered through the secondary sources. The primary data consisted of videos and posts on YouTube, Instagram and Tik Tok, recorded through a screen record with frames that were time stamped to examine editing, sound, hooks, and visual effects. Commentary, memes, shares, and replies were scanned down with either platform APIs or tabled manually. The media reports, news stories about viral trends, and publicly accessible influencer analytics, such as views, likes, and shares, were included as the secondary sources.

2.5. Data Analysis

Audio-Visual Content Analysis

The following are the framing techniques analyzed in content:

- **Editing Techniques:** Cut frequency, pacing, montage, slow-motion or jump cuts.
- **Visual Effects (VFX):** Overlays of texts, captions, filters, animations, meme-like effects.
- **Background music,** sound effects, remixing, voice modulation.
- **Hooks:** Thumbnail design, opening shots, repetitive visual or spoken patterns in order to draw attention.

A content analysis was conducted in the form of a matrix (see Table 1 in Subject Analysis) which was coded. Each case was identified as having patterns of attention grabbing and engagement inducing strategies.

Textual (Audience Interaction) Analysis

To examine the response of audience to the framing and engagement farming strategies, analyzing their audience responses was done:

- **Comments:** Coded into positive, negative and humorous/neutral.
- **Shares and Reposts:** Followed to get to know the content virality.
- **Memes and Parody Content:** Under analysis as an element of participatory engagement.
- **Interaction with Calls-to-Action (CTA):** Observed in regards to conscious requests to like, comment, share, subscribe or implicit requests such as dance/remix challenges.

Thematic coding was used in determining repetitive audience behaviors, emotion stimulation and engagement patterns. Sentiment analysis was used to measure the percentage of positive, negative and neutral engagement on cases.

2.6. Case Study Integration

The audience analysis is done through audio-visual analysis and text each case study:

1. **KachaBadam** - Dance challenges, remix music, flashy edits; good admiration and funny parody promotes the world-wide shares.

2. **Indian Mukbang** -Close-ups, exaggerated eating sounds, slow/fast shots; the feeling of fascination and disgust provokes a longer viewing time and debates.
3. **Fashion Haul Videos** -Quick changes in outfits, fast music, price tags; compliment and criticism lead to recurrent shares and discussions in the communal sphere.
4. **Rasode Mein KaunTha? Remix** – Jump cuts, laugh-out-loud beats; meme-lays, and cross-platform virality are driven by humor and remix participation.

The research connects the framing of content and farming strategies with the audience engagement results by examining these cases.

3. SUBJECT ANALYSIS

This section provides a qualitative overview of content framework and engagement farming techniques used by social media makers to spur engagement using four examples of viral Indian cases. This analysis is a combination of audio-visual content study, textual reaction of the audience, and engagement strategies.

3.1. Audio-Visual Framing Analysis

Artists are careful in applying their audio-visual effects to attract attention and hold the audience. The following table 1 summarizes the framing techniques which were used in four cases:

Table 1: Audio-Visual Framing Techniques

Case	Editing Techniques	Visual Effects (VFX)	Sound/Music (SFX)	Hooks/Attention Grabbers
KachaBadam	Fast cuts, dance montages	Animated text overlays, bright filters	Upbeat remix beats, percussion	Repetitive lyrics, energetic dance moves
Indian Mukbang	Slow-motion + rapid cuts, close-ups	Minimal, humorous captions	Amplified chewing/slurping, background music	Massive food portions, exaggerated reactions
Fashion Hauls	Rapid outfit transitions, montage aligned with beats	Price captions, sparkles, zoom effects	Upbeat trendy music, outfit reveal effects	Bright thumbnails, “Top 5 dresses under ₹1000”
Rasode Remix	Jump cuts timed with beats	Meme-style overlays, animated text	Comedic beats synced with dialogue	Short dialogue snippets, exaggerated expressions

Table 1 presents Audio-Visual Framing Techniques shows that designers employ editing, visual effects, music, and hooks to keep viewers interested. In KachaBadam and Fashion Hauls, dynamic editing highlights important moments, such as dance sequences and revealing outfits, to keep viewers engaged. Mukbang videos strategically use slow-motion shots and fast cuts to emphasise the eating activity. KachaBadam's dynamic text overlays and Rasode Remix's meme-like text overlays make it funnier, more informative, and more shareable. Remix rhythms, comic background music, and exaggerated SFXs like slurping or drumming may evoke emotion, interest, and a distinctive aural experience that increases engagement. Finally, hooks (repeated phrases, vivid thumbnails, exaggerated reactions, or speech

samples) rapidly grab attention and encourage visitors to like, remark, or share. Table 1 illustrates that purposeful use of audio-visual framing components is key to audience appeal and content interest.

