

**RESEARCH PAPER**

Examining Social Media Thumbnails and Posts: A Critical Analysis of Kite String Incidents and Road Safety in Pakistan

¹Adnan Ali Anwar and ² Dr. Rabia Noor*

1. PhD Scholar, School of Creative Arts, The University of Lahore, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

2. Assistant Professor, School of Media and Mass Communication, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

Corresponding Author

rabia.noor@bnu.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

This study explores the semiotics and discourses surrounding kite flying accidents, focusing on the impact of YouTube thumbnails and AI-generated images on perceptions of safety and cultural significance. Kite flying poses hazards, particularly from kite strings in South Asia. Visual media often sensationalize these dangers, influencing public opinion and safety narratives. The study employs social-semiotic discourse analysis to examine various images and thumbnails, identifying key themes such as social responsibility, freedom, and danger. Findings indicate that sensationalized imagery and language can distort truth, leading to misinformation. This creates tension between the enjoyment of kite flying and safety concerns, highlighting media's role in shaping societal attitudes and regulatory demands. The study advocates for ethical media consumption that balances cultural heritage with safety, emphasizing the need for critical engagement with visual narratives to foster informed discussions and appropriate safety measures.

Keywords: Kite String Accidents, Kite Flying, Social Media, Youtube Thumbnails, Social-Semiotic Discourse Analysis

Introduction

Flying a kite is an ancient and variegated pastime with thousands of years, spanning several cultures, generally in the form of festivals, rituals, and civilizations (Desai, 2010). Kite flying commenced for amusement and recreational activities and as a lovely cultural practice to be cherished by everyone in the world irrespective of age (Nakade et al., 2020). Apart from its social use, kite flying is also used for economic purposes, demonstrating appreciation of art (Yi-ping, 2006). But as kite flying changed with the arrival of new materials like paper, plastic, and synthetic fibers, it started becoming dangerous, especially because of the strings used for flying. One incident brought this danger to the fore: Asif Shafiq, a Samanabad resident, received a fatal throat wound inflicted by a kite string while in the vicinity of the Novelty overhead bridge in Faisalabad. As per the Punjab police's spokesperson, their sustained drive against kite flying has seen 10,686 persons fined, while 82,694 metallic string reels and 464,000 kites were seized (Punjab Police, 2024). Nakade et al. (2020), in their "Kite-string injuries: A case series," wrote that kite flying in the vicinity of roads could result in accidents to vehicle drivers. They noted that individuals moving slowly tend to experience fewer superficial cuts, while faster-moving individuals, such as those on motorcycles, may suffer more severe, potentially life-threatening injuries if not treated promptly. The incident in Faisalabad was also distorted on social media, where it was played up to bring in pity and viewership (Muzaffar, et. al., 2019). Van Dijk (1995) described the concept of critical discourse analysis (CDA), explaining how the media can manipulate public opinion through biased language and framing. He argued that this manipulation often seeks to evoke emotional sympathy rather than maintain objectivity (Van Dijk, 1995).

Historically, the Basant festival has been associated with numerous fatalities, stemming from incidents involving kite captures, electrical hazards, and, more recently, kite

strings. AI-generated visual imagery often emphasizes certain issues and prompts specific actions through the use of color, dramatic angles, and lighting, intensifying the perception of these incidents. Social media platforms frame such events according to their targeted objectives, contrasting traditional celebrations with tragic occurrences. This presentation shapes audience narratives, steering viewers toward the creator's intentions rather than focusing on safety measures and the underlying causes. The content significantly influences people's emotions and self-esteem, highlighting the importance of recognizing how social media can sensitize individuals to incidents. Additionally, this research sheds light on road safety issues related to kite flying and the associated risks. It also examines various cultural aspects of the Basant celebration in Pakistan while emphasizing the need for safety precautions.

Literature Review

Pervez, (2020) stated historical and cultural perspective of kite flying in the world is used to please gods and avoid their anger with different shapes and colors. In Asia kite flying has seemed a favorite activity for all age categories. Sabir, et al (2014) stated that Kite Flying became a dangerous game due to the use of glass-coated Manjha string especially when it touches with skin converts into severe type injuries. Mahmoodie,, et al. (2012) stated that the neck region contains a very sensitive and unprotected organ of the body for all types of injuries. Research indicates that in areas where kite-flying is dominant, it often causes of high ratio of accidents. They recommended that it is necessary to measure the danger related to kite flying incidents and to overcome with effective strategies for reduction in severe injuries linked with these activities. (Singla, Marwah, & Kamal, 2009). Mahmood. et al (2011) concluded that the most victims of the kite string at the event of Basant were children and young people. They described that it is not only enhancing health burden but also creating a bad impact on society. Weber (2009) defined social media as an online forum where people gather to share their thoughts, opinions, and comments on issues with common interest. McLuhan's (1975) law of media defined that nowadays the rapid explosion of social media has a vast effect on every aspect of human society. Tani, (2010) Stated in his research that kite-flying incidents must be taken as the most important issues and treated effectively to stop accidents that could endanger people's lives. Kumar Swain, S(2022). Stated that kite string injuries are preventable due to raising awareness against the hazards of kite flying and counseling to families who play an important role in reducing the frequency of injuries. Zadeh et al., (2019) stated that the effectiveness of social media as a behavioral involvement platform has the potential for deep impact. Dwivedi, & Pandey, (2013) stated that regarding a certain issue, Media is a powerful tool and plays a vital role in the enhancement of public awareness, providing information, in collecting views and people's attitudes. Bakir & Mcstay (2018) stated the role of social media for emotional manipulation through engaging content which mostly consists of fake information in sensational tones. They said that it changes receiver perception and behavior due to altered fabricated content (Bakir & McStay, 2018). Tandoc et al. (2018) proposed that the use of sensational words, exaggerated language, and emotional appeals with misleading content leads to a tool of influence rather than information (Tandoc et al., 2018).

