

Balancing of Freedom of Expression and Community Guidelines for YouTube Content Creators

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ABSTRACT

This paper indicates the importance of Freedom of Expression, especially fundamental rights of humans that are protected by international law. YouTube the popular free video-sharing website whereas content creators upload and make videos to share with others. YouTube provides opportunities for communication between viewers and content creators. Moreover, YouTube has a wide spectrum of content uploaded everyday while following the community guidelines to protect the safety of its users. Nonetheless, there are strict rules to follow and some content are affecting conflicts and self-censorship without adhering to the community guidelines. In addition, YouTube has complicated monetization policies that aim to maintain the quality of the content while simultaneously giving creators of content financial opportunities. The study highlights the importance of both human reviewers and algorithms in upholding rules while addressing the delicate balance between permitting freedom of expression and censoring content to avoid harm. The study also summarizes the complex problems with YouTube as a platform that strikes a balance between community safety, monetization policies, and creator expression.

Keywords: Freedom of Expression, Community Guidelines, Content Creators, Censorship, Monetization Policies

INTRODUCTION

According to GCFGlobal Learning (2021), YouTube is a platform where people can upload and share videos with an audience of millions of users who enjoy watching and sharing content online. YouTube provides opportunities for communication between consumers and YouTube producers or content providers.

According to Lange (2015). Content producers don't always transform into YouTube content producers. Every content creator has a background of awareness, experience, and goals. Society influences the activities of content creators, who each take particular actions pertaining to their work in an effort to retain and grow their audience. Additionally, as the number of content providers increases annually, many people may be convinced to start their own content creation company. This proves that creating content is an enjoyable and fulfilling endeavor. YouTube certainly impacts the motivations behind the actions of content creators. The activities are a way to get attention, start a career, make money, express ideas, and a lot more.

YouTube's community guidelines define prohibited content types across the platform, covering videos, comments, links, and thumbnails. All materials must adhere to these established standards. The YouTube community guidelines contain workable policies and are regularly updated to address new issues in collaboration with YouTube creators and outside experts. In an effort to make the community safer while enabling creators to freely express their varied experiences and opinions, YouTube also uses both strategies that are human reviewers and machine learning to apply the community guidelines

The basic human rights which are so protected by international law and its constitutions of almost all countries of the world is the freedom of expression. In addition to being a prerequisite for democracy and sound governance, it is necessary for human development, dignity, personal fulfillment, and the search for justice. It

ensures that new laws and policies are carefully considered and permits citizens to speak out their concerns to authorities, and fosters free discussion about and between rival political parties. Freedom of expression increases the quality of government by enabling people to express their concerns and engage in debate regarding government actions, as well as by ensuring that authorities are capable and truthful. In other words, limiting the free flow of ideas and information threatens democratic values. (International Media Support, 2014).

According to Momen (2020), The Internet is thought to be a significant factor that influences freedom of expression in the current unreliable human rights environment. Authorities around the world constantly try to sabotage social and political movements in the digital age by blocking access to the Internet entirely or in parts. As a result, it can be challenging for content producers to produce work that conforms to all of YouTube's stringent guidelines, which often results in conflicts among major content creators and the platform's owners (Ufongene, 2019).

The YouTube Industry has undergone significant transformations over the preceding years, However, none have been as significant as those of the past ten years. Entrepreneurs are making the most of social media and technology as people's attention moves from traditional screens to the Internet for entertainment. YouTube companies can generate revenue through the platform, allowing marketers to better understand how to invest in emerging media. It is anticipated that YouTubers will earn the most from advertisements and endorsements, while companies will benefit from increased sales. Additionally, businesses are using YouTube to advertise their goods and events. They frequently create their own videos or rely on user-generated content, like event coverage and product reviews.

With the increasing popularity of social media platforms like YouTube as sources of news, more people are turning to these sites for information. Any threat to the visibility of news on YouTube could have a big effect on a lot of people. In the United States, online personalities are now frequently used as primary and secondary news sources (Pew Research Center, 2018). Mainstream news commentators – that is, individuals who are not affiliated with a traditional news media network– posting content on YouTube are frequently found to disregard YouTube's guidelines due to the mature nature of the content they cover. Current real-world events often fall into the category of “controversial and sensitive issues,” which YouTube defines to include, but not be limited to, issues like death, war, political conflicts, terrorism, and sexual abuse —subjects that frequently appear in mainstream news coverage. The critic will be censored by the algorithm or will need to exercise self-censorship to avoid losing views and revenue. self-censorship manifests in the content posted by non-mainstream news critics as well as how YouTube’s monetization algorithm inflicts censorship by proxy.

Moreover, the section in Code of Ethics is dedicated to ethical behavior across the social media platforms, it identifies the relevant values and examples of inappropriate behavior in social media and recommended best practices. The Code of Ethics highlights five core elements to follow and maintain the trust from stakeholders as “the ultimate currency of social media”. First, full disclosure. Second, safeguarding confidence. Third, conflicts of interest. Fourth, free flow of information, and lastly, enhancing the profession (Larsen et al., 2015).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Universal Protection for Rights of Freedom of Speech

According to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights or UDHR (1948), Article 19, the freedom of expression and opinion of everyone is entitled to use freely. The right has the ability to seek, obtain, disseminate information and concepts through any medium and internationally, as well as the freedom to hold beliefs without hindrance.

According to Article 19 of the ICCPR, or also known as the International Covenant on Civil Political Rights (1996). This article contains the rights that come with different obligations and responsibilities. Hence, to preserve social order and guarantee that others' rights are maintained the subject may be put to restrictions. Such as, to protect others' rights or reputations, and to safeguard public order, national security, morals, or health. The European Convention on Human Rights of Article 10 (1950). This serves as the basis for a democratic community by protecting the citizens' freedom while giving particular restrictions that aim to balance the public

interest and the rights of people.

