

SHORT-FORM VIDEO PLATFORMS AND THEIR IMPACT ON NEWS CONSUMPTION & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: A REVIEW

Rida Ramzan^{*1}, Dr. Shazia Hashmat²

^{*1}PhD Scholar, Department of Communication and Media Studies, FJWU, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan

²Assistant Professor, Department of Communication and Media Studies, FJWU, Rawalpindi, Punjab, Pakistan.

¹ridaroy744@gmail.com, ²shazia.hashmat@fjwu.edu.pk

¹<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-9819-4989>, ²<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-3384-670X>

Corresponding Author: *

Rida Ramzan

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18630606>

Received 14 December 2025	Accepted 29 January 2026	Published 13 February 2026
------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------

ABSTRACT

The research paper examines changes in news consumption, literacy, and civic engagement resulting from short-form video platforms. Through a systematic review of the latest literature, the study finds evidence on the platform's affordances, curation, formats, and behaviour. It points out the possibilities and threats that are apparent on the platform. The discussion indicates a greater accessibility of the young generation due to incidental views, the visual narrative, and interactivity on the platform, and also indicates the depth and level of evaluation the platform brings, thus resulting in a false perception of the platform and media. This, in turn, enhances polarization and filtering of the media, particularly as the audience and reliance of people on the platform increase. These dynamics bring into question the issue of democratic equality and equity on the platform and in the media, as would be deduced in the literature. Significant knowledge gaps are identified, including longitudinal evidence, cross-platform and cross-cultural comparisons, and a lack of evaluation of intervention effectiveness. Overall, the findings emphasize how crucial it is to have coordinated, evidence-based strategies that ensure short-form video platforms facilitate rather than undermine informed civic participation and democratic discourse.

Keywords: Short-Form Content, News Consumption, Civic Engagement, Video Platforms, PRISMA

Introduction

Short video platforms have altered the manner in which people view, interpret, and discuss news. Apps like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts have shifted the communication process, which was initially text-based, to the short, visual-form of communication that combines entertainment and self-expression with news (Malik et al., 2025a). These platforms have become significant gateways to matters of societal concerns, social debate, and international

relations in the minds of millions of users, especially the youth who use them. The shift in the roles poses tremendous questions about the nature of news in the world, where news has been exposed to fifteen-second-long videos, algorithm-edited stories, and social commentary (Vasist et al., 2024).

Analysis of these platforms and studies of communication, political science, sociology, and digital media studies has been developed recently. Some of the problems that researchers have

examined include algorithmic exposure to news, creator-based streams of information, the threat of misinformation, participatory culture, and the mobilization of young people in order to voice their political views with the use of short videos (Castelló et al., 2025). However, the findings are still rather fragmented, and no generalized cognition of the impact of short-form videos on the news consumption patterns and civic participation outcomes can be made. As a result, no obvious implications are given in terms of the overall issues of public knowledge, democracy, and media literacy (Ruzzante et al., 2026).

The packaging of all kinds of complex information in the form of short, engaging, emotional, and interactive videos, together with the nature of the algorithm (Nasir, 2025), makes the user's task of judging the reliability of the news, retaining the context, and engaging in meaningful civic discourse rather challenging (Caled & Silva, 2022). With the personalization of the news, with the increased use of imagery and the interactive nature of the visuals, the possibility of a shared foundation of information could fragment, and the possibilities of distortion, polarization, and superficial civic engagement might increase (Wilding et al., 2018). As a result, the use of algorithmic curation, (Nasir, 2025) visual storytelling, and the omnipresent availability of these new forms of storytelling have changed the nature of the news process, moving it from a designated and source-mediated process for the consumption of the news into an incidental process enabled and facilitated through the use of these new tools (Rafeeq, 2025).

A few studies investigate political engagement on TikTok, some studies investigate news literacy among social media users, and some studies investigate misinformation or civic identity development (Lan & Tung, 2024). In the absence of a systematic synthesis, it is hard to estimate whether short videos stimulate informed engagement or promote surface-level interaction based on the logic of entertainment (Zannettou et al., 2024). An overview is necessary to determine what is already known, where evidence is solid or weak, and where it is necessary to continue the study.

The article satisfies that gap since it involves conducting a systematic review of peer-reviewed articles regarding short-form video platforms, news consumption, and civic engagement. The review is a compilation, analysis, and synthesis of research published between 2020 and 2025 according to PRISMA 2020. It aimed at examining the impact of these platforms on the way individuals are introduced to news, perceive societal matters, and engage in civic or political affairs. This review develops a conceptual framework of both individual and structural factors that influence news and engagement on short-video ecosystems. The results explained the existing body of knowledge, demonstrated the main trends, and provided further directions for research on digital media and society.

Problem Statement

Video-based platforms, which offer short-form content, have quickly become one of the major sources of information among millions of users, especially the younger generations. The border between entertainment, information, and opinion is becoming slender as people are still relying on TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts to receive any information in a few minutes (Malik et al., 2025b). This change brings up significant concerns regarding the process of news consumption by users in quick, visually oriented formats, as well as whether these platforms can facilitate any sort of meaningful civic participation or merely facilitate superficial responses (Denisova, 2023).

Although media usage trends, political discourse, fact manipulations, and behavioral patterns during consumption have already been studied by researchers employing disciplinary and methodological varieties, the findings remain fragmented by disciplines and approaches to the issue (Molla & Ahsan, 2025). Mass knowledge, trust in the news, and civic or political engagement have not been unified in how the content of short-form videos is affecting them. The absence of synthesis complicates the evaluation of the larger societal consequences of the transition to the use of short videos as an information ecosystem. This review fills that gap by reviewing the existing literature in an

organized and concise way to explain what we know and what we do not, and where we need future research to proceed.

Objectives:

O₁ To systematically collect and analyze existing studies on news consumption and civic engagement via short-form video platforms.

O₂ To evaluate the quality, scope, and findings of these studies to determine whether these platforms foster meaningful information processing and active civic participation.

