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From Revenue to Reliability: Analyzing YouTube as a Money-Making Platform or an Information Source from the Youth's Perspective

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Abstract

In the advance digitalized world, YouTube has raised as both a money-making platform and widely used for source of information. Although, with the rise of social media journalism has also made a digital shift which has faded the line between credible content and the content created for audience engagement and profit generation. In Pakistan, traditional media has been facing financial crises and political pressures which has led the journalist and independent content creators turn towards YouTube for economic stability. This digital shift in journalism has led to an increase in biased, misleading, and sensationalized content, which is raising concerns about YouTube's reliability as a source of information. This research examines the perception of young audience about YouTube in Pakistan, whether they consider YouTube as a trustworthy and credible medium for information or consider it as a merely revenue-generating tool.

To analyze this, we conducted a survey involving 140 individuals from diverse educational backgrounds, all of whom actively use YouTube. We used the quota sampling method, where the survey was distributed via Google Forms through email invitations and social media platforms, achieving a 100% response rate. The findings of survey confirmed that content creators use emotional interaction, current affairs, and appealing visuals to attract larger audience and gain higher views. Sensational content is a the main source of revenue generation, and YouTube's policies are perceived as insufficient in combating misinformation and disinformation

keywords: YouTube, misinformation, disinformation, sensational content, Youth perception

Introduction

Safdar (2024) argues that language plays a crucial role in shaping how people perceive information. Terms like misinformation, disinformation, fake news, and conspiracy theories all describe different ways in which people can be misled, whether intentionally or unintentionally. As communication has moved online,



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societies worldwide are now struggling with the growing issues of fake news and conflicts on social media. Shaheen (2022) highlights that journalism in Pakistan has undergone significant changes in recent years. Journalists face increasing challenges in securing stable jobs and gaining recognition. Traditional media in Pakistan is under financial pressure and faces intense competition, pushing many journalists to use social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and X for personal branding and economic stability. However, this shift has also led to a rise in biased, shallow, and misleading content, as content creators prioritize views over accuracy. The primary goal of many is to generate engagement rather than deliver fact-based, relevant information. Asfandyar Mir (2022) states that Pakistan has seen rapid growth in internet access and social media use. However, the spread of false or misleading information on platforms like YouTube, X, and Facebook has significantly impacted public perception, political ideologies, social harmony, and even national security. Fake news is a broad category that includes deliberately created, altered, or spread misinformation to deceive people. The main types include:

- **Misinformation:** False news spread unintentionally.
- **Disinformation:** Intentionally false information shared to mislead or harm others.

It is noted that in Pakistan, fake news often consists of edited images, exaggerated headlines, and misinformation spread for political, social, or economic gain. Social media has accelerated the spread of false news, making it more difficult to control. Examples include fake election results, manipulated images, and fabricated stories, which contribute to political polarization, extremist ideologies, and loss of trust in institutions.

Jazeera (2023) provides a real-world example of misinformation in Pakistan, referring to the Punjab College Lahore incident. On October 11, 2024, a 17-year-old female student was allegedly assaulted by a security guard in the basement of Punjab College for Women. News of the incident spread rapidly on social media, leading to public outrage and protests. However, misinformation about the case soon emerged, with conflicting claims from the college administration and activists, which only fueled public frustration and confusion. Dawn.com (2024) discusses another case of widespread misinformation during the May 9, 2023 riots. After the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, protests erupted, escalating into violent riots, leading to significant damage and casualties. The government labeled the incident a "black day" and compared it to major historical attacks. Social media was flooded with conflicting narratives, with some claiming the rioters were not PTI supporters, while others accused the government of staging the events to suppress opposition. These false narratives deepened divisions and misled the public.

These incidents highlight how fake news is often sensationalized to generate engagement rather than deliver facts. The Pakistani media landscape, particularly through social media, plays a key role in shaping public perception, often prioritizing financial gain over journalistic integrity.

Research Focus

This study examines how content creators spread fake content, including misinformation and disinformation on YouTube to attract viewers and generate revenue. It also analyzes how this misleading content shapes public perception



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and evaluates the effectiveness of social media policies designed to combat misinformation.

Objectives

- To analyze the dual role of social media platforms as both businesses and sources of information.
- To study how misinformation, disinformation, and fake news spread worldwide through these platforms.
- To examine the strategies social media platforms, use to combat fake news.
- To assess whether efforts to curb misinformation improve platform credibility and user trust.

Research Limitations

This study focuses on the impact of fake content among youth aged 18-24 in Sialkot, specifically on YouTube and its monetization policies.

Literature Review

Zeng (2021) discusses how misinformation, disinformation, and fake news have become key concerns for social media consumers. The concepts are often used interchangeably despite their differences. Fetzer (2004) defines misinformation as false, mistaken, or misleading information. Pal (2019) and UN (2021) describe it as factually inaccurate information spread unintentionally. Choudrie (2021) notes that some scholars use "misinformation" as an umbrella term for all false content online. Bastick (2021) highlights that disinformation is deliberately created to mislead and manipulate public opinion. Zeng (2021) further explains that disinformation serves political and ideological purposes, often undermining opposing viewpoints. Lazer (2018) and Tandoc (2018) define fake news as a form of misinformation and disinformation that mimics real news media. Alexa (2022) points out that fake news is an effective tool for disinformation, often presented as legitimate journalism. Statista (2020) reports that YouTube had over 2.1 billion users in 2020, with over one billion hours of video watched daily. Fortune Lords (2021) states that more than 95% of the internet population interacts with YouTube, making it a major source of information for young people. Salama (2020) and Fortune Lords (2021) describe YouTube as a dominant platform for video content, widely used for social interaction, political discussions, and even educational purposes. However, Li (2020) warns that YouTube's search algorithm prioritizes popularity over content quality, exposing users to misinformation.

Qi (2016) found that over 25% of the most-watched YouTube videos on COVID-19 contained misleading information, reaching millions worldwide. Nour (2017) reported that both accurate and inaccurate YouTube videos on psoriasis received similar viewership, showing how misinformation competes with factual content. Wardle (2017) identifies three key components in misinformation spread: the agent (who creates it), the message (the content itself), and the interpreter (the audience). Abbasi (2013) and Gangadhar Batla (2014) study how social media users perceive and share information, with younger users relying on platforms like YouTube for news.



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Müller (2021) and Allcott (2020) examine the impact of social media on anti-democratic views, showing that misinformation can fuel political divisions and violence. Messing (2012) notes that users often trust information shared by friends over reputable news sources, further weakening traditional journalism. This study aims to explore whether social media platforms effectively counter misinformation or if economic incentives continue to drive misleading narratives.

Research Questions

How do content creation strategies, such as emotional appeal, visuals, and trending topics, influence viewership and revenue on YouTube?

How do users perceive YouTube's credibility, and how effective are its policies in controlling misinformation?

What restrictions or penalties are imposed on content creators to prevent the spread of fake or misleading content?

Hypothesis

- 1) It is more likely that content creators use emotional interaction, current affairs, appealing visuals and instant hint to get high views.
- 2) It is more likely that content creators make popular sensational content to earn more revenue through YouTube.
- 3) It is more likely that you tube Policies are not enough to combat misinformation and disinformation creates by the content creators.
- 4) It is more likely that youth think, YouTube is more credible platform than other social media apps.

Methodology

We conducted a survey to gather insights on "From dollar to data: Analyzing YouTube as a money-making or source of information in view of youth". The study involved a total of 140 individuals selected from different educational backgrounds and their active involvement in using YouTube. This study used the quota sampling method to conduct survey. The survey was conducted using Google links, which were distributed to potential Participants via email invitations and social media platforms. Participants were provided with a unique link to access the survey questionnaire hosted on google forms.

