

ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN YOUTUBE VLOGGING: A STUDY OF VLOGGERS IN FAISALABAD, PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This article examines the ethical challenges faced by YouTube vloggers in Faisalabad, Pakistan. Using qualitative research with in-depth interviews (N=25), the study explores dilemmas such as transparency in sponsored content, audience manipulation, privacy, and mental health concerns. The findings reveal ten recurring themes in vloggers' practices, shaped by local cultural and religious norms, and global digital trends. Social Identity Theory is employed as a framework to analyze how audience validation and in-group pressures influence ethical decision-making. The article highlights the need for clearer platform regulation, greater awareness among content creators, and policies that balance creativity with ethical responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

Launched in 2005 by pioneers Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim, YouTube has changed how we produce, share and view media content. When originally conceived, YouTube's goal was simply to let users upload videos online for private purposes, but before long it became one of the most influential social media networks in the world. Joiners and Browsers Acquired by Google in 2006, YouTube is known for its freewheeling and personable style, with content ranging from entertainment and education to

social commentary and personal storytelling (Abbasi et al., 2022).

YouTube has gone through an evolutionary process which can be divided into various transformative stages. Early YouTube was a place largely populated by amateur creators. A lack of strict content policies encouraged creativity, letting users upload everything from home videos to comedic skits (Ahmed et al., 2023). As its popularity ballooned, it started gaining the attention of professional creators and media companies, and amateur video gradually began

competing with real productions. The launch of the Partner Program in 2007, which allowed creators to share in ad revenue, marked a turning point for YouTube, encouraging a more intentional approach to content creation. This offered not just confirmed YouTube's position as a cash comprehension stage, yet makes, as it were, a vocation center for promising advanced creators (Alelaimat, 2023).

In terms of technology, a massive role in the growth of Youtube over the years. To say nothing of the rise of high-speed internet, the proliferation of smartphones, and the improvements in video-editing software that have all but guaranteed that creators would have ready means to produce and upload the goods (Anjari & Ali, 2024). With the introduction of features, YouTube has made it easier for creators to connect with their audience through live streaming and engage their audience in new forms such as YouTube Shorts and Community tabs (Ayub & Ali 2023).

YouTube has evolved into a powerful digital platform that allows individuals to create, share, and monetize content across diverse genres. In cities like Faisalabad, YouTube vlogging has become a source of income, identity, and influence. However, this rapid growth also brings ethical challenges, particularly in conservative societies where cultural and religious norms are deeply entrenched. Existing studies highlight dilemmas around privacy, sensationalism, and commercialization of personal life (Abbasi et al., 2022; Ahmed et al., 2023). Yet, limited research explores these issues in the Pakistani context, particularly in mid-sized urban centers such as Faisalabad.

1.1. Objectives of The Study

1. To explore the lived experiences of YouTube vloggers in Faisalabad regarding the ethical dilemmas they face during content creation.
2. To understand how audience validation and group dynamics shape vloggers' content creation decisions and ethical considerations.
3. To analyze how vloggers reconcile their local cultural norms with the globalized expectations of YouTube as a platform.
4. To investigate vloggers' strategies for differentiating themselves from out-groups and the ethical challenges that emerge as a result.

5. To examine vloggers' perspectives on balancing authenticity with the pressures of audience approval and digital competition.

Research Questions

1. How do YouTube vloggers in Faisalabad perceive the ethical challenges associated with their content creation?
2. How does the need for audience validation and group acceptance influence vloggers' decisions regarding content choices?
3. In what ways do vloggers balance their local cultural values with the globalized trends of YouTube vlogging?
4. How do vloggers differentiate themselves from competitors (out-groups) to strengthen their social identity, and what ethical dilemmas arise in this process?
5. How do vloggers perceive the tension between maintaining authenticity and catering to audience expectations?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Platforms like YouTube have changed the way people interact with media and shape their identities. As a worldwide space, YouTube enables people to share everything from personal lives and entertainment to social critique and activism. But this democratization of content creation has also come with its own set of moral and ethical dilemmas (Gatica-Perez et al, 2018). They are creators and influencers in one, and while they strive to keep the audience entertained, seeking group validation for their narratives, they face dilemmas about the ethics that they align with addressing issues around privacy, sensationalism and cultural representation (Farrukh et al., 2021). In particular, in places like Faisalabad where conventionalism meets modern globalizing digital customs, these challenges are amplified.

