DIGITAL INTIMACY AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF AUDIENCE INTERACTION ON PAKISTANI TIKTOK

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Abstract
This paper discusses the construction of digital intimacy and public discourse on Pakistani Tik Tok using non-verbal communication and interactivity with the audience. Using the three-dimensional approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Norman Fairclough, the study evaluated purposively sampled TikTok videos in the productions of influential Pakistani creators of various genres, such as family vlogging, entertainment, religious guidance, traveling, and sports achievement. It is analyzed in terms of visual and performative components including gestures, facial expressions, clothing, spatial contexts, and body-based interaction as well as the reactions of the audience in the form of likes, comments, and affective interaction.

The results indicate that TikTok serves as a strong platform of a public sphere, which promotes individual experiences into a collective speech and publicly confirmed by the involvement of the audience. Domestic intimacy is built through family-focused narratives that visually predetermine marriage, parenthood, and religious activity, and the reaction of the audience to the created narrative makes heteronormativity of the family and its moral standards natural. The content that is created by female influencers emphasizes the gendered visual norms in which admiration and engagements are the joint elements of the interaction with the audience. The change of moral authority and patriarchal hierarchies through authoritative non-verbal communication and the approval of the audience is reduplicated in religious discourse. Travel and lifestyle content foster aspirational mobility, and videos related to sports arouse group national pride by engaging the emotional aspects of the audience.

Considering CDA, the paper reveals that ideology on TikTok is not rooted in language but through visual performance and emotional exchange. The process of the audience engagement is a type of discursive process which supports the strong cultural norms concerning the family, gender, religion, and nationalism. This study helps to analyze the negotiation of power, culture, and identity by connecting CDA to the multimodal social media context by providing an example of the transforming environment of the Pakistani digital public.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, TikTok, Digital Intimacy, Non-verbal Communication, Pakistani Media, Audience Interaction

1. Introduction

The fast growing social media sites have really changed the way modern people communicate, express their culture and engage with the masses in a new way. Of these platforms, Tik Tok has risen to become one of the most dominant digital spaces in the world, transforming the ways of how individuals can create, distribute and consume content. Recently TikTok has gained millions of users due to advantages of privileged short-form video content, algorithmic visibility, and participatory interaction since its international ascendancy after 2019. Tik Tok has grown exceptionally in Pakistan especially due to its availability, local creativity, and ability to reach both urban and rural borders. It has turned into an important location where contemporary digital culture can be studied as the platform has become a place of centralization of entertainment, religious expression, lifestyle performance, and national discourse (Castells, 2022).

In contrast to the previous social media websites that focused on communication through text, Tik Tok is the emergence of visual, affective, and non-verbal means of contact. TikTok meaning is mostly generated by gestures, facial expressions, body language, music, visual imagery, and editing capacities as opposed to a long verbal or written discourse. This shift puts a strain on traditional conceptualizations of discourse and it necessitates analytical models that would explain visual and bodily modes of meaning-making. The prevalence of non-verbal communication in TikTok also contributes to the element of emotional immediacy, as it ensures that creators resonate with the audience using feelings, as opposed to logic or a detailed description (van Dijck, 2018).

The notion of digital intimacy is especially important in this visual ecosystem. Digital intimacy is the sense of, emotional intimacy, accessibility, and day-to-day familiarity between content creators and their audiences. This effect is achieved when Tik Tok influencers show their time in the personal sphere: family moments, their religious activities, their traveling routine, and their emotional milestones. This perceived intimacy leads to the development of parasocial relationships, which make viewers feel personally bonded with influencers even though there is no two-way communication. This type of intimacy is not accidental but a deliberate process of repetitive visual exposure, low-end aesthetics, and the affordances of interaction (Thompson, 2022).

Tik Tok therefore serves as a combination of the personal to be converted to the public. Once personal activities, like parenting, marriage, worship, or leisure, become objects of mass production, media consumption and production. Such a merging of the personal and the public has significant consequences in the way, cultural norms, moral values and social identities are formed and made natural. The content of influencers is not an image of the social reality; it is an active participant in forming the idea of people about family, gender roles, religion, and national identity (Kress, 2020).

The interaction between the audience is a key factor in the process. Social networking elements like likes, commentaries, shares, and duets as discursive processes in which meaning is negotiated, confirmed and reinforced. Emotional conformity, moral endorsement, religious confirmation, or national pride can commonly be response languages of the audience, which supports mainstream interpretation of content. These dealings convert audiences into passive consumers into active participants of discourse production, and Tik Tok is a dynamic and relational communicative space.

Although Tik Tok has increased popularity, little academic literature concerning the platform, especially its application in Pakistani society, exists (Izotova, 2021). Current research is mainly content oriented, youth centred, or governance by the platform but does not consider the discursive nature of the audience interaction and non-verbal communication. Additionally, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has conventionally focused on linguistic texts and hence lacks an aspect of application to multimodal and visual social media systems, including Tik Tok. The lack of CDA-led research studies that explore the functionality of power, ideology, and cultural norms as the result of visual discourse and audience interaction in Pakistani Tik Tok content is suggestive.