Theoretical Framework

Erving Goffman introduced framing theory in 1974, suggesting that individuals interpret and manage their social experiences regarding events and information based on specific frames. He indicated that these frames are mental structures that help people organize their experiences and form perceptions within the context of an event (D'Angelo, 2019). Researchers have posited that frames are deeply embedded in the brain's synapses (Lakoff, 2008). Framing indicates that news content is shaped by specific characteristics that offer insights into interpreting the text and the related news event, implying particular traits, evaluations, and choices (Lecheler et al., 2013). These characteristics include various

presentation elements, such as the inclusion (or exclusion) of specific keywords, phrases, stereotypes, images, news sources, metaphors, examples, and quotations (de Vreese, 2012).

Negative framing has been shown to be more effective than positive framing, especially when addressing complex issues that are unfamiliar and technically challenging, as opposed to "easy" topics that have become stable through years of familiarity and instinct (Lee and Chang, 2010). Theory indicates that social cognition is a product of iterative framing of events positively or negatively, and subsequent reframing (Ledgerwood & Boydstun, 2014). Extensive research has found that bad news is read more and lasts longer than good news (Boydstun et al., 2019; Ledgerwood & Boydstun, 2014; Wang et al., 2022). This means attitude changes are less strong when they switch from negative to positive framing than when they switch from positive to negative, so that reframing with a bias towards negativity has stronger effects (Boydstun et al., 2019).

The presentation of the kite string accident in Faisalabad on social media has had wide-ranging effects and remains a principal subject of discourse in society. The power of information to influence people's perception has contributed to legal bans against Basant's cultural celebration. Frames can backfire when they do not align with values in culture and prevailing beliefs (Chong and Druckman, 2007). The building of the kite string incident, with visual, textual, symbolic, and cultural elements, and thumbnail colors, constructs interpretations, sensationalism, and seriousness perceptions among viewers. While frames can provide intellectual structures to help citizens understand political contexts, they can also be responsible for "double lives," being embedded in elite discourse and political rhetoric (Callaghan and Schnell, 2005). As technology has improved, social media has dynamic impacts on its audience. When examining the audience response, the source, message, and delivery of a frame's credibility are essential (Callaghan and Schnell, 2009). Furthermore, an active and engaging counter-frame can have a significant dampening effect on a frame's influence (Callaghan and Schnell, 2005). An alternate view is that information shared via social media isn't necessarily validated by its readers (Del Vicario et al., 2016). False disinformation has been defined as information disseminated with purposeful intent (Karlova & Fisher, 2013; Wardle, 2017). In the early stages of an event, users' use of social media can cause misinformation to spread because of scarce knowledge (Simon et al., 2014). Fear appeals have been a tactic in persuasive communication for a long time, employing fear as an incentive to promote self-protective behavior (Lewis, Watson, Tay, & White, 2007; Rogers, 1983).

Material and Methods

This study utilizes qualitative case study design. Its aim is to investigate how social media represents the Faisalabad kite string accident, especially with respect to road safety implications. The key aim is to perform a discourse and semiotic analysis of a well-curated dataset. This dataset consists of three AI-generated images and six trending YouTube video thumbnails. These were selected due to their high public activity with view counts more than 100,000. This choice confirms that the data portrays recent public conversation and portrays varying perspectives and narratives about the incident.

The analysis is based on semiotic theory. It mainly uses Ferdinand de Saussure's most important signifier and signified concepts. This system is useful to analyze the relationship between visual representation and the meaning conveyed. Roland Barthes' theories of denotation and connotation are also essential. They describe the complex meanings of the images, specifically how they depict explicit and implicit messages about the risks involved in flying a kite.

In addition to semiotic analysis, the research will employ Michel Foucault's critical discourse analysis model. It analyzes the textual features related to these images. It allows

us to gain an in-depth knowledge of how language constructs the narrative of the kite string accident. It also determines public opinions and sentiments.

By close scrutiny of word choice and phrasing, as well as visual content, the study will illustrate how sympathy, concern, or anger for road safety is created. By using a combination of methodology, a comprehensive examination of how each of the news media presents the accident can be carried out. It also reviews the image of kite flying, the dangers included, and effects on road safety in Pakistan. Data collection involves close study of selected posts and thumbnails. It involves systematic coding of textual and visual content in an effort to point out prevailing themes and discourses. Coding is utilized in tracking fundamental patterns and sentiments that shape the course of the narrative. It aims to provide a comprehensive study of how visual representation influences public opinion regarding road safety. By combining discourse analysis and visual semiotics, the present study intends to give an in-depth, contextualized explanation of a pertinent social issue. It contributes to the safety versus regulation debate within communities and to the complexities of traditional practices.