A study explored that trust of user, nature of user behaviour, communication with others has been a huge reliant on social networking sites. Motivated by the copper-bottomed and influential network, users pick-out most green, in order to flourish their own wisdom. The growth of all new digital media networks has revolutionized consumer behavior on the online platform for decades. Social media allows a unique type of digital presence for organizations and

companies where users get support, contact the companies and engage with them which makes their experience richer (Gibson, 2016).

According to Haider et al. (2020) done a research and declared that blogs is the most attractive and appealing platform to audience in compare to all the other available. Therefore, it not only attracted viewers' focus but also helped companies to innovate/reinnovate their complete product market. According to Hale et al. (2018) there are 91.8 million blogs post every month. As per US population, 81 percent of the consumer was dependent on the information provided by blogs or on vlogs and 61 percent formed their whole decision concerning getting a product on recommendation given by these blogs because they are the most persuasive and a legitimate expert for them.

Moreover, according to Hasan et al. (2024) interactive celebrities which the new generation can quickly access through their digital persona, through followers from the celebrity and learned about buying styles as to how what style can effectively affect their selection and decision making. Therefore, marketers navigated to get benefit by any means with their digital celebrities as they have an immense goodwill in the mind of viewer and brand shapes the buyer behaviour by picturizing their product on the videos of famous and fashion conscious YouTubers. Celebrities attract users for specific action and become trend setters for the companies (Hashmi et al., 2021).

According to Hussain et al. (2024) consumer has become much more intelligent now as they receive free information and opinions on the product before making a decision whether it makes sense or not to spend money on product. The other thing he said is that it totally takes over place of traditional media and became must and wide range medium to create value for the businesses. Therefore, marketers tried to get these personalities to promote their products to their viewers and raised the intention of their subscribers to the product which will end up being the basis of the purchase from the subscribers (Ilyas & Ara, 2021). Additionally, according to Irfan et al. (2022) the influencers are source of inspiration for the viewers who often view videos and purchase endorse product. Everything is because of their credibility and that they have trust among themselves. YouTubers typically get free stuff or money from the business to bear solid and

positive association of the respective brand in their videos. Therefore, these personalities were taken as brand endorser and in their name companies also provided coupon code for their followers to avail discounts on the products. Over time, video content creator is not simply an essential and reliable social network personality for add-ons direction however additionally assist obtaining selection between preference of following brands (Irfan et al., 2022).

A study found that the credibility was the significant factor in purchasing decisions and reduces consumer uncertainties. Both reviews on net helps buyer in taking purchase decision and it has its other benefits as well. Information about products and recommendations given by influencers is seen by users as more credible, authentic and reliable than information provided directly by companies. The opinion of influencers about products was very significant as it positively influenced purchasing decision and ultimately helps in enhancing purchase intention of the buyer. The Social media influencers were being accepted as more truthful, clear and reliable way of information. So it induced purchase intentions. Additionally, the credibility of the source influences the perception of the speaker's persuasiveness. If they found the source credible than they tend to believe more on the message out of them and those which are not much credible, thus source credibility affects the credibility of the information provided (Abbasi et al., 2022).

Theoretical Framework

This study applies Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) to understand how vloggers construct their identities through group belonging, validation, and differentiation from out-groups. Audience engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares) serve as validation, shaping vloggers' decisions and often forcing them into ethical compromises (Berryman & Kavka, 2018). SIT helps explain the tension between authenticity, social acceptance, and ethical responsibility.

Methodology

A qualitative research method was employed to explore the nuanced perspectives of individuals associated with YouTube vlogging in Faisalabad. This approach was chosen to provide an in-depth

understanding of the ethical dilemmas faced by vloggers, viewers, and other stakeholders. Specifically, a content analysis was conducted, analyzing the narratives derived from semi-structured interviews. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility, enabling participants to express their thoughts freely while ensuring the discussion remained focused on the research objectives. The content was subsequently analyzed to identify recurring themes and patterns relevant to ethical concerns in vlogging.

The study involved N=25 participants of age range 18 years to 40 years, across two distinct categories i.e. aspiring vloggers, established vloggers to provide a holistic view of the subject matter.