This paper aims to fill this gap by focusing on the three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis on TikTok influencer and their audience interaction in Pakistan (Horton, 2021). The main objective will be to examine the ways in which non-verbal communication creates digital intimacy and in which the audience will help in the re-production of sociocultural meanings. To be more precise, this study seeks to (1) describe the visual and performative techniques of Pakistani Tik Tok influencers, (2) explore the notion of audience interaction as a type of discursive practice, and (3) place the process of interaction within the rubric of wider sociocultural and ideological frameworks (Baym, 2018).

The main research questions, which will inform the research, include: How is digital intimacy constructed using non-verbal discourse on Pakistani Tik Tok? How do the interaction of the audience play a role in the meaning-making and ideological reinforcement? What is Tik Tok as a location of the individual life as a public discourse?

Answering these questions, the given study can be used in the context of media studies, discourse analysis, the study of Pakistani digital culture (Choong, 2024). It widens the scope of CDA to visual social media settings and provides an important critical perspective on affective relations of influencer-audience in modern Pakistan.

2. Literature Review

2.1 TikTok, Influencer Culture, and Digital Public Spheres

TikTok is an algorithm-based participatory platform that has a great influence on the modern digital public space (Bucher, 2018). The Tik Tok For You algorithm, unlike previous models of social media which focused on the visibility of followers, is worked out on the basis of the engagement metrics, behavioral data, and affective responsiveness. This model favors visibility on the basis of performance and not institutional power, where individual creators can access mass audiences irrespective of official status. Consequently, Tik Tok reorients the ways of access to public attention by incorporating participation into the infrastructures that are controlled by platforms (Schrøder, 2020).

In such a setting, there arise those who are so called influencers and opinion leaders. The influencers on TikTok are not only entertainers but also they are selectors of every day stories, aesthetic standards, and moral stance that are compelling to viewers. They mediate cultural meanings in the context of family, gender, religiosity, and national identity through the repeated performances that are visual in nature. They do not have power in the form of argumentative persuasion but in the form of affective resonance, in which relatability and perceived authenticity serve as sources of symbolic power. In this respect, the role of influencers in creating the topic of discussion under the conditions of platform governance becomes a major participant in this process.

This change is the conceptualization of Smyrnaios and Baisnee (2023) of the platformization of the public sphere. As they analyze, the digital platforms become more and more dominant of the circumstances of the production, circulation, and consumption of the public discourse. The visibility, distribution, and monetization are structurally controlled by the private corporations, which, at the same time, provide the individual and fragmented content experiences. This antimony between concentration of power and fragmentation of audiences radically changes the mode of working of the public sphere. Platformized spaces are more and more favorable to emotional engagement, personalization and algorithmic relevance, rather than to a rational-critical debate (Schofield, 2020).

Tik Tok can be an example of this change in deliberative public discourse to affective engagement. The desire to interact on the platform openly is motivated by emotions, the visual immediacy, and performative appeal instead of argumentation. Movies in the short form enhance this change by condensing meaning into cursory, saturated images that are attentive grabbers and easy spreaders. Such dynamics, as Smyrnaios and Baisnee (2023) contend, have serious consequences on the freedom of expression and the formation of the discourse as platform logics are used to define what is visible and how it is perceived.

Thus, the public sphere of TikTok is not marked with debate but with its visibility, affect and interaction. In order to acquire an insight into the culture of influencers in this platformized space, it is essential to raise critical questions around the intersection of algorithmic power, non-verbal performance, and audience engagement to generate modern-day versions of public discourse.

2.2 Digital Intimacy and Parasocial Interaction

Horton and Wohl (1956) brought the concept of parasocial interaction into the limelight of the world to explain the illusion of face-to-face relationships developed between audiences and media personalities. Previously referred to television and radio, parasocial interaction was perceived as one-sided emotional attachment, which was established upon the basis of a repetitive mediated exposure (Horton, 2021). Nevertheless, with the emergence of digital platforms, this phenomenon has greatly changed as the meaning of parasociality has been extended toward more interactive and affective ways of connection.

In modern digital spaces, parasocial interaction is progressively taking the digital intimacy form, in which perceived emotional proximity, accessibility and continuity occur between content producers and audiences. The relationships between the influencers and the audiences on the platform like Tik Tok are developed through the regular visual contact, the unofficial aesthetics, and the acting of the ordinary life. Influencers are different in that they make themselves relatable and ordinary, which enables viewers to relate to them personally. This perceived relatability encourages emotional investment and the feeling of shared social space (Abidin, 2018).

Act authenticity performance is central towards maintaining digital intimacy. Activities of influence involve emotional work which involves telling personal stories, being vulnerable, and selective response to feedback of the audience. Such performances are well edited but look improvised, which creates an impression of honesty and credibility. The research by Choong (2024) on digital intimacy in VTuber communities raises the issue of the active pursuit of affective and social satisfaction by the audiences in mediated interaction (Choong, 2024). Although VTubers act in virtual characters, the inclusion of a real person, the naka no hito, adds credibility and emotional attachment. Such an observation highlights the significance of human presence, even in very mediated or performative digital spaces.

Even though TikTok will not provide the same level of live-two-way communication as the live streaming platform, interactions between audiences in the form of comments and likes and duets would make the audience experience two-way communication. These exchanges obscure the lines between one-sided parasocial relationships and mutual connection as perceived. As it is evident abroad, digital intimacy does not actually encourage viewers to pursue offline relationships; rather, it promotes keeping emotional ties in the digital space itself, as illustrated by Choong (2024).