Results and Discussion

This study unearths the semiotics and discourse of AI-created images in terms of the problem of kite flying. Through a study of various pictorial representations, it finds out how such images communicate intricate messages about safety, cultural significance, and social duties of kite flying.



Figure 1: First AI-generated Image on Kite string Faisalabad case



Figure 2: Second AI-generated Image on Kite string Faisalabad case



Figure 3: Third AI-generated Image on Kite string Faisalabad case

Denotation

Picture 1 features a poster with the words "Stop Kite Flying" prominently displayed in large, bold letters. Beneath this, in a smaller font, it reads "by: AALI JAH." There's an illustration of a child with a rope around their neck, accompanied by a kite soaring in the background. In Picture 2, an image shows a man riding a scooter, gazing at a kite floating in the sky. In the background, other individuals are riding motorcycles, with the phrase "Say No to Kite Flying" prominently featured across the image. Picture 3 depicts a young man on a motorcycle, wearing traditional attire (likely shalwar kameez, typical of Asian culture). People in the background, dressed in festive clothes, are flying colorful kites under a bright sky.

Connotation

The visuals propose the hazards linked to kite flying. In Picture 1, the metaphor of the child's neck being ensnared by a rope suggests suffocation and death, highlighting the dangers associated with kite strings. In Picture 2, the man's upward look conveys a sense of wonder or admiration for the kite, despite the cautionary message. The presence of motorcyclists may symbolize the chaos and risks tied to kite flying. Fig 3 suggests motorcycle riding as a routine means of transportation, with the white dress that is traditionally worn as a mark of cleanliness, cultural identity, and innocence. The crowd of onlookers indicates community participation or passive observation, as in social forces in tragic circumstances.

Discourse Analysis

These images portray kite flying as a dangerous activity that must be prohibited. They begin conversations regarding safety, accountability, and the conflict between individual enjoyment and what is better for society. The photographs cause individuals to reflect upon individual responsibility, emphasizing the conflict between individual enjoyment and the general good.

In Picture 1, a splash of red makes individuals consider blood. This color spoils the festive atmosphere and highlights the untold risks of kite flying during festivities. Numerous themes are derived from these pictures, such as risk and danger, freedom and responsibility, and societal responsibility. Picture 1 emphasizes danger and risk. Picture 2 examines the tension between enjoyment and responsibility. Picture 3 discusses the harmony between individual liberty and societal obligation. In Picture 1, "Stop Kite Flying" is bold and forceful, and it indicates the seriousness of it. In Picture 2, the words "Say No to Kite Flying" are not as forceful but still indicate a warning. How the words are positioned gives one a sense of urgency. In Picture 3, there are no words but only images. These images consider the cultural significance and social perceptions of kite flying in the regions they depict. Picture 1 looks at how culturally significant kite flying is but also discusses safety. Picture 2 takes into account traditions, personal freedom, and social responsibility. Picture 3 conveys the celebratory nature of kite flying, probably Basant, a well-known kite festival in South Asia. But the startling red splurge in Picture 1 shatters this holiday atmosphere, indicating the drawbacks of such celebrations.

In Picture 1, the kite symbolizes childhood innocence and freedom but also indicates the threat of the rope on a child's neck, producing tension. In Picture 2, the kite symbolizes ambition and freedom but also indicates the danger involved in flying a kite. The red splash in Picture 3 probably symbolizes blood and injury, underlining the risks for motorcyclists. The indifference of the crowd to this suggested tragedy indicates society's negligence regarding avoidable losses during celebrations. This illustrates the disparity between community happiness and the risk of individual injury when safety is disregarded. Combined, these photographs talk about safety awareness and social responsibility. They

emphasize the importance of balancing enjoyment and responsible action. These images are powerful calls to action against kite-flying accidents and advocate for safety. They encourage individuals to consider safety and social obligation in addition to the enjoyment and cultural significance of kite flying. Ultimately, the message overall is a firm reminder of the importance of responsibility and awareness when celebrating cultures. It compares the happiness of traditions to the sorrowful consequences of irresponsibility, and this makes viewers think about how their actions impact themselves and others.

Analysis of Social-Semiotic Discourse in YouTube Thumbnails about Kite String Incidents



Figure 4: Religious video thumbnail on YouTube on kite string incident

Main title: Incident of a kite string around the neck

Sub title: Faisalabad Kite Door Accident - Patang Bazi Hadsa - Qasim Ali Shah with Naeem Butt

In national language, text on the thumbnail is in Urdu that is *Galy pay dor phirny ka waqia*

Agar ap ki zat se kesi ko nuqsan ponchy to ap badqismat ha

(Translation: The incident of a kite string cutting someone's throat. If someone gets harmed because of you, you are unfortunate.)