Participants were included in the study based on the following criteria:

1. Active involvement or significant experience with YouTube vlogging in Faisalabad (either as creators, viewers, or stakeholders).

2. Ability to articulate their views on ethical issues related to vlogging.
3. Willingness to participate in a one-on-one interview and provide informed consent.
4. Availability during the data collection period.

While participants were excluded if:

1. They had no significant interaction with YouTube vlogging in Faisalabad.
2. They were unwilling to participate or could not provide informed consent.
3. They were unable to communicate effectively due to language barriers or other limitations.
4. Their participation posed any potential conflict of interest (e.g., YouTube platform moderators or administrators).

A demographic sheet with consent form was used for collecting the biodata and permission of the participants. A mobile audio recorder was used for recording interviews with the consent of participants, was used.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Following themes and subthemes are formed for this study



Table 1: Themes and Subthemes

Sr. No	Themes	Subthemes
1.	Ethics in Content Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency and honesty in vlogging. • Ethical dilemmas with clickbait and sensationalism. • Ethical integrity versus engagement and popularity.
2.	Influence on Viewers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of vloggers as role models. • Impact on young audiences' mental health and self-esteem. • Influence on public opinion and behavior.
3.	Sponsored Content and Monetization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency in sponsored partnerships. • Ethical concerns around manipulative marketing tactics. • Pressure from brands to promote specific content.
4.	Responsibility Toward Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing entertainment and education. • Sensitivity when addressing controversial topics. • Promoting inclusivity and diversity.
5.	Platform Regulation and Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YouTube's role in ensuring ethical standards.

Sr. No	Themes	Subthemes
6.	Role of Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for stricter content guidelines, especially for young audiences. • Tools for parents and viewers to monitor content. • Holding vloggers accountable for unethical behavior. • Encouraging ethical practices through engagement and feedback.
7.	Mental Health and Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing mental health through content creation. • Glorification of unrealistic standards and lifestyles.
8.	Training and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of training vloggers in digital ethics. • Providing resources and guidance for ethical content creation.
9.	Diversity and Inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighting diverse voices and cultures. • Avoiding reinforcement of stereotypes.
10.	Accountability and Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms for holding vloggers accountable for unethical practices. • Consequences such as strikes, demonetization, or bans for harmful content.

The Table 1 is representing all the themes and their respective subthemes that have been extracted from the interviews conducted from the YouTube Vloggers of Faisalabad.

Theme 1: Ethics in Content Creation

Ethics in content creation is the moral principles and standards vloggers use to do what they do and to share what they share. Given influencers' ability to shape opinions and behaviour, it is ethically important. According to this theme, it is important for vloggers to be honest, transparent and honest while their work at the same time, and set aside pressures related to engagement metrics and financial incentives. It examines the narrow line between being an exemplary content creator and complying with ethical norm.

Subtheme 1: Transparency and Honesty in Vlogging

Transparency and honesty involve being truthful in the content shared with viewers and openly disclosing any sponsorships or endorsements. Interviewee 23 noted:

"They need to be transparent about their content, ensuring that the content is informative or entertaining without distorting facts."

He also emphasized the significance of sponsorship disclosure:

"Brands should work with creators who maintain transparency with their audiences and avoid any deceptive practices."

By thinking about these aforementioned statements, it is clear what the interviewee was trying to report: building trust between vloggers and their audience begins from transparency and honesty. Fostering a more loyal viewer base is also found on streamers that are upfront about their intentions and what is on their mind. Vloggers can maintain integrity while keeping their audience in the know through the disclosure of sponsorships and accuracy of the facts vlogged.

Subtheme 2: Ethical Dilemmas with Clickbait and Sensationalism

Ethical dilemmas arise when vloggers use sensationalized titles or thumbnails (clickbait) to lure

viewers, often at the cost of honesty. Interviewee 25 pointed out:

"The pressure to generate views can lead vloggers to take ethical shortcuts, like clickbait or presenting skewed information to attract a larger audience."

Interviewee 23 also hinted at this dilemma when discussing harmful trends:

"Sometimes vloggers glorify unhealthy habits or promote unrealistic beauty standards just to get more engagement."

They explained how the race to achieve higher engagement metrics gets vloggers tempted to surrender the strong moral values of their viewers. Clickbait may boost short term exposure but at the cost of alienating viewers that eventually will learn to not trust it. Creators who care more about what their growth metrics look like than what the representation of their content represents give way to ethical dilemmas.