Therefore, the issue of parasocial interaction on Tik Tok can be explained as a spectrum of affective interaction that is determined by the affordance of the platform, influencer performance, and the participation of users of the platform. This theory is crucial in the examination of the functioning of intimacy as a discursive and ideological power of the digital public culture (Fairclough, 2023).

2.3 Audience Interaction and Meaning-Making on Social Media

Engagement of the audience in social media platforms is more of a critical location of meaning-making as opposed to a reaction to content. Attributes like likes, comments, and shares work as discursive practices where audiences use them as an emotional ideological agreement or moral approval. These engagements indicate promotion and presence, which play a role in the dissemination and naturalization of specific discourses in platformized publics (Duffy, 2021).

Particularly, comment sections serve as mini-public spaces in which discourse is negotiable together. Although these spaces might not be formally discussed, they allow audiences to define meanings, reinforce hegemonic meanings, or sometimes undermine the narratives of influencers. The audiences are engaged in the stabilization of the meaning through repetitive

affirmations, praise, prayers, or symbolic emojis. This procedure makes the influencer content turned into common social knowledge instead of personal statements.

Co-construction of meaning between the influencers and the audiences is revealed in the validation mechanisms that are enclosed in platform interaction (Baym, 2018). The symbolic authority of influencers is achieved by interactions with the audience, and it provides audiences with a sense of participation and belonging. The dynamics of this phenomenon can be illustrated by Salih et al. (2025) who examine the reactions of the Pakistani influencers to climate change advocacy and find that the audience reaction fell within the spectrum of awareness and emotional involvement to performative action. Their results emphasize the role of the influencer narratives in the formation of a general knowledge and the engagement of the audience adds authority and prominence to these narratives (Ahmed, 2023).

Noteworthily, emotional and ideological alignment also occurs through the audience interaction. Empathy statements, national pride, or moral concurrence plays into dominant frames and give unwelcome credence to alternate interpretations. In this way, the social media interaction is a discursive process where affective publics are created.

2.4 Critical Discourse Analysis in Digital and Visual Media

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is also interested in the interrelationship between discourse, power, and ideology, it focuses on how social differences are created and maintained in the communicative aspects. CDA considers discourse not as a language of use but rather as a type of social practice that exists in institutional, cultural and political aspects. By preempting the problems of dominance, power and normalization, CDA allows the scholar to discover how ostensibly neutral texts reinforce the power relations (Hartley, 2019).

The three-dimensional model by Norman Fairclough still stands as one of the most powerful codes of CDA, which brings together textual analysis, discursive practice, and sociocultural setting. The analysis of the Pakistani television news headlines by Hassan (2018) illustrates that the model by Fairclough works well and helps to uncover the ideological construction of the media discourse (Hassan, 2018). His results demonstrates that media texts may influence the viewpoint of the audience by incorporating the relations of power and value judgments in the everyday communicational forms. This publication highlights the applicability of CDA to the analysis of the role of the media in the Pakistani context.

Nevertheless, modern online platforms require the development of CDA into more than just linguistic study (Jenkins, 2023). What is posted on the social media, especially the Tik Tok, is mostly multimodal, in that it is based on images, gestures, sound and performance in order to create a meaning. When working with such settings, non-verbal semiotics and visual narratives should be considered as discursive tools to apply CDA. Ideological strategies that operate like linguistic strategies in the traditional media are visual framing, embodiment performance and affective cues. Therefore, by applying CDA to the digital and visual media, it is possible to view how power and ideology work via non-verbal discourse in the platformized spaces of the public.

2.5 Pakistani Digital and Cultural Context

The Pakistani society is organized with the entrenched cultural values, especially those connected with family unity, religious following, gender roles, and nationality (Kress, 2020). The family is one of the most important social institutions, which form the expectations in terms of morality, respect, and social behavior, whereas religion still impacts the daily activity and discourse. Gender is usually a controlling factor on the visibility and actions in the open areas, more so to women and nationalism is a binding story to the national pride and righteousness. These cultural dimensions go a long way in understanding how digital content is created, perceived and evaluated in Pakistan.

It is in this context that Tik Tok has become very popular especially among the young and the urban middle classes. The low barriers of entry, the vernacular yield of the platform, and the focus on visual expression, in particular, makes it particularly attractive to younger individuals who want to be entertained, recognized, and gain a social mobility. The impact of digital media on the Pakistani culture, as proposed by Safdar (2022), indicates that young people are the avid users of digital media, with online media taking up the cultural ambitions and daily activities. In this regard, TikTok serves as a place of culture making and culture bargaining (Nikos Smyrnaios and Olivier Baisnée, 2023).

Nonetheless, this presence has also raised ethical concerns and cultural fears towards TikTok. The site is often linked by other critics to the loss of traditional values, and the internalization of alien cultural influences, and the undermining of traditional gender conduct. Safdar (2022) also raises the same concerns about cultural imperialism and the disappearance of local cultural practices among young Pakistani people (Livingstone, 2021). These contradictions ensure that Tik Tok is a conflictual digital space through which tradition and modernity overlap, and is therefore a crucial space in analyzing discourse, power and cultural transformation in the digital public space of Pakistan.

