

# Social Media Engagement: What Motivates User Participation and Consumption on YouTube in Nepal

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## Abstract

This study examines the impact of social media engagement: What motivates user participation and consumption on YouTube in Nepal. User engagement metrics are the dependent variable. Likewise, the selected independent variables are content type, video length, frequency of uploads, interaction with viewers, and visual appeal. The primary source of data is used to assess the opinions of the respondents regarding these variables in the context of YouTube in Nepal. The study is based on primary data with 17 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, a structured questionnaire is prepared. Descriptive statistics, Kendall's Tau correlations, and regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of these factors on user engagement metrics on YouTube in Nepal.

The study showed that content type has a positive impact on user engagement metrics on YouTube. It implies that varied and interesting content leads to increased user engagement. The result also showed that video length has a positive impact on user engagement metrics. It implies that optimal video length leads to increased user engagement. Moreover, frequency of uploads has a positive impact on user engagement metrics. It implies that regular uploads lead to increased user engagement. Furthermore, interaction with viewers has a positive impact on user engagement metrics, indicating that active interaction leads to increased user engagement. Similarly, the result also showed that visual appeal has a positive impact on user engagement metrics. It indicates that visually appealing videos lead to increased user engagement. The result also showed that improved visual appeal leads to increased user engagement on YouTube.

*Keywords:* YouTube engagement, user participation, user consumption, Nepal, content type, video length, frequency of uploads, interaction with viewers, visual appeal, user engagement metrics

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## 1. Introduction

Social media engagement refers to the level of interaction and involvement that users have with content on social media platforms. Social media engagement on YouTube refers to the level of interaction and participation that users have with videos and channels on the platform. The site thus serves as an attractive platform for both amateur content creators and media companies alike (Xu *et al.*, 2016). The use of online video-sharing site showed a constant rise, in which about 33% of US adults had posted a video to an online site (Anderson, 2015). As of July 2015, 400 hours of video content was uploaded every minute on YouTube (Statistica, 2015).

YouTube content is diverse and global, offering the opportunity to disseminate content to a very broad audience of site visitors. The site thus serves as an attractive platform for both amateur content creators and media companies alike (Xu *et al.*, 2016). Politicians, news organizations, education institutes, businesses, music and film artists, and people from all walks of life use YouTube. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have unique architecture, norms, and culture (Smith *et al.*, 2012). YouTube “can be regarded as a convergence of the traditional entertainment choices of television, music, and film” (Shao, 2009).

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The popularity of social media sites has encouraged social interaction and participation on an unprecedented scale. YouTube allows content to be shared, embedded and discussed (Burgess & Green, 2013). The site offers a variety of functionalities besides uploading and video viewing that encourage both active and passive user engagement. Shao (2009) stated that individuals deal with content in three main ways: consumption, participation, and production. the study by also stated that content consumption is when users watch a video, read comments and view likes/dislikes but do not respond. Viewing videos add to the number of views depicted at the bottom of a video.

Tiktok also known as Douyin in China, is a short video creation, discovery and sharing platform founded in 2016, with over 600 million users as of August 2020 and has established itself as a worldwide multimedia social network program (Wengel *et al.*, 2022). Delivering learning to homes has been challenging to teachers in most under-resourced contexts, where the accessibility, availability, and use of technology in education are not widespread (Khan *et al.*, 2012).

The affective advantage of social media and its interactive relationship with social capital and identity suggest a potential affinity between ethnic minorities' social media use and their motivated efforts to engage with the mainstream culture and language (Golonka *et al.*, 2014). The pandemic outbreak of Covid-19 has created serious disruptions in educational activities. Delivering learning to homes has been challenging to teachers in most under-resourced contexts, where the accessibility, availability, and use of technology in education are not widespread (Khan *et al.*, 2012). Heinonen (2011) analyzed consumer narratives of their social media activity to identify 15 activities grouped under three themes.