The text employs an emotional tone paired with moral or religious elements to prompt reflection on personal accountability. The red text highlights a sense of urgency or peril, illustrating the seriousness of the event. The use of bold and large fonts ensures that the important message remains prominent, effectively grabbing the viewer's attention. The image features two central figures: on the left, one appears to be a religious scholar, signified by traditional clothing (a white garment and headgear) and facial hair. The individual on the right is attired in formal Western-style clothing, suggesting a professional role, possibly as a speaker or host. These characters are likely representations of authority figures in both religious and inspirational contexts, aiming to foster audience trust in spiritual guidance. The background is kept simple and light-colored, probably chosen to maintain focus on the individuals and the text. The color white symbolizes purity, tranquility, and seriousness, which aligns with the moral tone of the message. In contrast, red conveys urgency and risk, emphasizing the seriousness of the kite string incident. Both figures stand tall, looking towards the camera with composed expressions, exuding authority, confidence, and dependability. The religious scholar's garb reflects cultural and religious authenticity, while the suited figure denotes professionalism. The presence of a religious figure in the thumbnail implies that the video addresses the matter within moral or ethical dimensions, stressing accountability from an Islamic perspective. The visual portrayal of two authoritative figures adds credibility to the message, appealing to both moral and rational thought. The medium "Deen Aasan" indicates a focus on religious and inspirational themes.

The thumbnail reinforces the concept of taking responsibility for actions that could harm others, utilizing spiritual and social frameworks to evoke an emotional response. The specific reference to kite strings (a community concern) lends cultural relevance to the message. The interplay of bold colors, authoritative figures, and an emotionally charged message within the thumbnail effectively captures attention. The moral and religious context encourages viewers to reflect on their conduct and consider taking responsibility to prevent harm. Although not explicitly stated, the imagery and text suggest a necessity for behavioral changes, particularly related to activities like kite flying.



Figure 5: UrduPoint video thumbnail on YouTube on kite string incident

Main headline

Yeah patang ki dor nahi thi
(Translation: This was not a kite string.)

Sub headline

*Chand seconds me nojwan Allah ko payara ho gaya
Faisalabad me nojawan ko jahanbahaq hoty dekhny waly log*

Translation: ("A young man tragically passed away due to steel wire. See how people in Faisalabad tried to save him.")

Typography

The phrase "This was not a kite string" aims to grab attention and challenge an earlier explanation regarding the incident. The thumbnail features a contrast of white and yellow text set against a black background to engage viewers. The use of bold font highlights the urgency and importance, making the headline stand out. On the left side, an image shows a young man dressed in formal attire (likely representing the victim or a significant figure). In the bottom right corner, a small circular inset presents a blurred image of the incident scene (such as a motorbike or wire), adding visual appeal and implying evidence. The dark background combined with vivid text directs the viewer's attention to the central message, enhancing the emotional weight of the narrative. Yellow suggests urgency and serves as a warning or attention grabber, while red indicates danger, tragedy, or loss, thereby reinforcing the emotional tone of the story. The use of black contributes to a somber mood, fitting for the theme of loss and tragedy. The young man appears calm and serious, representing either the victim or someone related to the tragedy. His formal clothing adds credibility or relatability to the depiction. Including a small image of the alleged incident (highlighted in red) creates the impression of "evidence" or visual confirmation, potentially enhancing the authenticity of the narrative.

Social, cultural and religious perspective

From a sociocultural perspective, the topic relates to accidents involving kite strings, especially the sharp strings used in kite-flying events in Pakistan. Such unfortunate events

are emotionally impactful and often receive extensive media attention. Spiritually, Allah ko payra ho gaya (became dear to God) is a euphemism for death in Urdu, commonly used to frame bereavement within a spiritual or emotional context. This expression evokes compassion and places the tragedy within particular cultural and religious considerations. The headline challenges the usual belief that a kite string was responsible for the death, instead attributing it to "steel wire," which introduces a level of contradiction, prompting viewers to "uncover the truth." Discourse themes emphasize the tragic loss of life, appealing to the audience's emotions and creating a moral narrative around preventable incidents. Dismissing the kite string explanation (a commonly accepted cause) and blaming the death on "steel wire" introduces a more investigative or sensationalist viewpoint. Regarding misinformation, this thumbnail might demonstrate a case of narrative manipulation, as indicated by the headline "This was not a kite string," which goes against earlier reports without clearly presenting evidence at first. The audience can believe this assertion without fully examining the proof presented in the video. In case the new assertion has no verification or overwhelming support, it might result in misinterpretation or disinformation. Phrases like "tragically passed away" and photographs of the victim give a human face to the incident and provoke strong feelings. Emotional appeal has the power to overshadow rational examination, and the result is a distorted view of the scenario. The sensational tone of the headline, combined with the cryptic evidence in the inset photo, creates a sense of "breaking news" or a major breakthrough. Such hyperbolic framing has the potential to fuel rumors or unsubstantiated assertions, particularly on matters of public safety or community affairs. The small, unclear inset image implying the supposed wire or scene does not offer conclusive proof. Poor-quality or indistinct visuals can be misinterpreted or intentionally manipulated to support a particular narrative. Conflicting statements that lack dependable evidence can erode trust in media reporting, making it harder to grasp the actual cause of the event. Misinformation about the cause (kite string versus steel wire) might impact cultural practices like kite flying, causing unwarranted fear or resulting in regulatory reactions. If the argument regarding steel wire is unfounded, it may distract from addressing the real underlying issue (such as dangerous kite strings). Essential questions arise for evaluating the accuracy of the claims in this thumbnail: Is the reporting organization (UrduPoint) known for its reliable journalism, or does it favor sensational coverage.