3.2. Engagement Farming Strategies

Table 2 shows the practice of utilizing farming strategies by creators to transform the viewers into participants is actively used by creators:

Table 2: Engagement Farming Strategies

Case	Explicit Calls-to-Action (CTA)	Implicit Engagement Strategies	Observed Participation
KachaBadam	“Try this dance!”	TikTok/Instagram dance challenges, tagging friends	Dance remixes, global shares
Indian Mukbang	“Subscribe for more challenges”	Shock factor of extreme eating, comment prompts	High watch time, comment debates
Fashion Hauls	“Comment your favorite outfit”, “Share with friends”	Interactive responses to comments	Repeated shares, discussion threads
Rasode Remix	None directly, implied: “Remix it!”	Spin-offs, meme templates, cross-platform sharing	Meme creation, remix participation

Table 2 shows Engagement Farming tactics shows producers' explicit and implicit tactics to transform passive onlookers into active participants. Try this dance! on KachaBadam and Comment your favourite outfit on Fashion Hauls are CTAs that advise viewers to participate with the video content and provide a clear reaction to ensure a verifiable boost in engagement. Implicit strategies like TikTok dancing competitions, frightening Mukbang material, remix templates, and meme spin-offs encourage users to creatively interact with the content beyond the site. Rasode Remix used implied remixing to encourage viewers to make memes and spin-off videos, increasing cross-platform visibility. The instances show that explicit CTAs and implicit engagement strategies enhance sustained interaction, high watch time, and content virality. Overall, Table 2 illustrates that engagement farming programs convert viewers into active participants and increase watching and involvement.

3.3. Audience Textual Reaction Analysis

The positive, negative, and humorous/neutral responses of the audience were analyzed, with the emphasis on how framing and engagement farming can make people attend.

Table 3: Audience Reaction Analysis

Case	Positive Sentiment (%)	Negative Sentiment (%)	Humorous/Neutral (%)	Key Themes in Comments
KachaBadam	45%	25%	30%	Admiration, parody, dance participation
Indian Mukbang	35%	40%	25%	Fascination, disgust, shock
Fashion Hauls	50%	30%	20%	Praise, critique, sharing opinions

Rasode Remix	40%	20%	40%	Humor, meme creation, remix participation
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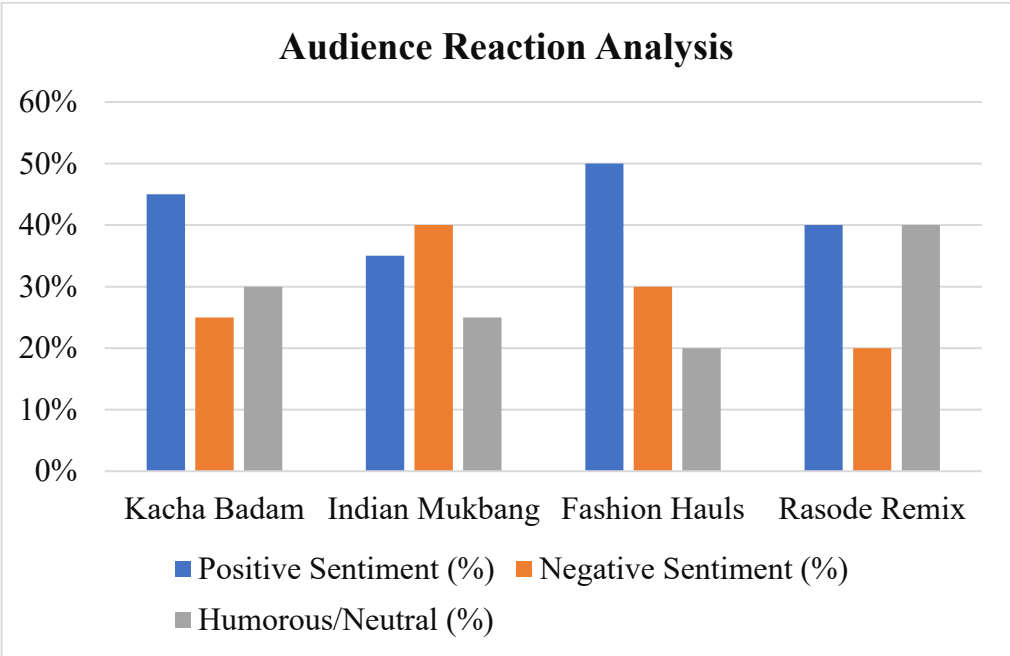