Subtheme 3: Ethical Integrity versus Engagement and Popularity

Maintaining ethical integrity often conflicts with the pressure to achieve higher engagement and popularity. Interviewee 22 acknowledged:

"Sometimes the pressure to maintain a certain level of popularity or engagement leads creators to compromise their integrity."

Similarly, Interviewee 21 stressed the importance of balancing integrity with success:

"Vloggers should focus on providing value, educating, and entertaining in ways that align with ethical standards. Success doesn't have to come at the expense of integrity."

During the interviews, the interviewees stated that vloggers are caught between 'staying true' or loyal to what they believe in, and the pull to fulfill the platform demands of YouTube, which is in reality an algorithm. To keep long term trust above short term gains is an ethically composed behavior of all creators when staking popularity is difficult. Ethics in Content Creation has to be about influencers teaching their followers that they are good and principled. The subthemes reveal specific challenges and insights, despite the pressures of engagement vloggers must be transparent, they must avoid sensationalism, and they must prioritise integrity. Ethical principles provide the

foundation for building sustainable and credible relationship with audience for vloggers.

Theme 2: Influence on Viewers

Vloggers have great power as public figures and influencers with their audiences. Opinions, behavior and sometimes the norms of a society can be shaped by their content. This theme highlights the dual responsibility vloggers have: To inspire positive change, while at the same time thinking of the negative potential consequential outcomes of their content on the viewers, especially younger ones. It covers their role as role models, effects on mental health and self-regard, and the effect on public opinion and act.

Subtheme 1: Role of Vloggers as Role Models

Vloggers often become role models for their viewers, especially younger audiences, who look up to them for guidance and inspiration. Interviewee 19 noted:

"Vloggers are role models, and they should be more mindful of how their content might affect vulnerable viewers, especially teenagers who are still developing their sense of identity."

Similarly, Interviewee 18 emphasized:

"They not only create content but also shape opinions and behaviors. Their actions can influence public discourse, and this power requires careful consideration of ethical standards."

The interviewees want vloggers to bear the responsibility of their contribution, because of their ability to shape people's opinions and decisions. As role models, they are to be an example of integrity, to set a positive value, and refrain from activity that has the potential to be harmful to members of their audience. Vloggers should inspire their followers using their platform but responsibly.

Subtheme 2: Impact on Young Audiences' Mental Health and Self-Esteem

The content shared by vloggers can profoundly affect young viewers' mental health and self-esteem, especially when it involves unrealistic standards or harmful behaviors. Interviewee 13 mentioned:

"A lot of vlogs promote unrealistic body standards, materialism, and harmful behaviors, which can negatively affect a young person's self-esteem."

This concern was echoed by Interviewee 15:

"Look for content that over-promises, uses manipulative tactics, or presents an overly perfect image that doesn't seem authentic."

Interviewees also wanted to report that younger audiences are easily influenced by negative content seen within vlogs. Viewers who are young may begin to feel inadequate, stressed or depressed from unrealistic portrayals of beauty, wealth or success. As a result, vloggers need to produce content that is authentic and brings happiness to the world, not allowing dangerous stigmas or idealities beyond reach.

Subtheme 3: Influence on Public Opinion and Behavior

Vloggers have a significant impact on public opinion and behavior, as they often act as opinion leaders. Interviewee 17 explained:

"Vloggers often claim to be authentic or genuine, but in reality, they are curating narratives that influence their viewers."

Interviewee also remarked on this:

"Sometimes the pressure to generate views can lead vloggers to present skewed information to attract a larger audience."

The interviewees, wanted to accentuate the fact that bloggers have the power to influence the way the society trends and the way it talks about itself. With that responsibility also comes an obligation to accurately relay information (or not manipulate said information) as they have the ability to amplify specific narratives or ideas.

Theme 3: Sponsored Content and Monetization

YouTube vlogging monetization is also done through selling ads and sponsored content in their video through buying from youtube monetization partner. Nevertheless, maintaining these methods has ethical challenges like the necessity of awareness of the need to avoid leading sponsors or to hype manipulative techniques and prospects of being vulnerable to pressure from sponsors. This theme has been explored in terms of the ethical issue that vloggers are confronted with regarding finding that balance between upholding authenticity and trust with respect to their sponsors.