Response Rate

Out of the 140 individuals contacted, we received responses from 140 participants, resulting in a response rate of approximately 100%.

Findings

Table 1: illustrate the age of respondents

		15-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	total
Respondents	Count	50	78	10	2	140
% of Total		35.7%	55.7%	7.1%	1.4%	100.0%

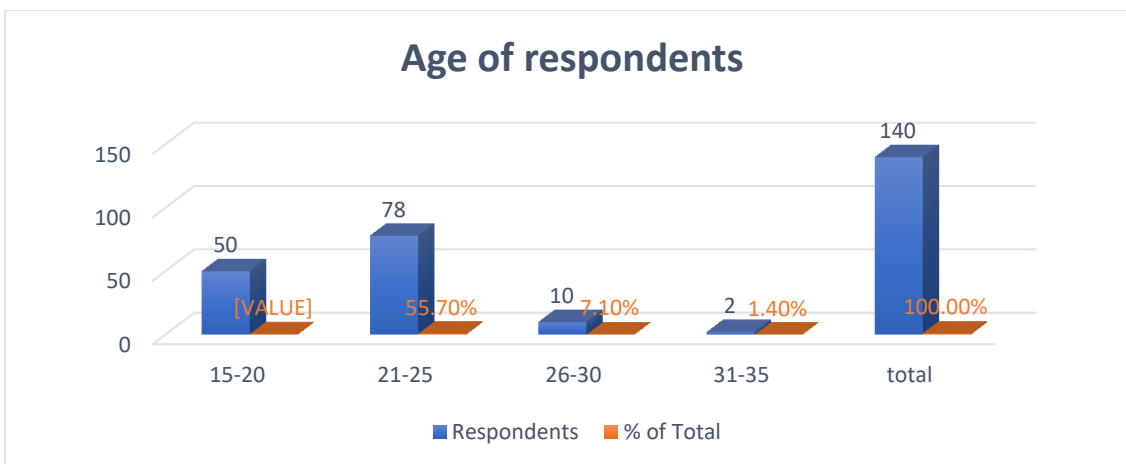


Table 4.1 shows cross tab of age of respondents. The overall data shows majority of respondents (55.7%) belonged to the 21-25 age group, followed by (35.7%) belonged to 15-20 age group and (7.1%) belonged to 26-30 age group and (1.4%) belonged to 31-35 age group.

Table 2: Illustrates the gender of respondents

		Male	Female	total
Respondents	Count	18	122	140
% of Total		12.9%	87.1%	100.0%

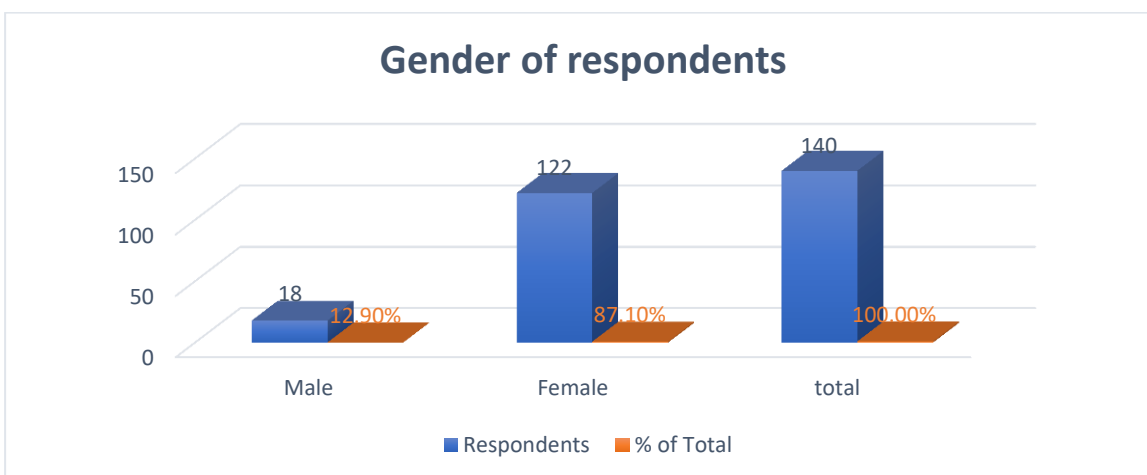


Table 2 shows cross tab of gender of respondents. The overall data shows majority of respondents 87.1% belonged Females, followed by 12.9% belonged to Males.

Table 3: illustrate the education of respondents

		high school	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	total
Respondents	Count	12	92	36	140
% of Total		8.6%	65.7%	25.7%	100.0%

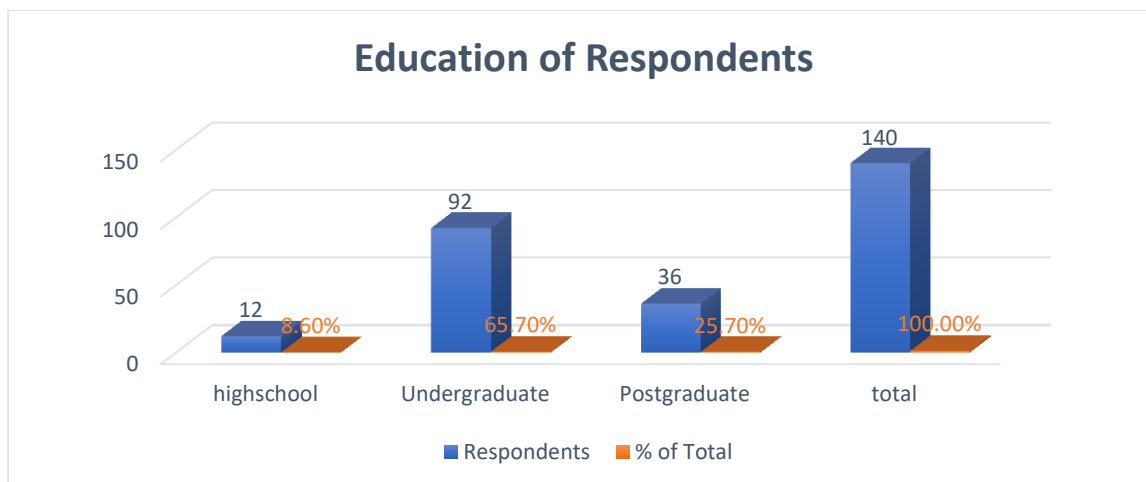


Table 3 shows cross tab of Education of respondents. The overall data shows majority of respondents (65.7%) belonged to undergraduates, followed by (25.7%) respondents belonged to postgraduate and (8.6%) respondents belonged to Highschool.

