

Success Stories of Micro-Celebrities: A Study of Multiple Social Networking Platforms' Viral Content in Pakistan

Rahima Faisal

Abstract:

In the era of digital media, the rapid rise of social media has given birth to a new breed of celebrities known as "digital media celebrities" or "micro-celebrities." These individuals gain fame and recognition through their viral content, attracting wide spread attention and admiration. This study employs a qualitative, cross-sectional research design to explore the process of celebrification among digital media celebrities in Pakistan. The research methodology involves content analysis of various articles, focusing on the journeys of four notable personalities: Ahmed Shah, Dananeer Mobeen, Ayesha, and Arshad Khan. The findings highlight the significance of visually appealing content, catchy phrases, and humor as major factors contributing to their virality, while an examination of audience sentiments through comments sheds light on the transformative impact of viral content, elevating micro-celebrities to macro-celebrity status. Additionally, the study proposes The Viral Fame Model (VFM) on the basis of results emphasizing the importance of genuine talent and skills in sustaining long-term success and achieving the actual status of macro-celebrity in the competitive world of media and entertainment.

Keywords: digital media, macro celebrities, micro-celebrities process of celebrification, user-generated content, viral content.

Introduction

Social media has become an integral part of contemporary society, revolutionizing the way people interact, share information, and express their self. One notable issue that has emerged in this digital landscape is the rise of user-generated content and the emergence of micro-celebrities. These individuals, who are often ordinary people, have gained noticeable fame and recognition through their activities on social media platforms (Brooks et al., 2021).

Goffman (1959) made a contribution to the understanding of identity construction through his work on the "dramaturgical approach." This approach highlights how individuals present themselves in everyday life. The theory of Goffman discusses the self- presentation of people on back stage, relaxing with their actual version of personality and front stage where people manage their image that adhere to social norms and expectations. The theory argues that people construct their identities and show the part of their personalities which they want people to perceive them.

In addition to the identity construction, there is a concept known as "celebrification" that has gained fame in the digital age. Celebrification refers to the process by which ordinary individuals and public personalities transform themselves into celebrities, often through their online presence (Turner, 2006). This transformation takes place by social media platforms which provide opportunities for self-presentation and the projection of fame by turning bloggers, YouTube video performers, and social networking site users into celebrities (Couldry, 2004; Gamson, 1994).

User-Generated Content and the Rise of Micro-Celebrities

According to the principle of uses and gratifications, people use media to satisfy various wants and needs (Blumler et al., 1974). The Uses and

Gratification theory examines how the media affects people. The theory discusses what people do with media instead of what media does to people. Uses and gratification stems from the notion that media serves a purpose. If the audience has specific uses or demands, the media will fulfill or gratify those needs (Sridharan, 2023).

As technology advances, so do the many forms of media. With the expansion of the World Wide Web has come to the expansion of online forums, which has resulted in the emergence of user-generated content (UGC) (Cha, et. al, 2007). PC Magazine defines user-generated content (UGC) as any sort of material developed by users or end-users of a digital platform and made publicly available to other users is referred to as user-generated content (PC Mag, 2013). This can include video content, blogs, photos, posts, and audio (Cha, et. al, 2007).

User-generated content has grown in popularity on social media over time, influencing people and satisfying their need to be famous like celebrities. There are millions of people around the world who make efforts to make their dreams come true, and then there are those who become overnight social media celebrities (Kanchwala, 2016) due to a self-presentation that unexpectedly goes viral (Elliott, 2013). The term "viral" refers to social media content that has become popular and could be uploaded as "memes" (Litsman, 2021). Celebrification is established as one of the incentives and gratifications underlying the practice of content creation.

Senft (2008) defines micro-celebrity as an unknown individual making himself/herself known, primarily relying on personally generated online content to become famous. Prior to the Internet, a celebrity was regarded as a product that required promotion, mass media, and publicity. However, the rapid expansion of digital media has altered these assumptions. Everyone can now freely design their self-presentation on social media (Yeru, 2019).

The rise of micro-celebrities can be attributed to the significant role played by user-generated content (UGC) on social media platforms. These platforms provide a space where individuals can share their own content that leads to recognition and fame. Through their creative activities, ordinary people have transformed themselves into micro-celebrities by appealing audiences with their unique perspectives and talents (Cha et al., 2007). This sensation has promoted celebrity status that challenges the traditional power dynamics of fame. Several notable examples in Pakistan, such as Dananeer Mobeen (Pawri Girl), Ayesha (Dancing Girl), Ahmed Shah (Pathan Ka Bacha), and Arshad Khan (Chai Wala) demonstrate how common individuals have gained celebrity status through their presence on social media.

Factors Influencing Content Virality on Social Media

The viral nature of content on social media platforms has captured the attention of researchers intending to understand the factors that contribute to its spread. West (2011) identified several key elements that make content more likely to go viral, including surprise, amusement, irony, minority representation, talent, and youth. Additionally, Berger and Milkman (2012) found that positive content tends to go viral more often than negative content, as it triggers emotions such as joy and humor. These insights shed light on the psychological and emotional connectivity that motivates the sharing and dissemination of content on social media.

Transitioning from Micro-Celebrities to Macro-Celebrities

As micro-celebrities gain recognition and popularity, they may transform into macro-celebrities with a wider reach and influence. This transformation resulted by combination of strategic efforts and audience engagement. Tanupabrungsun (2018) found that micro-celebrities who engage their audiences through identity-rich and interaction-rich posts are likely to generate higher levels of engagement. Social media

platforms provide a unique opportunity for individuals to build their personal brand and expand their fan following that ultimately opens doors to collaborations, endorsements, and opportunities in the mainstream media (Yeru, 2019).

Social Media Sensations and Mainstream Media

The increasing convergence of social media sensations and mainstream media attention has become a notable trend. Social media platforms serve as a springboard for individuals to capture the attention of traditional media outlets. This transition often occurs as social media sensations grasp apprenticeship within the mainstream media (Stojanova, 2020). Platforms like Facebook play a crucial role in the creation, promotion, and demarcation of social media celebrity culture, where individuals can seamlessly transition from online micro-celebrity status to gaining recognition in mainstream media.