Social media has emerged as a critical marketing tool, leveraging Web 2.0 technologies to enhance interaction and communication between brands and consumers. This interaction occurs through various means such as liking, commenting on, or sharing brand content, thereby facilitating word of mouth and the collection of market data and customer feedback (Lu & Stepchenkova, 2015). Brands are actively using social media to get their messages out to consumers. Social media offered the promise of direct access to an engaged consumer-base, eager to listen and converse with brands (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

According to McAfee (2006), modern organisations are increasingly expected to establish a robust social media presence to facilitate information sharing and engagement with the networked public. Social media has emerged as a critical marketing tool, leveraging Web 2.0 technologies to enhance interaction and communication between brands and consumers. For hospitality companies, social media provides a platform to engage customers online (Leung *et al.*, 2013). Liikkanen and Salovaara (2015) demonstrated that music videos constituted the most popular content genre on YouTube.

Pengnate *et al.* (2019) suggested that web page order significantly influences visual appeal, engagement, and intention. In addition, the results of multigroup SEM analysis reveal that users evaluate website design very quickly (within 1 s), and that these evaluations remain remarkably consistent over time. Bhandari *et al.* (2019) accessed the Understanding the impact of perceived visual aesthetics on user evaluations: An emotional perspective. The study found that there is a significant relationships between aesthetic sub dimensions and valence, whereas arousal was partially significant. Argenti *et al.* (2005) examined the framework of social media engagement: Case studies with food and consumer organisations where organisations increasingly interact with the public through online spaces, they face

growing expectations to be highly responsive, such as promptly replying to queries, regularly updating content, managing multiple channels, and engaging with the public on various issues.

Responsive engagement requires attention to multiple aspects, including channel integration and leveraging feedback to enhance organisational capacity for engaging with diverse stakeholder groups (Argenti *et al.*, 2005). The study observed various information-sharing activities across five different types of social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Delicious, YouTube, and Flickr. Ten factors were examined to elucidate the motivations of social media users, drawing upon major motivation theories and models (Oh and Syan, 2015).

Mobile instant messaging (MIM) has changed the way millions of users communicate worldwide. Instant messaging (IM) apps enable customers to send and receive text messages, videos, photos and audio on smart devices in real time (Oghuma *et al.*, 2016). Fournier and Brasel (2004) underscored the importance of viewing brands as relationship partners, highlighting the various types and dynamics of these relationships. The study significantly advanced our understanding of consumer/brand relationships. Within this emerging body of work, consumer brand ‘involvement,’ which reflects a consumer’s level of interest in, and personal relevance of a brand, has gained significant attention (Coulter *et al.*, 2003).

De Vries *et al.* (2012) initiated this conversation and posited some relationships between media richness (vividness), interactivity, and brand post popularity, and it is to this line of content marketing research that we wish to contribute. Perreault and Mosconi (2018) showed little understanding of the customer path of engagement on social media. Khan (2017) examined social media engagement on YouTube, focusing on the motivations driving user participation and consumption. The study showed active participation and passive content consumption, conceptualized within the framework of uses and gratifications theory

Despite the evident shift towards social media as a primary news dissemination channel, research on the specific practices and impacts of news sharing on platforms like Facebook remains limited, particularly in the context of Nepal. While studies in countries like Norway have explored these dynamics (Erdal, 2011), similar investigations within Nepal are notably sparse due to insufficient academic attention and research funding opportunities (Al-Rawi, 2017). Liikkanen and Salovaara (2015) examined the landscape of music on YouTube, acknowledging its prominence as the leading Internet video service and one of the most visited websites in 2014. Features like autoplay and recommendations can exploit psychological vulnerabilities to maximize watch time, leading to a perceived lack of control over app use and negative life effects such as sleep deprivation (Lukoff *et al.*, 2021).