Figure 1: Audience Reaction Analysis
Table 3 indicate Audience Reaction Analysis reveals that social media engagement is driven by a combination of positive, negative, and funny or neutral reactions. Compliments like praise for KachaBadam or Fashion Hauls boost credibility and spread. Negative responses, like disgust or horror in Mukbang videos, actually increase interest by sparking conversation, debate, and rewatches, which algorithms love. Humorous or indifferent replies, notably Rasode Remix and parody postings in KachaBadam, encourage memes, spin-offs, and dance remixes. This shows that audience involvement is multidimensional, including creative and critical participation as well as approval. In general, Table 3 shows that ambiguous audience feelings like criticism and humour are crucial to engagement and virality.

3.4. Integrated Analysis: Framing, Farming and Engagement

Table 4 integrates audio-visual framing, engagement strategies and engagement textual response by the audience to demonstrate the complete mechanism of engagement.

Table 4: Integrated Analysis of Engagement Mechanisms

Case	Audio-Visual Framing Score (avg. 1–5)	Farming Strategy Score (1–5)	Audience Reaction Score (1–5)	Overall Engagement Outcome	Observed Phenomenon
KachaBadam	4.8	4.5	4.2	Very High	Global shares, dance remixes, viral trend
Indian Mukbang	4.0	4.0	4.0	High	High watch time, debates, shock engagement

Fashion Hauls	4.3	3.8	3.7	Moderate-High	Repeated shares, discussion threads
Rasode Remix	4.5	4.7	4.3	Very High	Meme virality, cross-platform remixes