Table 4: Illustrate how often respondents spend their time on watching YouTube daily

		4 hours	3 hours	2 hours	1 hour	30 minutes	Total
Respondents	Count	72	46	12	2	8	140
% of Total		51.4%	32.9%	8.6%	1.4%	5.7%	100.0%

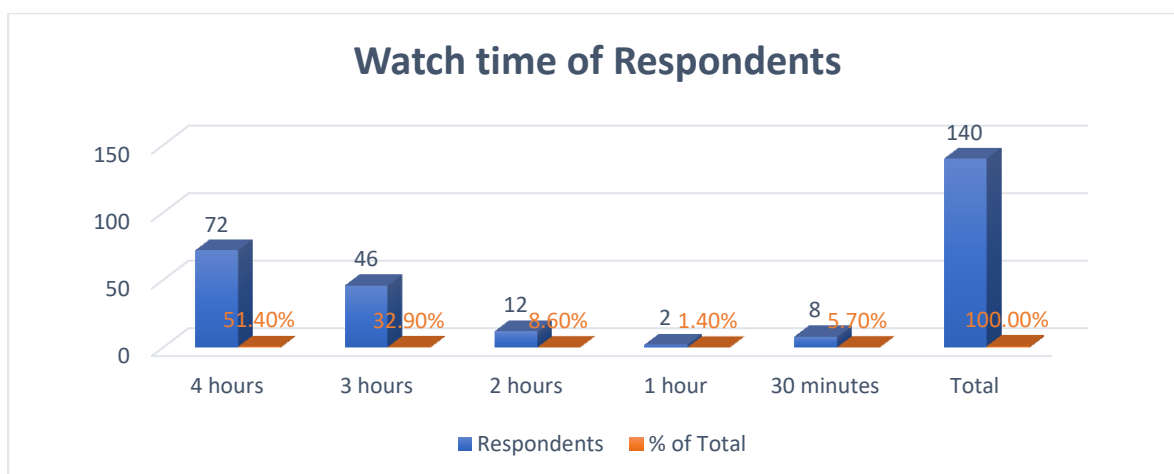


Table 4 shows cross tab of watch time of respondents on YouTube. The overall data shows majority of the respondents (51.4%) spend 4 hours on YouTube daily, followed by (32.9%) respondents spend 3 hours on YouTube daily, (8.6%) respondents spend 2 hours on YouTube daily, (1.4%) respondents spend 1 hour on YouTube daily and (5.7%) respondents spend 30 minutes on YouTube daily.

Table 5: Illustrates what is the main purpose respondents for using YouTube

	entertainment	Education	Social engagement	Professional	Total



Respondents	Count	82	36	20	2	140
% of Total		58.6%	25.7%	14.3%	1.4%	100.0%

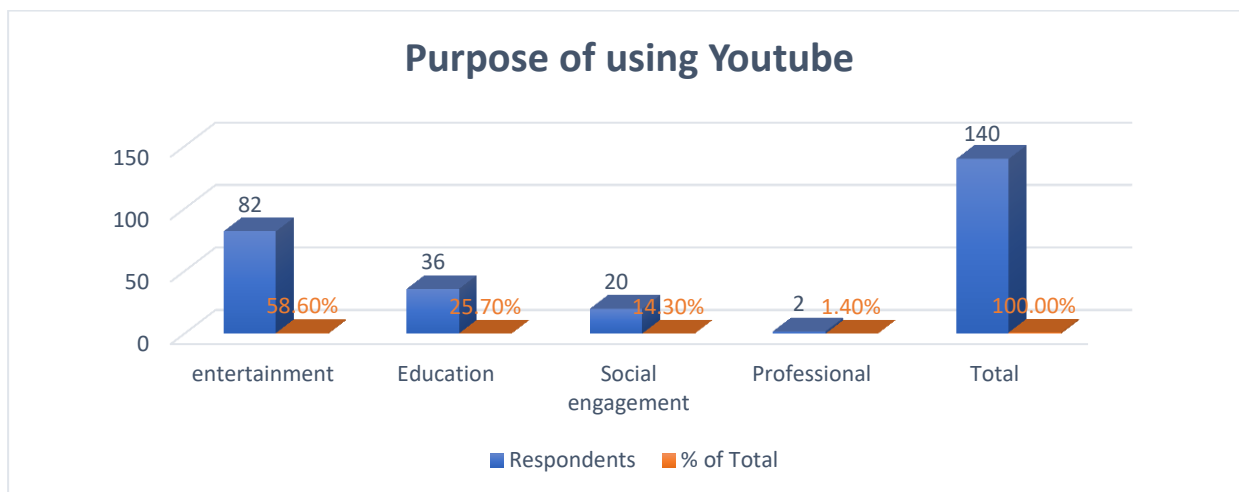


Table 5 shows cross tab of purpose of using YouTube. The overall data shows that majority of respondents (58.6%) uses YouTube for Entertainment, followed by (25.7%) respondents uses YouTube for Education, (14.7%) respondents uses YouTube for social engagement and (1.4%) respondents uses YouTube for Professional work.

Table 6 illustrate do you think content creator’s use of attractive clickbait, titles and thumbnails gather more views on YouTube

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	89	34	8	9	0	140
% of Total		63.6%	24.3%	5.7%	6.4%	0%	100.0%

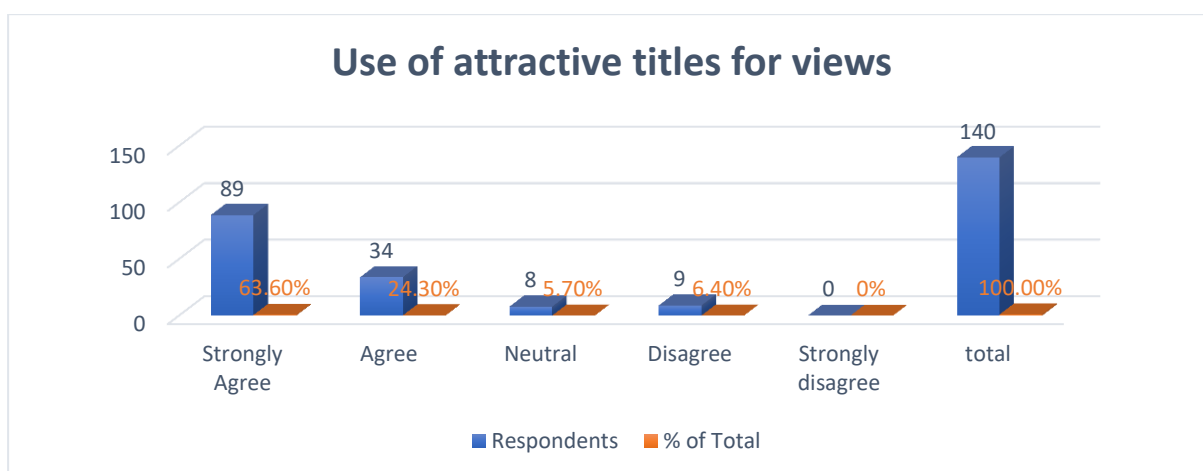


Table 6 shows cross tab of respondent’s opinion on content creator’s use of attractive clickbait’s, titles and thumbnails gather more views on YouTube. The overall data shows that majority of the respondents (63.6%) strongly agreed,



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followed by (24.3%) of the respondents agreed, (5.7%) of the respondents were neutral, and (6.4%) of the respondents disagreed.

Table 7: Illustrates do you think content creator’s frequently use emotional elements to engage viewers

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	85	39	5	9	2	140
% of Total		60.7%	27.9%	3.6%	6.4%	1.4%	100.0%

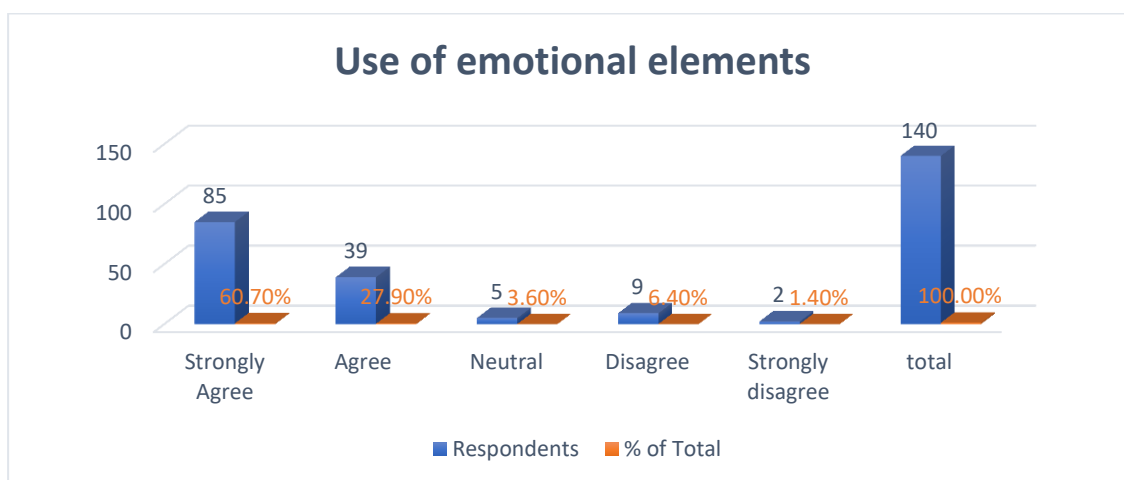


Table 7 cross tab shows respondent’s opinion on content creator’s frequently use of emotional element to engage viewers. The overall data shows that majority of respondents (60.7%) strongly agreed, followed by (27.9%) of respondents agreed, (3.6%) of respondents were neutral, (6.4%) of the respondents disagreed and (1.4%) respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 8: illustrates do you think videos with appealing visuals gain higher views on YouTube