In the context of Nepal, Sharma (2012) revealed that the emergence of online social networking, particularly on Facebook, had a significant impact on the linguistic and semiotic practices of college youth in Nepal. According to Bista *et al.* (2012), establishment of a new online community with a sustained level of member engagement is a challenging problem. University teachers in developing countries often resort to using available technological resources to cope with the challenges and to improve their teaching and teach (Shah *et al.*, 2020). Sharma (2014) examined transnationalism within the context of contemporary super diversity, particularly focusing on how Nepal is in the diaspora utilized YouTube as a platform to express their collective identity in response to a video featuring a speech delivered in perceived ‘bad’ English by Nepal’s minister for health at a UN meeting. The analysis revealed that YouTube served as a platform where diverse participants from the

Nepali diaspora congregated, expressing various subjectivities, identities, and attitudes. Participants demonstrated linguistic competence through diverse linguistic repertoires in both English and Nepali.

The above discussion shows that the empirical evidence varies greatly across the studies on the impact of social media engagement: What motivates user participation and consumption on YouTube. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidence in the context of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The main purpose of the study is to analyze the impact of social media engagement: What motivates user participation and consumption on YouTube in Nepal. Specifically, it examines the impact of content type, video length, frequency of uploads, interaction with viewers, and visual appeal on user engagement metrics on YouTube.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows. Section two describes the sample, data and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results and the final section draws the conclusion.

## 2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on primary data. The data were gathered from 173 respondents through a questionnaire. The respondents' views were collected on content type, video length, frequency of uploads, interaction with views, visual appeal and user engagement metrics. The study used descriptive and casual comparative research design.

### *The model*

The model estimated in this study assumes that user engagement metrics depends on social media engagement. The dependent variables selected for the study is user engagement metrics. Similarly, the selected independent variables are content type, video length, frequency of uploads, interaction with views and visual appeal. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

$$UEM = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CT + \beta_2 VL + \beta_3 FOU + \beta_4 IWV + \beta_5 VA + e$$

Where,

UEM = User engagement metrics

CT = Content type

VL = Video length

FOU = Frequency of upload

IWV = Interaction with views

VA = Visual appeal

Content type was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I prefer Educational videos on YouTube", "I intend to

watch videos that shows Tutorials and Guides.”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha = 0.894$ ).

Video length was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items “I am more likely to watch shorter videos (less than 60 minutes) on YouTube,” Longer videos tend to lose my interest quickly on YouTube. “, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha = 0.900$ ).

Frequency of upload were measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “ Longer videos tend to lose my interest quickly on YouTube.”, “ I prefer channels that upload content at least once a week.”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha = 0.911$ ).

Interaction with views was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I frequently leave comments on YouTube videos to interact with the content creator”, “ I often like or dislike videos on YouTube to express my opinion or appreciation”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha = 0.898$ ).

Visual appeal was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I am more likely to click on a video with visually appealing thumbnails”, “I prefer videos with aesthetically pleasing graphics or animations”, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha = 0.913$ ).

User engagement metrics was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I often measure a YouTube video’s popularity by the number of views it has “, “ The number of likes and dislikes on a video influences my decision to watch it “, and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha = 0.895$ ).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with hypothesis formulation.

### *Visual Appeal*

On social media platforms such as YouTube, entertainment content engages users by providing amusement, humor, and storytelling (Smith, 2020). How-to guides offer step-by-step instructions for viewers to complete tasks or learn new skills (Garcia & Brown, 2020). Live streams allow content creators to engage with their audience in real time, fostering a sense of community and immediacy (Lee, 2019). Music videos on YouTube range from professional productions to amateur performances, attracting a wide audience of music enthusiasts (Nguyen, 2017). User-generated content (UGC) on platforms like YouTube allows everyday users to share their creations and experiences with a global audience (Katz & Rice, 2018). Based on it, this study develops following hypothesis:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive relationship between content type and user engagement metrics.

### *Video Length*

Short-form videos, generally under 10 minutes, are crafted to capture and retain viewers' attention with concise, engaging content (Brown, 2020). Binge-worthy content includes series or playlists intended for consecutive viewing, encouraging extended engagement sessions (Kumar & Williams, 2020). Viewer retention rate, indicating the percentage of a video watched, helps gauge the effectiveness of video length in maintaining viewer interest (Choi, 2019). Content segmentation involves dividing longer videos into shorter segments, aiming to maintain viewer engagement and deliver comprehensive information (Miller, 2021). Based on it, this study develops following hypothesis:

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive relationship between video length and user engagement metrics.