O₃ To identify gaps in the literature and suggest areas for future research on media influence, public knowledge, and engagement in the digital era.

Research Questions:

RQ₁ What changes do short-form video platforms introduce in the way news is consumed?

RQ₂ What challenges do short-form video platforms create for the accurate understanding and interpretation of news?

RQ₃ How does news exposure on short-form video platforms influence civic engagement?

RQ₄ What risks do short-form video platforms pose to informed public participation and news literacy?

RQ₅ What approaches have been proposed to improve news literacy and civic engagement on short-form video platforms?

RQ₆ What gaps exist in the current literature on media influence, public knowledge, and engagement in the digital era, and which areas warrant further research?

Methodology

This study adopts a PRISMA-based systematic review methodology to examine evolving trends and key complexities within the selected research field (Veginadu et al., 2022). This will not only enable researchers to have insight into the current developments based on the review of the existing literature, but it will also highlight gaps that will allow conducting a more comprehensive and in-depth study of the topic.

Assumptions and Justifications

The review of the studies analyzed was performed with the help of two assumptions. First, the review has investigated the consistency in the critical terms, namely News Consumption, civil engagement, and their effect, across the chosen studies. This provided some sense of continuity in the explanation, even with the diverse definitions and categorizations used by each researcher. Second, there were strict screening and inclusion criteria that reduced the inconsistency and homogeneity of the selected literature. Articles whose definitions were not clear and relevant were filtered out.

Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Research on news consumption, news engagement, or civic engagement on short video sharing platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, or YouTube Shorts.	Research specifically examining long video sharing platforms (conventional YouTube videos) or non-digital news contexts.
Studies that examine the behaviours of users concerning news reception, trust, interpretation, communication, opinion formulation, activism, and political engagement.	Research that does not consider the behaviours of users but only the technical or advertisement-related sides of the matter.
Peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers published between 2020 and 2025.	Articles published before 2020.
Studies available in English.	Publications in languages other than English.
Empirical or review-based studies that provide evidence relevant to media use or civic behaviours.	Non-peer-reviewed sources such as blogs, commentaries, news reports, or opinion pieces.

Evaluation of Assumptions

In order to fulfil the research problem systematically, the researcher chose prominent platforms manually, Scispace and Google Scholar. The criteria of eligibility were not limited to demographic variables but were content-related. Keywords were News consumption, short-form content, Political Mobilization, Consumer Behavior, Social Change, and Digital Discourse.

The process of data extraction and organization was conducted according to PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021) with the help of Microsoft Word to tabulate useful information in order to conduct the systematic review of the research. The inclusion and exclusion criteria used in this research are summarised in Table 1. Out of 69 records, the duplication of records was removed, and 61 articles were screened. Out of these, 45 were full-text, and finally, 27 articles were selected according to all the selection criteria (Fig. 1).

Validation of Selected Methodology

A rigorous validation process was done on the methodology used in this systematic literature review in terms of reliability and inclusiveness. The validation process is among the standard features of the following:

Adherence to PRISMA Guidelines

The systematic review procedure maintained the Preferred Reporting Items strictly according to

the Systematic Review (PRISMA) methodology (Page et al., 2021). It is the best framework to use, so that it is a transparent, systematic, and structured approach to literature synthesis.

Data Tabulation and Analysis

Data were analyzed in Microsoft Excel into frequencies and percentages and tabulated into a data table. This contained a system of systematic review of relative frequencies and percentages; there is a minimum level of accuracy, consistency, and transparency in reporting.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The criterion for this study is designed to select those articles that specifically mention the Short-Form Video Platforms and Their Impact on News Consumption & Civic Engagement.

Search Strategy

The article search strategy was to apply a specific resource: Google Scholar and SciSpace. The researcher selected keywords carefully to encompass them and did not miss any significant studies.

Table 2: Number and Percentages According to the Literature According to Publication Year

Publication Year	Number	%
2020–2021	2	7.41
2022–2023	7	25.93
2024–2025	18	66.67
Total	27	100

Table 2 shows the publication year distribution with (n=2, 7.41%) from 2020–2021, (n=7,

25.93%) from 2022–2023, and the majority (n=18, 66.67%) from 2024–2025.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage of Platform Focus Distribution

Platform	Number	%
TikTok (primary focus)	22	81.48
Multiple platforms	3	11.11
Russian platforms	2	7.41
Total	27	100

Table 3 shows platform focus with the majority of studies (n=22, 81.48) having TikTok focus, (n=3,

11.11) multiple platforms, and (n=2, 7.41) concentrating on the Russian platform.

Table 4: Frequencies and Percentages of the Literature According to Their Data Gathering Approaches

Method	Number	%
Computational analysis	8	29.63
Content analysis	7	25.93
Mixed methods	6	22.22
Qualitative (interviews/surveys)	4	14.81
Literature review	2	7.41
Total	27	100

Table 4 shows research methods with computational analysis (n=8, 29.63%), content analysis (n=7, 25.93%), mixed methods (n=6, 22.22%), qualitative approaches (n=4, 14.81%), and literature review (n=2, 7.41%).

Table 5: Frequencies and Percentages of Research Focus Distribution

Focus Area	Number	%
Political engagement & civic participation	9	33.33
News consumption & dissemination	8	29.63
Platform characteristics & content	5	18.52
Misinformation & information quality	3	11.11
Media convergence & journalism	2	7.41
Total	27	100

Table 5 presents research focus distribution showing political engagement (n=9, 33.33%), news consumption (n=8, 29.63%), platform characteristics (n=5, 18.52%), misinformation (n=3, 11.11%), and media convergence (n=2, 7.41%).