Objectives:

- To explore the dynamics of social media fame, focusing on the factors that contribute to content to be viral.
- To study the transformation process from micro-celebrity to macro-celebrity status.
- To evaluate the relationship between social media sensations and mainstream media.

Literature Review

To study the phenomena of Viral Content, User-Generated Content (UGC), and the motivation behind the practices of Micro-celebrity and Celebrification, the following literature comprise of past studies that have been analyzed by the researcher to fill the research gap.

In the study, by identifying similarities among viral videos West (2011) sought to answer the question that why certain videos are so popular while others aren't. Researcher discovered nine important factors the majority of which are focused on the video content, such as the element of surprise and amusement, irony, and the presence of a minority, talent, and youth in the video. Others are related to the presentation, such as the quality of music, the length of a video, and the length of a title.

Furthermore, positive content is more likely to go viral than negative content. The post that motivates positive or negative thrills such as fear, anxiety, or anger gets more viral than the low-arousal, or deactivating content (Berger & Milkman, 2012).

Elliott (2013) developed a Model for Creating a Non-Professional Viral Video in 2013 based on various areas that were proven to be essential for viral content. According to the study, sharing sources, such as social media and mainstream media, are necessary but opinion leaders are discovered to be the primary sharing source of viral videos. The content itself is also significant in terms of how it makes people feel, whether it is entertaining or relatable. While positive emotions such as compliments, joy, or humor are considered major components of a viral video.

People want to be famous celebrities since childhood, but it's a fantasy that rarely comes true. Millions of people all over the world work hard to fulfill their wishes and some are those who become social media celebrities suddenly. Kanchwala (2016) discusses 10 people including a famous Chae Wala (Arshad Khan) who became sudden sensations on social media without even trying. There are many accounts on social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube and due to a large number of social media users and content creators, certain "micro-celebrities" have emerged. Because of the upbringing on the Instagram and YouTube platforms, social media influencers can have a greater impact on media consumers than traditional celebrities. A consumer also

trusts the viewpoint of a social media influencer more because of its relatability and genuineness (Nouri, 2018).

The study (Tanupabrungsun, 2018) investigated whether micro-celebrity is a learned skill rather than a natural trait. According to the findings, audiences are more engaged with posts that are identity-rich and interaction-rich, but less engaged with posts that are visibility-rich. The study highlighted several platforms used by various groups of celebrities with varying basic practices. The researcher explored micro-celebrity methods that are vital in engaging their audiences.

Instagram is a platform that allows everyone to remain engaged with the masses, helps in developing connections and turns ordinary people into celebrities through its different features and trends. The research focused on the practice of Instagram users who make themselves Instagram celebrities. According to the findings, the celebrification that occurred on Instagram may be seen because of participation habitus, and this participatory habitus can be defined as an Instagram user-created technique to challenge traditional methods of celebrity generation. A social media celebrity is a sort of freedom in which users have the power or capital to make themselves celebrities by being active and creative users in developing a persona and producing media content (Yeru, 2019).

The process of becoming a celebrity is democratized in the sense that Facebook gives everyone a chance to become whoever they want to be by providing the tools for the transformation of ordinary individuals into micro-celebrities. According to Stojanova (2020) not only are there accolades and acceptance, but there are also dark sides to a person's ambitions and fondness for celebrification. Facebook has played a big influence in the creation, promotion, and demotion of micro-stardom. The study added to the body of knowledge about Pakistani female micro-celebrities who become popular of their own volition but are destroyed by the toxicity of their hateful cultural environment. By utilizing Facebook account creation and profile management features, the average

Fouzia Azeem was able to display herself on social media as the glamorous Qandeel Baloch. Micro-celebrities specifically Baloch turned attention into a commodity. Because online audiences are the intended customer and promoters of this commodity, and it is understandable that micro-celebrities are willing to go to any length to satisfy them. Toxic micro-celebrities appear to prefer even negative attention, especially when it is unrelentingly negative, as it is most likely to be devoured not only personally and individually, but to become 'viral' and spread like wildfire (Stojanova, 2020).

Celebrification is widely adopted by TikTok users. The network has already turned people into celebrities mainly known as tick-tock stars. The study defines the elements that determine the continuous desire to use TikTok in Jordan. Satisfaction has a substantial beneficial influence on users' long-term intention to use TikTok. Aspects like expressing yourself, informativeness, feel of being part of something, and trendiness have a substantial impact on Ticktock users' happiness. However, attachments and pastimes in TikTok have no effect on TikTok users' satisfaction (Sharabati et al., 2022).

In the context of the above literature, i.e. user-generated content for self-presentation, the process of celebrification, and the consequences of micro-celebrities' posts on social media, this paper examines cases from Pakistan that went viral on social media and resulted in ordinary or public figures becoming celebrities.

Research Questions:

RQ1: How did Micro-celebrities become Macro-celebrities?

RQ2: Which elements can possibly make content viral on social media?

RQ3: How do social media sensations gain recognition in mainstream media?

RQ4: Does the viral content always associate with the positive

sentiments of the audiences?

RQ5: Does the fame obtained from a sudden viral content have a lasting presence?

Methodology:

This research utilizes qualitative cross-sectional approach to examine the phenomenon of viral stories in Pakistan. Through content analysis of various articles, this study analyzes the process of celebrification, focusing on specific personalities. Another approach to collect data, content analysis involves the use of self-structured coding sheets to identify the key elements contributing to virality in all four cases. Additionally, the study examines the sentiments expressed by viewers by interpreting the last 50 comments on each post.

