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Digital Diplomacy and Strategic Communication: Analyzing the @SaudiVision2030 X Account

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Abstract:

This research looks at how the official @SaudiVision2030 X (formerly Twitter) account handles strategic communication and drives digital engagement. Through quantitative content analysis, the study evaluated a specific sample of every original post (N=7) shared from January 1 through January 25, 2026. The posts were coded based on multiple variables, including media type, overarching topic, linguistic purpose, persuasive strategies, and intended audience. Alongside this, we calculated standardized engagement rates using view counts and direct interactions.

Results show that the account heavily favors video formats and Arabic content aimed primarily at a local audience. Although the topics covered different aspects of the Kingdom's strategic pillars, high-quality media—especially posts announcing major milestones—achieved massive reach. That being said, the data highlights that "Educational" posts relying on rational appeals actually drove the highest proportional engagement rates from users. Ultimately, the analysis suggests that while emotional and aspirational messages are great for boosting general visibility, well-structured, informative content works best for getting the public to actively interact with the Vision's core goals.

الملخص :

تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على أساليب الاتصال الاستراتيجي ومؤشرات التفاعل الرقمي في الحساب الرسمي لرؤية السعودية 2030 على منصة إكس (تويتر سابقاً). واعتمد البحث على أسلوب تحليل المحتوى الكمي لدراسة عينة محددة شملت كافة التغريدات الأصلية (عدد=7) التي نُشرت خلال الفترة من 1 إلى 25 يناير 2026. وجرى تصنيف وتفرغ البيانات بناءً على

عدة عوامل أساسية، منها نوع الوسائط المستخدمة، وطبيعة الموضوع، والهدف اللغوي، والأسلوب الإقناعي، والفئة المستهدفة، وترافق ذلك مع قياس معدلات التفاعل القياسية بناءً على أرقام المشاهدات والمشاركات الفعلية. وأظهرت النتائج تركيزاً واضحاً على استخدام مقاطع الفيديو والمحتوى العربي الموجه بشكل أساسي للجمهور المحلي. ورغم أن المواضيع المطروحة شملت مختلف ركائز رؤية المملكة الاستراتيجية، إلا أن المنشورات ذات الإنتاج الضخم - كتلك التي تعلن عن تحقيق إنجازات رئيسية - حصدت أرقام وصول هائلة. في المقابل، أوضحت الأرقام أن التغريدات التي تحمل طابعاً تثقيفياً وتعتمد على لغة العقل والإقناع المنطقي سجلت باستمرار أعلى نسب التفاعل الفعلي من قبل المستخدمين. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أنه بالرغم من أهمية الرسائل العاطفية والتحفيزية في زيادة الانتشار العام، يبقى المحتوى المعرفي والمنظم الأداة الأقوى لدفع الجمهور نحو التفاعل الحقيقي والنشط مع أهداف ومبادرات الرؤية.

1. Introduction

Today's landscape of digital diplomacy and government communication has seen social media platforms shift from basic broadcasting channels into essential spaces for shaping strategic narratives. When it comes to state-driven transformation efforts, platforms such as X (previously Twitter) act as the main bridge connecting the government with its citizens and the international community. By sharing carefully selected content, these official profiles work to inform the public, raise awareness, and steer public opinion, turning high-level policy objectives into active digital participation.

A prime example of this kind of initiative is Saudi Vision 2030, which serves as the Kingdom's extensive blueprint for diversifying the economy, advancing social reforms, and modernizing the culture. Within this framework, the official @SaudiVision2030 online presence holds a crucial position. Rather than just acting as a standard news feed, it functions as the primary digital center responsible for telling the story of the Kingdom's continuous evolution to

local citizens and global observers alike. Taking a closer look at how this profile is managed offers important clues into the wider strategies behind state-backed communication.

Figuring out the mechanics behind this online strategy requires looking past basic surface-level metrics to systematically evaluate the actual content being published. This means breaking down the types of visual media used, who the posts are aimed at, the core themes of the messages, and the persuasive techniques applied to encourage people to interact.