According to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of Article 9 (1986), the article focuses on the rights to receive information and to express opinions of people. The article shows the significance of information access and freedom of expression as essential human rights that are necessary for a democratic society to function and for people to exercise their rights.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution of Article III in Section 4 (1987), discusses the importance of freedom of speech, the free press, and the power to petition the government and peacefully build. Moreover, it talks about how individuals can freely express their opinion and demand accountability without fear of legal penalties.

The Republic Act No. 11440 (2019), also known as National Campus Press Freedom Day, declares the policy of the state that guarantees to promote, protect the right to freedom of expression, speech, and freedom of the press.

The Republic Act No. 10175 Cybercrime Prevention Act (2012), it protects the online freedom of speech and tackling the cybercrime acts addressing various offenses and establishing a legal framework for the prevention of cyber threats.

YouTube Content Review Procedure

According to Fitriani et al. (2020). The communication styles of reviewers influence the audience's loyalty to their channels, and it emphasizes the important content review in maintaining viewer engagement and trust. YouTube's content review mechanisms and user engagement strategies also provide insights on how these processes can shape viewer experiences and channel sustainability. Hence, the feedback from the viewer engagement leads to less contentious interactions with moderators, for which the moderators rely on clear guidelines that can adapt based on community feedback and creator practices.

The strategies outline an effective content review process that balances the need for timely publication with the necessity of ensuring the content quality and adherence to community standards. Thus, keeping a safe and appropriate online environment content moderation is essential to maintain. Moreover, it guarantees that content creators align with platform guidelines and community standards, which is crucial for user engagement and trust (Todd, 2024).

According to Yesilada & Lewandowsky (2022), while YouTube has established procedures for reviewing and moderating content to prevent problematic material from reaching users, and a video is uploaded, the method analyses it based on various factors that include the title, description, and tag to determine if it meets advertiser-friendly content guidelines. The finding from the systematic review indicates that the recommendation for algorithms can counteract these efforts by directing users toward such content.

According to Snelson (2011), The importance of evaluating the quality of educational content on YouTube is crucial for effective teaching and learning. It notes that YouTube should provide a vast array of user-generated content, whereas often lacking in standardized quality assurance that leads to concern about its reliability and educational value. It develops a deeper comprehension of how it effectively assesses and utilizes YouTube as an educational resource.

Exposure and earnings in YouTube and its Impact in Community Guidelines

The visibility on YouTube is related to potential earnings. Producing high-quality content and enhancing the algorithmic exposure are the frequent dilemmas for the creators. According to Fifield et al., (2020) says that educational content usually struggles to gain support compared to videos for entertainment due to algorithmic biases that favors engagement metrics like views and likes. This kind of situation creates problems for content creators, for good content, for better engagement in their channels or their income can be affected.

User engagement metrics are important in deciding how a video is viewed. Content with a higher engagement level, such as the number of shares, likes, and comments are more suggested by YouTube (Zhou et al., 2022).

This recommendation algorithm not only affects individual videos but also the growth of the channel as a whole and its potential revenue. So, for creators who want to maximize their income. It is important to understand the factors that influence user engagement. According to Hua et al., (2022), the influence of up to 70% of engagement is important for looking at content and creating money on YouTube. This affected the income and strategies of creators who focus on views and how long they spend on the platform. In addition to the advertising revenue, other new sources of income, like channel membership and Super Chats, have been made available to creators. In a competitive environment, these options may give them more financial freedom. However, there are problems that creators also face, such as lack of criteria in getting money, unclear monetization guidelines, and algorithm changes that are not announced or entirely unexplained.

Darnay (2024) points out that unless the authors plan to earn a living by their writings, guidelines set by the community are especially crucial, since a violation could result in removal or demonetization of the content. Besides trying to persuade the advertisers about placing their ads beside content, the new guidelines reflect YouTube's commitment to a safe environment for creators as much as for viewers.

Algorithms in YouTube would determine the visibility of content. Meanwhile, the visibility could have impacts on the creators' earnings. Rieder et al. (2023) explain that algorithmic biases tend to promote certain kinds of content more than others. This creates unequal chances for different creators to be seen. As a result, those making educational or specialized content, which might not get a lot of attention, can struggle financially. To get more views and earn more money, creators often feel they need to change their content to fit what the algorithms prefer.

YouTube Monetization Policy

According to Chu et al., (2022) emphasizes the effort made by YouTube to monetize the content that its creators produce. Over the years, the platform has expanded to become the most popular video-uploading website in the world, with over one billion hours of views every day. YouTube has provided monetization advice to help creators of content make money through their work. Also, if the policy is implemented, the YPP will only accept members who have more than 1,000 followers, 4,000 hours of watching throughout the 12 months leading up to January 2018. These policies aimed to maintain content quality. Andrew Chu et. al. also identified exploits present on the platform: First, illegal buying and selling of YouTube accounts to avoid the requirements for monetization. Individuals who want to earn revenue immediately can quickly access monetization without creating authentic content or building their subscriptions. Second, bots may be used by creators to increase engagement metrics such as views, likes, and comments, creating an artificial channel engagement. These tactics can be used to increase their chances of being approved for monetization. Third, clickbait or misleading titles or thumbnails were frequently done by creators creating deception. This practice's goal is to increase views and watch time which are guidelines for monetization. Lastly, content theft is also present in the platform. Some creators re-upload content of other YouTubers without permission, claiming it as their own, violating the copyright laws, and also stealing the viewers from the original creators.