Coding sheets:

Type of Viral Story	Definitions
Comedy/Humor	Funny acting/performances, humorous dialogue, catchy music, comedic visuals, entertaining storyline
Emotional/Uplifting	Strong emotional performances, impactful dialogue, moving music, heartfelt visuals, inspirational storyline
Shocking/Surprising	Surprising acting/performances, shocking dialogue, dramatic music, unexpected visuals, plot twists

Informative/Educational	Knowledgeable acting / performances, informative dialogue, engaging music, visually appealing educational content
Inspirational/Motivational	Inspiring acting/performances, motivational dialogue, uplifting music, visually captivating inspirational content
Trending/Pop Culture	Relevant acting/performances, trendy dialogue, popular music, visually appealing references to current trends or pop culture

Main Element that went Viral	Definitions
Catchy Phrase or Memorable Line	Analyzing the impact of a catchy phrase or memorable line used in the content, which resonated with the audience.
Unique Talent or Skill	Examining the role of a unique talent or exceptional skill displayed by the main character.
Music or Song	Exploring the influence of infectious music or a catchy song used in the video.
Humor	Analyzing the comedic element present in the post.

Visual Appeal	Assessing the visual impact of the post, including visually stunning scenes, movement or captivating visuals.
---------------	---

Audience Response		Definition
Trending	Trending hashtags	The hashtags associated with the post that became popular or went viral.
	Discussions/ Conversations	The discussions, conversations, or threads related to the post.
	Media coverage	The extent of media coverage or mentions of the post in news articles or publications.
Viral Reach	Social media platforms	The specific social media platforms where the post gained popularity and was shared.
	Impressions	The total number of times the post was displayed or viewed by users.
User-generated Content	Parodies	The creation of parodies or spoofs based on the content.
	Remixes	The creation of remixes or mashups using the post audio or visuals.

	Renowned individuals' reach	The involvement of influential figures with a viral post, amplifying its visibility and impact.
--	-----------------------------	---

Comparative Analysis of Comments		Definition
Positive Sentiments	Entertainment/ Enjoyment	Comments that express enjoyment, amusement, or pleasure derived from watching the post.
	Appreciation/ Admiration	Comments that express admiration, praise, or affection towards the person present in a post.
	Humor / Fun	Comments that are funny, humorous, or lighthearted in nature, often containing jokes or witty remarks.
Negative Sentiments	Offense/ backlash	A negative or critical comment expressing disapproval, condemnation, or emotional hurt in response to a post
	Disappointment	A comment expressing feelings of sadness or letdown due to unmet expectations or hopes.

	Mocking	A derisive or scornful remark intended to make fun of someone or something in a post.
--	---------	---

Posts for comments analysis:

The analysis of comments is focused solely on primary comments. Replies and discussions within the comment section were excluded from the analysis as they may be influenced by the initial comment. By excluding the replies, the researcher aimed to maintain the integrity of the primary comments and ensure an unbiased assessment.

Celebrity	Platform	Video/Photo Link	Views	Comments
Dananeer Mobeen	Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/p/CK9JmaXBEtc/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igshid=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==	9.5M	4,514
Ahmed Shah	YouTube Shorts	https://youtube.com/shorts/D4jkw2JJaGo?feature=share	502k	126
Arshad Khan	Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/Sheikhspeareofficial/pho	N/A	278

		tos/a.785268894897226/1125794904177955/?_cft__[0]=AZVzZoQvH_hh9tXbP71YzoFKqv-HbJgSMFu_DhC1C7NMjtz5bJzwDqqMaZ0-WQQeUFgUWbsGSXvA1vF6JdDyysR39ErPhSZkWgb5NxdbnRVNTIBnR321M9I9crikTFKbolXUxXOi5_3xmkf-6nne3_0-3RjwoANcxVf-jT-XkAkbEXSUYvz pEQxMMwBHUt rO3SG86B7WNI1wKH0Yro7sJxyQ&tn=EH-y-R		
Ayesha	Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/reel/Ck04177955/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igshid=MzRIODBiNW-FZA==	2.4M	73.1k

The coding sheet aims to analyze the last 50 comments received on four viral posts. The sheet includes columns for each post's title, Positive Sentiments, and Negative Sentiments. These categories will be used to categorize and analyze the sentiments expressed in the comments of the audience. The purpose of this analysis is to gain insights into the overall sentiment and feedback received from the audience regarding each post.

Interviews:

The morning show "Good Morning Pakistan" hosted by Nida Yasir on ARY Digital has become a popular platform for inviting social media-made celebrities. However, the show received serious backlash when Ayesha, the dancing girl from social media, was invited and performed again, leading to accusations of violating societal norms. Nida Yasir faced severe criticism for promoting such practices. To delve deeper into the mainstream media's perspective on viral content and the process of celebrification, the researcher conducted an in-person interview with Ashfaq Ishaq Satti, anchor of ARY News morning show "Ba Khabar Sawera." Additionally, the researcher analyzed a recorded interview of Nida Yasir, where she addressed the public criticism and clarified her position in a "The talk show with Hassan Choudary" (Express TV, 2023).

Results and Findings

Content Analysis of Viral Stories:

Table 1: Type of Viral Post

Viral Post title	Ayesha's Video - "Dil	Ahmed Shah's	Dananeer's Video - "Pawri	Arshad Khan's Photo -
------------------	-----------------------	--------------	---------------------------	-----------------------

	Ye Pukare Aaja"	Video - "Pathan ka Bacha"	Ho Rahi Hai"	"Chaiwala"
Comedy/Humor		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Emotional/Uplifting				
Shocking/Surprising				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Informative/Educational				
Inspirational/Motivational				
Trending/Pop Culture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

The findings from the coding sheet analysis indicate that among all four, the comedy/humor type of posts went viral. Two out of the four posts demonstrate the association of viral stories to comedy/humor, suggesting its importance in engaging the audience. Additionally, Ayesha's Video is associated with the trending/pop culture element, indicating that content related to current trends can contribute to virality. Arshad Khan's Photo stands out for its shocking/surprising element, which can attract attention. However, according to the results, emotional/uplifting, informative /educational, and inspirational /motivational element hasn't been found in these posts.