3. Theoretical Framework

The research is based on the Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Norman Fairclough who views discourse as a practice of social life, which is situated within the relationships of power and ideology (Fairclough, 2023). The CDA is especially well adapted to the analysis of media discourse since it goes beyond the surface meanings to find out how texts lead to the creation, perpetuation, and naturalization of social inequalities. Instead of considering discourse as a type of communication that is neutral, Fairclough focuses on its practicality in the process of constructing social realities in an institutional and cultural way.

The model developed by Fairclough has three dimensions of interrelation: text, discursive practice and sociocultural practice (Foucault, 2022). The former dimension is the textual analysis that traditionally pays attention to such linguistic elements of sentence characteristics as vocabulary, syntax, and rhetoric strategies. Nevertheless, within the framework of digital media such as Tik Tok, this aspect needs to be extended to cover visual and non-verbal aspects. The meaning of Tik Tok is mostly constructed using gestures, facial expressions, body position, clothing, music and space layouts. These non-verbal signs act as semiotic tools that convey emotion, authority, intimacy and identity. Through the analysis of such visual texts, the consideration of the ideological imprinting in language, as well as in embodied performance becomes possible in a critical manner.

The second dimension is the discursive practice which deals with how the texts are created, distributed and read. The platform affordance, algorithmic visibility, and influencer strategies targeted at maximizing engagement influence content production on TikTok. The circulation is effected by the fact that recommendation systems emphasize affective responsiveness, and consumption is characterized by interactive activities, including liking, commenting, sharing, and remixing content. The interaction with the audience will hence not be external to discourse but it will be a part of meaning-making (Bourdieu, 2022). The dimension will permit analyzing the role of engagement of audiences to legitimise influencer authority and strengthening of dominant interpretations.

The third is the sociocultural practice dimension that positions discourse within the wider social constructs, power relations and cultural values. In Pakistani culture, family, religious, gender roles, and nationalist values have a strong impact on Tik Tok content and communication with the audience. CDA makes it possible to find out how such ideologies are reproduced and naturalized in terms of repeated visual narratives and affective alignment.

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Power exists in an insidious manner where it is normalized, as opposed to coercion, which makes CDA especially useful in the analysis of daily digital practices.

The introduction of the idea of digital intimacy into the framework created by Fairclough would make the latter more applicable to the analysis of social media. Digital intimacy is described as the perceived emotional intimacy between influencers and audiences, which is developed by accessibility through visuals, authenticity-performance, and interaction. In CDA, digital intimacy should be perceived as a discursive approach which makes ideological influence easier through reducing critical distance and creating emotional recognition (Ahmed, 2023).

Through this study, CDA is justified as it offers a holistic approach to the analysis of the way TikTok serves as a platformized public sphere in which non-verbal discourse, interaction with the audience, and sociocultural ideologies collide. Through the model of Fairclough, the study poses a critical question of the role of digital intimacy and audience participation to the construction of meaning, power, and identity in Pakistani Tik Tok discourse.

4. Methodology
4.1 Research Design
The proposed research design is qualitative and interpretive to explore the process of the construction of digital intimacy and public discourse via Tik Tok content made and the interaction among the audience in Pakistan. The qualitative method is especially appropriate when examining meaning-making, symbolic representations and ideological patterns that are contained in visual and non-verbal communication. Instead of quantifying frequency or cause and effect, the analysis aims at understanding how discourse functions in certain sociocultural situations.

The main mode of analysis is the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is based on specifically on the three-dimensional framework by Norman Fairclough. This study can be appropriately analyzed using CDA because it allows a critical analysis of the reproduction of power, ideology, and social norms based on mediated communication. Considering the content of Tik Tok as a discourse and interaction with the audience as a component of the discursive practice, CDA makes it possible to analyze both the visual text and the participation process in a rather subtle way.

4.2 Data Selection and Sampling
The sample will include Tik Tok videos created by the most popular Pakistani influencers who produce different kinds of content, i.e. family vlogging, entertainment, religious discussion, lifestyle, travel, and sports performance. The selection of influencers was based on the number of followers, the regularity of their content, and audience interactions, which guarantee their appropriateness in the Pakistani digital space of the population.

Particular videos were chosen selectively to get the examples of successful audience engagement and the obvious non-verbal communication. The criteria used to select them were that they must have had some form of visual storytelling, small dependency on verbal description, and high elements of engagement in terms of likes, comments, shares, and duets. The sampling period is a period of existence marked by increased visibility of contents in Tik Tok with regard to our daily lives, religion, and national happenings. The audience reach was contextualized in terms of engagement metrics instead of being quantifiable using the metrics.

4.3 Analytical Procedure
The interpretation has been done through the stepwise implementation of the Fairclough model of CDA. The textual dimension entailed first, the close analysis of visual and non-verbal aspect such as gestures, expressions, clothing, space, and symbolism used in the

background. These characteristics were discussed as the semiotic resources that help the construction of intimacy, authority and identity.

Second, the discursive practice aspect that involved content creation, distribution, and consumption by the audience. This included the analysis of captions, hashtags, and algorithmic affordances, as well as the patterns of interaction of the audience (comment, emoji, shared trends). The reactions of the audience were encoded in terms of emotional coloring, ideological identity, and activism of the narratives of the influencers.