Figure 6: A news channel video thumbnail on YouTube on kite string incident

Textual Elements

The text is in Urdu, addressing the audience in Pakistan.

Meri ankho k samnay dor se gardin cut gai

(Translation: "The string slit the throat right in front of my eyes.")

Roazy ki halat me meri ankho k samnay tarpta raha

(Translation: "While fasting, I witnessed him writhing in pain.")

Typography

The language employed is profoundly emotional, conveying disbelief and a sense of helplessness, aiming to evoke empathy from the audience. The use of red text emphasizes

the themes of tragedy and urgency, capturing immediate attention. In the image, a contrasting background ensures readability while accentuating the story's dramatic aspects. The background is divided into vibrant sections of red, blue, and yellow, creating a striking and segmented layout. Each colored section highlights different aspects of the narrative, such as shock, personal narratives, and the aftermath of the event. Red indicates danger and misfortune, while blue and yellow temper the emotional intensity, providing urgency and clarity. Numerous faces are visible, including a man who seems to be either a victim or a witness, depicted in a state of distress. An interviewer, holding a microphone, implies that this is a scene of on-the-ground reporting or personal testimony. Images of individuals connected to the incident (victim, bystanders) foster emotional engagement, framing the tragedy in a personal and relatable context. Two small circular images present what appears to be graphic evidence from the accident site, adding a layer of "visual proof" to capture attention. The visuals of distressed individuals (likely witnesses) amplify the emotional weight of the situation. The presence of the reporter conveys a sense of urgency, as though the events are unfolding in real-time or have been carefully documented.

Social, Religious, and Cultural Context

The reference to kite strings pertains to the culturally significant yet controversial custom of kite flying in Pakistan, often associated with accidents caused by dangerous materials like sharp strings. The mention of (fasting during Ramadan) introduces a spiritual and cultural dimension, which heightens the emotional impact. The context of Ramadan intensifies the tragedy during a holy period, deepening the narrative's connection. The thumbnail highlights individual and direct experiences to bolster credibility and emotional impact. It draws attention to the horrific and tragic elements of the event, focusing on the suffering of the victim. The visual and written emphasis on "kite strings" subtly highlights issues related to public safety. The thumbnail severely depends on emotional language and graphic imagery, like circular visuals, to provoke a reaction. Sensationalized reporting may prioritize emotional engagement over factual accuracy, potentially distorting the true sequence of events. The use of ambiguous visuals can deceive viewers into accepting overstated claims. The text references an eyewitness account, but no clear details are provided about the event's time or location of evidence. Misdirection can hinder meaningful discussions on preventing similar events in the future. Graphic and emotionally charged storytelling can heighten fear, especially during important cultural periods like Ramadan. Sensationalized narratives may result in calls to completely prohibit kite flying, ignoring the potential for safer practices and regulations. If the assertions or visuals are subsequently disproven, it could damage the credibility of the reporting platform (Hamara Pakistan) and decrease public confidence. Are the eyewitness accounts verified by other sources (such as CCTV footage or police documentation)? Is the dramatic narrative crafted to educate the public or to generate views and engagement? Does the thumbnail foster constructive awareness or contribute to fear and misinformation? This thumbnail employs powerful emotional and visual techniques to engage viewers but risks spreading misinformation through sensationalism, vague visuals, and a lack of verifiable evidence. Thorough fact-checking and unbiased reporting are essential to maintain accuracy and public trust.



Figure 7: Another channel's video thumbnail on YouTube on the kite string incident

Multimodal Analysis

Textual Elements

The text is written in Urdu and includes dramatic phrases like:

Patang ki dor se aik aur moot ho gai

(Translation: "Another death caused by a kite string.")

Bachy na dekhy gardin alag ho gai

(Translation: "Caution: Children should not watch, Beheaded visuals.")

The language is intentionally emotive, aimed at heightening the gravity of the incident and engaging the audience emotionally.

Red text: Conveys urgency, danger, and tragedy.

Yellow text on a black background: Highlights emotional consequences, such as the orphaning of children, ensuring it grabs attention.

Visual Elements

An intense close-up of a serious neck injury grabs attention, stirring feelings of shock and horror. The depiction of a young man, with an arrow directed toward him, suggests he is either a casualty or closely associated with the event. A small vignette in the background shows a person on the ground, possibly serving as "evidence" of what happened. Having both the hurt person and the seeming victim adds a personal touch to the tragedy, inviting viewers to relate to the victims. Red symbolizes danger, blood, and urgency, while black is used to create a tragic and mournful atmosphere, highlighting themes of death and loss. The visual representation of the injury serves as the central point, clearly showing the severity of the incident without words. The serene look on the young man's face starkly contrasts with the tragedy, perhaps representing a life that has been lost.

Social and Cultural Context

This incident is connected to the contentious kite-flying tradition in South Asia, wherein hazardous kite strings (*manjha*) have been associated with accidents. Such incidents tend to trigger public discourses regarding whether kite flying should be banned altogether because of its risks.