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	72	36	8	24	0	140
% of Total		51.4%	25.7%	5.7%	17.1%	0%	100.0%

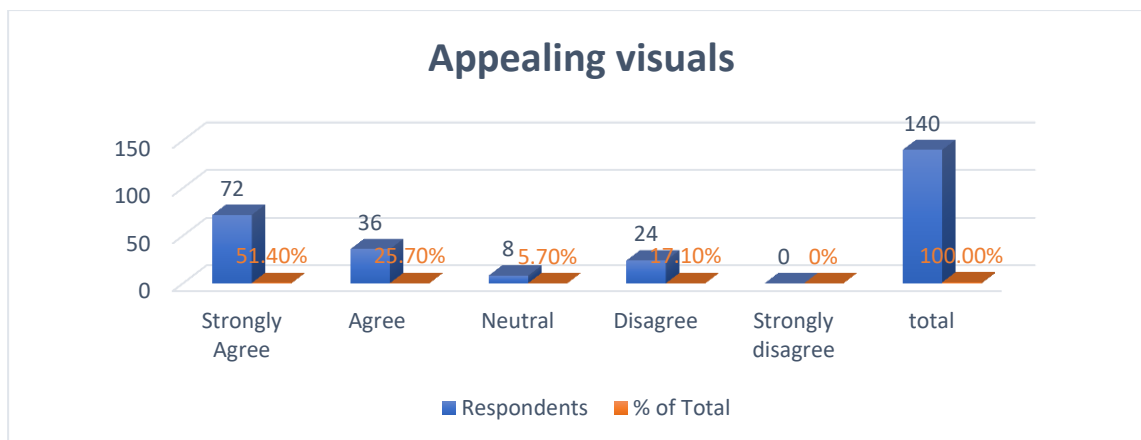


Table 8 cross tab shows respondent’s opinion on videos with appealing visuals gain higher views on YouTube. The overall data shows majority of the respondents (51.4%) strongly agreed, followed by (25.7%) of the respondents agreed, (5.7%) of the respondents were neutral, an (17.1%) of the respondents disagreed.

Table 9: Illustrates do you think content creators generate more revenue from YouTube as compared to other social media apps

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	80	30	4	26	0	140
% of Total		57.1%	21.4%	2.9%	18.6%	0%	100.0%

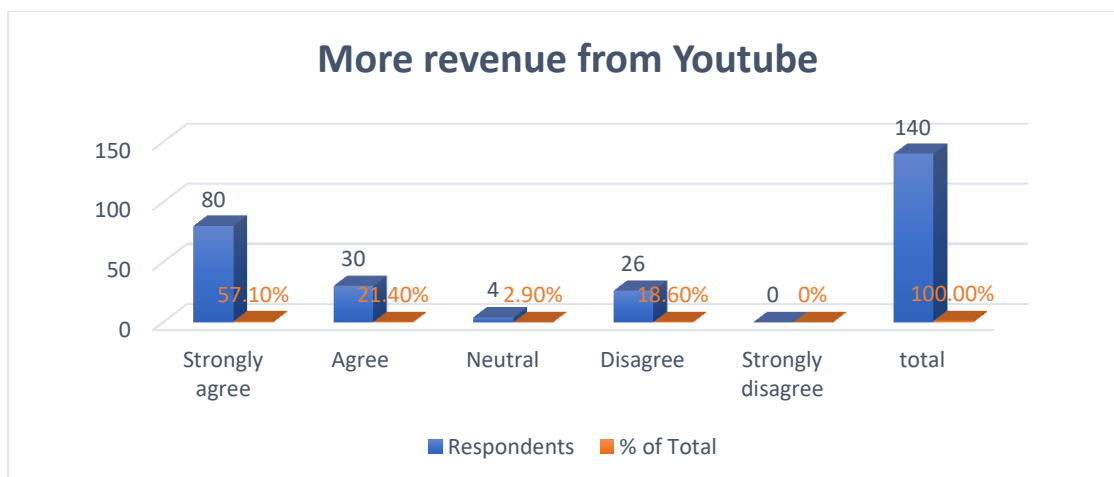


Table 9 cross tab shows respondent’s opinion on content creator’s generating more revenue from YouTube as compared to other social media apps. The overall data shows majority of the respondents (57.1%) strongly agreed, followed by (21.4%) respondents agreed, (2.9%) respondents were neutral and (18.6%) respondents disagreed.

Table 10: Illustrate do you think content creators prioritize sensational content to increase their revenue

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	84	40	6	10	0	140



% of Total		60%	28.6%	4.3%	7.1%	0%	100.0%
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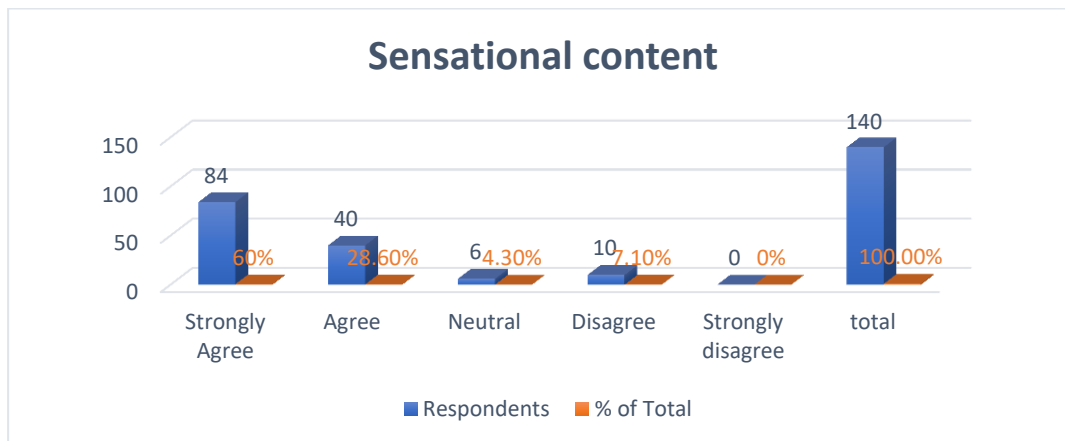


Table 10 cross tab shows respondent’s opinion on content creators prioritizing sensational content to increase their revenue. The overall data shows that majority of the respondents (60%) strongly agreed, followed by (28.6%) respondents agreed, (4.3%) respondents were neutral, and (7.1%) respondents disagreed.