Lastly, the sociocultural aspect placed the discussion in the wider Pakistani culture in terms of family values, religiosity, gender roles and nationalism. This phase linked micro-level relations to macro-level relations of power and ideology.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

This paper uses only publicly shared Tik Tok materials, which does not violate the privacy of users. Influencers were examined as social personalities, and there were no confidential or limited information that had been accessed. The comments of the audience were perceived on an aggregate level without direct identification of specific users. Caution was made in the representation of the content without being offensive or judgmental. The assessment framework focuses on the issue of academic integrity and ethical sensitivity in the activity of interacting with digitally embodied cultures.

5. Analysis and Findings

This part provides the most significant conclusions of the Critical Discourse Analysis of the Pakistani Tik Tok influencer materials, in which digital intimacy and public discourse are created based on non-verbal communication and interaction with the audience (Castells, 2022). The analysis based on the three-dimensional model proposed by Fairclough analysis combines the results of a case study and determines the patterns of themes that dominate the influencer genre in each case. The results prove that Tik Tok materializes a form of affective public sphere during which personal experiences, cultural traditions, and ideological principles are graphically enacted and proved by the community through the interaction of the audience.
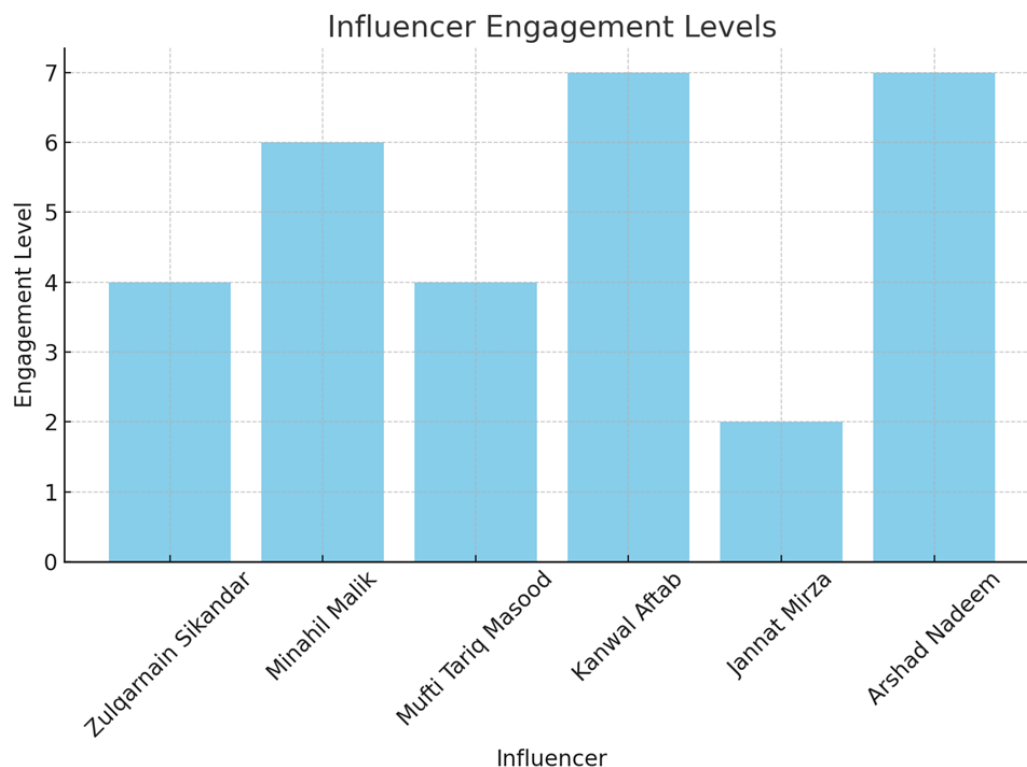

Influencer Engagement Levels

Figure: 01 Overview of Trending Tiktok Content Creators in Paksitan

5.1 Family Narratives and Emotional Engagement

A recurrent discursive topic in the Pakistani TikTok content is family-centered, especially the videos of Zulqarnain Sikandar and Kanwal Aftab. Such influencers create domestic intimacy by telling visual narratives that anticipate such milestones of marriage, parenthood, religious practices, and day-to-day family practices (Hjarvard, 2023). The smiling face expression, loving gestures, coordinated clothing, and intimate domesticity represent non-verbal semiotic resources that convey the message of warmth, stability, and emotional satisfaction.
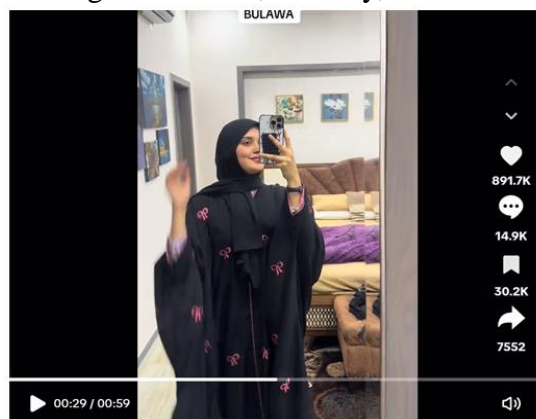

Figure1: Kanwal Aftab preparing for Umrah with family in themed attire.