2.1.1. Subtheme 1: Transparency in Sponsored Partnerships

Transparency in sponsorships involves clearly disclosing paid collaborations to maintain audience trust. Interviewee 11 emphasized:

"Brands should work with creators who maintain transparency with their audiences and avoid any deceptive practices."

Additionally, Interviewee 17 discussed the issue of blurred lines between content and advertisement:

"Many vloggers blur the lines between entertainment and advertisement, often manipulating emotions to sell products or ideas."

The interviewees reported that whenever sponsorships are necessary, they must be done so with clear, open communication to maintain viewer trust. Vloggers must disclose partnerships or face deceiving an audience and backlash in trust and credibility. Transparency leads to ethical compliance and demarcates a strong relation between creators and their viewers.

Subtheme 2: Ethical Concerns Around Manipulative Marketing Tactics

Manipulative marketing tactics involve exploiting viewers' emotions or trust to drive sales or views. Interviewee 15 highlighted this concern:

"The pressure to generate views can lead vloggers to take ethical shortcuts, like presenting skewed information to attract a larger audience."

Interviewee 16 also pointed out:

"Some vloggers glorify products or lifestyles without being genuine about their limitations, leading audiences to unrealistic expectations."

The interviewees wanted to make it clear that employing manipulative tactics will compromise the integrity of vloggers and make them lose view of their audience. Though these may be profitable in the short term, they can damage the long term reputation. Ethical marketing matters as long as we want viewers to feel respected and informed.

Subtheme 3: Pressure from Brands to Promote Specific Content

Brands often pressure vloggers to promote content that may not align with their personal values or audience's interests. Interviewee 15 observed:

"Sometimes the pressure to maintain a certain level of popularity or engagement leads creators to compromise their integrity."

Interviewee 17 added:

"Brands should work with creators who align with their values and prioritize honesty and transparency."

Interviewees were eager to state that vloggers have a hard time juggling their ethical duties with their brand expectations. Giving in to such pressure can lose its audience and damage trust. To remain credible, creators must choose their partnerships with care and ensure that the partners align with their values, and their audience preferences.

Theme 4: Responsibility Toward Audience

Vloggers have an ethical responsibility to make content that observes and benefits their audience. This theme is about how vloggers can successfully create balance between information and entertainment, become sensitive when talking about a controversial topic and encourage inclusiveness and diversity. That is why it stresses the importance that creators play in shaping a healthy, informed and inclusive online world.

Subtheme 1: Balancing Entertainment and Education

Striking the right balance between entertainment and education is crucial for engaging audiences while offering meaningful value. Interviewee 6 highlighted:

"Vloggers should aim to inform as much as they entertain, offering something more than just distraction."

Interviewee 5 also noted:

"Creators have a responsibility to ensure their content is enriching, whether it's teaching something new or inspiring positive change."

However, the interviewees wished to report that while entertainment is what predominantly attracts audiences, educational value contributes to content value and yields long term benefits to the audience. Combining both aspects vloggers can develop a platform that keeps the viewer pretty entertained and empowers them with an eye opener useful knowledge or insights.

2.1.2. Subtheme 2: Sensitivity When Addressing Controversial Topics

Addressing controversial topics requires empathy and awareness of potential consequences. Interviewee 3 emphasized:

"When discussing sensitive issues, vloggers should avoid sensationalism and instead focus on fostering constructive conversations."

Interviewee 8 shared a similar perspective:

"Vloggers need to be careful about how they frame controversial topics to avoid alienating or offending their audience."

The interviewees reported that Vloggers should handle controversial issues responsibly. The admissions to sensitivity allow creators to talk to their audience on serious issues without violating their code of ethics or being alienated.

Subtheme 3: Promoting Inclusivity and Diversity

Promoting inclusivity and diversity ensures that all viewers feel represented and respected. Interviewee 1 mentioned:

"Vloggers have the power to break stereotypes and bring diverse voices to the forefront of their platforms."

Interviewee 2 added:

"Content that celebrates diversity and promotes understanding can have a lasting, positive impact on viewers."