Table 11: Illustrates do you think staying updated on current affairs is a key factor for YouTube content success

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	86	40	4	10	0	140
	% of Total	61.4%	28.6%	2.9%	7.1%	0%	100.0%

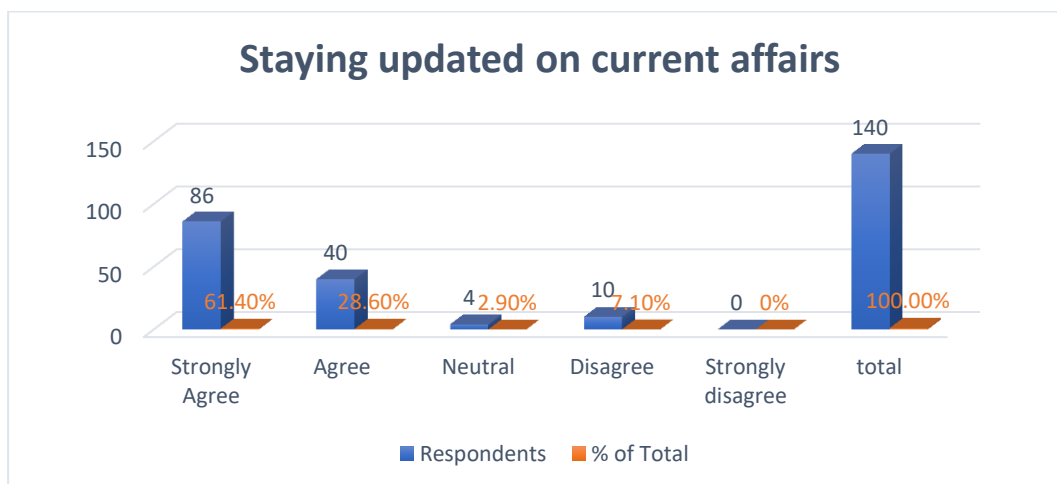


Table 11 cross tab shows respondent’s opinion on staying updating on current affairs is a key factor for YouTube. The overall data shows majority of the respondents (61.4%) strongly agreed, followed by (28.6%) of respondents agreed, (2.9%) of respondents were neutral and (7.1%) respondents disagreed.



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Table 12: Illustrates do you think that YouTube policies are helpful in combating the spread of fake content

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	82	30	5	8	15	140
% of Total		58.57%	21.43%	3.57%	5.71%	10.71%	100.0%

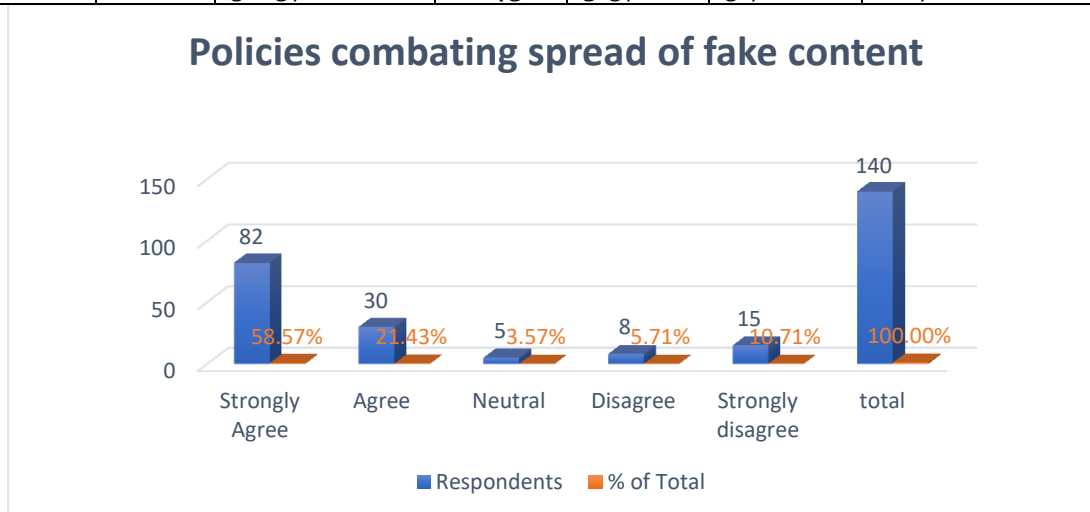
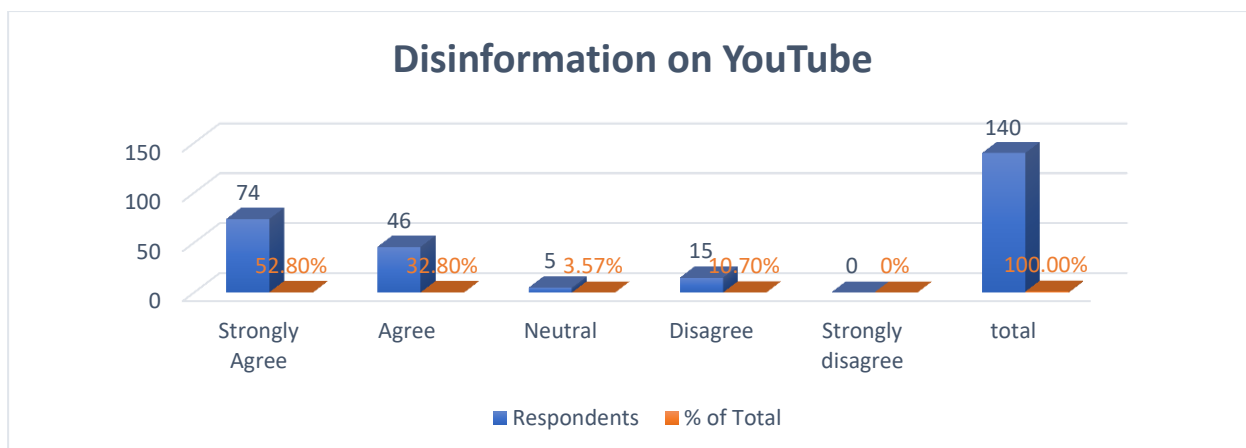


Table 12 cross tab shows respondent’s opinion on YouTube policies are helpful in combating the spread of fake content. The overall data shows majority of the respondents (58.57%) strongly agreed, followed by (21.43%) of respondents agreed, (3.57%) of respondents were neutral, (5.71%) of respondents disagreed and (10.71%) of respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 13: Illustrates do you think Disinformation on YouTube is the major issue of its credibility

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	74	46	5	15	0	140
% of Total		52.8%	32.8%	3.57%	10.7%	0%	100.0%





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Table 13 cross tab shows respondents' opinion about disinformation on YouTube is the major issue of its credibility. The overall data shows majority of the respondents (52.8%) strongly agreed, followed by (32.8%) of respondents agreed, (3.57%) of respondents were neutral, and (10.7%) of respondents disagreed.

Table 14: Illustrates does penalties like demonetization, content removal, or account suspension prevents content creator's from creating and uploading fake or misleading content

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	78	38	6	8	10	140
% of Total		55.7%	27.1%	4.2%	5.7%	7.14%	100.0%