Table 2: Main Element that went viral

Viral Post Title	Ayesha's Video - "Dil Ye Pukare Aaja"	Ahmed Shah's Video - "Pathan ka Bacha"	Dananeer's Video - "Pawri Ho Rahi Hai"	Arshad Khan's Photo - "Chaiwala"
Catchy Phrase or Memorable Line		✓	✓	
Unique Talent or Skill				
Music or Song	✓			
Humor		✓	✓	
Visual Appeal	✓	✓		✓

Visual appeal emerges as the significant common factor among the posts analyzed. According to results, three out of four posts i.e. Ayesha's Video, Ahmed Shah's Video, and Arshad Khan's Photo, possess visually captivating elements. Additionally, Dananeer's and Ahmed's videos gained popularity and virality with the incorporation of humor and catchy phrases. This suggests that visually compelling content tends to attract more attention and engagement from viewers and makes the posts more shareable, increasing their potential for virality.

It is worth noting that while these factors were observed among the evaluated posts, other elements such as unique talents, skills, and music were not constantly present. Thus, visual appeal, along with catchy

phrases and humor played more significant roles as contributors to the virality of these specific posts.

The findings of this analysis indicate that content evoking positive emotions, including humor, catchy phrases, and visual appeal has a higher likelihood of becoming viral which aligns with previous research by Berger & Milkman (2012). In conclusion, the success of these posts in gaining viral attention highlights the importance of visually appealing and emotionally engaging content in attracting audience and gaining popularity.

Table 3: Audience Response

Viral Post Title	Ayesha's Video - "Dil Ye Pukare Aaja"	Ahmed Shah's Video - "Pathan ka Bacha"	Dananeer's Video - "Pawri Ho Rahi Hai"	Arsha d Khan' s Photo - "Chai wala"
Trending (Hashtags)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discussions/Conversations	✓	✓	✓	✓
Media Coverage	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Media Platforms	✓	✓	✓	✓
Impressions	✓	✓	✓	✓

Parodies	✓	✓	✓	
Remixes	✓	✓	✓	
Renowned individuals' reach	✓	✓	✓	

The all four viral posts received audience response in a form of hashtags, initiated discussions and conversations, gained media attention and achieved a wide reach on social media. With the exception of Arshad Khan's photo, other three posts generated high impressions and inspired user-generated content like parodies and remixes. Furthermore, the posts successfully reached influential and renowned individuals who appreciated and re-shared the content.

Table 4: Comparative Analysis of Comments:

Post Title	Positive Sentiments	Negative Sentiments
Ayesha's Video - "Dil Ye Pukare Aaja"	16	34
Ahmed Shah's Video - "Pathan ka Bacha"	50	✗
Dananeer's Video - "Pawri Ho Rahi Hai"	50	✗
Arshad Khan's Photo - "Chaiwala"	50	✗

Based on the analysis of the last 50 comments on Dananeer's post, it can be concluded that all of the comments were positive in nature and encompassed various elements such as entertainment/enjoyment, humor/fun, excitement/ enthusiasm, and a sense of connection/remembrance. There was a notable absence of negative sentiments, including criticism, disapproval, offensive language, taunting, or disrespect. The audience predominantly expressed their admiration and reactions through the use of emoticons.

As indicated in Table 1, Dananeer's video falls under the category of comedy/humor, and the primary element contributing to its virality was its humor and catchy phrase. Consequently, the audience frequently employed laughing, clapping, and heart emoticons in their comments.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the audience repeatedly referenced Dananeer's catchy line from the video, which played a significant role in its viral success, as depicted in Table 2. The tone of the comments remained respectful, with many commenters addressing Dananeer using the term "aap/aapki".

1. Mujhy to aj pta Laga y apki video thi 😊❤️y na insafhii ho rahi he 😊😊
2. Mujhe Aj pata chala he ye ap thi @dananeerr

In the video featuring Ahmed Shah, audiences from both Pakistan and other countries praised his adorable appearance. Out of the 50 selected comments, 36 expressed admirations for Ahmed's physical appearance and sent love to him.

1. So very cute ahmed like him so nice Love you cute Ahm
2. So cute❤️❤️❤️😊😊😊😊
3. Beautiful boy❤️❤️❤️❤️
4. Very Cute
5. So cute❤️❤️❤️😊😊😊😊

Additionally, 10 comments fell into the humor category, where the audience playfully repeated Ahmed's catchy phrase and viral line in various styles.

1. mugri mugri nhi soooooo cute ahemd shah😊😊😊
2. Mugri nehi hai ye mugri nehi hai 😊😊
3. Pichhe dekho pichhe 😊😊😊😊so cute ahemad bachha I luv u

The post of Arshad Khan's photo differs slightly from the other discussed cases since it wasn't self-generated content, but rather a photo captured and posted by Jiyah Khan, the photographer. The comments in this case were found to appreciate both the person who took the photo (Jiyah Ali) and the person featured in the photo (Arshad Khan).

1. @jiah... you are good for outdoor clicks ..so dont waste your fun inside ... kool clicks. ...

2. At first, I really thought he is posing for any brand...
3. Yes, really model look

Based on the content analysis of the post, it was determined that this specific post, being a photo, did not have an entertainment value. However, despite the absence of entertainment value, the comments it received were predominantly admiration and humorous in nature. Out of the 50 comments analyzed, 28 were found to be humorous comments.

1. Eyes 😍 plus he is Chaye wala. Total my pkg
2. koi faida nii tmriii City and and degree 😂😂

Discussion

Ahmed Shah

Micro-celebrities like Ahmed Shah have transformed into macro-celebrities through their unexpected rise to fame. Ahmed Shah, also known as "Pathan ka Bacha," gained popularity in 2011 with a viral video where he innocently pointed out chickens to his uncle, capturing the hearts of viewers with his adorable appearance and unique pronunciation. This video quickly garnered widespread attention and was widely shared, propelling Ahmed Shah into the limelight (Qureshi & Qureshi, 2020).