Figure 2: TikTok snapshot from Zulqarnain Sikandar's wedding milestone video (Hjarvard, 2023).

The short video of marriage life shared by Zulqarnain Sikandar is a good example of how individual achievements can be transformed into a social conversation. His expressive movements, emotional presentation, phrases that are culturally charged like To Be Continue (Insha Allah) help place family life on a visual plane within the realms of religion and culture. On the same note, the Umrah preparation video by Kanwal Aftab incorporates motherhood, spirituality, and domesticity in a well-coordinated fashion using abaya co-ordination, scenes of prayer, and warm motherly communication with her child. These images put family life in perspectives that are aspirational and morally oriented (Hjarvard, 2023).

Video Title	Video Comments	Video Likes
Mood swing	1578	101.4K
Asi Pinda Alay	955	52.1K
Pind	1322	118.1K
Hamain sirf thand chahiye	664	49K
Aur Ab Mje Wife Ayy Oooo Oye Kr Ky Bulati Ha	747	68.4K

Table: Statics of Relative Videos of Zulqarnain

The interactivity of the audience is a key element that supports these narratives. The use of comments that represent prayers, blessings, admiration and emotional identification of the audience reflects the identification with the ideals of the family that were represented. These reactions make heteronormative families, religious faith, and maternal identity appear to be productive social ideals. By means of repetition, family contenting is the place where the digital intimacy enhances emotions between influencers and audiences through reproducing the culturally approved ideals about family life in Pakistan.

5.2 Gender Performance and Visual Entertainment

The gender performance is significantly expressed in the form of entertainment-based content created by women influencers like Minahil Malik and Jannat Mirza. The videos are based almost solely on non-verbal communication (in the form of lip-synchronization, facial expressions, hand movements, body position, and aesthetic presentation). The conventional clothing, jewelry, and the restrictive domestic environment co-exist with a modern fashion and mainstream music, forming the hybrid image of visual identity that should be strengthened with the elements of traditional connectedness and the modern attraction.
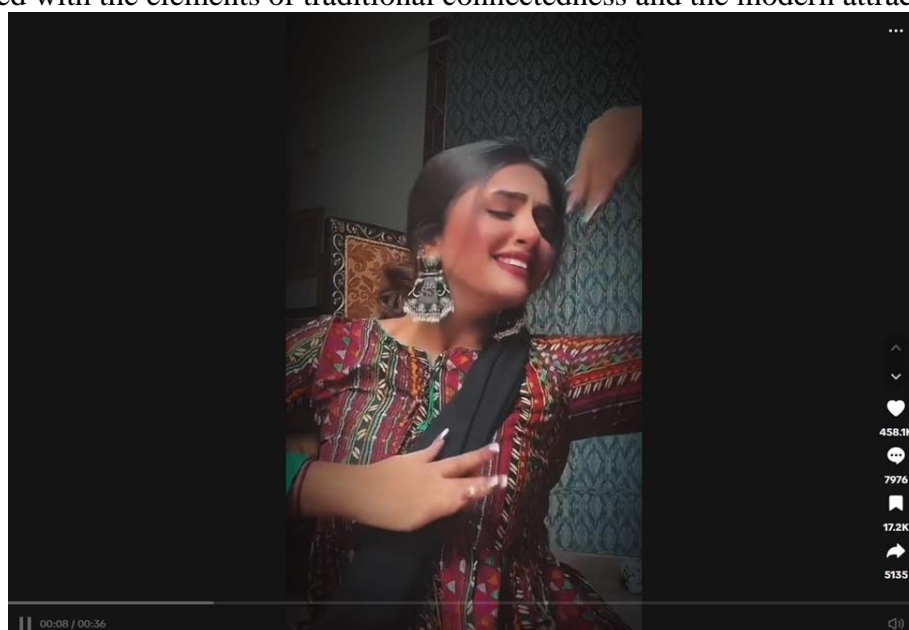

Figure 3: Minahil Malik lip-sync performance within a domestic indoor setting

The performances of Minahil Malik can be seen as the example of femininity, built through the expressive gestures, direct glance, and possible aesthetic styling. The traditional clothes and jewelry she uses serve as a cultural root and the active movement of hands and facial expressions contribute to emotional appeal. Equally, the lip-sync performances done by Jannat Mirza apply exaggerated expression, direct camera work, and rhythmic movement of the body to get attention and express emotion without uttering a single word.

Video Title	Video Comments	Video Likes
Gangubai	25K	1M
Shut The	1634	74.8K
True but last scene is my fav	1843	75.4K
Basss Laaryy	1314	69K
Hurry up guys	1460	41.2K

Statics of Relative Videos of Minahil Malik
Reactions of the audience to such material show the trends of admiration, validation, and surveillance. Beauty, performance prowess, and fashion are often commented on and this advances aesthetic ideals that are linked to femininity. Simultaneously, the publicity of the female body on the internet creates the possibility of implicit surveillance of the performers as acceptable forms of femininity are compensated. These relations can be used to show how Tik Tok entertainment can at the same time empower self-expression and reproduce gendered expectations that are inherent in Pakistani sociocultural norms.