YouTube also presented things to avoid if creators want to monetize their content effectively. Avoid controversy and create false statements just to increase engagement. Clickbait is a great example of this, creating misleading thumbnail previews; Avoid reusing content and posting it as their own. This violates YouTube's copyright guidelines on originality. Understanding the principle of fair use and ensuring that creators must obtain permission from the copyright owner to avoid infringement; Inappropriate content is also a violation in YPP. Creators must adhere to YouTube's advertiser-friendly content guidelines- a clear standard for what content is suitable for advertising and promoting a safe environment for viewers. Inappropriate language, violence, and sexual and harmful acts. Advertisers shouldn't use this kind of content, which could lead to little to no ad revenue. Furthermore, it will be against community guidelines to post videos that contain harassment, hate speech, false information, and other damaging content. Repeated infringement of these guidelines may result in suspending or terminating monetization of the channel (Zappin et al., 2021).

The YouTube Partnership Program largely oversees YouTube's monetization practices, in that it enables content creators to make money by having their videos displayed with ads. The qualifying requirements for admission to the YPP have since become even more strict, especially after what is known as "adpocalypse," a term which

refers to the general term for significant revisions made to the guidelines on what ads can run on YouTube as a result of worries over the suitability and quality of the content. According to El-Kombo et al., (2023). The delivery of these rules was stricter in 2023 so as to improve content quality, but it ultimately led to removing many creators who had been part of the program.

Based on recent studies, the monetization policies of YouTube are getting tighter, especially after the "Apocalypse," which led to the review of the content restrictions imposed. Kopf (2020), claims that the changes brought by the demands of advertisers for brand safety resulted in a more selective monetization process that favors high-quality content while unintentionally excluding smaller creators who find it difficult to achieve these requirements. The connection between YouTube and its content creators is marked by intricate power dynamics. Kopf (2020), also states how YouTube exercises a lot of control over the income-generating process while posing as a partner to the creators through its monetization plans. A culture of conflict and questioning the fairness and equality of the partnership arises from the fact that creators rely on the platform's permission in order to generate income.

The impact of these monetization policies on creators has been significant. Research by Phillips (2022), highlights that while monetization schemes can empower certain creators by providing financial incentives, they also create a competitive environment where only established channels thrive. This dynamic can lead to economic disparities among creators, as those unable to meet the monetization thresholds may find it challenging to gain visibility and support.

Analyzing Monetization in Social Media Platforms

According to Kombo et al., based from his work on Social Media Monetization (2024), social media monetization is an evolving structure that matches the alteration and advancement of the innovative age or era. The monetization of social media platforms had, relative to its early days, evolved from a form that hardly produced revenue at all. Social media monetization is another major aspect of social media, and over different historical moments on social platforms, thousands of methods and strategies have been developed to keep the digital space intact and even improve in its scalability.

User data-driven advertising for monetization was one of the frequently used revenue generation methods applied by social media platforms (Kombo et al., 2024). Facebook is one of the known social media platforms to use this method of monetization, utilizing inputted data from their system by users to capitalize and generate targeted ads based on user preference revolutionized the advertising industry, and greatly assisted in the platform's monetization and revenue capabilities (Helmond et al., 2019). Various other large companies enumerate the goods and benefits in their social media monetization requirements, like in YouTube's guidelines where smaller content creators can be part of the YouTube Partnership Program and requirements state that once a content creator reaches 1000 subscriber counts and 4000 annual viewing hours, the user is considered to be monetized and available for payment (Bruce et al., 2023).

With the increase of internet users, various social media platforms gave rise to the formation of influencers being the central images in the digital market. Forming brand partnerships and creating a dynamic change in how audiences can reach certain brands and products through their digital presence (Kombo et al., 2024). The platforms in social media have been fundamental in shaping the landscape, sometimes in combination with user-driven data, of the marketing of influencers through its system's Algorithms, the pre-calculated set of preferences based on user activity that determines the visibility of certain content (Pitafi, 2024). An example of such is Instagram's algorithm, which favors posts with high engagement such as likes, shares, and comments, whereas TikTok's algorithm prioritizes viral videos, regardless of followers, likes, or shares (Pitafi, 2024). In collaboration with influencers, monetization has also been used through sponsored content which has had a dominant impact on social media monetization as a transformative strategy that alters the relation between the creators and brands (Kombo et al., 2024). Sponsored posts and videos help content creators to monetize their engagement and present brands with innovative and creative idea engaging avenues to connect and influence their target audiences (Gillespie, 2020). The growth of sponsored content platforms, represented by Instagram and YouTube take part in a significant role in reforming the influencer competitive market. YouTube, as a central media hub for sponsored videos, advertises collaborative efforts between content creators and brands while

Instagram is seen as a seamless integration of brand messaging into influencer content (Haenlein, 2022). Other labels also promote their products through reviews, not as a direct sponsor, but through product reviews. Often named as Public Relations, a technique in social media monetization for a quick way to gain publicity through influencers or already known online figures (Bruce et al., 2023).

Progressing from social media monetization methods came the process of subscription-based models that uses the direct connection and revenue generation straight from the audience; this relied less on the traditional forms of advertisements and relied heavily on the support of the users of the platform (Kombo et al., 2024). Examples of such are Patreon, which revolutionized social media monetization through direct financial online user support, and in turn, offering exclusive and vip access to certain content (Gillespie, 2020).

Other monetization strategies include affiliation of creators and brand to earn through commission and promotion of products, digital product sales and selling of online content accessible through e-products, and live streaming content (Kombo et al., 2024).