Ahmed Shah's newfound fame opened doors for him in the entertainment industry. He became a frequent guest on mainstream media channels and participated in popular television shows and events. His catchy phrase "Piche Dekho Piche To Dekho" became a popular and household phrase, attracting a massive fan following. Due to his influence, Ahmed Shah was appointed as the Brand Ambassador for the Clean Green School Program (CGSP) by Water Aid and the Federal

Ministry of Climate Change (Ehsan, 2019). He appeared on renowned television shows such as Good Morning Pakistan and was a part of the ARY team in programs like Jeeto Pakistan and Ramzan Transmission (Alka, 2019; Qureshi & Qureshi, 2020).

Ahmed Shah's fame is extended beyond television as he entered into the advertising industry. He was featured in commercials for notable brands such as Iqbal Oil and Basmati TV (Kalyani & Pawan, 2020). The impact of his popularity was further highlighted when WB by Hemani launched a perfume inspired by his iconic line "Perfume Peeche Tu Dekho," investing on his widespread recognition and influence (Ahmad Shah Perfume Peechy Tu Dekho | Hemani Herbal - a Natural Lifestyle Solution, n.d.). Additionally, he was selected as the Brand Ambassador for 'Purelait,' a renowned Pakistani milk company (Tiwari & Tiwari, 2019). Ahmed Shah's journey exemplifies his talent and ability to engage audiences, stabilizing his position as a significant figure in Pakistani media and advertising (Qureshi & Qureshi, 2020).

Overall, the transition of micro-celebrities like Ahmed Shah into macro-celebrities showcases the power of unexpected viral fame and the opportunities for recognition and success in the entertainment and advertising industries.

Dananeer Mobeen

In the past, Dananeer Mobeen achieved a remarkable fame that drove her from being a micro-celebrity to a macro-celebrity. It all began in 2021 when her five-second video "Pawri Ho Rahi Hai" went viral overnight, appealing millions of viewers on social media platforms. She posted featuring herself and her friends that went viral overnight. In the clip, she humorously introduced her car and her group, exclaiming, "Yeh humaari car hai, aur yeh hum hain. Aur yeh humari pawri ho rahi hai" (This is our car, and this is us. And we are having a party). The unique pronunciation of "pawri" instead of "party" became a catchy element of the video,

contributing to its extensive appeal. This life-changing moment marked a turning point in her career (BBC News, 2021; Ghosh, 2021).

As her video gained momentum, Dananeer became a social media sensation, garnering immense attention and admiration. Her infectious catchphrase and the trend it sparked became a cultural phenomenon, with countless recreations and widespread engagement from fans across borders. Yashraj from India, renowned for his quirky and viral soundtracks, also created a mesh-up track titled 'Pawri Ho Rahi Hai' (Pant, 2021; Sudden Viral, 2023).

The viral success opened doors to new opportunities for Dananeer. She ventured into various fields, showcasing her versatility and talent (Manchanda, 2021). From featuring in advertisements to making television appearances, she left an indelible mark on the industry. Her stunning Instagram pictures and captivating content focused on beauty, fashion, and makeup caught the attention of her growing fan base (Pant, 2021).

Moreover, Dananeer's achievements extended beyond social media. She made her television debut in the esteemed ISPR series, Sinf-e-Aahan, portraying a female officer of the Pakistan Army (Global Village Space, 2021; Desk, 2022).

Dananeer's journey exemplified how micro-celebrities leveraged their viral moments to establish themselves as macro-celebrities. Through their engaging content, widespread recognition, and strategic career choices, micro-celebrities like Dananeer transcended their initial fame and achieved long-term success in the media industry.

Ayesha

The rise of micro-celebrities, individuals who gain fame and recognition through social media platforms, has transformed the dynamics of

celebrity culture and contributed to the emergence of macro-celebrities. Ayesha, initially an ordinary individual, became a micro-celebrity overnight due to the viral nature of her dance video. The power of social media allowed capturing the attention of millions, propelling her into the spotlight. This sudden burst of fame propelled Ayesha from being a micro-celebrity to a macro-celebrity, with a significant following and widespread recognition (Shumaila, 2023)

However, with the ascent to macro-celebrity status comes increased scrutiny and criticism. Ayesha's appearance on popular television show, Good Morning Pakistan and her viral dance video became the subject of debate. Critics questioned the value and authenticity of her talent, arguing that internet sensations like Ayesha over shadowed individuals with more substantial achievements. This criticism highlights the complex interplay between micro-celebrity and macro-celebrity status. While micro-celebrities can quickly gain fame through their online presence, they also face the challenge of sustaining their success and proving their worth amidst skepticism. The transition from micro to macro requires navigating the fine line between viral sensation and long-term recognition (Manzoor, 2022).

Arshad Khan

Arshad Khan's journey from an ordinary tea maker to a global sensation is filled with intriguing details that showcase his remarkable rise to fame. It all started in 2016 when a professional photographer, Jiah Ali captured his mesmerizing looks and shared a picture on Instagram, instantly captivating the internet with his blue eyes and chiseled features. The viral sensation spread not only within Pakistan but also across the border in India, making Arshad Khan a cross-border celebrity (Desk, 2020).

Arshad Khan also featured in a music video, where he embraced his 'Chaiwala' persona and also included it in a London-based magazine's list of the 50 most attractive people in Asia. But the story doesn't end there.

In 2020, Arshad Khan made a triumphant return by launching his own truck art themed café in Islamabad called 'Café Chaiwala Roof Top' (Desk, 2020).

Beyond running a successful café, Arshad Khan's entrepreneurial spirit shines through as he plans to expand his franchise internationally. With 10 outlets set to open in the United Kingdom, he is solidifying his status as an international brand (Admin, 2022). Despite his success, Arshad Khan remains grounded and has expressed his desire to contribute to society by focusing on youth education and skill development (Haq, 2018).

