



EXPLORING THE ADOPTION OF REELS AND SHORT VIDEOS IN THE NIGERIAN NEWS INDUSTRY

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Cite this article:

Farrau, A., Ezekiel, J. (2024), Exploring the Adoption of Reels and Short Videos in the Nigerian News Industry. British Journal of Mass Communication and Media Research 4(3), 1-21. DOI: 10.52589/BJMCMR-RXKZXVRI

Manuscript History

Received: 16 Jul 2024

Accepted: 13 Sep 2024

Published: 23 Sep 2024

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ABSTRACT: *The advancement in digital technologies has indeed changed the consumption and delivery of news. Through the nature and operations of the web ecosystem, short videos and reels can be regarded as a kind of news delivery due to the features they possess for news curation and dissemination. This paper focused on analyzing the potential of utilizing short videos and reels in reaching young audiences in the news media industry and the extent to which news media organizations have embraced the use of short videos and reels. Drawing from the Diffusion of Innovations theory, this study aimed at identifying the process through which news organizations adopt short videos and reels. Considering the research questions posed, an exploratory research design was adopted. For this study, the in-depth interview method was adopted with a purposive sample of ten (10) professionals drawn from different news organizations in Nigeria. The sample comprised two participants from strictly-online news organization, Legit NG Lagos; four participants from television stations, NTA Kaduna and Galaxy TV Kaduna; three participants from print news organization, Daily Trust, Abuja and The Nation, Lagos; and finally one participant from a radio station, Liberty Radio Kaduna. Data was collected through face-to-face and telephone interviews using a semi-structured interview guide that asked the participants questions on their understanding about the use of short videos and reels as a means of conveying news information. Data analysis involved manual coding of themes. The findings revealed that short videos, particularly reels, have the potential of attracting younger audiences. The comparative analysis showed that short videos and reels are being adopted to a varying degree by these news organizations; strictly-online media organizations are leading the adoption rate of this format. The study offered some recommendations on how to effectively address challenges regarding the adoption of reels and short videos for news curation and delivery in the mainstream news media organizations in Nigeria.*

KEYWORDS: Short videos, Reels, News dissemination, Multimedia journalism, News industry.



INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian news industry has undergone transformation in recent years, driven by the convergence of traditional media with digital technology and the adoption of social media platforms (Salaverría-Aliaga, 2019). With a population exceeding 200 million people (World Bank, 2021) and an increase in internet penetration rate, Nigeria has witnessed a surge in smart devices usage and social media engagement (Adegbola & Gearhart, 2019). This digital revolution has fundamentally reshaped the culture of news consumption and production in the country, giving rise to diverse forms of digital news formats, with short videos and reels emerging as prominent tools for news dissemination.

Traditionally, Nigeria's news industry was dominated by print and broadcast media, with television and radio serving as the primary sources of information for the majority of the population (Schäfer & Painter, 2021). However, the advent of the internet era marked a significant paradigm shift in the way news is accessed and consumed. Online news portals emerged as alternatives to print and social media platforms and revolutionized news dissemination by allowing instantaneous sharing and engagement (Chua & Westlund, 2019). Within this digital landscape, short videos and reels have rapidly gained popularity among Nigerians. Short videos, typically lasting between one minute to five minutes, have become an engaging and succinct medium for presenting news highlights and capturing viewers' attention (Zayani, 2021). On the other hand, reels, native to Instagram, Facebook and Toktok which are short, looping videos, often set to audio, provide a creative and dynamic means for journalists and news organizations to convey news events, stories and opinions (Kaye, Zeng & Wikstrom, 2022). Instagram and TikTok, in particular, have emerged as influential platforms for the dissemination of short videos and reels in Nigeria (Nwagwu & Akintoye, 2023). Instagram's reels feature and TikTok's friendly interface have attracted a massive user base, comprising various demographics, with a significant representation of the youth population (Guerrero, 2023).