PRISMA FLOWCHART

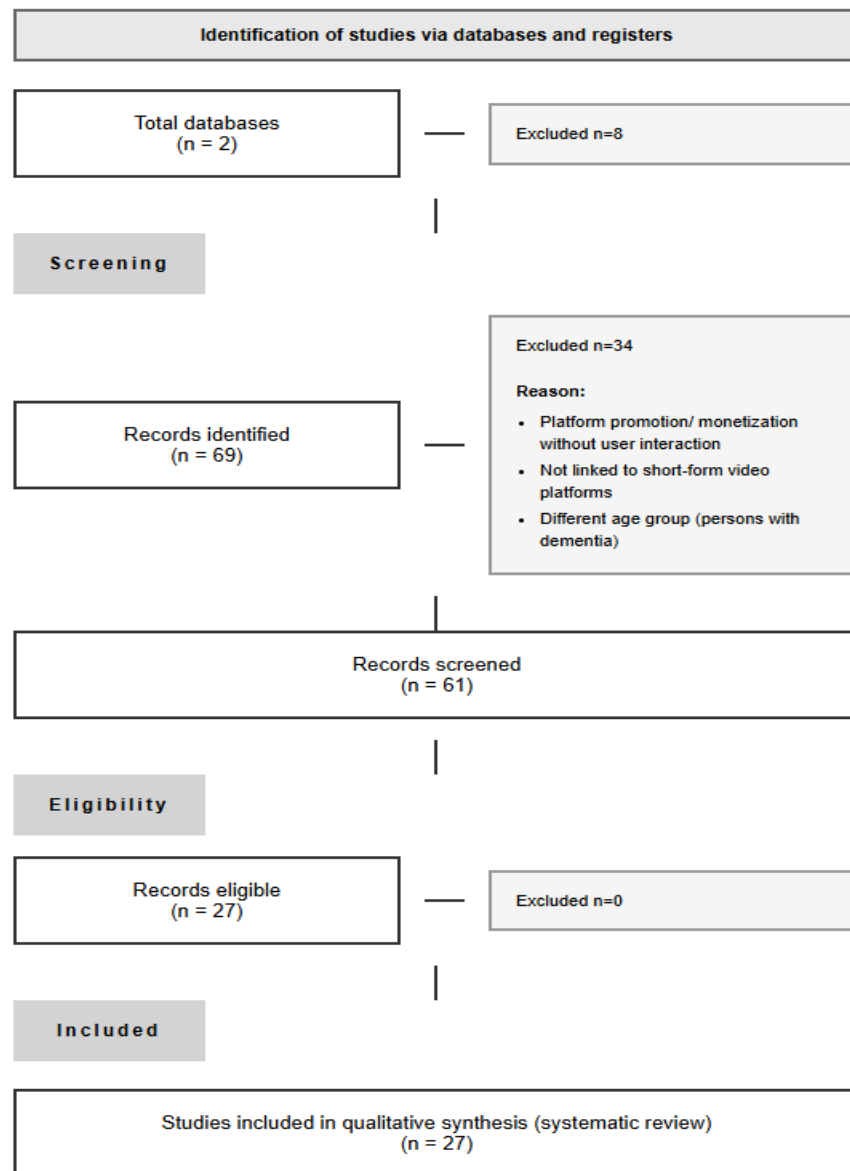


Fig. 1 PRISMA FLOWCHART

The systematic selection process utilized in this review is graphically illustrated in the PRISMA flowchart (Fig. 1), which increases the clarity and the transparency of the methodology. Although the same validation process is not allowed in this review study as in experimental research, its credibility was ensured through compliance with the given guidelines, thorough selection of the articles, thorough reporting, and strict selection criteria of the entire process of reviewing. All

these make the methodology used in this research strong and reliable.

Review

The systematic literature review is a clear, unrefined, descriptive, and consistent method of integrating scientific information. This involves the gathering of all the evidence published. (Brignardello-Petersen et al., 2025). This review study helps to determine themes, patterns, and

reliability between the studies. A systematic method of unearthing the most effective themes and notions that may not be readily evident when contemplating studies of a given individual exclusively. In addition, this process lists gaps within existing literature, which prove very

informative and need further explanation through clarification of examination. A systematic review provides a holistic view of various study outcomes through a combination or synthesis of their outcome (Levy & J. Ellis, 2006).

Changes in News Consumption and Challenges to News Understanding

Table 6: Summary of Changes Introduced by Short-Form Video Platforms in News Consumption and Their Implications for News Understanding

Dimension of Change	Nature of Change in News Consumption	Resulting Challenge for News Understanding	Implications for Interpretation and Literacy	Key Supporting Articles
Algorithmic Delivery	News is algorithmically delivered to the user through personalized feeds instead of being actively searched from selective sources	Selective exposure and the filters prevent exposure to differing views	Misconstrued public issues and knowledge of differing perspectives	(Solovev et al., 2025) (Parker et al., 2024a) (Zeng et al., 2024) (Bağ, 2024)
Content Duration	News comes in short video clips that last a limited time: the focus is on the highlights rather than the details	Context collapse: Simplification of complex politics and societal matters	Narrow understanding replaces in-depth understanding	(Wu, 2025), (Lei et al., 2024), (Yang, 2024)
Visual Dominance	News is more reliant on visuals, audio, and emotional components than words	Framing by emotion is more important than information	Biased perception based on emotional response to news information	(Solovev et al., 2025), (Yang, 2024), (Cheng & Li, 2024)
Entertainment-Oriented Environment	News is embedded within entertainment-driven, trend-based scrolling environments	Politi-tainment blurs lines between information and leisure	Reduced critical evaluation and seriousness in processing the news	(Zeng et al., 2024), (Hendrickx, 2025)
Distributed Source Structure	A combination of professional journalists, influencers, and ordinary users contributes to news creation	The credibility of sources starts to become questionable	Confusion between credibility and the skills of evaluation	(Wu, 2025), (Medina Serrano et al., 2020), (Vázquez-Herrero & Negreira-Rey, 2025)
Viral Circulation Speed	Facts are disseminated very fast, irrespective of validation or editorial control	The pace of validation is slower than the rate of dissemination	The perseverance of inaccuracies and the challenges of correcting incorrect perceptions	(Ruak, 2023), (Medina Serrano et al., 2020) (Yin, 2024) (Zhang, 2024)

Table 6 demonstrates the ways the short-form video platforms reshape news use and the problems that they create in understanding the news (Yin, 2024). As the table shows, these platforms have radically changed the conventional, planned, and text-based news to algorithmically curated, brief, and visual experiences (Solovev et al., 2025). The users now have the experience of being pushed into content by an algorithm driven by engagement patterns, which gives them incidental exposure as well as reaching a wider range of those who were not engaged in the news in the past. Nevertheless, this algorithm mediation decreases personal influence on the sources, issues, and the quality of information (Zeng et al., 2024).