Arshad Khan's journey from a tea vendor to a global sensation, and now a budding entrepreneur, serves as an inspiring example of how an ordinary individual can transcend boundaries and achieve extraordinary success. His story resonates with people worldwide, symbolizing the power of viral fame and the potential for unexpected opportunities to arise from humble beginnings.

RQ1: How did Micro-celebrities become Macro-celebrities?

On social media platforms, users engage in a process of constructing their online images by carefully selecting and portraying aspects of themselves that are likely to gain approval from others. It also supporting the Goffman's (1959) "dramaturgical approach." of image management in front of society, applying the concept in the digital age. This enables users to create believable personalities that align with societal norms, promotion social interaction and connection in the online world. The journeys of Ahmed Shah, Dananeer, Ayesha, and Arshad Khan demonstrate how individuals can become macro-celebrities through the power of the internet. Their viral fame was not anticipated; it emerged from the moments captured in their videos. These micro-celebrities-turned-macro-celebrities exemplify the transformative influence of viral

fame and the potential for unexpected success in the digital age, where anyone can capture the world's attention and become a celebrity.

Through a content analysis of these viral posts and an examination of audience responses, researchers aimed to uncover the underlying reasons for their virality. This analysis shed light on the key ingredients that contributed to the success of these viral stories.

RQ2. Which elements can possibly make content viral on social media?

In the digital media era, talent or skill is not always a prerequisite for content to go viral. The content analysis of the four posts revealed that visually appealing content is the primary factor contributing to virality. Additionally, incorporating catchy phrases and a humorous element can further enhance the chances of content going viral. Combining the results of post types and elements of virality, it can be observed that entertaining posts that are visually appealing and have humor stand a good chance of becoming viral. This could be attributed to the stressful nature of life in the country, where people seek lighter and more uplifting content to relieve stress, rather than engaging with serious, sad, or tense content.

According to Ashfaq Ishaq Satti (Personal interview), popularity varies across different platforms, and people's attention spans are decreasing, possibly due to the complex situation in Pakistan, leading them to prefer light and non-serious content. This highlights the importance of understanding audience preferences and tailoring content accordingly to maximize its potential for virality in the digital landscape.

RQ3. How do social media sensations gain recognition in mainstream media?

Once the content goes viral, these personalities often find themselves appearing on mainstream media almost immediately. The question arises

whether they really need this exposure. The relationship between media and viral personalities is symbiotic – media requires compelling content, and these individuals need a platform to further their fame. A comparative analysis of Ashfaq Ishaq Satti's and Nida Yasir's interviews reveals that these viral stars become popular even before being invited to mainstream shows. The decision to invite them and the criteria for selection depend on the nature of the show.

Satti stated that he did not invite Dananeer or Ayesha on his show, nor does he intend to, as his program follows a different format. However, Nida Yasir, hosting an entertainment show, chose to invite them as it boosts the show's TRPs. Nida faced criticism for inviting Ayesha on her morning show, but she argued that the public themselves make these viral stars overnight and enjoy such content. However, when they are invited to shows, they face criticism, even though the ratings demonstrate that their presence increases viewership.

In essence, viral stars gain popularity independently through social media, and media platforms invite them to capitalize on their fame and attract more viewers. The mixed response they receive from the public and critics further highlights the complexities of this phenomenon in the digital age.

RQ4. Is the viral content always associated with the positive sentiments of the audience?

The comparative analysis of comments reveals that negative sentiments, although criticism, are still considered sentiments, and in the digital media realm, the focus is on views. Whether a person clicks a post out of curiosity, interest, or even with negative sentiments in mind, the algorithms merely observe the number of views, indifferent to the specific emotions.

The analysis indicates that, except for Ayesha's dance video, all other posts received only positive comments. Despite facing backlash and criticism, Ayesha's popularity soared, leading to opportunities like working with different brands on digital media, including Kashee's (Desk, 2022). However, this controversial fame can sometimes turn toxic, as micro-celebrities may resort to practices solely for attention, ultimately having negative consequences for their image.

According to Stojanova (2020), such behavior can be detrimental to the celebrity and is not beneficial to anyone involved.

RQ5. Does the fame obtained from a sudden viral content have a lasting presence?

The sudden viral posts undoubtedly gave these individuals a significant boost in their lives, even transforming the life of Arshad Khan and surpassing his wildest expectations. However, the question remains: will this fame endure in the long run? The analysis of the posts demonstrates that there is no element of unique talent or skill in these four instances, and the creators never anticipated their content to go viral to such an extent. This emphasizes the role of luck and algorithms in providing the initial opportunity.

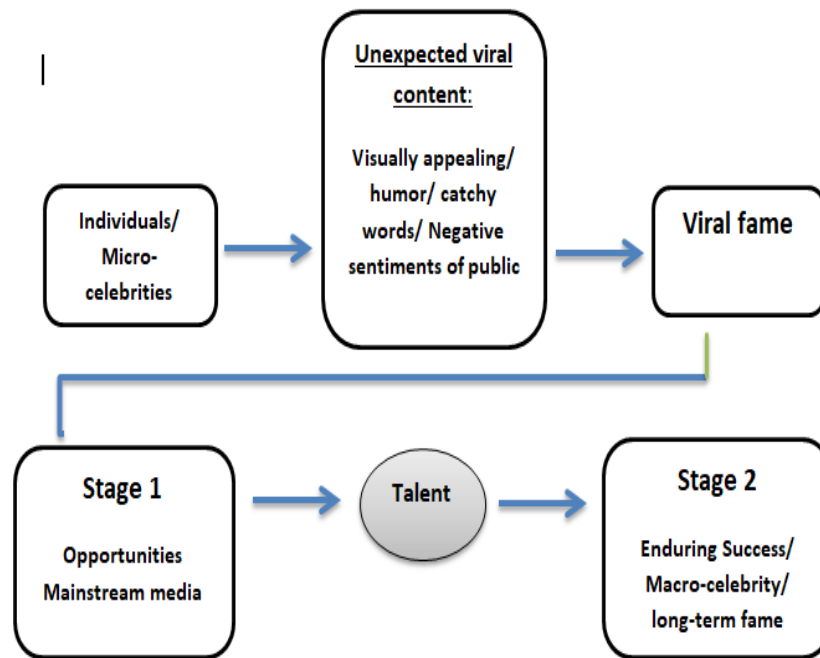
Comparison of their current projects:

After her success with "Sinf-e-Aahan," Dananeer has become a prominent figure in mainstream media and is now playing a leading role in Hum TV's drama serial "Muhabbat Gumshuda Meri" (Fatima, 2023). Similarly, Ahmed Shah is associated with the ARY and continues to be active in the mainstream media. On the other hand, Ayesha and Arshad Khan's life has been transformed but they are no longer a part of the media industry. Arshad Khan owning cafes but his initial assumption as a model didn't secure him a prominent position in the media industry. These instances emphasize the significance of talent and skills as crucial

factors in sustaining fame and progress in the competitive world of media and entertainment.

In the media industry, talent and skills hold utmost importance. Those who possess the required skills are more likely to continue their journey in the industry. In conclusion, while sudden viral fame could open doors, it is the talent and skills that play a crucial role in maintaining and succeeding in the competitive world of media and entertainment.

Figure 1: The Viral Fame Model (VFM)



In conclusion, this study proposes “The Viral Fame Model (VFM)” (Figure: 1). Based on the findings of this analysis, the VFM theorizes that in the digital media era, individuals can experience a transformative rise to fame through unexpected viral content. The process known as

celebrification, involves the transition of micro-celebrities to macro-celebrities, achieved by the power of viral posts. The key factors contributing to virality are visually appealing content, catchy phrases, and humor, which attract widespread attention and engagement from viewers. However, the model also reveals the presence of negative sentiments and criticism in the digital landscape, which still contributes in multiplying views and overall popularity. While viral fame opens doors to opportunities in mainstream media, long-term success is dependent upon genuine talent and skills. Moreover, the relationship between viral stars and media platforms is mutually beneficial as mainstream media invite these digital media celebrities to make profit from their fame and boost viewership. Ultimately, the theory highlights the transformative impact of viral content, emphasizing the need for a balance between sudden fame and genuine talent to sustain enduring success in the dynamic world of digital media.

Limitations

The limitations of this study include a focus on a specific set of digital media celebrities and their viral content which may not represent the broader aspects of micro-celebrities. Additionally, the analysis relied on publicly available data, which may not fully capture the underlying motivations and sentiments of the audience.

Additionally, researchers were unable to conduct interviews with the personalities under investigation due to limited time and resources. Primary data may reveal underlying relationships and various aspects of user-generated content, fame and enduring success.

Suggestions & Recommendations

Based on the findings and analysis, it is recommended for digital media celebrities to focus on creating visually appealing and emotionally engaging content to increase their chances of virality. Additionally,

balancing fame with genuine talent and skills will be crucial in gaining long-term success in the competitive world of media and entertainment.

Future research could delve into the psychological and sociocultural aspects of viral content's appeal. It could examine the long-term effects of fame on digital media celebrities' well-being and careers. Also by collecting primary data including interviews of respective individuals, the researchers can present different insights.

References

- Admin. (2022). Chai Wala Arshad Khan open Café Outlet in the United Kingdom. CHASKACLUB. <https://chaskaclub.com/chai-wala-arshad-khan-open-cafe-outlet-in-the-united-kingdom/>
- Ahmad Shah Perfume Peechy Tu Dekho | Hemani Herbal - A Natural Lifestyle Solution. (n.d.). <https://pk.hemaniherbals.com/ahmad-shah-perfume-peechy-tu-dekho>
- Alka, A. (2019, August 14). “Peechedekho, Peechetohdekho” - News | Khaleej Times. Khaleej Times. <https://www.khaleejtimes.com/article/peeche-dekho-peeche-toh-dekho>
- BBC News. (2021, February 19). “Pawri girl”: A five-second video brings India and Pakistan together. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-56107941>
- Berger, J., & Milkman, K. L. (2012). What Makes Online Content Viral? Journal of Marketing Research, 49(2), 192–205. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23142844>
- Blumler, J. G., & Katz. E. (1947). The Uses of Mass Communications: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research. Sage Annual

Reviews of Communication Research Volume
III. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED11920>

- Cha, M., Kwak, H., Rodriguez, P., Ahn, Y., & Moon, S. (2007). I tube, you tube, everybody tubes. Internet Measurement Conference. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1298306.1298309>
- Couldry, N. (2004) “Teaching Us to Fake It: The Ritualized Norms of Television’s ‘Reality’ Games”. In Murray, Susan and Ouellette, Laurie (eds.). Reality TV. Remaking Television Culture. New York & London: University Press
- Desk, W. (2020, October 5). After years off the radar, Arshad “Chaiwala” returns with his own cafe in Islamabad. Geo News. <https://www.geo.tv/latest/311646-after-years-famous-arshad-chaiwala-returns-to-social-media-with-modern-style-caf-in-islamabad>
- Desk, W. (2022). Dananeer Mobeen: Pawri girl reveals who taught her acting. ARY NEWS. <https://arynews.tv/pawri-girl-dananeer-mobeen-learnt-acting-from-her-mother/>
- Desk, W. (2022, December 13). Dancing sensation Ayesha’s new bridal photoshoot goes viral. Daily Pakistan Global. <https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/13-Dec-2022/dancing-sensation-ayesha-s-new-bridal-photoshoot-goes-viral>
- Ehsan, S. (2019). Peer Ahmed Shah appoints as Brand Ambassador of CGSP. Technology Times. <https://www.technologytimes.pk/2019/11/16/peer-ahmed-shah-appoints-as-brand-ambassador-of-cgsp/>
- Elliott, L. (2013). What makes a non-professional video go viral: a case study of “I’m farming and I grow it.” CORE.

https://core.ac.uk/display/10653648?utm_source=pdf&utm_medium=banner&utm_campaign=pdf-decoration-v1

Express TV. (2022, December 25). The Talk Talk Show with Hassan Choudary | Nida Yasir | 25th December 2022 | Express TV [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8SCLYiMqek>

Fatima, N. (2023, April 18). Dananeer Mobeen, Khushhal Khan to star in upcoming drama series. Daily Pakistan Global.