This project conducts a thorough quantitative content analysis of the @SaudiVision2030 account on X. By reviewing the official posts shared throughout the first 25 days of January 2026, the study delivers an empirical overview of the account's online approach. It evaluates how the initiative turns broad national goals into everyday digital messaging, and more importantly, how online audiences engage with and react to these strategic storylines.

2. Research Objectives

A targeted set of empirical goals guided this study to allow for a systematic evaluation of how the @SaudiVision2030 account manages its strategic communication. The study design isolates and measures the core variables shaping the account's digital messaging, with a focus on understanding how these elements ultimately drive audience behavior.

Specifically, the project aimed to achieve the following:

- **Identify formatting and linguistic patterns:** Pinpointing the preferred media types (e.g., videos, static imagery, infographics) and the main languages (Arabic, English, or both) relied upon for information distribution.

- **Map thematic focus areas:** Breaking down the distribution of strategic subjects prioritized over the study period, tracking topics ranging from economic shifts and quality of life to global partnerships and sustainability.
 - **Deconstruct persuasive tactics:** Sorting the linguistic intent of the content (such as educational, informative, or motivational) and pinpointing the core persuasive appeals—whether rational or emotional—woven into the institutional messaging.
 - **Assess audience orientation:** Determining whether the digital output was constructed primarily for local citizens or tailored toward an international demographic.
 - **Gauge digital effectiveness and user engagement:** Logging the raw interaction data (likes, reposts, replies, and views) to compute a standardized engagement rate per publication. This final step isolates exactly which blend of formatting, functional intent, and persuasive appeal managed to drive the strongest proportional public response.
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3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Sampling Strategy

To systematically assess the digital messaging of the official @SaudiVision2030 X (previously Twitter) account, this research utilized a quantitative content analysis approach.

The initial sampling plan aimed to collect a comprehensive overview of the account's operations by setting a target of 25 posts. The study's timeframe was strictly limited to the initial 25 days of January 2026 (spanning January 1 to January 25). To avoid any personal selection bias, the

agreed-upon procedure required choosing just the first original post published on any specific day.

Strict criteria for inclusion and exclusion were applied to the data to maintain the rigorousness of the analysis. The coding guidelines explicitly ruled out replies and quoted posts, ensuring the evaluation focused solely on original content released directly by the organization. Additionally, if the account shared a connected thread of posts, only the very first post in that sequence was added to the sample. This prevented a single topic or event from skewing the overall data.

After applying these collection rules, it became clear that the account's actual rate of publishing original content during this window fell short of the initial target. Since the methodology required skipping days without new original posts, strictly adhering to the exclusion guidelines yielded a final, purposive sample consisting of all eligible posts (N=7) shared across the 25-day timeframe.

From an academic standpoint, shifting from a fixed quota to capturing all available, qualifying data within the set period actually boosts the study's ecological validity. Instead of padding the numbers with irrelevant replies just to hit a quota, the resulting sample (N=7) offers a precise, unfiltered view of the @SaudiVision2030 account's core strategic broadcasting habits throughout January 2026.

3.2. Coding Frame and Variables

We manually reviewed every post in our sample using a standardized coding frame. This approach helped maintain high inter-coder reliability and ensured a systematic analysis across six main qualitative variables:

- **Format:** We categorized the primary media element of each post based on a specific hierarchy. When a post contained multiple types of media, we coded it using this priority order: video (which includes live, animated, or standard clips), infographic (custom graphics featuring text or charts), image (basic illustrations or photographs), and finally, text (posts lacking any attached media).
- **Language:** We coded the language of the delivery as either exclusively Arabic (AR), exclusively English (EN), or Bilingual (BIL) for posts featuring both.
- **Topic:** The main subject matter was assigned to one of nine strategic pillars. These categories were T1 (Economic transformation), T2 (Quality of life), T3 (Tourism & heritage), T4 (Sustainability), T5 (Education & human capital), T6 (Technology & innovation), T7 (International partnerships), T8 (Governance & reform), and T9 (Other/Mixed, used for posts that gave equal weight to multiple topics).
- **Function:** We evaluated the underlying communicative goal of each post. Categories included Informative (sharing announcements or facts), Educational (breaking down concepts or processes), Guidance (telling the audience to take a specific action), Motivational (using aspirational or inspiring language), and Warning (delivering cautionary messages).