In the case of thumbnails, the text sensationalizes the story by suggesting that children ought not to view the video. Sensationalized presentation is meant to attract attention and boost viewership. By dramatizing the possible risks, thumbnails appeal to the emotions of viewers, challenging them to face the brutal realities involved in kite flying and its implications, thus heightening the sense of urgency of the debate on safety and regulation. The thumbnail depicts the event as a tragic loss to society, using words such as "*Aik aur moat*" ("another death").

The visual imagery of the damage is intentionally gratuitous, meant to elicit a visceral, instant emotional response. Sensationalism can weaken factual content by emphasizing outrage more than contextually understanding the narrative (Waisbord, 2018). Emotional appeal can sway an audience, with Ahmed et al. (2021) having established that emotions can make individuals more vulnerable to misinformation. While the thumbnail illustrates a graphic injury with a victim, it doesn't specify exactly how the victim

was injured. Confirmation with official reports or eyewitness accounts. This lack of clarity allows for speculation, a common tactic in misinformation (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). The graphic depiction of the neck injury may be presented out of context or amplified to increase viewership. Visual disinformation can mislead audiences into arriving at incorrect conclusions (Mejias & Vokuev, 2017).



Figure 8: Figure 7: Another channel's video thumbnail on YouTube on the kite string incident

Textual Elements

Patang ki dor lagney ki makamal video samany aa gai
(Translation: "Complete video of the kite string incident has surfaced.")

This phrase builds curiosity and suggests conclusive evidence regarding the incident, implying authenticity and finality.

Typography

The black text on a yellow background is designed to attract attention while ensuring readability. Yellow typically conveys urgency and significance. The phrase "CCTV Video Full" is presented in red and white text, where the inclusion of "CCTV" lends credibility, whereas "Full Video" suggests exclusivity.

Visual Elements

The graphic displays two CCTV images side by side, capturing a person who has fallen or is lying on the street. A red arrow directs attention to a particular subject, highlighting where viewers should concentrate. This choice creates a narrative suggesting that evidence is being presented. In the bottom-left corner of the image is a man who is presumed to be a victim, witness, or someone involved? His serious demeanor matches the severity of the situation. The use of red for "CCTV" and the arrow conveys themes of danger, blood, or urgency, reinforcing the tragedy depicted.

The focus on "Complete CCTV Video" positions the event as definitive and indisputable, framing it as a factual account of what transpired. The incorporation of surveillance footage and personal visuals fosters an emotional connection for viewers, increasing their trust in the video's authenticity. Although the thumbnail asserts it shows "CCTV footage," it remains unclear whether the footage directly pertains to the incident. It is possible that the footage has been modified, misrepresented, or taken out of context. This strategy aligns with the visual disinformation tactics discussed by Wardle & Derakhshan (2017), where selective images are utilized to mislead the audience. The use of striking visuals, like the red arrow and repeated clips of the same footage, is a common technique to amplify significance. Waisbord (2018) points out that sensationalism often diverts attention from factual correctness, prioritizing emotional resonance over reality. According to Mejias & Vokuev (2017), exhibiting unverifiable information as credible proof is a hallmark of visual misinformation. The portrayal of the individual (likely the victim) paired with the

claim of "full evidence" creates a highly personal and tragic story. Emotional manipulation can obscure logical reasoning, leading audiences to be less discerning regarding the claimed "facts" (Ahmed et al., 2021). By emphasizing tragic results (such as injuries and fatalities), the thumbnail provokes moral panic, a strategy commonly exploited by disinformation campaigns to sway public opinion (Cohen, 1972).



Figure 9: Another channel video thumbnail on YouTube on the kite string incident

Headline Text

Ghusal dety waqat kiya dekha

(Translation: "What was seen while giving the final bath? Watch this video with a strong heart.")

This creates suspense and invokes emotional curiosity while signaling a deeply tragic or shocking revelation.

Supporting Text

Patang ki dor se nojawan ki...

(Translation: "A young man [affected] by a kite string...")

The incomplete sentence leads to an open-ended thought, leaving viewers eager to watch the video for details.

Typography and visual perspective red and yellow hues are frequently utilized to denote urgency, peril, or tragedy. Striking fonts emphasize the seriousness of the topic and draw immediate attention. A man depicted in the thumbnail appears emotional or potentially weeping as he prepares a body for the final rites (ghusl). This portrayal invokes feelings of grief and solemnity, establishing the tone for the video's subject matter. The prominent image of a young man with a somber expression symbolizes the victim. The smaller picture on the right contributes a personal element to the story, likely linking the victim to the audience on a human level. The prevailing red backdrop conveys urgency and tragedy, commonly associated with negative or distressing news.

The visuals and the corresponding text aim to tell a profoundly personal and emotional narrative, concentrating on the heartbreaking aftermath of the event. The headline, which highlights the funeral ritual, invites viewers into a moment filled with vulnerability and sorrow. The reference to "ghusl" (Islamic funeral washing) connects the incident to religious and cultural traditions, amplifying its emotional impact for audiences in predominantly Muslim communities. The focus on the young man's portrait alongside the funeral imagery underscores the intimate loss, depicting the victim as someone viewers can

connect with. This approach promotes a change in public discourse towards empathy for the victim and outrage regarding preventable tragedies.