The table focuses on the effect of video-first storytelling, in which content is based on graphics, audio, and text superimposition of extremely condensed content, often taking a few seconds (Wu, 2025). This enhances access to wide audiences as well as enabling on-demand, mobile consumption so that the news can be smoothly incorporated into everyday lives (Yang, 2024). However, the concision and speed of these formats can tend to lose analytical richness, omit necessary contexts, and lack historical, systemic, and multi-perspective explanations that can be used in comprehensive comprehension (Lei et al., 2024). Never-ending access is another contributor to information overload, divided attention, and lack of meaningful engagement in complicated issues (Ван, 2024).

The table also indicates how news is diversified among these platforms, such as the traditional media, citizen journalists, influencers, and eyewitnesses (Wu, 2025). Although this concept of democratization of worldviews positively benefits through the broader presentation, it also makes verifying credibility a more challenging task, especially when commercial or performative interests are covered as valid reporting (Kislyak, 2025). Interactive features make users interact more, and this tendency promotes the virality of fake news, as well as the concentration on emotional appeals results in giving sensational or

controversial stories more relevance than essential issues.

The table also refers to algorithmic personalization and recommendation systems that create filter bubbles and echo chambers that promote what people believe in and do not want to be exposed to other possible viewpoints (Cheng & Li, 2024). Curated feeds can create a misperception of reality in users, which reinforces confirmation bias and selective exposure. Introduction of news into entertainment settings continues to confuse the borders between information and entertainment further, and, more often than not, encourages negative feelings such as fear, anger, and outrage (Wu, 2025). Such a focus on emotional appeal rather than the facts can distort perceptions of conflict and exclude the moderate or moderated views (Hendrickx, 2025).

Verification problems and fact-checking boundaries are also challenges that have been discussed in the table. Ease of publication enables unchecked information to be shared globally, and the corrections take much longer to be virally shared in comparison to misinformation (Medina Serrano et al., 2020). Strong time compression leaves less room to elaborate on causation, introduce supportive evidence, or accept uncertainty, and results in people being widely informed but shallowly knowledgeable on complicated policy issues (Zhang, 2024). Algorithms introduce a time distortion that relates to the higher priority of receiving new and trending material than the substantively and historically important issues, creating episodic attention and disregard of long-term questions (Vázquez-Herrero & Negreira-Rey, 2025).

Finally, the table highlights the importance of visual literacy, as short-form videos imply that individuals have the ability to decode an image that has been manipulated, decontextualized, or it has been created by an AI (Solovev et al., 2025). Many users do not have these skills, and they are particularly vulnerable to the elaborate forms of visual misinformation (Zeng et al., 2024).

Civic Engagement and Risks to Informed Democratic Participation

Table 7: Summary of Influence of Short-Form Video News on Civic Engagement and Risks to Informed Democratic Participation

Dimension	Core Findings on Civic Engagement	Associated Democratic Risk	Mechanism of Influence	Key Supporting Articles
Youth Political Engagement	Short-form video platforms enhance interest, expression, and participation in politics for young people	Heightened Polarization and Identity Politics	Casual voice, user-generated content, and the echo chamber effect for identity-based cues	(Moffett & Rice, 2024), (Hindarto, 2022), (Lei et al., 2024)
Grassroots and Movement Activism	Platforms allow for the bypassing of legacy gatekeepers in grassroots movements.	Autonomous, Episodic, & Trend-Driven Participation	Viral dissemination, mobilization, & trending between grassroots movements & marginalized discourse over sustained engagement	(Jiang et al., 2022), (Parker et al., 2024a) (Parker et al., 2024b) (Sodani & Mendenhall, 2021)
Algorithmic Amplification	Politically divisive and emotionally charged content gets more visibility and engagement	Visibility of radicalizing content	Engagement algorithms reward conflict, negativity, and outrage	(Solovev et al., 2025), (Qin, 2025), (Cheng & Li, 2024)
Online Participatory Features	High levels of commenting, sharing, and remixing increase the possibilities of political speech	Incivility, aggression, and contentious forms of political interaction are on the rise	Online affordances amplify aggressive forms of political talk	(Medina Serrano et al., 2020), (McLaughlin et al., 2025)
Incidental News Exposure	Users stumble upon news while consuming entertainment media	Poor political knowledge and a lack of issue understanding	Low-effort news exposure, lacking context and additional information	(Zeng et al., 2024), (Hendrickx, 2025) (Sodani & Mendenhall, 2021)
Personalized Content Feeds	Civic and political content: personalized according to preferences and engagement with content	democratic inequality and unequal informed participation	Differential exposure and inequality due to personalization and media literacy gaps	(Zeng et al., 2024), (Lei et al., 2024), (Hendrickx, 2025)

Table 7 indicates the civic and political impacts of short-form video platforms and the risks associated with not being able to participate in

democracy. The table demonstrates that these platforms transform the nature of engagement by reducing the cost of political engagement,

allowing youth and marginalized groups to try political identities, tell first-person stories, and circumvent conventional media gatekeepers (Lei et al., 2024). The sharing of political content by users tends to be associated with offline civic engagement (Parker et al., 2024a, 2024b), whereas the interactive nature of features enables the process of co-construction of political discourses to attain horizontal discourse and community engagement (Moffett & Rice, 2024). The findings that are brought out in the table are that algorithmic curation, emotional framing, and engagement measurement lead to a robust effect on the perception of the salience of the issues, perceived consensus, and prioritization of issues, and are concerned with the issue of democratic accountability in digitally mediated environments (Jiang et al., 2022). Online to offline action spill over: Online communication can be converted to offline action, which can be maintained as civic behavior of some users, yet it can also be superficial in others, and this will again depend on the nature of the content, motivation, peer network, and relevance of the issue (Medina Serrano et al., 2020). The exposure to incidental news is particularly strong with younger audiences who are slowly losing their trust in the traditional sources (Solovev et al., 2025), despite the quality of the learning being directly related to the quality of the material and the capability of the users to analyze the news critically.