As a result, these platforms have become potent channels for news organizations to engage with their audiences and extend their reach beyond traditional media (Lewis, 2020). The possible adoption of short videos and reels in the Nigerian news media industry has been potentially driven by the widespread availability of smartphones and the improvement in internet connectivity have facilitated the creation and consumption of video content on the go (Apuke & Tunca, 2022). With a growing number of Nigerians owning smartphones, these devices have become powerful tools for capturing and sharing news in real-time, making news production more accessible to both professional journalists and citizen reporters. More so, the vicissitude nature of modern lifestyle has led to a decline in attention spans, prompting a shift towards shorter and more engaging content (Phan, 2023). Short videos and reels cater to this preference, allowing traditional news organizations to package information in an appealing manner that suits the modern audience. Also, the interactive nature of social media platforms has facilitated higher levels of audience engagement with short-form news content (Gwadabe, 2021). Viewers can react, comment and share videos, actively participating in news conversations and contributing to the viral dissemination of information (Agbese, 2022).

However, while short videos and reels offer opportunities for news organizations to reach and engage with more audiences, they also present possible challenges to do with adoption and integration. Technical landscape of digital creation, distributing and managing content may require different approaches and skills other than the existing traditional news culture in the



media industry. It is against this backdrop that this study deems it essential to investigate the adoption, potential and implications of short videos and reels in the Nigerian news industry. Oyedokun and Oladesu (2022) noted that the Nigerian news industry is facing numerous challenges in the era of digital media, while their counterparts in other countries have gone far in the adoption of technologies in the newsroom, several news outlets in developing countries such as Nigeria are still struggling with the adoption of these innovations in their operations.

DEFINING SHORT VIDEO AND REELS

Short videos and reels are recent concepts, largely associated with the social media landscape. Short video refers to compact, appealing audiovisual content that lasts for a brief duration, typically ranging from a few seconds to a few minutes (Sparacino, 2022). Yang, Zhao and Ma (2019) emphasized that the length of a short video is usually measured in seconds. They reach the audience through mobile internet technology, with entertainment, science, singing and fashion as the main content, so as to gain their (Yang, Zhao & Ma, 2019). To Chen, Valdovinos Kaye and Zeng (2021), short video refers to video content that is shorter than five minutes, often between 15 and 60 seconds, distributed digitally by platforms such as Tiktok and some other social media platforms. Short videos are relatively new media formats with features such as low-cost production, highly spreadable content and blurred boundaries between producers and consumers (Kaye, Chen & Zeng, 2021). These videos have gained significant prominence in the digital age, appealing to audiences' preferences for concise and easily consumable information (Tufan, 2021). In the context of the Nigerian news industry, short videos have emerged as a transformative medium for news dissemination, presenting news outlets to communicate to their audience (Oparaugo, 2021).

One of the defining characteristics of short videos is their brevity and conciseness (Joy, 2023). The visual appeal of short videos plays a role in their popularity, as they employ captivating imagery, animations and graphics to convey messages effectively Naik, Suryawanshi & Atre, 2023). This visual storytelling approach enhances engagement and retention, making short videos an ideal format for news highlights and breaking news updates. The shareability and virality of short videos are significant factors driving their adoption in the Nigerian news environment (Mukhongo, 2020). Due to their compact nature and enthralling content, short videos have a good probability of being shared widely on social media platforms, reaching broader audiences beyond the traditional news consumer base. Mobile accessibility is another key aspect of short videos' popularity. With the prevalence of smartphones and mobile devices, audiences can access short videos conveniently while on the go (Shutsko, 2020). This aligns with contemporary lifestyle patterns and consumption habits, further contributing to the appeal of short videos in the Nigerian news industry.

The term "Reel" in the context of digital media has its root origin in the word "reel," which originally comes from the Old English word "hreol," meaning "a revolving frame or cylinder used for winding and unwinding thread or line." The word "reel" has been historically used to describe various devices, such as fishing reels and film reels used in old movie projectors (MacDonald, 2020). The term "Reel" in the context of digital media refers to short, engaging and looped video content that is commonly found on social media platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok (Mordecai, 2023). The looped playback characteristic of digital reels is reminiscent of the repetitive winding and unwinding motion seen in traditional reels, making the term a fitting description for this type of visual content on social media platforms.



Reels are designed to capture and retain audience attention through their visual storytelling and interactive features, creating an immersive and entertaining viewing experience (Hukerikar, 2023). As a relatively newer format, reels have rapidly gained popularity, particularly among younger audiences, due to their stackable and easily consumable nature (Steiner, 2018). Reels are distinct from conventional videos in that they are typically shorter in duration, usually lasting up to 60 seconds (Craig & Cunningham, 2019). This brevity aligns with the preferences of modern-day audiences who seek quick and concise content. The format of reels allows content creators, including news outlets, to deliver impactful and engaging information within a short span of time, making it suitable for presenting news highlights and captivating stories.