- **Persuasive Appeal:** The core rhetorical strategy fell into one of four categories: Rational (relying on logic, statistics, and numbers), Emotional (leveraging evocative imagery, national pride, or aspirational wording), Fear, or Humour.
- **Audience:** We used context and language to figure out the intended demographic target. Posts were labeled as either Domestic (DOM, targeting Saudi citizens) or International (INT, focused on global audiences or foreign investors).

3.3. Engagement Metrics and Data Collection

To gauge how the public received these strategic narratives and measure overall digital effectiveness, we pulled quantitative engagement data for every post in the sample. Social media content has a natural lifespan, so to guarantee reliable metrics, we recorded this data well past the standard 72-hour stabilization window following publication.

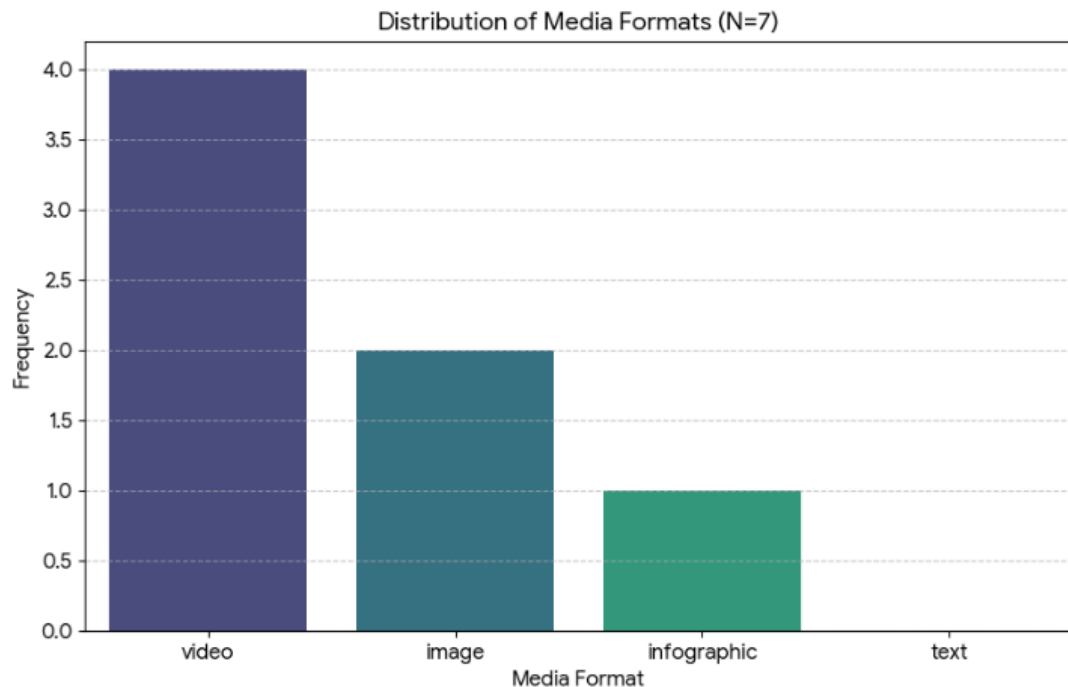
We logged the raw numbers for Views, Replies, Reposts, and Likes exactly as they appeared on the platform. However, to look past simple vanity metrics and create a standard measure of active public participation compared to the overall reach, we calculated an Engagement Rate (Engagement %) for every post. To compute this, we added up the active interactions (Replies + Reposts + Likes), divided that sum by the total Views, and multiplied the final number by 100 to get a percentage.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Analysis of Strategic Content