### *Frequency of uploads*

Various studies examine the impact of “frequency of upload” on YouTube engagement. This variable includes factors such as regular uploads to maintain viewer interest (Johnson, 2020), high-frequency uploads which can overwhelm but boost short-term engagement (Garcia, 2021), and low-frequency uploads that may fail to sustain long-term interest (Thompson, 2018). Scheduled uploads create anticipation (Nguyen, 2017), while irregular uploads lead to unpredictability (Kumar & Li, 2020). Peak-time uploads aim to maximize initial engagement (Choi, 2019), and batch uploads can saturate the audience (Miller, 2021). Based on it, this study develops following hypothesis:

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a positive relationship between frequency of uploads and user engagement metrics

### *Interaction with views*

Various aspects of “Interaction with Views” on YouTube contribute to user engagement. This includes likes and dislikes, which indicate viewer sentiment and influence engagement metrics (Smith, 2019). Comments provide a platform for viewer interaction and community engagement around video content (Jones & Lee, 2020). Shares amplify the reach of videos across social networks, enhancing engagement metrics (Nguyen, 2018). Playlist ads reflect viewer intentions to revisit or engage further with video content (Garcia & Martinez, 2017). Subscriptions signal ongoing interest and facilitate recurring engagement with channel content (Brown & Williams, 2019). Rewatches indicate viewer appreciation or the value of video content (Choi, 2020). Click-through rate (CTR) measures initial viewer interest based on video thumbnail clicks (Miller, 2018). Watch time reflects viewer interaction and influences video ranking on YouTube (Kumar, 2019). Based on it, this study develops following hypothesis:

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a positive relationship between interaction with views and user engagement metrics.

### *Visual Appeal*

Various aspects of “visual appeal” significantly influence user engagement on YouTube. This includes thumbnail aesthetics impacting click-through rates (Smith, 2020), video quality affecting viewer perception (Johnson & Lee, 2019), visual design strategies enhancing viewer appeal (Nguyen, 2018), brand consistency reinforcing recognition (Garcia & Martinez, 2020), artistic creativity capturing viewer attention (Brown, 2019), visual storytelling techniques

conveying narratives effectively (Choi & Williams, 2021), thumbnail clickability through engaging visuals (Miller, 2017), and visual consistency establishing viewer expectations (Thompson & Lee, 2020). Based on it, this study develops following hypothesis:

H<sub>5</sub>: There is a positive relationship between visual appeal and user engagement metrics.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### *Correlation analysis*

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients along with mean and standard deviation has been computed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

#### **Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients matrix**

(This table presents Kendall's Tau coefficients between dependent and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 173 observations. The dependent variable are User Engagement Metrics(UEM) and the independent variables are Content type(CT), Video Length(VL), Frequency Of Uploads(FOU), Interaction with views(IWV) and Visual Appeal(VA).

Variables	Mean	S.D.	UEM	CT	VL	FOU	IWV	VA
<b>UEM</b>	3.697	1.005	1					
<b>CT</b>	3.827	0.938	0.764**	1				
<b>VL</b>	3.798	0.981	0.659**	0.602**	1			
<b>FOU</b>	3.780	1.050	0.831**	0.753**	0.747**	1		
<b>IWV</b>	3.597	1.000	0.633**	0.576**	0.828**	0.699**	1	
<b>VA</b>	3.741	1.011	0.840**	0.773**	0.693**	0.821**	0.620**	1

(Note: The asterisk signs (\*\*\*) and (\*\*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows that content type on YouTube videos is positively correlated with user engagement metrics. It means that better content type leads to an increase in user engagement metrics. Similarly, there is a positive relationship between video length and user engagement metrics. It means that an increase in video length leads to an increase in user engagement metrics. Likewise, frequency of uploads has a positive relationship with user engagement metrics. It shows that an increase in frequency of uploads leads to an increase in user engagement metrics. Similarly, there is a positive relationship between interaction with views and user engagement metrics. It indicates that an increase in interaction with views leads to an increase in user engagement metrics. Moreover, visual appeal has a positive relationship with user engagement metrics. It indicates that an increase in the visual appeal of videos leads to an increase in user engagement metrics.