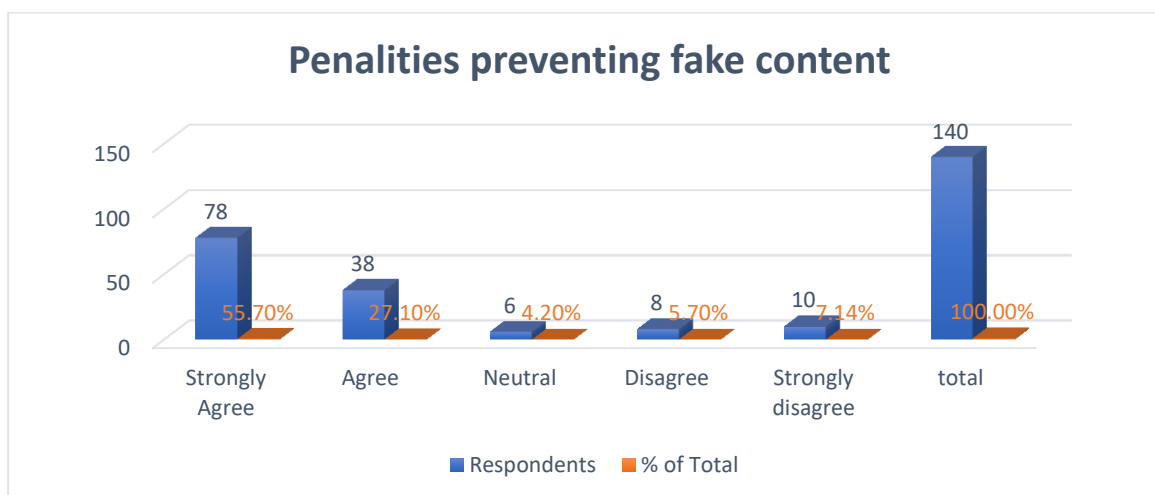


Table 14 cross tab shows respondents opinion on penalties like demonetization, content removal, or account suspension prevent content creator's from creating and uploading fake and misleading content. The overall data shows majority of the respondents (55.7%) strongly agreed, followed by (27.1%) of respondents agreed, (4.2%) of respondents were neutral, (5.7%) of respondents disagreed, and (7.14%) of respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 15: Illustrates do you think YouTube should enhance fact-checking features and warnings on content to prevent misinformation

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	80	38	8	14	0	140
% of Total		57.1%	27.1%	5.7%	10%	0%	100.0%

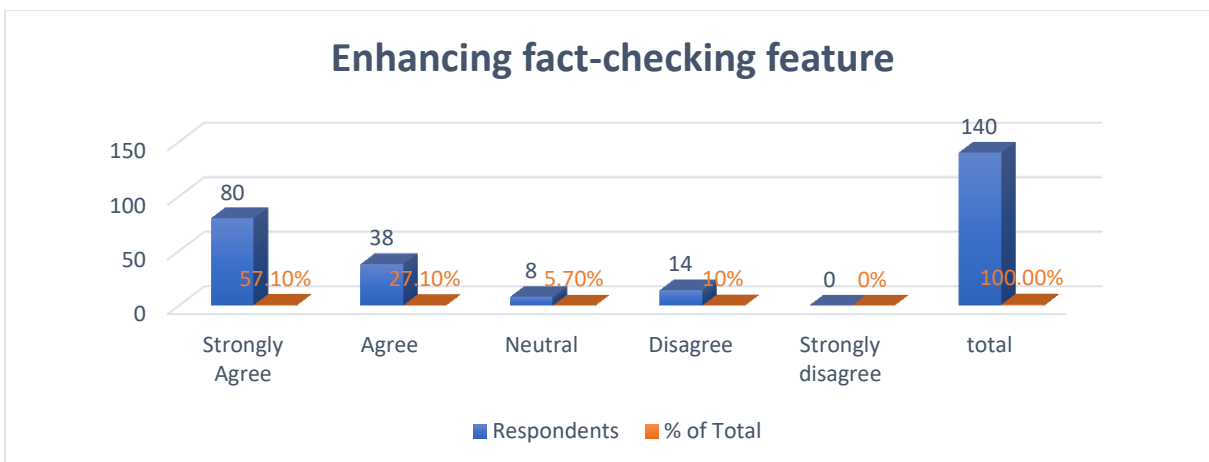


Table 15 cross tab shows respondents opinion on YouTube should enhance fact-checking features and warnings on content to prevent misinformation. The overall data shows majority of the respondents (57.1%) strongly agreed, followed by (27.1%) of respondents agreed , (5.7%) of respondents were neutral, and (10%) of respondents disagreed.

Table 16 illustrates do you think YouTube is perceived as more credible than other social media platforms

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	80	40	8	10	2	140
	% of Total	57.1%	28.57%	5.7%	7.14%	1.4%	100.0%

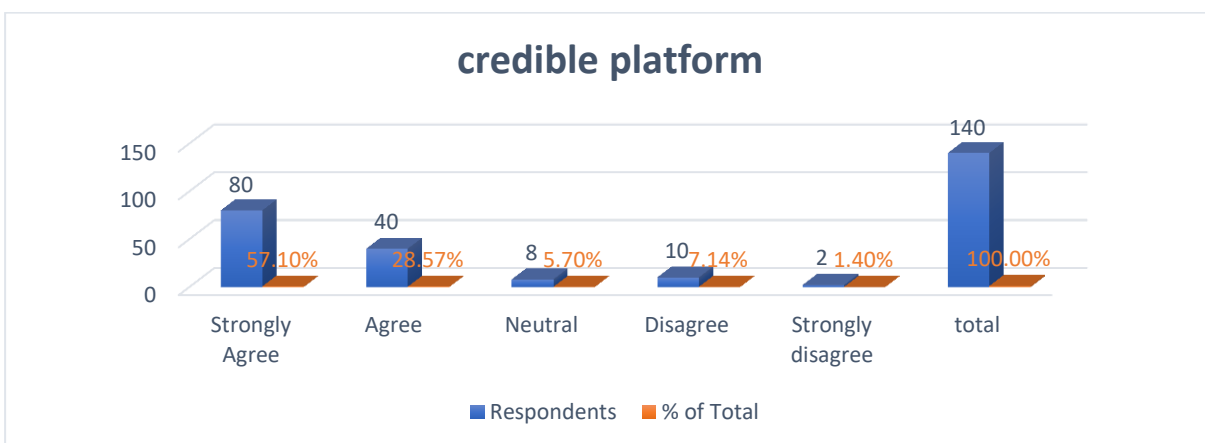


Table 16 cross tab show respondent’s opinion on YouTube is perceived as more credible than other social media platforms. The overall data shows majority of the respondents (57.1%) strongly agreed, followed by (28.57%) of respondents agreed, (5.7%) of respondents were neutral, (7.14%) of respondents disagreed, and (1.4%) of respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 17: Illustrates do you think diverse content availability on YouTube enhances its value as a reliable source of information

		Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly	total



		Agree				disagree	
Respondents	Count	70	36	10	16	8	140
% of Total		50%	25.7%	7.14%	11.4%	5.7%	100.0%

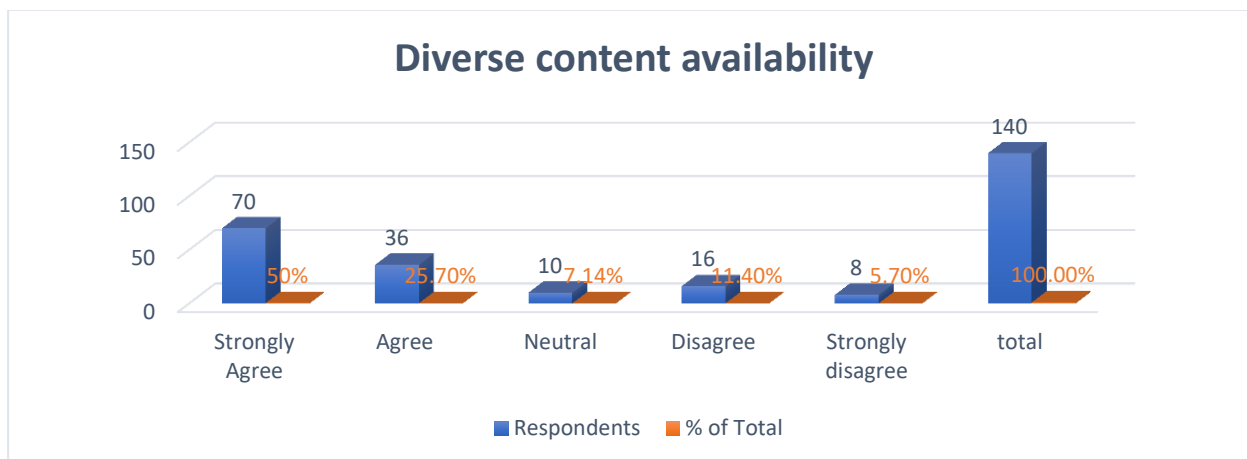


Table 17 cross tab shows respondents’ opinions on diverse content availability on YouTube enhances its value as a reliable source of information. The overall data shows majority of the respondents (50%) strongly agreed, followed by (25.7%) of respondents agreed, (7.14%) of respondents were neutral, (11.4%) of respondents disagreed and (5.7%) of respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 18: illustrates do you think revenue generative streams like ads and sponsorships on YouTube encourages content creators to focus mainly on profit rather than content quality