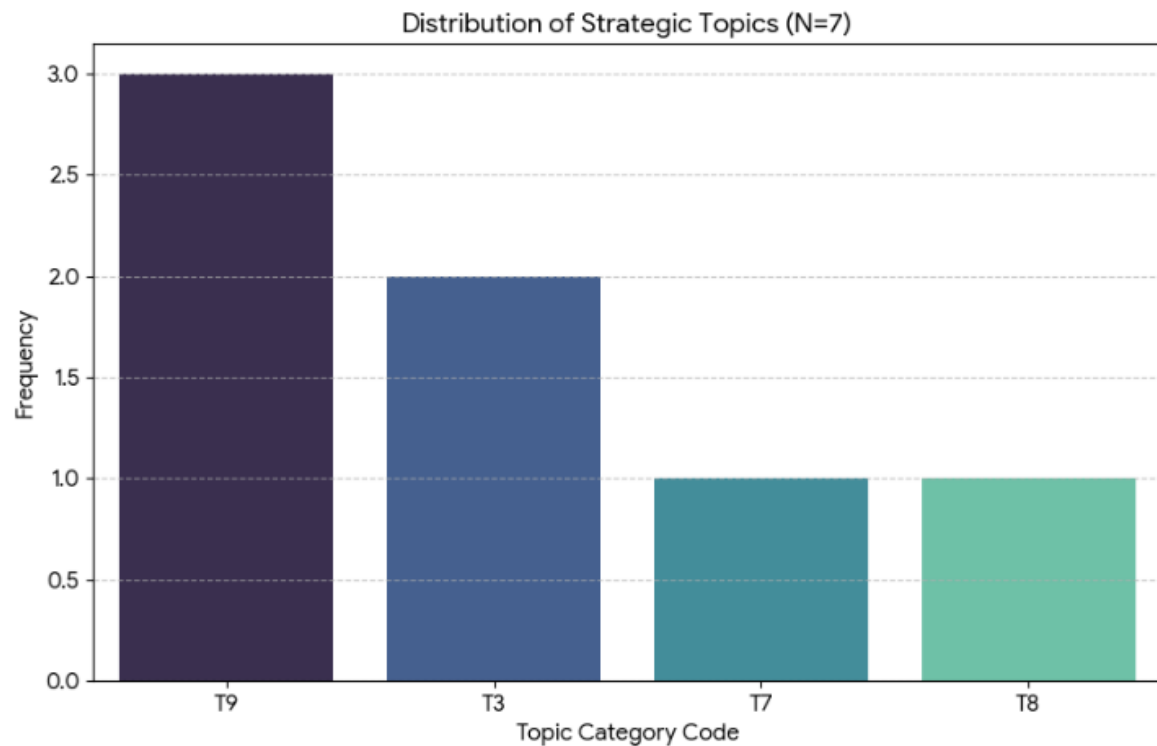
By applying the coding frame to the purposive sample (N=7), we established a clear descriptive profile of the @SaudiVision2030 account's digital strategy during this timeframe.

Media Format and Delivery Our analysis of media formats shows a strong institutional lean toward high-quality visual storytelling. Video content stood out as the primary medium, making up over half of the sample (n=4). Static images appeared twice (n=2), and a detailed infographic was used once (n=1). Notably, there were no text-only posts, which highlights the account's commitment to using multimedia as the exclusive way to capture user attention.



Linguistic and Audience Targeting The account's language choices show a clear priority for local engagement. Most posts (n=5) were shared only in Arabic, which matches the strategy of focusing on a Domestic (DOM) audience. Meanwhile, two posts were released strictly in English (n=2). These English posts were clearly designed for an International (INT) audience, specifically highlighting global events—such as the World Economic Forum—to speak directly to international partners and investors.