Research gap

The gap of this study identifies a lack in how YouTube's algorithms have favored certain types of content, specifically entertainment, over educational materials. The study lacks an algorithm for a detailed examination of how this bias affects the content creators from diverse communities and fields. Moreover, it might refer to the repercussions for marginalized voices and targeted educational resources that have difficulty to gain visibility. In addition, the study should highlight the importance of the policy changes because of the "apocalypse." but it fails to provide a thorough examination of how these policies have altered and have affected the behavior of the content creators and the caliber of their work. The study could track these effects to better understand the long-term consequences of changing monetization criteria. The study mentioned the user engagement metrics beyond the views and likes; this emphasizes the engagement metrics as determinants of visibility. Hence, the gap in understanding the other potential metrics, such as viewer retention and community interactions, could influence algorithmic recommendations and monetization outcomes. Moreover, the comparative analysis could be revealed by differing the monetization dynamics and algorithm impacts across the platforms. Furthermore, the community guidelines are mentioned, but little research has been done into how these guidelines are applied, and how they are enforced, and the impact on the content creator's behavior. The study could find whether stringent enforcement which results in high-quality content or disproportionately affects the smaller content creators, who lack the resources necessary to fully comply.

Aim of the Study

The study aims to understand the thorough analysis of YouTube's monetization policies and how these affect the content creators. The effect for diversity in content, freedom of expression, equitable compensation for the content creators, and the wide impact on the digital media environment to seek to contribute offer insights that can better support dynamic and diverse creators while upholding fundamental democratic principles.

Problem Statement

The study highlights the need to understand YouTube's community guidelines and freedom of expression and how the algorithms work, whereas it discusses the implications for content creators to avoid self-censorship and keeping the community standard to protect the users from harmful content. Moreover, how the content creator facilitates their content and makes their videos monetize while following the YouTube monetization policies to get earnings.

Furthermore, it aims to respond these questions;

1. How do YouTube's content moderation policies compare to universal regulation for the protection of freedom of speech?
2. What are the specific effects of YouTube's content review procedure on creators' ability to express themselves freely?

3. How do changes in community guidelines impact the exposure and earnings of different types of content on YouTube?
4. What challenges do content creators face when managing YouTube's monetization policies in relation to community guidelines?
5. What effective strategies on monetization can be identified from comparative analysis of YouTube's policies versus those of other social media platforms?

METHODS

To address the statement problem effectively, the researchers gathered raw data from various sources, including scholarly articles, industry reports, and official government documents. Keywords such as “YouTube”, “freedom of expression”, “community guidelines”, “monetization policies”, and “content creator” were applied to quicken the extraction of necessary data. Content analysis serves as a method for determining multiple forms of communication, such as text and images, by identifying patterns, themes, and significant elements. This approach allows researchers to draw conclusions based on their findings (Columbia University, 2019). In this research, to comprehend the implications of language and text concerning the interrelations between words and phrases from various sources, the researchers will implement Comparative Analysis and Thematic Analysis as these methodologies align well with the objectives of the study. To uncover similarities and differences by examining side-by-side is what comparative analysis is for. It involves comparing details, theories or concepts, or to analyze sets of data (Kaluza, 2023). Other than comparative analysis, the researchers also used Thematic Analysis. As per Wæraas (2022), The Thematic Analysis has key principles which are data coding, theme development, theme verification and presentation of results. Analyzing qualitative data is the main focus of this method, it identifies and extracts the patterns to interpretative understanding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this research, the researchers aim to extract raw data from each of the source, making sure that they meet specific criteria and these are: sources should be dated between 2014-2024, the content must pertain to community guidelines, policies of monetization, or content creators, and every source that meet the criteria one and two can still be accepted, even if the publication date is outside the specified range. A code will be assigned to each raw data piece to narrow its context. Lastly, based on the categorization of all the codes, themes will be generated. This approach enables the researchers on gaining insights into how content creators from YouTube navigate the balance between freedom of expression and adhering to community guidelines, emphasizing the obstacles/challenges and motivations being faced that relates to monetization policies. The researchers’ findings will give helpful and valuable information to inform policy recommendations that aim to improve the experiences of content creators on YouTube. The researchers come up with a proper and holistic explanation of the data, ultimately helping to discuss the statement of the problem and results to meaningful conclusions.

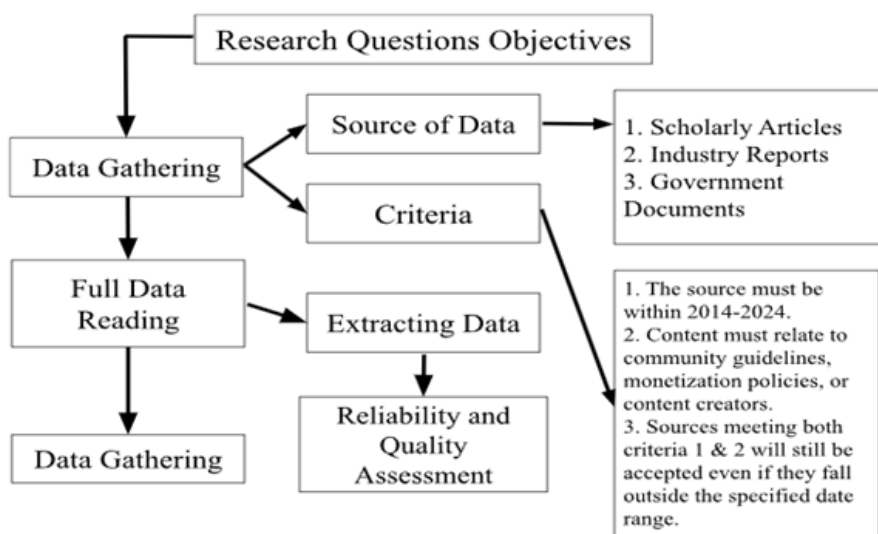


Figure 1. Data Gathering and Preparation
Source: (Delmo et al.,2023)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers created tables after collecting the necessary data to visually represent how the occurrence coded from different databases are extracted and categorized into themes. Apart from these, the tables show the relationship between each of the gathered data in correlation with one another and thus gives the researchers a deeper understanding and helps in attaining the objective goal.

Table 1. Content moderation policies of YouTube are aligned with the universal laws that safeguard Freedom of Expression.