The writing and images seek to enhance emotional engagement by highlighting the victim's tragic demise. Sensationalized reporting can divert attention from factual accuracy. Wardle & Derakhshan (2017) assert that emotionally engaging narratives tend to serve as a type of disinformation to provoke outrage or sadness, which lowers critical examination. The picture does not provide information about the accident with the kite cord or how the funeral is connected to the larger framework. This lack of specificity leads to speculation and misinterpretation, as indicated by Jowett & O'Donnell (2018). Reference to "ghusl" ties the tragedy with Islamic doctrine and therefore appeals emotionally to religious sentiment. Such a presentation may lead audiences to believe the tale unquestioningly because of its cultural and religious backdrop. The piece insidiously links kite flying (patang bazi) as the direct cause without invoking overall reasons like dangerous practices, absence of regulations, or institutional negligence. This reductionism follows Waisbord's (2018) view on the way disinformation employs individual stories to distract attention from more weighty systemic issues. The thumbnail employs emotive images and words that do not supply credible evidence or backstory to support its assertions. According to Mejias & Vokuev (2017), this absence of evidence makes the narrative suspect and challenges beliefs. The emphasis on funeral traditions appeals to the cultural and religious feelings of the audience, making the narrative more engaging and profound. This technique also carries the risk of manipulation of deeply held beliefs for the sake of sensationalism. By calling attention to the victim's demise, the thumbnail reiterates public indignation against kite flying, possibly fueling demands for harsh bans without addressing underlying factors like weak enforcement of safety measures.

Conclusion

The discourse and semiotics on which AI photographs of the problem of kite flying are founded are brought to the surface with this research. It brings to light the ways in which different forms of representation in photographs convey in-depth messages concerning the social duties, cultural significance, and safety of kite flying. The explicit messages that visual images communicate through explicit imagery are known through this research by identifying it. Instantaneously, Picture 1's stern appeal, "Stop kite flying," and its accompanying image of a child in jeopardy warn the viewer of the riskiness of kite flying. Similarly, Picture 2 presents an image of wonder over the potential melee, and Picture 3 focuses on the celebratory but risky nature of kite flying. These images evoke the dangers of kite flying, focusing on the emotional effect of the images. The repetition of the image in Picture 1 of a child's neck wrapped around a rope sets up the situation of life-threatening danger and evokes an environment of urgency. Therefore, the references to these images only serve to increase the argument for individual conscience over public enjoyment. The graphic images put kite flying in the category of hazardous games under scrutiny and potentially prohibited. The ominous in the photographs creates a context for discourse regarding responsibility and safety, constituting the tension between the person's enjoyment and the welfare of the community. Safety, freedom, and responsibility to others are some of the concerns that cross over the photographs and invite the viewer to question the consequences of their actions.

The thumbnails examined offer another aspect of the kite string incident narrative through sensationalized and emotive narratives in an attempt to engage the viewers. Each thumbnail uses certain textual and visual tactics to engage viewers on an emotional level ranging from religious undertones in the initial thumbnail to the graphic and unvarnished quality of later images. The sensationalized images and headlines employed in the media heighten the emotional perception of urgency surrounding kite string accidents. Sensationalism takes away from fact, though, leaving open the possibility of disinformation. The thumbnails demonstrate how visual media can overtake narratives and shape public

opinion, consistent with theoretical explanations of media representation and audience reception.

Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This research adds to theoretical knowledge in the field of visual semiotics and discourse analysis by demonstrating how AI-created images and YouTube thumbnails could influence public discourses around cultural practices such as kite flying. It underscores how important it is to critically assess visual media against societal issues, particularly those related to accountability and safety.

In reality, the findings emphasize the importance of judicious media coverage, prompting producers to consider the implications of sensationalized news. The report is asking for an equitable debate that prioritizes safety while still respecting local traditions by increasing awareness of the potential consequences of kite flying and the associated risks.

Thus a richer insight into the influence of the media on public consciousness and reaction can be obtained through the interactive combination of visual symbolism, emotive resonance, and societal debate surrounding kite flying mishaps. The actors can proceed with improved safety measures and legislation that balances maintaining cultural heritage with risk reduction through enabling critical analysis of these accounts.

Recommendations

To address the issues identified in the research, it is important to implement public awareness campaigns that educate people about the dangers of kite flying and promote safe practices. Establishing regulations to limit kite flying in high-traffic areas can enhance safety, while involving local communities in discussions will help balance cultural significance with responsibility. Media outlets should be encouraged to portray kite flying in a way that highlights both its traditions and associated risks. Additionally, training for emergency services to effectively respond to kite-related accidents is essential for ensuring swift assistance when needed. Social media platforms should enforce guidelines to reduce sensationalism in posts about kite flying incidents, promoting responsible content that prioritizes safety over shock value.