Thematic Focus (Topics) The thematic data reveals a focus that is both diverse and concentrated. The most common category was "Other/Mixed" (T9) (n=3), used for broad posts that combined multiple Vision pillars, such as high-level progress updates. Among specific pillars, "Tourism & heritage" (T3) was the most frequent (n=2). The rest of the content was split between "International partnerships" (T7) (n=1) and "Governance & reform" (T8) (n=1).



Communicative Function and Persuasive Appeal The account's messaging balanced factual reporting with educational and motivational content. Informative (INF) posts, which focus on reporting announcements or facts, were the most frequent (n=3). Educational (EDU) posts—which explain the "how" behind initiatives—and Motivational (MOT) posts, which use aspirational language, were used equally (n=2 each).

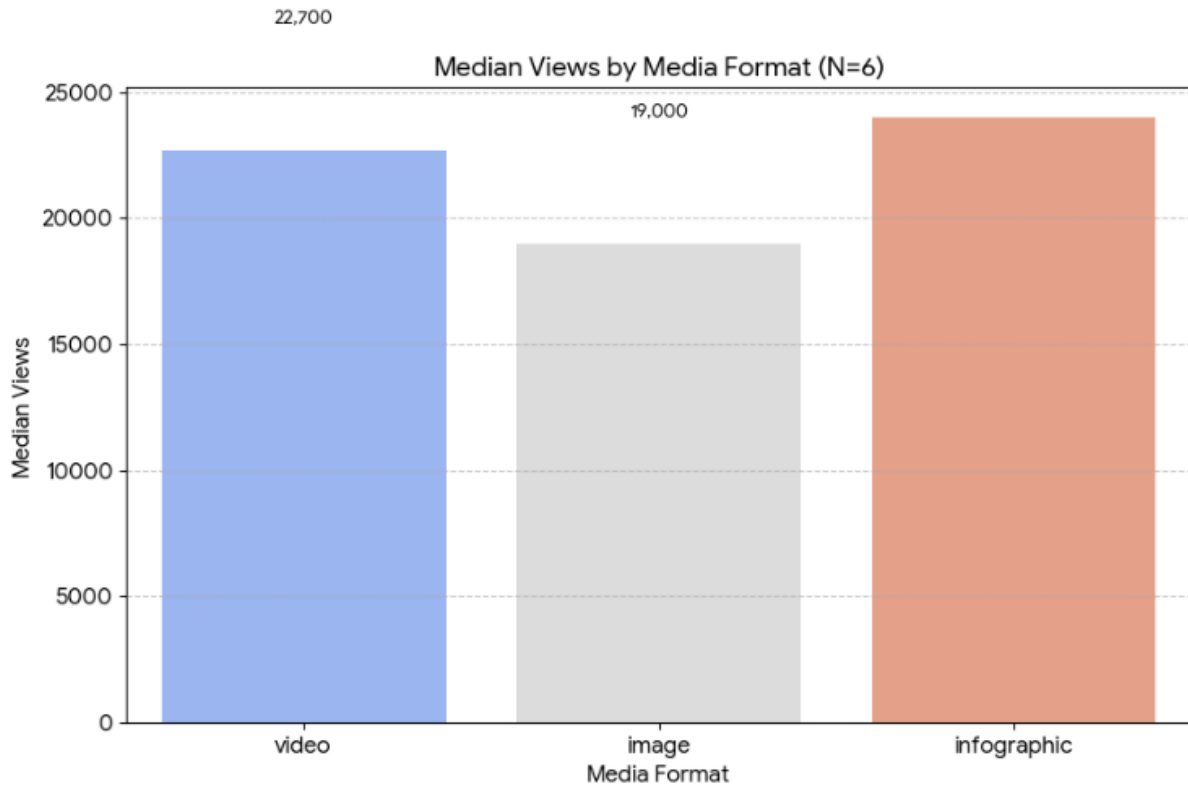
There was a direct link between the purpose of a post and its persuasive style. Every Informative and Educational post relied solely on Rational (RAT) appeals, using logic, official data, and statistics (n=4). Conversely, every Motivational post used Emotional (EMO) appeals, utilizing pride and evocative visuals to connect with the audience (n=3).