Emotionally colored, extreme, or conflict-oriented messaging will always perform better compared to moderate messaging, and polarizing actors, and the incentive to utilize the communication strategy of outrage (Solovev et al., 2025). The reward system of platforms favors sensationalism and brevity, and this aspect can hasten the process of political polarization, create a barrier to the finer aspects of debate, and distort the view of democratic consensus (Qin, 2025). The activity of platforms is dominated by the young, whereas older users are underrepresented. The communities of color and those with little access to traditional news are increasingly using the platforms, though unequal access to education, media literacy, and access to

digital devices make issues of democratic inequity apparent.

The table also reveals that platforms are vital to electoral campaigns, particularly their use in attracting younger voters, by focusing on authenticity, personality, and trending features (McLaughlin et al., 2025). Deliberative communication in campaigns, however, can be obstructed by the algorithmic biases in favor of divisive content and extreme actors. The spikes of engagement tend to be fleeting and focused on a viral moment, and they are short-lived, which restricts the ability to maintain attention to complicated policy questions (Parker et al., 2024a). The long-term civic participation requires personal engagement, connection to the community, organizational assistance, and characteristic features of platforms that can foster long-term participation rather than short-term participation (Hindarto, 2022).

According to the table, the threats to informed democratic participation are based on structural, cognitive, and algorithmic factors. The viral mechanics and algorithmic amplification promote misinformation, particularly the visually persuasive information that spreads faster than the corrections and complicates the understanding of credibility (Qin, 2025). Transparent algorithms strengthen filter bubbles, focus on emotionally colored content more than sound analysis, and enable avoidance of news. The ability to be news literate to evaluate the content critically may not be accessible to users, disproportionately impacting the youth, disadvantaged communities, and non-native speakers (Sodani & Mendenhall, 2021).

The table highlights cognitive and social consequences of fast short-form consumption: decreased sustained attention, worse depth of processing, and worse quality of integrating complex information, which leads to information overload and stress. The social networks encourage emotion and naivete rather than critical thinking, so the politicians are less interested in policies and more concerned with performance. Personalized algorithmically strengthens confirmation bias, enhances outgroup aggression, and hastens the process of ideological polarization, dividing the common

ground (Lei et al., 2024). Compact forms of expression necessarily diminish context, evidence assessment, and intricacy, and content themselves with the result of a massively informed but critically unsophisticated citizenry.

Lastly, structural inequalities aggravated by platform dynamics are reflected in the table: business models that rely on engagement focus more on profit than the public, encourage

divisive content by default, allocate insufficient resources to verification, and provide weak accountability (Zeng et al., 2024). The focus on novelty as an algorithm promotes trending content rather than reporting on the important issues over an extended period, and this implies that present issues in society are not sufficiently reflected (Hendrickx, 2025).

Proposed Interventions and Research Gaps in Short-Form Video News

Table 8: Summary of Proposed Interventions and Identified Gaps in the Literature

Category	Proposed Approaches	Evidence or Rationale	Identified Gaps / Limitations	
Platform Design and Algorithmic Reform	Algorithmic transparency, content quality signals, lower emphasis on engagement metrics, and exposure tools for varied distribution	Engagement-oriented algorithms, according to research, prioritize emotional, polarizing, and misleading content, influencing the distribution of news.	There is a lack of research on the effectiveness of the reforms introduced by the platforms, and the data for the algorithms is not disclosed.	(Solovev et al., 2025), (Zeng et al., 2024), (Qin, 2025) (Huang, 2024)
Media Literacy and Critical Skills	News literacy education, visual literacy, and algorithm literacy initiatives	Research shows that users employ erratic or dubious practices to make meaning from short-form video news content	Overemphasis on individual agency and a narrow focus, lack of a platform perspective, and inequalities	(Lei et al., 2024), (Zeng et al., 2024), (Marquart, 2023)
Journalistic Adaptation and Professional Practices	Adapting short-form formats and maintaining journalistic standards of verification, transparency, and editorial integrity.	Rather than reporting, news outlets are using human-interest approaches and emotional storytelling to be noticed on short-form platforms	The focus is primarily on newsroom approaches, and very little research is conducted on audience outcomes related to learning.	(Wu, 2025), (Yang, 2024), (Vázquez-Herrero & Negreira-Rey, 2025), (Sidorenko-Bautista et al., 2025)
Regulatory and Policy Interventions	There is a desperate need to introduce algorithmic accountability, content moderation standards, and the actions that will guarantee electoral	The significance of regulation in dealing with misinformation, manipulation and democratic risks are highlighted in the literature;	implementation issues in worldwide platform ecosystems.	(Qin, 2025), (Vázquez-Herrero & Negreira-Rey, 2025) (Kislyak, 2025)

	integrity.			
User Empowerment and Agency Tools	Fact-check links, adjustable recommendation controls, and transparency cues.	Empowerment tools are suggested to consumers and improve the process of critical appraisal and educated interaction.	The difference between effective content and unsuccessful content is user awareness, motivation and digital skills.	(Zeng et al., 2024), (Hendrickx, 2025) (Wedel et al., 2024)
Research and Governance Coordination	Multi-stakeholder collaboration among platforms, journalists, educators, regulators, and researchers.	The challenges are complicated in technological, social, and political spheres.	Fragmented research efforts and limited coordination across sectors	(Vázquez-Herrero & Negreira-Rey, 2025), (Qin, 2025) (Sodani & Mendenhall, 2021)