The looped feature of reels is a notable aspect of their appeal (Leaver, Highfield & Abidin, 2020). Unlike traditional linear videos, reels automatically replay in a continuous loop, encouraging viewers to watch the content multiple times. This looped playback fosters higher engagement and increased message retention. Another key characteristic of reels is their interactive nature. Content creators can use features like music, text overlays, stickers and filters to add creativity and dynamism to their Reels (Towner & Muñoz, 2022). Moreover, reels often include call-to-action prompts, such as liking, commenting, or sharing the content, which further stimulates audience participation (Corcos & Hodara, 2023). The format of reels is suited for mobile devices, considering the prevalence of smartphones and the mobile nature of social media platforms (Parke, 2022). Reels mobile accessibility allows news organizations to reach wider audiences and engage with viewers in real-time. In fact, short videos are looped into reels and combined to bolster engagement and immersive experience for the audiences. This digital feature of social media platforms presents good opportunities for the news media outlets to create and disseminate highly engaging news content for an increased number of audiences.

STUDIES ON THE POTENTIAL AND ADOPTION OF SHORT VIDEOS AND REELS IN NEWS MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS

A number of studies have explored the potential of short videos and reels as communicative tools in various contexts. In their study, Plaisime, Robertson-James, Mejia, Núñez, Wolf and Reels (2020) investigated the potential of social media, including short videos and reels, in promoting health among teenagers. Although the specific focus of the study was on health promotion, the findings provided valuable knowledge on the potential of short videos and reels as a tool for news media organizations. A cross-sectional mixed-methods study design was used by the authors, in which a survey was administered to 152 youth (ages: 13-18 years). In addition, four focus groups were conducted with 26 teens to elaborate on the quantitative findings. The findings highlight the significant role of social media in the lives of teenagers. The study reveals that teenagers actively use social media as a source of information, entertainment and social connection. This identified the potential of short videos and reels to capture the attention of teenagers due to their engaging and visually appealing nature.

Chobanyan and Nikolskaya (2021) explored the potential of TikTok as a platform for television news organizations to reach younger audiences. Using both quantitative and qualitative content analysis, the study analyzed the top two accounts of traditional TV news on TikTok: NBC News and CBS News. The findings of the study highlighted the potential benefits and challenges of using TikTok as a tool for television news organizations. The researchers found that TikTok can serve as a platform for news organizations to experiment with creative formats, engage with younger demographics and increase brand visibility. However, they also identified challenges related to content adaptation, maintaining journalistic standards and navigating the



platform's algorithmic nature. In a similar vein, Negreira-Rey, Vázquez-Herrero and López-García (2022) analyzed the presence of journalists on TikTok through the type of content and strategies used in adapting to this platform. The research is based on methodological triangulation. First, a database of journalists on TikTok was developed and the profiles were reviewed. Second, a questionnaire survey was developed. Finally, a content analysis of profiles exceeding 100,000 followers was conducted. The findings of the study revealed journalists leverage the platform's features, such as short videos, creative editing and engaging storytelling techniques, to convey news content in a format that resonates with younger audiences.

Also, Newman (2022) examined the strategies employed by publishers to create and distribute news content on TikTok. The study focuses on how publishers are adapting to the TikTok platform, examining their strategies for creating and distributing news content to engage with the platform's younger user base. The study identified the top news brands in 44 countries from Digital News Report. The study excluded India, where TikTok is banned and Hong Kong, where it is unavailable. The findings of the study revealed that news media organizations are exploring various storytelling techniques and adapting their content to suit the unique characteristics of TikTok, such as the short video format, dynamic editing and interactive features. Jain, Kachwala, Sopariwala, Melwani and Sanji (2022) focused on the importance of Instagram Reels in promoting new products, but the insights can be relevant to understanding the potential of short videos and reels for news media organizations. The study highlighted the growing significance of Instagram Reels as a promotional tool. Snowball sampling was used and in-depth interviews were conducted with 25 of successful female micro Instagram influencers. The findings revealed that Instagram reels are appealing towards the youth of this generation which generates more attraction towards the brand and its products, moreover as more people often spend most of our time on social media watching reels so it becomes a really big factor for brands to promote their products.