4.2. Engagement and Performance Metrics

The final stage of the results examines the digital impact of the account's content, measuring success through a combination of overall reach (Views) and active participation from the audience (Likes, Reposts, and Replies).

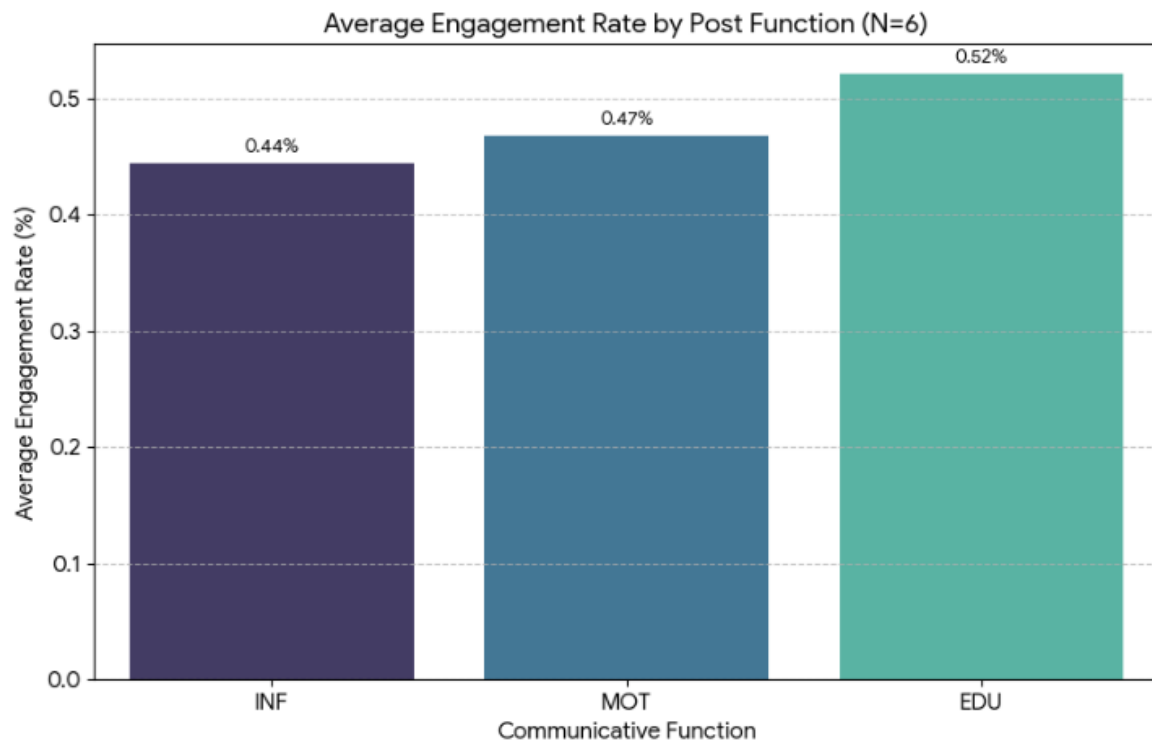
Reach and Visibility Trends The study found notable fluctuations in reach throughout January 2026. Total visibility for the sample was largely driven by a single statistical anomaly: the January 1st milestone video (P01), which racked up 633,000 views. This specific post pushed the average reach to 122,500 views, though the median reach of 21,500 views serves as a more accurate reflection of standard daily performance.

When breaking down reach by media format, infographics surprisingly led with the highest median visibility at 24,000 views per post. Video content followed closely behind with a median of 22,850 views, while static images saw the lowest median visibility in the group at 19,000 views.



Public Interaction and Engagement Rates Beyond passive viewing, the account saw consistent levels of active engagement. On average, each post earned roughly 100 likes, 65 reposts, and 12 replies. To normalize these numbers across the sample, the study identified a mean Engagement Rate of 0.47%.