Enhancing news literacy and civic engagement in short-form video platforms is a systemic issue that would need concerted efforts on platform design, education, journalism, regulation, and user agency (Marquart, 2023). Platforms are supposed to maximize transparency and give users more control over recommendations and a balance between personalization and exposure to different perspectives (Hendrickx, 2025). The design interventions to consider are visible source attribution, verification badges, contextual layers, and explicit labeling of the disputed content, but more radical reforms are required since engagement-based algorithms continue to prefer emotive and divisive content (Zeng et al., 2024). The users, especially the youth, require the training of platform-specific literacy that includes visual literacy, algorithmic consciousness, and situational awareness, which should be introduced by curricula, community courses, and in-app features (Lei et al., 2024). The best form of education is that which is accompanied by design enhancement, which eases critical analysis (Yang, 2024). By relying on verifiable information, offering context by using several videos, displaying corrections, engaging with the audience, and collaborative approaches that involve journalists and platform creators creating content together, news organizations can achieve

short-form approaches without disrupting professional journalism (Wu, 2025). Some of the solutions that should be enforced through regulatory strategies to balance platforms' power include algorithmic accountability, independent auditing, misinformation standards, and access to research data, and also include funding of public interest media, competition, and electoral protections (Vázquez-Herrero & Negreira-Rey, 2025). The agency of the users can be further enhanced by the provision of customizable recommendations, content clarifications, embedded fact-checking, verification notices, and exposure to other opinions. Nonprofit, cooperative, or publicly-funded platforms that use democratic ideals provide more examples of verified, contextual information, but scalability and funding are problems (Sidorenko-Bautista et al., 2025). Regardless of these suggested interventions, there are gaps in research. There are few longitudinal studies of changing consumption patterns, and the cross-platform, cross-generational, and cross-cultural comparisons, particularly beyond the Western context, are even fewer (Cheng & Li, 2024). There is very limited information regarding the impacts of short-form format on information retention and understanding, or on long-term cognitive effects, and the acquisition of critical video-viewing skills should be studied

more systematically (Zeng et al., 2024). The demographic vulnerability to false information, the transfer of web interaction to the real world, and the accruing civic and democratic effects are poorly studied.

Limitations

This review study, despite its large scope, has to confront a significant number of limitations: The present review study is based on 27 sample scholarly articles published between 2020 and 2025. The sample size of the selected research studies might not be limited to a size that indicates the entire scope of research on the subjects, especially in rapidly expanding fields, such as AI, generated content, social media fake news, and deep fakes. Short-form video social media sites are considered to be a paradigm technology of the current media environment, but the identification of accurate information and the avoidance of deceptive and fake information on such sites remains a challenge (Kondamudi et al., 2023). These sites have great potential for both informing and mobilizing people, but the algorithms and visual formats on these sites also pose the potential for the creation and spread of deceptive and fake information. The virtual social networks established around short-form media products are considered to have great influence on opinion and behavior, and the impact assessment of deceptive and fake information on these virtual networks has remained a challenge because the impact has been diffused and cumulative (Aïmeur et al., 2023). The rapid development of digital technologies means that some findings in this area may become outdated as new features, platforms, and algorithms emerge.

Conclusion

The research shows that the short-form video platforms fundamentally change the democratic information ecosystems based on the interdependent processes of consumption patterns, comprehension problems, civic engagement dynamics, and structural risks.. These platforms are not merely new distribution channels; they are a complete reconfiguration of how news functions in society, who produces it, how it's consumed, and what cognitive and civic

effects it generates. The transformation is marked by deep contradictions (Huang, 2024).

On the one hand, platforms make access more democratic; on the other hand, they turn to the concentration of algorithmic control (Wedel et al., 2024). They increase the involvement and undermine the quality of discussion. They engage youth while creating generational divides. They accelerate the flow of information while fragmenting understanding. These contradictions imply that the results are largely dependent on design choices, regulatory frameworks, literacy interventions, and journalistic adaptations rather than being technologically determined.

Evidence shows that the present configurations of the platforms aid the commercial use of the platforms rather than the values of democracy. Thus, systematic biases against rational, complex, and inclusive content have resulted (Javed & Javed, 2023). A combination of algorithmic opacity, weak verification structures, format constraints, and profit-driven incentives is turning information environments into spaces that are challenging for informed citizenship (Shahzad et al., 2024). If it does not have effective regulation, vulnerable populations-young people, the economically deprived, and those with limited access to traditional media-are at greater risk, with a deepening of democratic inequalities, rather than a shrinking (Peters, 2022).

Instead, future studies and research agenda ought to be shifted towards longitudinal and independent research on the practical implications of algorithmic and design interventions to news comprehension and news engagement. A holistic approach (media literacy, design, and institutional accountability) should be The effects of journalistic adaptations to the short-form format on the understanding, trust, and retention of knowledge should be researched in terms of the short-form (audience-oriented research) (Ali et al., 2024). Cross-platform and cross-national research can help determine the effectiveness of the different approaches for media policies. Finally, research through experiments can help determine how, in practice, users adopt empowerment research, and collaboration among different research fields is a necessity in establishing the systemic implications

for democracy through the short-form online video format (Shahzad et al., 2024).

The same technologies that are currently being used to amplify misinformation and polarization can be turned around to support democratic values if stakeholders decide to go for a sustained, evidence-based reform. To succeed, it is necessary to understand that platform governance is essentially a matter of democratic design, not just technical optimization, and therefore it requires corresponding levels of public investment, regulatory attention, and civic engagement.

Ultimately, the problem is not whether short-form video platforms will shape democracy but whether democratic societies will actively shape those platforms to serve collective self-governance rather than passively accepting configurations optimized for commercial gain. The research reviewed here provides both a warning and a roadmap, identifying serious risks while also charting pathways toward platforms that expand rather than undermine informed democratic participation.