Interviewees eagerly reported on the importance of developing inclusive content representation that match the diversity of the society. Vloggers also help create a more equitable and harmonious online community by putting in front of their viewers different ways of seeing the world, different cultures and different experiences. Inclusivity also brings a wider audience to a vlogger. Ethically vloggers should understand the Responsibility Towards Audience in their theme by realizing they are responsible to make sure their content helps their target viewers.

Theme 5: Platform Regulation and Policies

Platform regulation and policies denote the process YouTube uses to maintain aesthetic quality; deliver suitable contents for its various users; and offer means of users controlling what they view. In this theme YouTube is the regulator and the emphasis is on long overdue tighter guidelines to safeguard young viewers,

whilst empowering users and parents with monitoring tools.

2.1.3. Subtheme 1: YouTube's Role in Ensuring Ethical Standards

YouTube, as a platform, has a significant responsibility to maintain ethical standards and hold creators accountable. Interviewee 4 noted:

"YouTube needs to play a bigger role in monitoring content and ensuring creators don't cross ethical boundaries."

Interviewee 8 also expressed concern:

"While vloggers should be accountable, platforms like YouTube must enforce clear policies to deter unethical practices."

The interviewees revealed that YouTube is critical in dictating what ethical content creation is. Strict policies can be put into place and were put into place to prevent anyone from spreading harmful or unethical material. Doing this forces creators to follow rules that put the safety and trust of the community first.

Subtheme 2: Need for Stricter Content Guidelines, Especially for Young Audiences

Stricter content guidelines are essential to protect young viewers from inappropriate or harmful material. Interviewee 10 emphasized:

"There's so much content out there that young audiences shouldn't be exposed to. YouTube needs clearer age restrictions and better enforcement."

Interviewee 14 added:

"The platform should ensure that vloggers label their content accurately and follow regulations that keep younger audiences safe."

The interviewees reported that they need stricter guidelines to protect their young viewers from harmful influences. YouTube by enforcing age appropriate content and giving methods of filtering unsuitable material can create a safer environment for its youngest users and can lead to lifelong healthy consumption trends.

Subtheme 3: Tools for Parents and Viewers to Monitor Content

Providing tools for parents and viewers to monitor content empowers users to tailor their experience on the platform. Interviewee 9 suggested:

"YouTube should invest in better parental controls that allow parents to decide what content is appropriate for their kids."

Interviewee 19 also mentioned:

"Tools like content filters and usage monitoring should be more accessible and user-friendly for all viewers."

The interviewee reported that it is important that parents and viewers have the right tools to empower them to monitor responsible content consumption. With these tools users can deny unwanted content, and protect children from inappropriate and non-beneficial content, making them more in control of their digital experience. Under the theme of Platform Regulation and Policies,

Theme 6: Role of Audience

YouTube content creation is also heavily influenced by the audience. Viewers are active officers of the vlogging ecosystem and have the power to hold vloggers accountable, to shape their behavior, and commend ethical practices. The intention and focus of this theme is that audiences are key to creating a culture of integrity and authenticity on digital platforms.

Subtheme 1: Holding Vloggers Accountable for Unethical Behavior

Audiences have the power to call out unethical behavior and demand accountability from vloggers. Interviewee 16 remarked:

"When viewers see something unethical, they should speak up and call it out. Silence only encourages more of the same behavior."

Interviewee 13 highlighted the role of collective accountability:

"Audience feedback can push creators to rethink their strategies and adopt better practices."

According to the interviewees, audiences are a necessary part of upholding ethical standards by holding vloggers accountable for engaging in harmful, or dishonest, practices. Criticism that is constructive and public accountability are both necessary to develop a culture of creators who want to conduct themselves responsibly in order to stay credible and worthy of an audience.

2.1.4. Subtheme 2: Encouraging Ethical Practices Through Engagement and Feedback

Engaging with content that aligns with ethical standards and providing feedback can encourage vloggers to prioritize integrity. Interviewee 15 explained:

"Viewers should actively support creators who are honest and transparent, showing that ethical behavior is valued."

Interviewee 16 suggested:

"Positive reinforcement, like constructive comments and active engagement, motivates vloggers to maintain ethical practices."