Themes: Freedom of Expression	
YouTube	It prohibits hate speech, harassment, and violent content, which may limit free expression.
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of Article 19 (UDHR)	The data mentions that everyone has the rights to freely express their thoughts and opinions, through actions and voice, which also includes the user's freedom to express opinions online for constructive criticism, spreading ideas and information without worries through any means of media.
The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of Article 19	Within boundaries, restrictions are still considered with grounds of respect for the protection of national security, human rights and reputations of others, and public order and health.
The European Convention on Human Rights of Article 10	Subject to judgement, freedom of expression could still be restricted under specific circumstances. For reasons of national security, prevention of disorder, or for the defense of a person's rights or reputation.
The African Charter on Human and People's Rights of Article 9	The limitations on the right of freedom of expression are permitted in order to safeguard national security, public order, and public health, but such restrictions must be necessary and appropriate.
The 1987 Philippine Constitution of Article III, Section 4	The law to protect against restricts freedom of expression, although it allows limitations in the context of libel, slander, obscenity, or other similar restrictions related to public safety.
The National Campus Press Freedom Day or Republic Act No. 11440	The law protects the editorial independence of the campus press but does not allow for the publication of materials that endanger the public order, national security, or morality.
Republic Act No. 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act)	While promoting freedom of expression, this law allows for the criminalization of online defamatory content (e.g., cyber libel), which may prohibit the freedom of expression online.

Table 1.b. YouTube's content moderation policies align with universal regulations for the protection of Hate Speech.

Themes: Hate Speech	
YouTube	Vulnerability to cyber-attacks on IoT devices (Kumar & Yadav, 2023)
The Universal Declaration of	Under the article of UDHR it does not particularly mention hate speech, but it

Human Rights of Article 19 (UDHR)	allows a limit to safeguard national security, public order, health, or morals.
The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of Article 19	The ICCPR in hate speech restrictions is permitted to protect the rights and reputations of others and to prevent incitement to discrimination, hatred, or violence.
The European Convention on Human Rights of Article 10	The Article 10 allows restrictions for "hate speech," which includes speech that incites violence, discrimination, or hatred.
The African Charter on Human and People's Rights of Article 9	The African Charter on Human and People's Rights of Article 9 has fewer legal precedents addressing hate speech.
The 1987 Philippine Constitution of Article III, Section 4	According to the 1987 Philippine Constitution of Article III, Section 4, there is no specific reference to hate speech mentioned, but restrictions on freedom of speech can apply in the context of public safety, such as libel and slander.
The National Campus Press Freedom Day or Republic Act No. 11440	The Republic Act No.11440 says the law does not specifically address hate speech, but it focuses on protecting freedom of expression in campus media.
Republic Act No. 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act)	Hate speech, particularly online, may be prosecuted under provisions related to cyber libel, online threats, and other forms of harmful online expression.
Gap	As the internet and digital communication has rapidly grown it outpaced the legal frameworks, leaving many countries, including the Philippines with outdated or insufficient protections for online freedom of speech.

Table 1.c. YouTube's content moderation policies align with universal regulations for the protection of Harassment.

Themes: Harassment	
YouTube	The policies against harassment can restrict legitimate criticism.
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of Article 19 (UDHR)	The UDHR doesn't specifically address harassment, but limits on freedom of expression may be allowed to protect others' reputation
The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of Article 19	Harassment is not directly mentioned, but freedom of expression may be restricted to protect individuals from defamation or attacks on their reputation.
The European Convention on Human Rights of Article 10	Harassment could fall under the restrictions for protecting the rights of others or preventing violence or disorder. The law permits restrictions on speech if it threatens individual dignity, including harassment.
The African Charter on Human and People's Rights of Article 9	Harassment is not specifically addressed, but expression may be limited to avoid harming others' rights or reputations.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution of Article III, Section 4	The Article III, Section 4 of the Philippine Constitution says it protects speech and press freedoms, it allows restrictions to protect public safety, morals, and reputation. Harassment is not explicitly mentioned, but defamation laws can be used to address certain types of harassment.
The National Campus Press Freedom Day or Republic Act No. 11440	While this law focuses on preventing interference in student media, it doesn't address harassment as related to campus press freedoms.
Republic Act No. 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act)	Harassment (e.g., online harassment, cyberbullying, cyberstalking) is addressed under the Act, particularly in relation to defamation or intimidation.
Gap	Harassment is not explicitly defined in most international human rights instruments, leaving a gap in addressing harassment comprehensively. Most of the legal frameworks focus on defamation, incitement to violence, or reputation.

Table 1.d. YouTube's content moderation policies align with universal regulations for the protection of Transparency and Appeals.

Themes: Transparency and Appeals	
YouTube	The YouTube community guidelines aim to balance free expression with preventing harmful content. The transparency can be lacking regarding how decisions are made to remove content, and appeals are possible for content removal but lack clarity.
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of Article 19 (UDHR)	The Article 19 of UDHR does not specifically address appeals or procedures for challenging decisions; it implies that restrictions on freedom of expression should be transparent.
The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of Article 19	The Article 19 of ICCPR stated that it provides an order for appealing restrictions on freedom of speech to ensure they are necessary, proportionate, and supported by law. Hence, it does not specify a legal appeals process.
The European Convention on Human Rights of Article 10	Article 10 of the ECHR ensures that restrictions on expression should be reasonable, authorized, and transparent. It offers an effective appeals process for individuals whose rights are being violated.
The African Charter on Human and People's Rights of Article 9	Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights does not specifically appeal to mechanisms or procedures for challenging restrictions.
The 1987 Philippine Constitution of Article III, Section 4	Article III, Section 4, of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that the freedom of speech is protected and it does not clearly provide an appeals process for citizens challenging government actions or laws restricting freedom of expression.
The National Campus Press Freedom Day or Republic Act No. 11440	The Republic Act No. 1140 claims that it has no certain appeals process for restriction imposed on students, however it protects freedom of campus press
Republic Act No. 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention)	The Republic Act No. 10175 stated that it offers a legal framework for dealing with cybercrimes but clearly does not appeal to the processes related to freedom of

Act)	expression. Complaints can be filed and investigated, but appeals mechanisms are not explicitly outlined for challenges to restrictions on expression.
Gap	There is limited accountability for restriction whereas without clear appeals processes or independent judicial oversight, restriction on freedom of expression may be more easily misused, leading to a lack of accountability for those imposing such restriction.