REFERENCES

- Aïmeur, E., Amri, S., & Brassard, G. (2023). Fake news, disinformation and misinformation in social media: A review. *Social Network Analysis and Mining*, 13(1), 30. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13278-023-01028-5>
- Ali, O., Murray, P. A., Momin, M., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Malik, T. (2024). The effects of artificial intelligence applications in educational settings: Challenges and strategies. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 199, 123076. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2023.123076>
- Brignardello-Petersen, R., Santesso, N., & Guyatt, G. H. (2025). Systematic reviews of the literature: An introduction to current methods. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 194(2), 536–542. <https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwae232>
- Caled, D., & Silva, M. J. (2022). Digital media and misinformation: An outlook on multidisciplinary strategies against manipulation. *Journal of Computational Social Science*, 5(1), 123–159. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42001-021-00118-8>
- Castelló, I., Colleoni, E., Scherer, A. G., & Trittin-Ulbrich, H. (2025). Social Media Is a Threat for Democracy! A Political Perspective for Analysing and Diminishing Harm. *Journal of Management Studies*, joms.70053. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.70053>
- Cheng, Z., & Li, Y. (2024). Like, Comment, and Share on TikTok: Exploring the Effect of Sentiment and Second-Person View on the User Engagement with TikTok News Videos. *Social Science Computer Review*, 42(1), 201–223. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393231178603>
- Denisova, A. (2023). Viral journalism. Strategy, tactics and limitations of the fast spread of content on social media: Case study of the United Kingdom quality publications. *Journalism*, 24(9), 1919–1937. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849221077749>
- Gagrčin, E., Naab, T. K., & Grub, M. F. (2024). Algorithmic media use and algorithm literacy: An integrative literature review. *New Media & Society*, 14614448241291137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241291137>
- Hendrickx, J. (2025). ‘Normal news is boring’: How young adults encounter and experience news on Instagram and TikTok. *New Media & Society*, 27(10), 5736–5754. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241255955>

- Hindarto, I. H. (2022). Tiktok and Political Communication of Youth: A Systematic Review. *JRP (Jurnal Review Politik)*, 12(2), 146–176.
<https://doi.org/10.15642/jrp.2022.12.2.146-176>
- Huang, W. (2024). Exploring the Role of Short Video Platforms in Guiding Public Opinion in the New Media Era. *Interdisciplinary Humanities and Communication Studies*, 1(9).
<https://doi.org/10.61173/stb38y97>
- Javed, U., & Javed, U. (2023). The Influence of Social Media Algorithms on Political Polarization and Public Opinion. *Online Media and Society*, 4(2), 44–52.
<https://doi.org/10.71016/oms/2ffw9391>
- Jiang, Y., Jin, X., & Deng, Q. (2022). *Short Video Uprising: How #BlackLivesMatter Content on TikTok Challenges the Protest Paradigm*. ICWSM.
<https://doi.org/10.36190/2022.42>
- Kislyak, A. A. (2025). A short video on Russian platforms: The transformation of television content on VK Video, Yandex Video, and RuTube. *Litera*, 6, 205–216.
<https://doi.org/10.25136/2409-8698.2025.6.74900>
- Kondamudi, M. R., Sahoo, S. R., Chouhan, L., & Yadav, N. (2023). A comprehensive survey of fake news in social networks: Attributes, features, and detection approaches. *Journal of King Saud University - Computer and Information Sciences*, 35(6), 101571.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jksuci.2023.101571>
- Lan, D. H., & Tung, T. M. (2024). Exploring fake news awareness and trust in the age of social media among university student TikTok users. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 2302216.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2302216>
- Lei, Y., Meng, X., Huang, X., Li, J., Jiang, Y., Yu, Y., & Literat, I. (2024). Short videos, big impact: How Chinese youth perceive and engage with news on short video platforms. *Global Media and China*, 20594364241298055.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/20594364241298055>
- Levy, Y., & J. Ellis, T. (2006). A Systems Approach to Conduct an Effective Literature Review in Support of Information Systems Research. *Informing Science: The International Journal of an Emerging Transdiscipline*, 9, 181–212.
<https://doi.org/10.28945/479>
- Malik, N. I., Ramzan, M. M., Malik, Z., & Tariq, I. (2025a). The Rise of Reels: Analyzing the Communicative Power of Short-Form Videos on Social Media. *Qlantic Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(2), 138–145.
<https://doi.org/10.55737/qjss.vi-ii.25350>
- Malik, N. I., Ramzan, M. M., Malik, Z., & Tariq, I. (2025b). The Rise of Reels: Analyzing the Communicative Power of Short-Form Videos on Social Media. *Qlantic Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(2), 138–145.
<https://doi.org/10.55737/qjss.vi-ii.25350>
- Marquart, F. (2023). Video killed the Instagram star: The future of political communication is audio-visual. *Journal of Visual Political Communication*, 10(1), 49–57.
https://doi.org/10.1386/jvpc_00024_1
- McLaughlin, B., Cloudy, J., Hunter, J., & Potter, B. (2025). Stitch incoming: Political engagement and aggression on TikTok. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 44(7), 1387–1400.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2024.2354436>