References

- Ahmed, S. (2021). Fooled by the fakes: Cognitive differences in perceived claim accuracy and sharing intention of non-political deepfakes. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 182, 111074.
- Bandyopadhyay, S., & Singh, K. (2023). Successful aging in the Indian socio-cultural milieu. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*, 38(2), 191-220.
- Bhatti, M. R. (2024). Kite flying: Potential threat to human life [Opinion]. *Pakistan Today*.
- Biswas, S. (2016). Why flying kites in India can be deadly. *BBC News*.
- Borkar, J. L., Tumram, N. K., Ambade, V. N., & Dixit, P. G. (2015). Fatal wounds by "manja" to a motorbike rider in motion. *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 60(4), 1085-1087.
- Bouzida, F. (2014). The semiology analysis in media studies: Roland Barthes Approach. In *Proceedings of SOCIOINT14-International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities* (Vol. 8, No. 10, pp. 1001-1007).
- Callaghan, K., & Schnell, F. (2005). *Framing American Politics*: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Chang, C. T., & Lee, Y. K. (2010). Effects of message framing, vividness congruency and statistical framing on responses to charity advertising. *International Journal of Advertising*, 29(2), 195-220.
- Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2010). Dynamic public opinion: Communication effects over time. *American Political Science Review*, 663-680.
- D'Angelo, P. (2019). Framing theory and journalism. *The international encyclopedia of journalism studies*, 2002, 1-10.
- Desai, N. (2010). *A different freedom: Kite flying in Western India; culture and tradition*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Donovan, R. J., & Henley, N. (1997). Negative outcomes, threats, and threat appeals: Widening the conceptual framework for the study of fear and other emotions in social marketing communications. *Social Marketing Quarterly*, 4(1), 56-67.
- Dwivedi, P. K., & Pandey, I. (2013). Role of media in social awareness. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, 1(1), 67-70.
- Graham, L. J. (2005). Discourse analysis and the critical use of Foucault. In *the Australian Association of Research in Education annual conference*.
- Gupta, P., Jain, A., Patil, A. N., Thakor, R., & Kumar, S. (2018). Kite string injury: a thin line between harmless sport and grievous injury. *Int J Community Med Public Health*, 5, 1-4.
- Haigh, M., Haigh, T., & Kozak, N. I. (2018). Stopping fake news: The work practices of peer-to-peer counter propaganda. *Journalism Studies*, 19(14), 2062-2087.
- Injury. *Annals of Indian Academy of Otorhinolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery*, 6(2), 31-34.
- Kaye, S. A., White, M. J., & Lewis, I. M. (2013). Individual differences in drivers' cognitive processing of road safety messages. *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, 50, 272-281.

- Krampen, M. (1987). Ferdinand de Saussure and the Development of Semiology. In *Classics of Semiotics* (pp. 59-88). Boston, MA: Springer US.
- Kumar Swain, S. (2022). Fatal cut-throat injury of the neck by kite string. *Archives of Trauma Research*, 11(3), 161-163.
- Lakoff, G. (2008). *The political mind: why you can't understand 21st-century politics with an 18th-century brain*: Penguin.
- Maci, S., Demata, M., McGlashan, M., & Seargeant, P. (Eds.). (2024). *The Routledge handbook of discourse and disinformation*. Routledge.
- Mahmood, S., Abbas, N., Maqbool, N., & Nadeem, I. B. (1970). Kite related injuries during Basant season. *Rawal Medical Journal*, 36(3), 218-218.
- Mahmoodie, M., Sanei, B., Moazeni-Bistgani, M., & Namgar, M. (2012). Penetrating neck trauma: review of 192 cases. *Archives of trauma research*, 1(1), 14.
- Muzaffar, M., Chohdhry, S., & Afzal, N. (2019). Social Media and Political Awareness in Pakistan: A Case Study of Youth, *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 3 (II), 1-13
- Parvez, A. (2020). Kites, Kite Flying and Kite Fighting in Punjab: Culture, Tradition and Basant. *South Asian Studies*, 33(1).
- Sabir, R. I., Ijaz, H., Akhtar, N., Zakir, U., & Yaseen, S. (2014). Kite Flying: A Unique But Dangerous Mode of Injuries In Pakistan. *International Review of Social Sciences*. 2 (10). 457-463.
- Shafi, M. M. (2024). Say no to flying kites! *The News International*. Magazine section, pp. 1170673. Retrieved December 28, 2024, from <https://www.thenews.com.pk/magazine/us/1170673-say-no-to-flying-kites>
- Swain, S. K. (2022). Kite string injury to the head-and-neck region: A review. *Annals of Indian Academy of Otorhinolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery*, 6(1), 1-5.
- Tani, K. (2010). *Under-reporting in aviation: an investigation of factors that affect reporting of safety concerns: a thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy in Aviation at Massey University, Manawatu, New Zealand* (Doctoral dissertation, Massey University).
- Tank, N. D., Palkhade, R., Dhatrak, S. V., & Chavhan, S. P. (2022). Spectrum and Possible Appropriate Technology for Specific Protection against Cutthroat Kite String "Manja"
- Tank, N. D., Palkhade, R., Dhatrak, S. V., & Chavhan, S. P. (2022). Spectrum and Possible Appropriate Technology for Specific Protection against Cutthroat Kite String "Manja" Injury. *Annals of Indian Academy of Otorhinolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery*, 6(2), 31-34.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1999). Context models in discourse processing. *The construction of mental representations during reading*, 123-148.
- Weber, L. (2009). *Marketing to the social web: How digital customer communities build your business*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Ye, X., Zhao, B., Nguyen, T. H., & Wang, S. (2020). Social media and social awareness. *Manual of digital earth*, 425-440.