A significant trend appeared when comparing engagement rates to the primary purpose of the posts. Educational (EDU) content—specifically posts designed to explain the "why" and "how" of Vision projects—achieved the highest average engagement at 0.52%. This outperformed both Motivational (MOT) content (0.47%) and strictly Informative (INF) factual updates (0.44%).



These figures suggest that while high-budget videos and emotional hooks are great for creating broad visibility or "viral" moments, the digital public is actually most likely to engage deeply with content that offers clear, rational, and structured details regarding the initiative's progress.

5. Discussion

The results of this content analysis offer a deeper look into the digital identity of Saudi Vision 2030 during a key phase of its development. By looking at content trends alongside user engagement data, several clear strategic communication patterns become evident.

5.1. The Primacy of Visual and Domestic Engagement

The heavy use of video media (n=4) and Arabic-language posts (n=5) points toward a "Domestic-First" visual strategy. Rather than acting as a standard news wire, the account functions as a digital storyteller. It prioritizes high-quality production values to maintain a sense of continuous progress within the Kingdom. Relying on Arabic as the main language—even when discussing complex economic shifts—reinforces the idea that local citizens remain the most vital stakeholders in the Vision's digital narrative.

5.2. The Rational-Emotional Dichotomy

There is a sophisticated rhetorical divide in how the account uses persuasive techniques. The data reveals a strict connection between the purpose of a post and the type of appeal used:

- **Motivational posts** were exclusively paired with **Emotional appeals**. These messages often use a collective "we" and "together" tone to build national pride and encourage aspirational thinking.
- **Informative and Educational posts** relied entirely on **Rational appeals**. This indicates a strategic effort to ground the Vision's "ambition" in concrete data and logical presentation, serving as a necessary balance to the more emotional and aspirational content.

5.3. Reach vs. Depth: The "Educational" Advantage

One of the most important findings is the inverse relationship between total reach and the depth of engagement. While the January 1st "milestone" video achieved massive viral visibility (633,000 views), it was the Educational (EDU) posts that recorded the highest proportional engagement rate (0.52%).

This suggests that while large-scale, cinematic announcements are great for attracting attention (Reach), the public is more likely to actively participate—via likes, reposts, and replies—with content that clarifies the "how" and "why" behind specific projects. For long-term digital impact, the @SaudiVision2030 account appears to benefit more from depth-oriented educational content than from purely reach-driven motivational messaging.

6. Conclusion

This study offered a data-driven assessment of how the @SaudiVision2030 X account managed its digital communication during the first 25 days of January 2026. By applying a systematic quantitative content analysis, we unpacked the account's strategic framework, uncovering a multi-layered approach to building state narratives.

The account follows a disciplined strategy, using a "Domestic-First" visual identity that pairs high-quality video content with Arabic messaging to sustain national momentum. The data points to a key rhetorical balance: while emotional and motivational hooks effectively maximize reach, it is the rational, educational content that generates the deepest levels of audience interaction. In the end, the @SaudiVision2030 account acts as much more than a simple news source; it is a

dynamic educational platform that turns complex national changes into relatable and engaging digital stories.

7. Limitations and Future Research

Although these findings offer important insights, there are a few academic limitations to note. Primarily, the sample size (N=7) was limited by the account's actual output of original posts during the timeframe and our strict policy of excluding quote-tweets and replies. While this kept the data clean, a larger dataset covering a longer period would be needed to identify long-term trends.

Additionally, this study relied on manual coding, which always carries a small risk of human subjectivity when interpreting broad or mixed topics. Future studies could expand on this by comparing the @SaudiVision2030 account with other institutional profiles across the GCC. This would help determine if the "Educational-Rational" engagement boost we observed is part of a wider regional trend in digital communication.

8. References & Appendices

- **Appendix A:** Completed Research Dataset (SaudiVision2030_Coding.xlsx).
- **Appendix B:** Coding Protocol and Variable Definitions (Coding_Cheat_Sheet.pdf).

Data Source: Official @SaudiVision2030 X (Twitter) Account, verified January 1–25, 2026.