5.3 Religious Authority and Moral Audience Alignment
The role of religious discourse on Tik Tok, especially on the example of Mufti Tariq Masood is taken by a unique, but influential force in the digital Pakistani space. Religious videos, unlike entertainment content, are based on authoritative posture, directive gesture and moral confidence as opposed to aesthetic performance. Mufti Tariq Masood, who commands the audience on how to deal with domestic conflict between a wife and a mother, is a demonstration of religious authority being played out visually with a cool disposition, using body language and simplification of moral concepts.
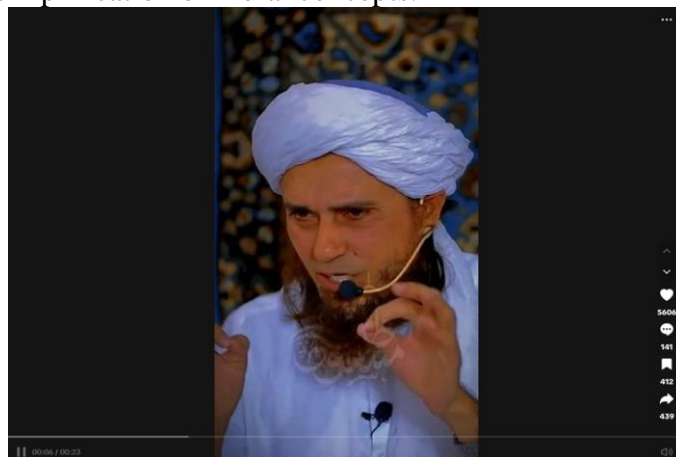

Figure 4: Mufti Tariq Masood on How to deal with Mother and Wife Situation

The way the audience engages with religious content is very different compared to the entertainment genres. The tone of comments is usually submissive, pious, and ethical, which are the signs of obedience, but not the signs of interpretation. Ya Allah and other phrases of thankfulness strengthen the authority of the speaker and correspond to the audience to the religious authority. This form of interaction makes Tik Tok a place of online moral control.

At the sociocultural level, this content recreates the patriarchal family structures and gender roles by making men the interlocutors and mothers the absolute authority figures. As CDA shows, religious discourse seems to be neutral and pragmatic but latently, as it practices the definition of cultural norms in terms of moral imperative, it strengthens the status quo of power relations. The audience alignment is important in reproducing this ideology.

5.4 Travel, Humor, and Aspirational Interaction

Aspirational content by travel influencers like Rajab Butt and Nadeem Mubarak builds aspirational content based on mobility, leisure, and freedom as a youth. Non-verbal features, such as a relaxed pose, scenic backgrounds, and visual jokes and cute gestures and relaxed clothes, convey the message of calmness and fun. The nature of the landscapes in the north of Pakistan is seen as a visual metaphor of escape and beauty of the nation in the travel vlogs by Rajab Butt, with little verbal description of the scenes adding to the emotional experience.

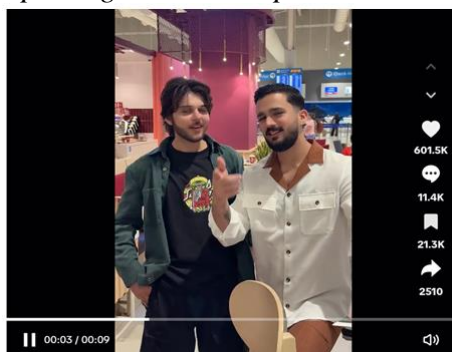*Figure 5: Rajab Butt exploring Babusar Top in scenic travel vlog.*

Figure 6: Nadeem Mubarak and Rajab Butt sharing a humorous airport moment.

The humorous airport video by Nadeem Mubarak brings into the scope of participation with the use of captions such as guess the destination where the audience can speculate and participate. Joking, matching movements and good manners create an impression of experience and availability. The comments of the audience are usually curious, excited, and participative, making the viewers co-narrators of the travel story.

These videos endorse the spirit of symbolic mobility, according to which traveling is an indication of achievement, modernity, and aspiration of lifestyle. Although this content may seem light-hearted, it implicitly favors some types of social capital and access and makes mobility normal as a symbol of success in the Pakistani digital culture.

5.5 National Pride and Collective Emotional Discourse

The sports-related content is the most explicit national identity, especially those videos that include Arshad Nadeem. His award ceremony video creates an articulation of national pride by using some visual indicators like dress code, official venue, humility, and gratitude. Body language, such as erect posture, calm facial expression and respectful body language, presents athletic performance as individual accomplishment and national pride.
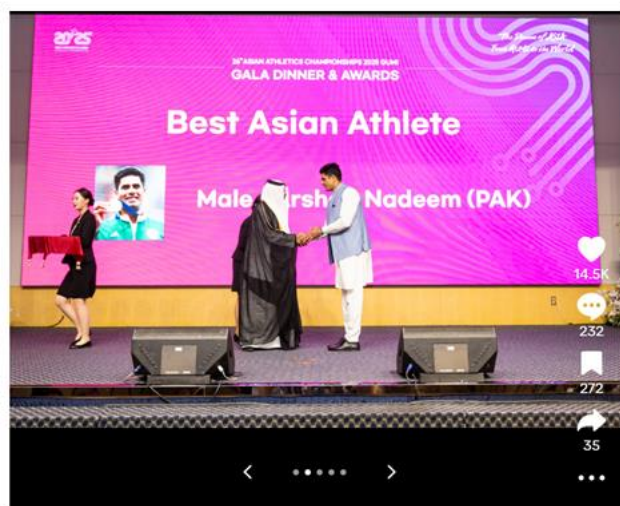

Figure 10: Arshad Nadeem receiving the Best Male Athlete award at the Asian Athletics Championships.