Source: Processed by authors

Table 1 highlights comparison of the YouTube’s content moderation policies that align with the universal regulation for the protection of freedom of speech, the table discusses different legal framework that protects the individuals such as; the European Convention on Human Rights of Article 10 , the African Charter on Human and People's Rights of Article 9, The 1987 Philippine Constitution of Article III, Section 4, The Republic Act No. 11440 (National Campus Press Freedom Day), Universal Declaration of Human Rights of Article 19 (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of Article 19 (ICCPR), and Republic Act No. 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act). The YouTube Community Guidelines that discuss are aligned with the international standard framework that protects the individuals’ freedom of speech. However, there are some limitations. YouTube’s prohibit the hate speech, harassment, violent content that most likely limits the freedom of speech, which provided the protections above. YouTube’s definition for limiting hate speech may be too broad, which tends to lead to overreaching, despite international standards being set for what is restricted. With possibilities for improvement, the platform could refine and re-develop its policies further to ensure that explicit hate speech is specifically restricted without stifling legitimate discourse. Although policies help protect from harmful content, your tube’s policies may also restrict genuine criticism. Providing a concise set of standard or regulation that focuses on outlining the extents of what is considered as “adverse” content or theme helps with administering a understandable regulatory system to equalize the need for protection and safeness and at the same time keeping the freedom of speech and expression. Compared to international standards, the transparency and appeals in YouTube’s content moderation processes struggle to meet the intended standard. The legal framework referenced above emphasizes the fairness and transparency in trials and appeals. YouTube’s appeal process, however, lacks clarity and accessibility. For future redevelopment and improvement, it is recommended that YouTube should make its appeal process more transparent and concise, ensuring alignment with principles of fairness and due process of international human rights laws. This comparison highlights the need for YouTube to refine its policies to avoid unnecessary and unwanted restrictions on the freedom and expression of users while encouraging a platform that upholds respect and prevents harm. Closely aligning with international human rights standards would reinforce both the platform’s overall commitment to global principles of freedom of expression and international credibility.

Table 2: The specific effects of YouTube’s content review procedures on creators’ ability to express themselves freely.

Theme	Description
Censorship and self-censorship	YouTube reserves the right to remove content that violates its community guidelines or terms of service without prior notice. This includes the flag for violence. Electronic Frontier Foundation (2017)
	The digital media usage among youth in treatment and YouTube's content review processes highlights the broad issues about censorship and self-censorship that both environments require careful navigation of risk associated with harmful content whilst striving to promote healthy expression and creativity. As it seeks to protect youth and must balance authenticity with compliance to avoid punitive measures (Good & Mishna, 2019).
Impact on content diversity	The content creators are mostly facing significant pressure to adhere to the algorithmic preferences of YouTube Community Guidelines, which can limit creativity and innovation of the creators (Rollins, 2022).

	YouTube has a significant impact for content creators when it comes to diversity, while moderation aims to create a safer online environment. This can unintentionally suppress diverse voices and limit creative expression. A balanced approach considers the nuance of different types of content and encourages a broad range of perspectives that help to lessen the effects while still upholding the community standards (Schwemer et al., 2023).
Perceived lack of transparency	The wider impacts of the policies that are examined include YouTube’s content moderation and the growth of community guidelines policies between platforms and the content creators. The procedures have an impact on algorithms, terms of services, and content review that affect the user’s freedom of expression (Gillespie, 2010).
	The systems are designed to automatically identify and censor content deemed inappropriate or harmful; however, it often comes without clear explanations to the user about why specific decisions are made. Moreover, the creators frequently report a lack of understanding regarding the reason behind moderation actions such as age restrictions or video removals (Cobbe, 2021).

Source: Processed by authors

Table 2 discusses the different ways in which YouTube’s content review policies have an essential impact on the content creator’s freedom of expression, such as self-censorship and censorship, that have a bad impact on the creativity output of the content creators, which they often avoid discussing significant social problems that have a need to follow the community guidelines, which the creators do not want to violate. Moreover, the table also discussed the impact on content diversity, which more likely aims to create a safer online environment that sometimes unintentionally suppresses the voices and limits creative expression. Additionally, the table has discussed how the content creators feel pressure to avoid demonetization that causes unsuitable advertisements or inappropriate content. Furthermore, the table addresses the perceived lack of transparency, in which the system often failed to provide unclear explanations to the user about specific decisions made; due to this, the content was removed because of a lack of understanding regarding the reason behind moderation.

Table 3: Changes in community guidelines impact the exposure and earnings of different types of content on YouTube.