The interviewees wanted them to reveal that audience support for ethical content is the main influence on creator decisions. Viewers can 'vote' for ethical behavior by liking, commenting and sharing the behavior, which means that rather than just ethically rewarding behavior, it also ethically incentivizes it

Theme 7: Mental Health and Wellness

Although vlogging has the ability to positively or negatively impact mental health and wellness. While it can be seen as a means to raise awareness (and spur the formation of supportive community) of many difficult issues, it can also be a place to glorify strive for unrealistic standards and lifestyles, which frequently leads to mental health issues for fans. This theme accounts for the double effect of the development of content on the mental well-being.

Subtheme 1: Addressing Mental Health Through Content Creation

Vloggers who openly discuss mental health can create a positive impact by reducing stigma and offering support. Interviewee 20 highlighted:

"Creators who talk about mental health and share their personal struggles can create safe spaces for viewers to feel less alone."

Interviewee 21 pointed out:

"When vloggers are authentic and vulnerable, it humanizes them and helps their audience connect on a deeper level."

Interviewees reported that content which addresses mental health can contribute to a sense of community and understanding. Vloggers can empower viewers to seek help, minimize the feeling of isolation and enable

viewers to normalize their conversations about mental well-being by sharing the similar stories with them.

Subtheme 2: Glorification of Unrealistic Standards and Lifestyles

Unrealistic portrayals of lifestyles, success, or appearance can harm viewers' mental health, especially among young audiences. Interviewee 22 noted:

"The constant portrayal of a perfect life can make viewers feel like they're not enough, leading to anxiety and low self-esteem."

Interviewee 24 added:

"Some vloggers unintentionally create a toxic culture by showing only their highlights and ignoring the struggles behind the scenes."

Interviewees reported that the glorification of unrealistic standards can set up viewers for harmful expectations. Authenticity and informing rather than feeding false ideal is what vloggers need to put into consideration to avoid having harmful vitality repercussions on viewers. Vlogging has a positive as well as a negative impact on mental health and wellness. Authentic discussions can reduce stigma and create supportive communities, but glorifying unrealistic standards can harm the viewers' mental well-being. Instead of turning their platforms into ads or products, vloggers can utilize their platform to make good to their audience's mental health by focusing more on transparency and authenticity.

Theme 8: Training and Education

Fostering a culture of ethical content creation is only made possible by training and education. Platforms can enable vloggers with knowledge of digital ethics and resources in order to enable creators to be informed and responsible choices. The theme of this also has to be the stressing of the need of formal and informal education in boosting ethical behavioral pattern among content creators.

Subtheme 1: Importance of Training Vloggers in Digital Ethics

Training vloggers in digital ethics helps them understand the potential impact of their content. Interviewee 4 emphasized:

"Many vloggers don't know the ethical implications of their actions; proper training could guide them toward better practices."

Interviewee 18 added:

"Workshops and certifications on digital ethics could make creators more conscious of their responsibility."

The formal training programs can help vloggers with the complexities of ethical content creation, so wanted to report the interviewees. Knowing about things like privacy, authenticity and what impact your audience is going to have on your work means that creators have the knowledge in order to uphold their integrity, and keep trust with their audience.

Subtheme 2: Providing Resources and Guidance for Ethical Content Creation

Providing easily accessible resources ensures vloggers can integrate ethical practices into their work. Interviewee 16 suggested:

"Platforms like YouTube should offer resources like toolkits or ethical guidelines to help vloggers make the right decisions."

Interviewee 8 shared:

"Guidance from experienced creators or platform moderators can go a long way in shaping how new vloggers approach content creation."

The interviewees revealed that they are enabled to report having readily accessible resources that contribute to a vlogger responsive environment. By providing clear guidance in strategic design, we encourage ethical decision making and establish a standard in quality of trusted digital space. Training vloggers in digital ethics and helping them access resources for ethical content creation give the creators the tools to do so responsibly. It provides them with the means and know how to keep up their credibility and also how they can positively affect the audience to whose they provide the vlog.

Theme 9: Diversity and Inclusivity

A fair and representative digital landscape is essential in diversity and inclusivity. Vloggers possess the ability to bring more voices to the front and elaborate on foreign places, without protruding stereotypes and a better sharing world for them.

Subtheme 1: Highlighting Diverse Voices and Cultures

Highlighting diverse perspectives enriches content and fosters cross-cultural understanding. Interviewee 10 observed:

"Vloggers have a platform to showcase voices and cultures that often go unheard, promoting inclusivity and understanding."

Interviewee 9 added:

"Representation matters. Content that celebrates diversity allows viewers to feel seen and respected."