#### *Regression analysis*

Having indicated Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it presents the regression results of content type, video length, frequency of uploads, interaction with views, and visual appeal with user engagement metrics.

Table 2

**Estimated regression results of content type, video length, frequency of uploads, interaction with views,**



and visual appeal on user engagement metrics for YouTube content in Nepal

The results are based on 173 observations using a linear regression model. The model is  $UEM = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CT + \beta_2 VL + \beta_3 FOU + \beta_4 IWV + \beta_5 VA + e$ , where the dependent variable is UEM (User Engagement Metrics). The independent variables are CT (Content Type), VL (Video Length), FOU (Frequency of Uploads), IWV (Interaction with Views), and VA (Visual Appeal).

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficients of					Adj. R_bar²	SEE	F-value
		CT	VL	FOU	IWV	VA			
1	0.313 (1.718)	0.884 (19.119)**					0.679	0.569	365.540
2	0.348 (2.231)*		0.882 (22.177)**				0.74	0.512	491.808
3	0.467 (3.621)**			0.855 (26.007)**			0.797	0.453	676.386
4	0.627 (4.145)**				0.854 (21.041)**		0.72	0.532	442.72
5	0.412 (24.692)**					0.878 (24.692)**	0.78	0.472	609.678
6	0.137 1.063	0.152 (2.341)*	0.174 (0.1704)	0.451 4.777**	0.115 1.553	0.406 5.635**	0.846	0.394	190.033

Notes:

- i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values.
- ii. The asterisk signs (\*\*) and (\*) indicate that the results are significant at 1 percent and 5 percent level respectively.
- iii. Customer preference is dependent variable.

Table 2 shows that the beta coefficients for content type are positive with user engagement metrics. This indicates that content type has a positive impact on user engagement metrics. This finding is consistent with the findings of Srivastava et al. (2015). Similarly, the beta coefficients for video length are positive with user engagement metrics. This indicates that video length has a positive impact on user engagement metrics. This finding is similar to the findings of Featherman and Pavlou (2003). Likewise, the beta coefficients for frequency of uploads are positive with user engagement metrics. This indicates that frequency of uploads has a positive impact on user engagement metrics. This finding is similar to the findings of Amijaya (2010). Further, the beta coefficients for interaction with views are positive with user engagement metrics. This indicates that interaction with views has a positive impact on user engagement metrics. This finding is similar to the findings of Wang and Chou (2018). moreover, the beta coefficients for visual appeal are positive with user engagement metrics. This indicates that visual appeal has a positive impact on user engagement metrics. This finding is similar to the findings of Ha and Jung (2016).

4. Summary and conclusion

Social media refers to websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. These platforms typically allow users to interact with each other by sharing text, images, videos, and other media, as well as by engaging in various forms of communication such as commenting, liking, and messaging. Social media engagement refers to the level of interaction and involvement that users have with content on social media platforms. Social media engagement on YouTube refers to the level of interaction and participation that users have with videos and channels on the platform

The study attempts to examine the impact of various factors on user engagement metrics on YouTube in Nepal, focusing on the relationship between these factors and user participation and consumption



The study showed that content type, video length, frequency of uploads, interaction with viewers, and visual appeal have positive and significant impacts on user engagement metrics for YouTube content. This indicates that diverse and appealing content types, optimal video lengths, consistent upload frequency, active interaction with viewers, and high visual appeal lead to increased user engagement. Similarly, these factors also positively and significantly influence user participation on the platform. The study concluded that interaction with viewers, followed by visual appeal and content type, are the most influential factors explaining user engagement and participation on YouTube.

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