- Medina Serrano, J. C., Papakyriakopoulos, O., & Hegelich, S. (2020). Dancing to the Partisan Beat: A First Analysis of Political Communication on TikTok. *12th ACM Conference on Web Science*, 257-266. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3394231.3397916>
- Moffett, K. W., & Rice, L. L. (2024). TikTok and Civic Activity Among Young Adults. *Social Science Computer Review*, 42(2), 535-553. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393231188470>
- Molla, M. A. M., & Ahsan, M. M. (2025). Artificial intelligence and journalism: A systematic bibliometric and thematic analysis of global research. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, 20, 100830. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2025.100830>
- Nasir, T., Bhadur, A., Javed, S., & Sabir, S. (2025). Digital battlegrounds: The role of social media in the Indo-Pakistani media war analysing narratives, propaganda, and public perception. *Journal of Media Horizons*, 6(3), 1434-1446. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16760157>
- Nasir, T., Khan, S. A., Majeed, A. A., & Jan, R. (2025). Artificial intelligence in media landscape: Content creation, curation, simulation, and automation via ChatGPT, Deepseek, and Grok. *Journal of Media Horizons*, 6(3), 796-800. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16355307>
- Nasir, T., Azeema, N., Irum, M., & Siraj, S. A. (2025). Influence of AI and Digital Media Trends, Algorithms and Big Data on Agenda Setting and Narrative Building of Media Students: A Case Study of Universities in Islamabad. *Social Science Review Archives*, 3(2), 335-355. <https://socialworksreview.com/index.php/Journal/article/view/184/208>
- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., ... Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, n71. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>
- Parker, S., Steel, B., & Ruths, D. (2024a). *TikTok vs. the Fourth Estate: Comparing Event Coverage in News Media and TikTok*. SocArXiv. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/gvnmc>
- Parker, S., Steel, B., & Ruths, D. (2024b, June 26). *TikTok vs. the Fourth Estate: Engagement With News on TikTok*. 6th International Conference on Advanced Research Methods and Analytics - CARMA 2024. CARMA 2024 - 6th International Conference on Advanced Research Methods and Analytics. <https://doi.org/10.4995/CARMA2024.2024.17768>
- Peters, U. (2022). Algorithmic Political Bias in Artificial Intelligence Systems. *Philosophy & Technology*, 35(2), 25. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-022-00512-8>
- Qin, T. (2025). Amusing Ourselves to Death: A Study on the Problems and Governance Approaches of Short Video Pan-entertainment in the Information Age. *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media*, 109(1), 184-190. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/2025.ND25973>

- Rafeeq, A. (2025). Multimedia Storytelling in Online Journalism: Analysing Multimedia Use on the Websites TheGuardian.com, TheNationalnews.com, USAToday.com, and Stuff.co.nz. *Journalism and Media*, 6(3), 157. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia6030157>
- Ruak, F. (2023). The Impact of TikTok on Combating and Filtering Hoax News: A Mixed-Methods Study. *Kampret Journal*, 3(1), 22–32. <https://doi.org/10.35335/kampret.v3i1.169>
- Ruzzante, F., Cevolani, G., & Panizza, F. (2026). Scrolling to wisdom: The impact of social media news exposure on knowledge perception. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 33(1), 11. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13423-025-02786-3>
- Shahzad, M. F., Xu, S., Lim, W. M., Yang, X., & Khan, Q. R. (2024). Artificial intelligence and social media on academic performance and mental well-being: Student perceptions of positive impact in the age of smart learning. *Heliyon*, 10(8), e29523. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e29523>
- Sidorenko-Bautista, P., Herranz-de-la-Casa, J.-M., & Alonso-López, N. (2025). From experiment to strategy: Use of TikTok by the local Spanish press between 2021 and 2024. *Revista Panamericana de Comunicación*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.21555/rpc.v7i2.3507>
- Sodani, T., & Mendenhall, S. (2021). Binge-Swiping Through Politics: TikTok's Emerging Role in American Government. *Journal of Student Research*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.47611/jsrhs.v10i2.1777>
- Solovev, K., Drolsbach, C., Demirel, E., & Pröllochs, N. (2025). *TikTok Rewards Divisive Political Messaging During the 2025 German Federal Election* (Version 1). arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/ARXIV.2509.10336>
- Vázquez-Herrero, J., & Negreira-Rey, M.-C. (2025). TikTok Journalism. In J. Hendrickx & M. Opgenhaffen, *Research Methods for Social Media Journalism* (1st ed., pp. 80–93). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003568766-9>
- Veginadu, P., Calache, H., Gussy, M., Pandian, A., & Masood, M. (2022). An overview of methodological approaches in systematic reviews. *Journal of Evidence-Based Medicine*, 15(1), 39–54. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jebm.12468>
- Wedel, L., Hendrickx, J., & Mayer, A.-T. (2024). What occurs as #news on TikTok? A Computational Approach. *Companion Proceedings of the 16th ACM Web Science Conference*, 22–23. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3630744.3658409>
- Wilding, D., Fray, P., Molitorisz, S., & McKewon, E. (2018). The Impact of Digital Platforms on News and Journalistic Content. *University of Technology Sydney*.
- Wu, S. (2025). Is TikTok News Less “News-Like”? Investigating News Organizations’ Stories on TikTok and Their Alignment/Divergence with Traditional News Values, Norms, Routines, and Roles. *Digital Journalism*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2025.2564165>
- Yang, J. (2024). The influence of short video development on news communication strategies from factual information to emotional experience. *Media and Communication Research*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.23977/mediacr.2024.050106>

- Yin, H. (2024). From Virality to Engagement: Examining the Transformative Impact of Social Media, Short Video Platforms, and Live Streaming on Information Dissemination and Audience Behavior in the Digital Age. *Advances in Social Behavior Research*, 14(1), 10–14. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7102/2024.18644>
- Zannettou, S., Nemeth, O.-N., Ayalon, O., Goetzen, A., Gummadi, K. P., Redmiles, E. M., & Roesner, F. (2024). *Analyzing User Engagement with TikTok's Short Format Video Recommendations using Data Donations* (No. arXiv:2301.04945). arXiv. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2301.04945>
- Zeng, R., Guo, S., & Evans, R. (2024). Intentional news avoidance on short-form video platforms: A moderated mediation model of psychological reactance and relative entertainment motivation. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1), 248. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-02675-5>
- Zhang, L. (2024). The Dissemination Path of News Short Videos in Mainstream Media from the Perspective of Media Convergence. *Arts Studies and Criticism*, 5(5), 313. <https://doi.org/10.32629/asc.v5i5.3074>
- Ван, И.Н. (2024). Study on the dissemination of news content through short videos by «CCTV News» on the «Douyin» platform. *Bulletin of Pedagogical Sciences*, 1, 166–170. <https://doi.org/10.62257/2687-1661-2024-1-166-170>