Type of Content	Impact on Exposure	Impact on Earnings
Educational Content	The article highlights that educational content enables a brand to effectively target the consumer throughout the customer journey. This is because the informative and educational content provided by brands can further be calibrated in response to compliance with various advertising policies to improve their visibility and engagement with customers (NY Licensing, 2023).	The research says that consumers who engage with educational content have 131% higher conversion rate into paying customers compared to those who do not engage with such content. Additionally, prospects are 83.6% more likely to purchase from companies that provide educational resources.
		The outcomes reveal that educational content creates leads, as well as increases more ad engagement, which may mean a considerably higher earning potential for both the creators and the brands. When the right contents are used, return on investment is always going to increase due to improved consumer trust and loyalty, of which, again, is one of the most essential areas in digital marketing (NY Licensing, 2023).
Sensitive Content	The study focuses on how the stringent checks of sensitive content often led to lesser	The paper indicates that demonetization of content because of guidelines violations will

	<p>exposure. Sensitive content should enable providing enough context to avoid violation of the platform policy. As a result of stiff filters by the platforms in ensuring conformation to the community guideline, this limitation might limit the viewing of such content and how often a user views it (Bioglio & Pensa, 2022).</p>	<p>result in a decline in creators' earnings. If their work is educational or helpful but falls into categories usually closely analyzed or detected by automated systems, it may not generate revenue. This is because sensitive issues will likely lead to monetization restrictions. The results demonstrate that producers need to manage these challenges in order to sustain both the exposure as well as the revenue from their content (YouTube Updates its Guidelines for Monetization on Certain Sensitive Topics, 2023), (Bioglio & Pensa, 2022).</p>
Violent/Dangerous Content	<p>The article discusses how violent content is subject to significant moderation, resulting in a reduction in exposure. Violent content is often prohibited or blocked, which reduces its visibility on various sites (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2009).</p>	<p>It underlines how the revenues are adversely affected because advertisements are rarely displayed on the content blocked because of violent nature that reduces the money that the creators may potentially earn (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2009).</p>
Misinformation	<p>The article shows that YouTube is actively taking down false content, making a creator's other work less visible if they do not confirm any information. To this end, moderation can also create severe limitations over the reach of such disseminated misinformed videos (Li et. al, 2022).</p>	<p>It explains that because monetization most of the time refers to adhering to community guidelines and the correctness of content, earnings may decrease due to blocked or tagged channels by claims of spreading false information (Li et. al, 2022).</p>

Source: Processed by authors

The table 3 shows how the changes in YouTube's community guidelines change the exposure and earnings for each type of content. Since it adheres to the advertisement policies, educational content typically goes well by raising more viewer exposure and engagement. It also results in more significant profits because people would probably trust and purchase from brands giving valuable resources. Sensitive content is even more dependent on monitoring and filtering, which may decrease the probability of its exposure and earnings. Sensitive topics are usually demonetized, especially when they contradict the policies of the platform, which can reduce the earnings to be generated by the creator. Due to strict regulation and permanent blocking, exposure to violent or harmful material has been minimized significantly. This lack of exposure also lowers income because advertisers avoid placing ads on such content. Similarly, YouTube actively detects or removes misinformation, reducing the frequency with which viewers see these videos. Creators who post misleading information face a loss in visibility and potential income, as their content does not meet the platform's standards. Overall, the table shows that aligning content with community guidelines is crucial for creators to maintain both exposure and earnings

Table 4: Challenges do content creators face when managing YouTube's monetization policies in relation to community guidelines.

Challenges	Description
Demonetization Risks	<p>It is usually due to algorithmic assessments or YouTube policy changes as the demonetization of creators' videos happens without any noticeable explanation, lowering earnings (Chu et al., 2022).</p>
	<p>No matter what informational or educational value this content has, it can be labeled as not advertiser-friendly if it discusses subjects that are sensitive, such as mental health or</p>

	sexuality (Tatjana Hödl & Myrach, 2023).
	YouTube's demonetization of creators of the videos pertaining to potentially harmful material, though not actually violating the platform's guidelines, may impact income levels for content creators significantly (Cornell Tech, 2022).
Lack of Control	This article scrutinizes the conflicts between platform control and creator autonomy by focusing on how algorithmic control influences content distribution and advertising income, thereby affecting the ability of creators to impact their earnings. Dynamic pricing and limited control over ad placements affect earnings in an unpredictable manner (Tatjana Hödl & Mirach, 2023).
Community Guidelines Compliance	This article identifies the issues creators are facing in terms of comprehension and implementation of community guidelines of YouTube and how its policy educates the creators about these. The introduction of resources developed to guide creators on handling such issues (Hutchinson, 2023).
Algorithmic Transparency	This article addresses the consequences of unclear decision-making in social media environments through examining how user trust and the perceived legitimacy of content moderation algorithms are affected by their lack of transparency (Pan et al., 2022).

Source: Processed by Authors

The table indicates the main obstacles that content developers encounter in managing YouTube's monetization policies in relation to community guidelines. Demonetization risks, where videos are flagged as not suitable for advertising, constitute one of the main obstacles. This usually occurs due to automated assessments or unclear regulation changes. Without violating guidelines, it is possible to demonetize even valuable content that addresses sensitive topics like sexuality or mental health, greatly reducing creators' earnings. Educational content is offered on YouTube to guide the creators in understanding these rules, and they may still face challenges applying them. Lastly, the difficulties facing creators have been worsened by a lack of algorithmic transparency. Confusion and distrust are contributed to by the fact that so many decisions about content control and monetization are subject to unclear algorithms. This ambiguity influences how creators view the legitimacy and fairness of YouTube in enforcing its policies. Overall, these challenges portray difficulties associated with maintaining creators' contents and revenue streams while adhering to YouTube's guidelines.

Table 5: Comparison of the effectiveness of Your tube's policies and other social media platforms.