<https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/18-Apr-2023/dananeer-mobeen-khushhal-khan-to-star-in-upcoming-drama-series>

Gamson, J. (1994) Claims to Fame. Celebrity in Contemporary America. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press

Ghosh, R. (2021, February 16). Who is Dananeer Mobeen, the Pawri Ho Rahi Hai girl? India Today. <https://www.indiatoday.in/trending-news/story/who-is-dananeer-mobeen-the-pawri-ho-rahi-hai-girl-1769770-2021-02-16>

Global Village Space. (2021). "Pawri girl" to make her debut from ISPR's Sinf-e-Aahan series. Global Village Space. <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/pawri-girl-to-make-her-debut-from-isprs-sinf-e-aahan-series/>

Haq, B. (2018, July 21). Arshad Chai Wala Just Revealed His Biggest Regret In Life And It Is Absolutely Heart Breaking. MangoBaaz.

<https://www.mangobaaz.com/arshad-chai-wala-just-revealed-his-biggest-regret>

Kalyani, Pawan. (2020). "15 Seconds of Name, Fame & Success: TikTok the Study of TikTok and pre-launch status quo of Facebook's 'Lasso' in India." JMEIT, 7(11), 10.5281/zenodo.3693002.

- Kanchwala, M. (2016). 10 ordinary people who became social media celebrities overnight | Social Samosa. Social Samosa | Indian Social Media Knowledge Storehouse. <https://www.socialsamosa.com/2016/10/ordinary-people-social-media-celebrities/>
- Listman, K. 2021. "The Significance of a Viral Post on Social Media." Senior Honors Projects, Bridgewater College, 2021. https://digitalcommons.bridgewater.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1062&context=honors_projects
- Manchanda, J. (2021, February 16). Meet Dananeer Mobeen, The OG #Pawri Girl Who Won Our Hearts With Her Viral Video. India's Largest Digital Community of Women | POPxo. <https://www.popxo.com/article/dananeer-mobeen-pawri-meme-video-942636/>
- Manzoor, P. (2022, December 30). Nida Yasir responds to backlash for inviting viral dance girl Ayesha on her show. The Truth International. <https://thetruthinternational.com/entertainment/nida-yasir-responds-to-backlash-for-inviting-viral-dance-girl-ayesha-on-her-show/>
- Nouri, M. (2018.). The Power of Influence: Traditional Celebrity vs Social Media Influencer. Scholar Commons. https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/engl_176/32/?utm_source=scholarcommons.scu.edu%2Fengl_176%2F32&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages
- Pant, H. (2021, February 18). Meet the real "pawri" girl, Pakistan's Dananeer whose video is breaking the internet. Zoom TV. <https://www.zoomtventertainment.com/celebrity/article/meet->

the-real-pawri-girl-pakistans-dananeer-whose-video-is-breaking-the-internet/721816

PCMag. (2013). Definition of user-generated content. PCMAG. <http://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia/term/56171/user-generated-content>

Qureshi, Q. J., & Qureshi, Q. J. (2020, May 23). How much does Ahmed Shah approximately earn from Jeeto Pakistan? Siasat.pk News Blog. <https://blog.siasat.pk/ahmed-shah-earns/>

Sharabati, A. A., Al-Haddad, S., Al-Khasawneh, M. M. F., Nababteh, N., Mohammad, M. H., & Ghoush, Q. A. (2022). The Impact of TikTok User Satisfaction on Continuous Intention to Use the Application. *Journal of Open Innovation*, 8(3), 125. <https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc8030125>

Shumaila. (2023, January 5). Ayesha's TikTok viral dance video and Life Story. Andaaz E Shaheer. <https://andaaz-e-shaheer.com.pk/ayeshas-tiktok-viral-dance-video-and-life-story/>

Sridharan, M. (2023). Blumler And Katz Uses And Gratifications Theory. Think Insights. <https://thinkinsights.net/strategy/gratifications-theory/>

Stojanova, C. (2020). A Qualitative Analysis of Facebook Micro-Celebrity: The Case of Qandeel Baloch. <http://hdl.handle.net/10294/9221>

SuddenViral. (2023). Who is Pawri Ho Rahi Hai girl? Sudden Viral. <https://www.suddenviral.com/pawri-ho-rahi-hai-girl-dananeer-mobeen-age-bio/>

- Tanupabrunsun, S. (2018). Microcelebrity Practices: A Cross-Platform Study Through a Richness Framework. SURFACE at Syracuse University. <https://surface.syr.edu/etd/879>
- Tiwari, S., & Tiwari, S. (2019, May 14). Cute & PeecheDekho; Kid, Ahmed Shah Is Now the Brand Ambassador of a Pakistani Milk Company 'Purelait'! Latest. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.latestly.com/social-viral/cute-peeche-dekho-kid-ahmed-shah-is-now-the-brand-ambassador-of-a-pakistani-milk-company-purelait-check-adorable-pics-and-video-842121.html/amp>
- Turner, G. (2006). The mass production of celebrity. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 9(2), 153–165. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877906064028>
- West, T. (2011). Going Viral: Factors That Lead Videos to Become Internet Phenomena. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Going-Viral%3A-Factors-That-Lead-Videos-to-Become-West/06d0eadf85d43f546a25cd86a2a0ed4744a27163>
- Yeru, T. E. (2019). Celebrification of Instagram Users As a Practice. *KnE Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v3i20.4951>

Appendix:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RkWDiT8RaZgelUhlkHADrkIBG505BFWeqYg0oEYRDY/edit?usp=sharing>