Interviewees reported that having diverse voices brings a sense of belonging and encourages inclusion within the digital space. The same representation not only adds to the fans' understanding of what they are watching but also helps enhance appreciation by lowering cultural barriers and stereotypes.

Subtheme 2: Avoiding Reinforcement of Stereotypes

Avoiding stereotypes requires conscious effort to challenge biases and present authentic narratives. Interviewee 16 noted:

"Some vloggers unintentionally reinforce stereotypes by oversimplifying cultural differences or relying on outdated tropes."

Interviewee 19 emphasized:

"Creators need to be mindful of how their content shapes perceptions, especially about underrepresented groups."

Interviewees wanted to promote fairness and understanding, avoiding stereotypes. By portraying things more nuanced and accurately, vloggers can help break down some biases and add to a more inclusive and unbiased society

Theme 10: Accountability and Consequences

Vloggers are made accountable for their actions thanks to accountability while the imposition of the right consequences discourages unethical practices. YouTube and its type to represent other large sites like YouTube and Facebook need to put in place strong mechanisms of identifying and resolving these violations to have them maintain a fair and ethical digital space.

Subtheme 1: Mechanisms for Holding Vloggers Accountable for Unethical Practices

Accountability mechanisms provide a framework for addressing unethical behavior. Interviewee 4 suggested:

"Platforms should introduce more transparent systems to track and report unethical behavior by vloggers."

Interviewee 11 added:

"Feedback systems involving viewers and platform moderators can help ensure that creators adhere to ethical guidelines."

The interviewees wanted to report that clear mechanisms are crucial for fostering accountability. By involving audiences and moderators, platforms can create a collaborative system that upholds ethical standards and protects viewers from harmful content.

Subtheme 2: Consequences Such as Strikes, Demonetization, or Bans for Harmful Content

Consequences act as deterrents for unethical practices and encourage responsible behavior. Interviewee 13 remarked:

"Strict penalties like demonetization or bans can discourage vloggers from crossing ethical boundaries."

Interviewee 18 noted:

"Creators need to know that harmful actions have repercussions, and platforms must enforce these consequences consistently."

The interviewees reported that a harmful practice needs tangible consequences in order to prevent and ensure the upholding of integrity of the digital sphere. Platforms can also signal sorts of unethical behaviors which would be tolerated by enforcing demonetization, bans or strikes on vloggers who engage in such behavior. Robust mechanism by which vloggers can be held accountable and have consequences enforced for unethical behavior thus creates a trustworthy digital space.

Conclusion

YouTube has become extremely popular and one of the most influential pieces of content creating platforms in recent years, and more in vlogging. The popularity of vloggers has exploded alongside ethical quandaries surrounding that content. This dissertation attempted to look into the ethical and moral issues that vloggers face in doing their job as

creators in Faisalabad specifically, Pakistan, with respect to transparency, integrity, and the impact that they have upon their followership. Additionally, the study found a few of key themes that embrace these challenges: ethics in content creation, vloggers impact on viewers, sponsored content and monetization, responsibility over its audience, platform regulation, audience role, mental healthiness issues, and need for training and education.

The question of vlogging transparency and honesty was one of the most critical issues that the interviews addressed. Vloggers are under pressure to be authentic while at the same time trying to lure in massive audiences and, by extension, boosting engagement. As vloggers may choose to boost details of their content or simply show specific components of their lifestyles to draw in watchers, the line between legitimacy and sensationalism will blur. "People say that honesty with the audience is critical for keeping an authentic relationship with the audience," people said during the interviews. This final point is a broader concern that vlogs, if not done right can mislead audiences into believing the vlogger's life is perfect and this can have truly negative long term affects. Authenticity is important for building trust, as Margetts (2021) noted, and vloggers who achieved viral success lost their credibility when their exaggerations or distortions were discovered. The ever present vlogger ethical dilemma of how to maintain a truthful portrayal while all the pressure is on to 'go viral' remains.

This study concludes that vloggers in Faisalabad face multidimensional ethical challenges shaped by audience validation, cultural norms, and platform algorithms. Policymakers and platforms must enforce stricter transparency guidelines, provide digital literacy programs, and support mental health resources for content creators. Future research should examine audience perspectives and comparative studies across different Pakistani cities.

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