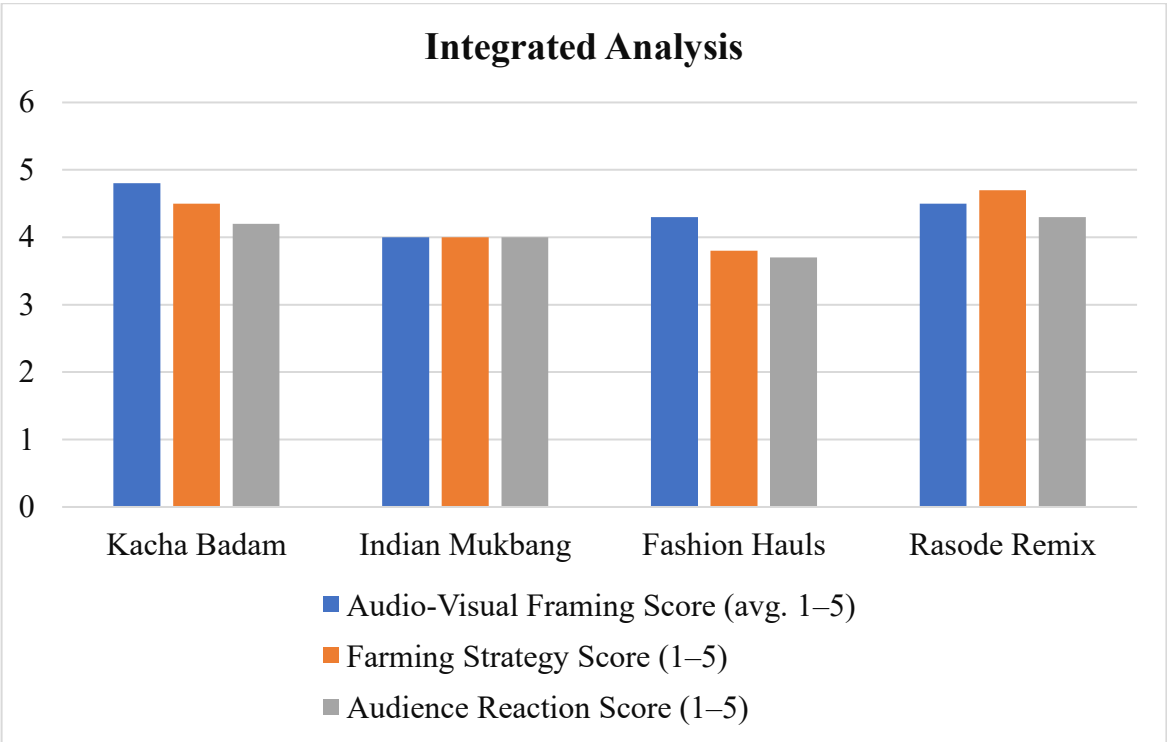


Figure 2: Integrated Analysis of Engagement Mechanisms

Audio visual framing, engagement farming method, and audience textual replies all affect social media engagement, as shown in Table 4: Integrated Analysis of Engagement Mechanisms. KachaBadam and Rasode Remix get strong audio-visual framing ratings due to editing, sound effects, and graphics. High ratings for great farming approach support the hypothesis that expressive CTAs and implicit viewer involvement, such as dancing challenges or remix templates, transform spectators into participants. The audience response score shows that positive, negative, and hilarious reactions stimulate engagement, which amplifies the algorithm. The integrated engagement metrics show that multimodal framing, participatory farming, and emotionally resonant or abnormal content (i.e. extreme eating in Mukbang or energetic remixing folk-songs) has high engagement, shares globally, memes spread virally, and users repeat it. Overall, Table 4 shows that framing, farming, and audience reaction generate online involvement and virality.

3.5. Theoretical Framework

The research may be viewed in light of many theoretical frameworks that define social media audience engagement:

- The **Framing Theory** suggests that content presentation, including visual, aural, and linguistic elements, shapes audience perception and engagement. In this article, artists use dynamic editing,

visual effects, and auditory cues to place information in context that emphasises humour, shock, or novelty, manipulating audience perception and reaction.

- The **Uses & Gratifications Theory** suggests that audiences seek media material to satisfy their needs, including amusement, curiosity, social engagement, and self-expression. The article shows that people watch viral material to be amused, participate in challenges, remix films, and have conversations to satisfy their social and cognitive needs.
- **Affective Economics:** Highlights the economic value of emotional responses in digital media ecosystems. Positive and negative emotions like admiration, humour, horror, disgust, etc. affect engagement metrics like likes, shares, comments, and view time. Emotional resonance is crucial to virality and long-term audience engagement because algorithms use such emotions to promote content.

These ideas explain how planned content structuring, audience motives, and emotion triggering produce high levels of engagement and impact in social media participation.

4. DISCUSSION

The section discusses about the findings of the study.

4.1. Effectiveness of Audio-Visual Framing

Discussing audio-visual framing is key to both attracting and sustaining readers. Quick cuts, montages, and fast editing (KachaBadam, Fashion Hauls) emphasized the most exhilarating points of the videos, full of thrilling dances and unveilings of the clothing to keep viewers interested. For Mukbang videos, slow and quick cuts added effects to dramatise eating to facilitate shock and interest. Meme-style overlays and simple yet creative visual effects like moving text or captions were beneficial in hilarious or parody material (Rasode Remix, KachaBadam). Sound design, increased SFX, energetic music, and hilarious rhythms evoked curiosity, humour, and disgust, encouraging participation. This supports the Framing Theory, which states that content presentation affects audience perception and response.

Positive Impacts:

- There are high levels of attention and retention, which result into long watch times.
- Aggressive virality on shared images and cross-platforms via catchy images and sounds.
- Promotion of creative audience engagement e.g. dance remixes, meme creation and parody information.