Social Media Platform	Implemented Monetization Strategy	Description
YouTube	Ad-Based Revenue	YouTube content creators gain revenue through advertisements from Google AdSense, created through pre-roll, mid roll, and banner ads. It also includes sponsored content and embedded advertising (Cunningham & Craig, 2019).
	Subscriber-Based Revenue	Only white listed subscribers can access the content creators' exclusive offers and perks (Postigo, 2019).
	Super Chat & E-gifts	Created for viewers to reward bloggers live on a stream or video, which highlights a chat user's message on live stream at a certain price (Zhan et al., 2023).
	Partnership Programs	As long as requirements are met, content creators can be part of a program that benefits creator's capabilities in revenue through partnership (Bruce et al.,

		2022). Helping both content creators and you tube as a whole in revenue and traction in popularity (Cheng et al., 2018).
Facebook	Placement of Advertisement	Focused more on personalization, advertisements are inserted based on user's preferences and users can also pay to increase the reach of their services and products (Huang & Depari, 2019).
	Advertisement as a Tool	Facebook supports users in creating free company pages or individual pages solely for the purpose of business, even though the Facebook Marketplace to support business revenue (Huang & Depari, 2019).
Instagram	Sponsored Posts and Reels	On this platform, it is primarily managed by influencers that collaborate with brands to promote products and services through brief formatted posts to showcase the items that are sponsored by the brand using reels and stories to reach a wider audience (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).
	Affiliate Marketing	Heavily leaning towards influencer marketing, Instagram's in app features greatly helps in monetization through affiliate commissions, Instagram Shopping and Checkout features for direct selling from content creators (Mishra et al., 2024).
TikTok	Creator Funds	Similar to Your tube's Partnership Program, certain prerequisites must be met in order to become a partner for the platform and directly earn cash through performance and metrics: 10,000 Adherents towards the account, 30-day account tenure, and compliance to the community guidelines (Novita et al., 2023).
	Influencer and Affiliate Marketing	With the format of short and creative videos, sponsored items and brand advertisements can generate revenue for content creators with their respective sponsors (Novita et al., 2023).
	Live Blessings and TikTok Coins	Permitting fans to "gift" electronic awards to content creators, which are convertible to cash. These are often seen and done within live streams and live videos (Novita et al., 2023).
Twitter (X)	Twitter Tips	Tips, one of the unique features of Twitter (X), allows creators to produce sales through third-party payment services with the advantage of content creators taking 100% of the commission's sales and no intermediary fees from Twitter (X) (Goanta, 2023).
	Twitter Super follows	It is another type of subscriber-based revenue for Twitter(X) wherein online content creators can make extra content, regardless of services or products, that users can purchase and for creators to earn separate sales from (Goanta, C., 2023).

Source: Processed by Authors

As seen within the table, the respective social media platforms, specifically you tube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter (X), utilize different effective strategies in monetization of content and for content creators. Similarly, video-streaming centered platforms like TikTok and you tube both utilize partnership programs for incentivized content and highlights user engagement with audience to maintain monetization, that any online content creator can join as long as certain parameters are met. Online posts and engagement-centered platforms like TikTok and Instagram are focused on influencer marketing and affiliation through sponsorships and product placements in posted content. Twitter (X) and Facebook however have unique strategies in monetization for users wherein Twitter (X) gives total freedom for users to generate sales on their own with Tips and similar with

Your tube's subscriber-based revenues, Super follow also gives total control of content creators over their sales, while Facebook is a flexible platform centralized more on advertisements and capable of hosting businesses and marketplaces, giving broader options for monetization.

Focusing on YouTube's monetization strategies compared with other social media platforms, YouTube combines the majority of the platforms' strategies together, advertisements within videos, subscriber exclusive content, online or e-gifts which correspond to real life money, and partnership programs for incentives, and implements these within one system, giving freedom for partners and sponsors to choose how to be monetized and earn, as well as maintaining the regulation of content through policies and guidelines. Keeping a "reward" and "punishment" aspect in maintaining monetization through policies that must be followed, stated within their YouTube community guidelines and monetization rules. (YouTube, 2023)

CONCLUSIONS

The researchers came to the conclusion that the study discusses the complexities of YouTube's community guidelines, the monetization policies, and the freedom of expression. YouTube wants to deliver a safer community for its users while engaging a wide range of views on the platform. YouTube's community guidelines allow the creator to exercise their human rights as it allows them to use their freedom of expression on the platform. Moreover, the content creators are facing difficulties because of strict regulations. YouTube's policies are becoming strict; it may hinder the content creator from creating a safe space and limit themselves to subjecting societal issues. Somehow, the monetization policies are designed to ensure excellent content; they may encourage the content creators to create deceptive tactics or clickbait just to meet the goal of getting monetized. Hence, ensuring the content's credibility and making it financially profitable are easy. Furthermore, the monetization's policies decide which content should be monetized and decide what content is profitable. As a result, the relationship between content creators and their content may become more complex, which certainly leads to unpredictable profits. In addition to balancing the content, it should ensure a diverse perspective and allow the content creators to express themselves without limits. Finally, the study promotes a thorough comprehension of the complexities of content creation and the monetization policy on YouTube. People should create a community that encourages creativity, provides opportunities for content creators, and maintains human rights as they freely use their freedom of expression on the YouTube platform.

RECOMMENDATION

To future researchers, the study has to strengthen the law that safeguarding freedom of speech that ensures it is aligned with international human rights standards. The study has to implement a transparency content moderation policy that evidently provides a criterion for content removal or demonetization that affects the innocent content creators. Thus, helping the content creators to understand how the community guidelines works and how they avoid the uncertain violations that could lead to penalties. Moreover, the algorithm has certain biases to types of content or platforms that allow visibility in various content. The algorithm should prioritize a diverse range of content that allows the other content creators to gain visibility in different backgrounds. In addition, the study has to foster a more inclusive environment such as community engagement whereas their feedback matters and helps to shape policies prior to balancing community standards with rights to freely express themselves. YouTube should allow the small content creators to earn generation without compromising content quality, or strictly following the monetization policies. Further, having reliable resources and training for content creators to help them practice for content creation, audience engagement, and knowing the monetization policies can enable them to succeed. Hence, educating the content creators about the copyrights, clickbaits, misleading information, and fair use help them to prevent the unintentional violations and can help to promote originality in content creation.

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