Personal achievement is changed into the shared emotional conversation of the audience. Pride, prayers and national unity are all expressed in comments and Arshad has been successful, which is symbolic of the position of Pakistan in the world. The ideas of gratitude are also effectively interwoven by the religious accent, which strengthens the moral-national identity.

Such a way of involving the audience describes how Tik Tok can create affective publics where national texts are debated not discussed. This is because sports success is a point of collective discussion that audiences also share a sense of pride, which strengthens the identity of the audience in the digital community in Pakistan.

6. Discussion

The results of this paper prove that TikTok in Pakistan is a place of intimacy-based public communication, where the affective interaction substitutes the conventional mode of rational conversation. The source of such influencer content in family life, entertainment, religion, travel, and sports indicates that the meaning of the people is created by using emotional appeal and visual performance instead of the discourse approach. TikTok can therefore be regarded as the embodiment of a platformized public sphere where personal narratives and embodied performances take the center stage of the communication between the masses.

Tik Tok audiences mostly interact affectively, but not deliberatively. Likes, comments, emojis, and brief affirmations do not serve a purpose of argumentation and are, instead, processes of emotional confirmation and identification. As found in the content under analysis, the reactions of the audience often contain admiration, prayers, pride, and moral approval and strengthen the dominant interpretations of influencer stories. The stabilization of meaning is the result of such interactional pattern as the alternative readings are pushed into the background in favor of the consensus-based emotional support. Instead of undermining discourse, audiences engage in reproducing it, and identify themselves with the values accepted within a culture.

As one of the dominant processes of ideological reinforcement, non-verbal communication manifests itself in this environment. Semiotic resources in gestures, facial expressions, clothing, space, and visual symbolism normalize the social norms without being expressed explicitly. Intimacy in the family is expressed through loving body language, gender roles through aesthetic display, religious power through posture and intonation and nationalism through ritual images. These naturalized cues make ideology seem normal because it has been embedded into everyday performances, rendering power relations seem like common-sense instead of the subject of dispute. CDA exposes that the ideology in Tik Tok is not delivered by means of coercive discourse but it is broadcasted through the use of emotionally appealing images.

One of the major implications of these findings is the point of blurring between the public and the private boundaries. Influencers generate content on intimate topics of life regularly such as marriage, parenting, worship, and leisure into consumable content in a public format. This visibility does not destroy privacy, rather it redefines intimacy as a performative and shareable phenomenon. The personal life is turned into a location of public sense-making where audiences are involved in an emotional interaction but physically separated. The process strengthens the parasocial relationships and increases the intimacy of digital interactions, decreasing the critical distance between an influencer and an audience even further.

Influencer-audience dynamics are non-obvious but still vital in terms of power relations. The influencers receive symbolic authority by being seen and engaging whereas the audience provides such authority by interacting and approving of such actions. Moral authority is used by religious personalities with the help of perceived legitimacy, family influencers with the help of aspirational intimacy and celebrities with the help of national symbolism. Such powers are not enforced by the institutions, but with the audience involvement, which shows how affordances of platforms reassign power and at the same time support the existing hierarchies of gender, religion, and social position.

Considering the CDA perspective, those dynamics allow visualizing how cultural norms become normalized in the digital realm of Pakistan. Tik Tok does not merely mirror the Pakistani culture; it actively facilitates the process of its production through the promotion of culturally approved discourse and exclusion of divergent voices. Dominant values on family structure, femininity, religiosity and nationalism are normalized and internalized through repeated exposure and affective involvement.

On the whole, this discussion indicates that TikTok is a potent discursive space that combines digital intimacy, non-verbal communication, and engagement with the audience and thus influences the discourse of the general population. Using the Critical Discourse Analysis, one can see the ideological labor done by seemingly mundane content, which demonstrates the way in which culture and power are negotiated and reproduced in the changing digital media environment of Pakistan.

7. Conclusion

The paper has explored how digital intimacy and Pakistani TikTok are constructed and discussed by means of an attempt at critical discourse analysis of influencer content and the interaction with the audience. By relying on the three-dimensional model proposed by Fairclough, the following analysis showed that TikTok is one of the efficient digital versions of the so-called public sphere where meaning is created mainly by non-verbal communication and driven by emotional interaction with the audience. Regardless of the genre of content, such as family stories, entertainment, religious advice, traveling, and athletic success, Tik Tok influencers are physically performing values that have been culturally embedded and are mutually verified by viewers.

The results indicate that digital intimacy is planned to be developed strategically by visual accessibility, performative authenticity, and normalization of personal lives as content to the public. On the one hand, influencers build emotional closeness using content related to their daily lives, whereas on the other hand, the audience reacts to their messages with admiration, prayer, pride, and moral approval. The interaction acts as the discursive practices that authorize the authority of the influencers and support the cultural dominant discourse on the topics of family bonding, gender roles, religiosity, and national belonging. Instead of aiding persons to deliberate critically, the interaction affordances of Tik Tok stimulate affective alignment, stabilizing meaning via consensus-based interaction.

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