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	96	25	6	11	2	140
% of Total		68.57%	17.85%	4.2%	7.8%	1.4%	100.0%

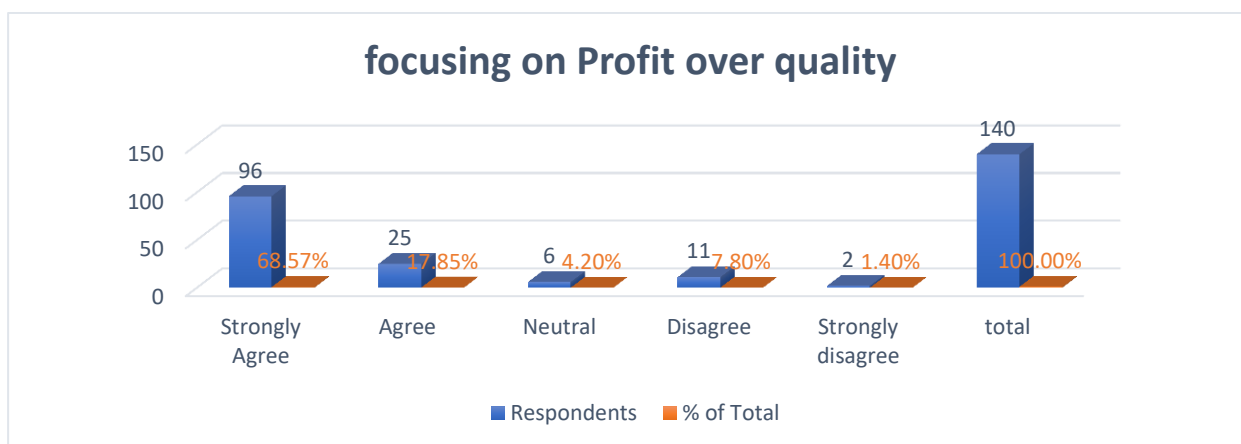


Table 18 cross tab show respondents’ opinion on revenue generative streams like ads and sponsorships on YouTube encourages content creators to focus mainly on profit rather than content quality. The overall data shows majority of the respondents (68.57%) strongly agreed, followed by (17.85%) of respondents



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agreed, (4.2%) of respondents were neutral, (7.8%) of respondents disagreed, and (1.4%) of respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 19: Illustrates do you think youth trusts YouTube content more than content on other social media platforms

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	78	46	4	10	2	140
% of Total		55.7%	32.85%	2.85%	7.14%	1.4%	100.0%

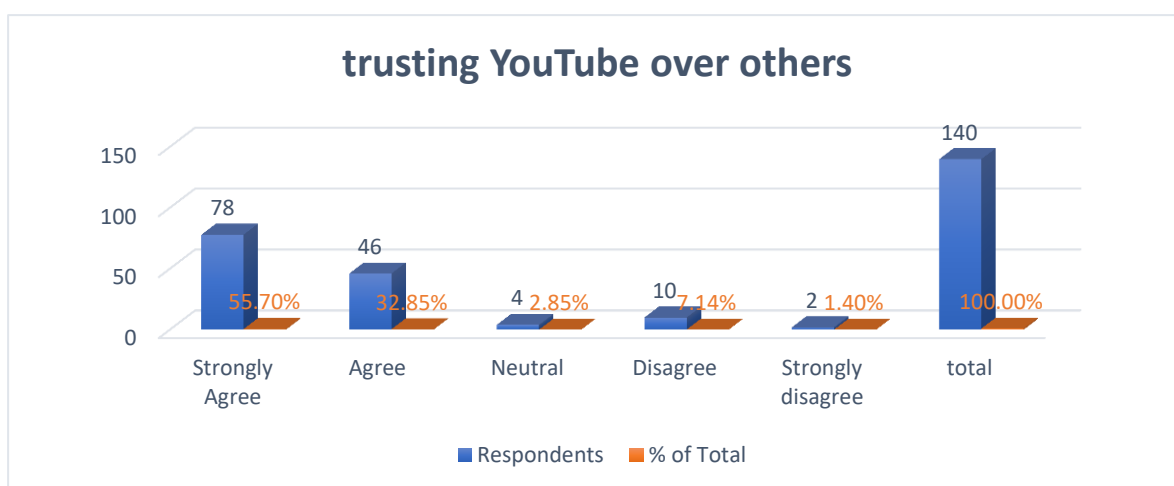
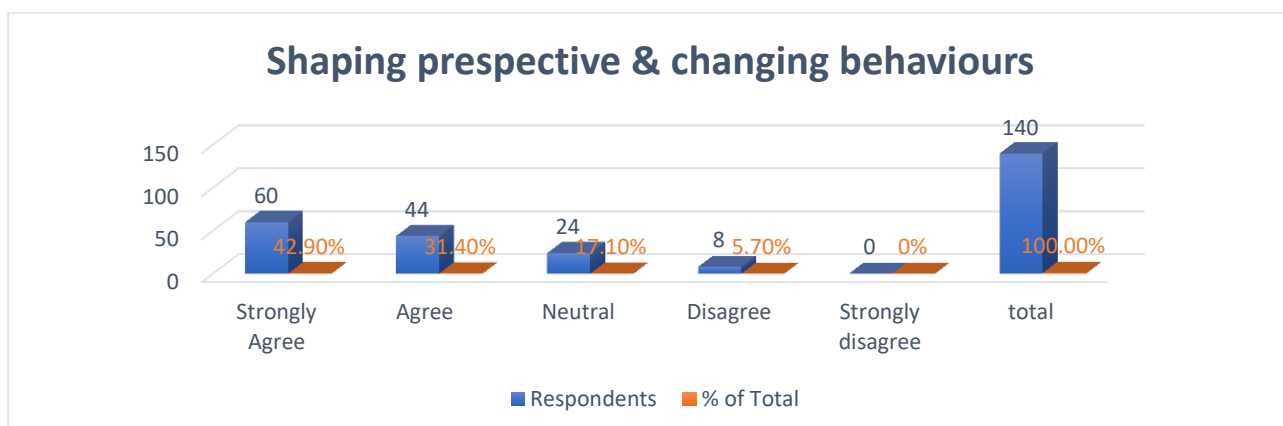


Table 19 cross tab shows respondents opinion on youth trusts YouTube content more than content on other social media platforms. The overall data shows majority of the respondents (55.7%) strongly agreed, followed by (32.85%) of respondents agreed, (2.85%) of respondents were neutral, (7.14%) of respondents disagreed, (1.4%) of respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 20: Illustrate do you think YouTube plays an important role in shaping the Perspective of youth and influencing their behavior

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	total
Respondents	Count	60	44	24	8	0	140
% of Total		42.9%	31.4%	17.1%	5.7%	0%	100.0%





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Table 20 cross tab show respondents' opinion on YouTube plays an important role in shaping perspective of youth and influencing their behaviors. The overall data shows majority of the respondents (42.9%) strongly agreed, followed by (31.4%) of respondents agreed, (17.1%) of respondents were neutral, and (5.7%) of respondents disagreed.