Negative Impacts:

- Too much sensory stimulation or shock-factor (e.g., Mukbang) can not only be uncomfortable or disgusting to some viewers.
- The visual effects can be highly stylized and in some cases it may end up being content overruling the content.

4.2. Role of Engagement Farming Strategies

Moviemakers manipulate the audience so that through direct and indirect appeals, they convert the audience into active participants. Direct CTA (e.g., Try this dance! (KachaBadam) or Comment your favorite outfit (Fashion Hauls) was used to increase likes, comments and shares directly. Participatory

engagement was promoted by implicit strategies, such as a remix challenge, meme template, or extreme stunts (Mukbang, Rasode Remix), which reached beyond the original content platform. A blend of explicit and implicit strategies makes sure the content not only reaches viewers but also encourages them to assist in its spread, which is the Uses and Gratifications Theory, according to which engagement is a mechanism of satisfying the humor needs, curiosity needs, and social participation needs.

Positive Impacts:

- More cross-platform propagation and visibility of the algorithm.
- Probably stimulated creative and interactive audience participation.
- Nurtured community involvement by means of discussions, debates and collaborations.

Negative Impacts:

- Free-market focus on engagement farming can cause clickbait content that values going viral more than content.
- The repetition of the CTAs or shock-based strategies can make audiences feel manipulated, which will lead to temporary exhaustion or a lack of interest.

4.3. Audience Reaction Patterns

The research concluded that mixed audience reactions of positive, negative, and humorous/neutral audience responses contribute to the overall engagement. Compliments or praise, as positive reactions, enhanced credibility of the content, and promoted sharing. Incidentally, negative responses (disgust, shock), and humorous/neutral responses (parody, memes) did not decrease engagement, but frequently provoked a debate, repeated viewing, and content creation (participatory), increasing reach via algorithmic promotion. This is in line with Affective Economics where emotion responses; positive or negative, are economically useful in creating engagement.

Positive Impacts:

- Wide engagement regardless of emotion, perpetuating virality.
- There are many different creative interactions that can be promoted, such as memes, remixes, and discussion threads.

Negative Impacts:

- Strong negative reactions, especially on extreme content (Mukbang) are some of the risks that creators face due to reputational risk.
- Some of the viewers would feel emotionally discomforted or desensitised with the repetition of abnormal or exaggerated content.

4.4. Integrated Insights

The combined analysis shows that the optimal results of the audio-visual framing, the strategies of engagement farming and the reactions of the audience are the most effective when they become synergistic. Cases that are highly rated in framing, farming, and audience response such as KachaBadam and Rasode Remix were highly rated in terms of engagement, such as sharing on global platforms and memes going viral and cross-platform engagement. Notably, the content that represents abnormalities or

hyperbolic situations, e.g. extreme eating in Mukbang or the energetic remixes of folk-songs, appeal to the viewers, even when disliked, because of its novelty, shock value, or humor. This is the underlying dilemma of engagement behavior in which audiences actively lean into content that they do not completely enjoy, reflects the complexity of emotional and social relationships of digital participation.

5. CONCLUSION

For this study, KachaBadam, Indian Mukbang videos, Fashion haul videos, and Rasode Mein KaunTha? remix were employed to examine framing methods and engagement farming strategies to leverage social media engagement. Strategically deploying the interaction between audio-visual framing, explicit and implicit engagement prompts, and the audience's reactive engagement leads to content virality. Editing, visual effects, sound design, catchy hooks, and engagement farming techniques such as challenges, calls-to-action, and meme templates also provide value to passive viewers. Positive, negative, or bizarre/neutral audience reactions simply enhance activity, indicating that even if content is hated or shocking, it may be viral because it is new or evokes emotion. These tactics boost platform innovation, community involvement, and sharing, but overuse can cause audience fatigue, discomfort, and reputational issues. In general, long-term participation is a result of framing, strategic audience mobilization, and emotionally appealing experiences, highlighting the importance of ethically responsive, audience-focused content creation that combines virality and social and psychological accountability to others for creators, marketers, and platform designers seeking optimal digital engagement.

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