Analysis

Table 21: Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	
It is more likely that content creators use emotional interaction, current affairs, appealing visuals and instant hint to get high views.	Accepted
It is more likely that content creators make popular sensational content to earn more revenue through YouTube.	Accepted
It is more likely that you tube Policies are not enough to combat misinformation and disinformation creates by the content creators.	Accepted
It is more likely that youth think, YouTube is more credible platform than other social media apps.	Accepted

Table 21 presents the hypothesis testing results based on survey data. The findings confirm that content creators use emotional interaction, current affairs, and appealing visuals to attract higher views. Additionally, the results indicate that sensational content boosts revenue, YouTube policies are insufficient to control misinformation, and youth perceive YouTube as more credible than other social media platforms.

Analysis of Research Hypotheses Based on Data

Hypothesis 1:

"It is more likely that content creators use emotional interaction, current affairs, appealing visuals, and instant hints to get high views."

Findings:

- **Emotional Interaction:** Table 8.7 shows that **60.7% strongly agreed** and **27.9% agreed** that content creators frequently use emotional elements to engage viewers (Total = 88.6%).
- **Current Affairs:** Table 8.11 shows that **61.4% strongly agreed** and **28.6% agreed** that staying updated on current affairs is a key factor for YouTube content success (Total = 90%).
- **Appealing Visuals:** Table 8.8 shows that **51.4% strongly agreed** and **25.7% agreed** that videos with appealing visuals gain higher views (Total = 77.1%).
- **Instant Hint (Clickbait Titles & Thumbnails):** Table 8.6 shows that **63.6% strongly agreed** and **24.3% agreed** that attractive clickbait titles and thumbnails gather more views (Total = 87.9%).

Hypothesis Accepted. The majority of respondents support the idea that content creators use emotional engagement, current events, appealing visuals, and clickbait to get higher views.



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Hypothesis 2:

"It is more likely that content creators make popular sensational content to earn more revenue through YouTube."

Findings:

- **Sensational Content for Revenue:** Table 8.10 shows that **60% strongly agreed** and **28.6% agreed** that content creators prioritize sensational content to increase their revenue (Total = 88.6%).
- **YouTube as a Major Revenue Source:** Table 8.9 shows that **57.1% strongly agreed** and **21.4% agreed** that content creators generate more revenue from YouTube than other social media platforms (Total = 78.5%).
- **Profit-Driven Content:** Table 8.18 shows that **68.57% strongly agreed** and **17.85% agreed** that revenue streams like ads and sponsorships make content creators focus more on profit than content quality (Total = 86.42%).

Hypothesis Accepted. The data confirms that sensational content is commonly used to maximize YouTube revenue.

Hypothesis 3:

"It is more likely that YouTube policies are not enough to combat misinformation and disinformation created by content creators."

Findings:

- **Disinformation as a Major Credibility Issue:** Table 8.13 shows that **52.8% strongly agreed** and **32.8% agreed** that disinformation on YouTube is a major credibility issue (Total = 85.6%).
- **Effectiveness of YouTube Policies:** Table 8.12 shows that while **58.57% strongly agreed** and **21.43% agreed** that YouTube policies help combat fake content (Total = 80%), **16.42% disagreed or strongly disagreed**, indicating some concerns.
- **Need for Better Fact-Checking:** Table 8.15 shows that **57.1% strongly agreed** and **27.1% agreed** that YouTube should enhance fact-checking features (Total = 84.2%).

Partial Acceptance. While many believe YouTube's policies help combat misinformation, the high concern about disinformation and calls for improved fact-checking suggest that current policies may still be insufficient.

Hypothesis 4:

"It is more likely that youth think YouTube is a more credible platform than other social media apps."

Findings:

- **YouTube's Credibility Compared to Other Platforms:** Table 8.16 shows that **57.1% strongly agreed** and **28.57% agreed** that YouTube is more credible than other social media platforms (Total = 85.67%).
- **Youth Trust in YouTube Content:** Table 8.19 shows that **55.7% strongly agreed** and **32.85% agreed** that youth trust YouTube content more than content on other platforms (Total = 88.55%).

Hypothesis Accepted. The majority of respondents perceive YouTube as more credible than other social media platforms.



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Discussion

The results of this research highlights the intricate relationship between YouTube as a platform for generating revenue and its credibility as a source of information, especially from the viewpoint of young users. The study reveals that YouTube content creators are significantly influenced by financial incentives, which leads them to adopt tactics like clickbait titles, emotionally charged stories and sensational material to maximize viewer engagement. Data shows that a large majority of respondents acknowledge these trend, confirming that financial motivations largely dedicate the type of content produced on the platform. This observation is consistent with broader discussions within media studies, suggesting that social media algorithms tend to favor content that maintains user engagement for extended durations rather than content that is necessarily factual or thoroughly researched. Consequently, YouTube has evolved into a space where viewership and revenue often overshadow accuracy and dependability, posing a potential risk for dissemination of misinformation.

A significant concern arising from this study is the effectiveness of YouTube's policies in addressing misinformation and disinformation. Even though most respondents recognized that YouTube the platform's ability to effectively tackle misinformation. This doubt aligns with global debates regarding the responsibilities of digital platforms in content moderation. YouTube has initiated policies such as fact-checking panels, content warnings, and the demonetization of misleading videos, but the findings suggest that these initiatives may not always be viewed as adequate. A major limitation is that YouTube's algorithm still tends to emphasize engagement metrics, enabling sensational or misleading content to thrive despite policy attempts. Additionally, many creators find ways to circumvent these regulations such as subtly framing deceptive narratives to avoid being flagged indicating that YouTube's current strategy might not be comprehensive enough to resolve the issue fundamentally. The study highlights an urgent need for stronger and more transparent regulatory mechanisms that prevent misinformation from receiving undue visibility and monetization opportunities. Despite these concerns, the research also indicates that YouTube is generally regarded as a more trustworthy platform compared to other social media channels. Data suggest that young users show a greater inclination to trust YouTube over platforms like X (formerly Twitter) or Facebook, potentially due to its organized content format, presence of expert-led videos, and relatively higher obstacles to content virality than text-based platforms. However, this perception of credibility represents both an opportunity and a challenge. While it implies that users view YouTube as a reliable source for information, it also means that misinformation, when present, can become even more powerful, as viewers may be less likely to scrutinize its accuracy. This finding emphasizes the need to foster digital literacy among youth, equipping them with critical thinking skills to assess sources and distinguish between well-researched information and misleading narratives. The study further underscores the inherent conflict in YouTube dual role as both a profit-driven platform and an information repository. On one side, the platforms economic model depends on advertising revenues, sponsorship, and user interaction, encouraging content creators to prioritize what garners the most views instead of what is the most accurate or informative. Conversely, YouTube has a responsibility to uphold its credibility



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and ensure users can access trust-worthy information. The challenges lies in harmonizing the two priorities allowing creators to succeed financially while also implementing stricter measures against misinformation. The findings suggest that achieving this balance will require YouTube to bolster its content moderation efforts, fine-tune its algorithm to prioritize accuracy over engagement, and establish most robust fact-checking mechanisms capable of countering the spread of misleading information in real time. Overall, this research emphasizes the changing role of YouTube in the digital media landscape, where financial incentives frequently shape content trends but also heighten concern about liability. While YouTube remains a prominent and largely trusted source of information, the study highlights the necessity for continuous advancements in regulation, content moderation, and efforts aimed at improving digital literacy. Addressing these challenges will be vital in ensuring that YouTube continues to function as both a profitable platform for content creators and a credible and responsible information source for its extensive user base.

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