Yuvarani and Saravanan (2021) studied the power of social persuasion and digital marketing for brands by consumers using Instagram Reels during the pandemic period of 2020-21. The study adopted an online survey and took 100 samples to measure the reach of Instagram reels among people of age group 19 to 45 years who try to do online shopping once after they get persuaded watching the reels used for marketing. The findings highlighted the power of social persuasion and digital marketing through Instagram Reels. By implication, the study's findings shed light on the potential of leveraging Instagram Reels as a tool for news media organizations to effectively reach and engage younger audiences who are active users of the platform.

Other studies have compared emerging media adoption across various types of media outlets. Bock (2012) explored the integration of video content in newspaper journalism and its impact on storytelling. He examined how the adoption of video in news media organizations contributes to new narrative forms and enhances the overall news experience. The study revealed that newspaper journalists, both writers and still photojournalists, are responding in ways that allow them to claim a distinct form of multimedia presentation, thereby sustaining their place in the traditional journalistic hierarchy.

Rodríguez-Ferrándiz, Tur-Viñes and Contreras (2016) explored the relationship between television series, media strategies and user tactics in the context of transmedia storytelling. They investigated how television series engage with audiences through YouTube and how user tactics influence media strategies in the transmedia environment. Anchored on computer-mediated communication theory, the authors selected a sample of 314 short YouTube videos



about 21 Spanish TV series that premiered in 2013 by Spain's three most popular mainstream television networks (Telecinco, Antena 3 and Lal). These videos, which together received more than 24 million views, were classified according to two key variables: the nature (official or nonofficial) of the YouTube channel on which they were located and the exclusivity of their content (already broadcast on TV or Web exclusive). The findings shed light on the ways in which television series utilize YouTube as a platform for expanding their narratives and engaging with audiences. The study revealed that television series employ various media strategies on YouTube, including the creation of official channels, release of promotional content, behind-the-scenes videos, fan interactions and interactive storytelling elements.

Saragih and Natsir (2023) examined the use of Instagram as a journalistic platform, focusing on the @Kompascom account. The purpose of the study was to analyze how Instagram is utilized by the Indonesian newspaper media organization, Kompas and to assess its effectiveness as a journalistic tool. Through a descriptive design with a qualitative approach, the findings revealed that Instagram is used by @Kompascom as a strategic platform for news dissemination and engagement with the audience. The research findings show that Instagram is a means of publishing journalistic works that contain photos, captions, videos and news narratives.

This is still an emerging area of research in media studies. Over the years, thorough investigations have been done to examine the phenomenon of news industries and how they disseminate contents by different researchers using different variables such as credibility of social media platforms, the role of technology in shaping news dissemination (Kümpel, Karnowski & Keyling, 2015; Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos & Nielsen, 2019), audience demographics, attitudes, preferences in relation to news consumption and dissemination (Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2013; Mitchell, Gottfried, Kiley & Matsa, 2019), impact of factors such as journalistic objectivity, framing and gatekeeping on the dissemination of news (Zhu & Weaver, 2017; Tsfati, 2020), impact of factors such as media concentration, ownership diversity, government regulation on news dissemination (McChesney, 2013; Donders, Raats & Deuze, 2019) and economic factors such as advertising revenue, market competition, business models have been studied in relation to news dissemination among others. There is still the need to examine this phenomenon in varying contexts, with very limited analysis of the Nigerian media environment. One area that the current study addressed is the specific examination of Nigerian news media organizations' experiences in adopting short videos and reels in the industry. While other studies provided a broader perspective on how publishers are learning to utilize social media platforms and their features, there is a need to explore the Nigerian context and the unique factors that may impact the adoption and effectiveness of short videos and reels for Nigerian news organizations.

Therefore, specific objectives of the study are as follows: to explore the potential of short videos and reels as a tool for news media organizations to reach younger audiences; and to compare the adoption of short videos and reels among different news media organizations.



METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the context of this study, Diffusion of Innovations Theory can be applied to explain the process by which news media organizations in Nigeria may adopt and integrate the use of short videos and reels into their practice. This theory traces the progression by which the new idea or practice is communicated to the people through certain channels over a period of time. It attempts to explain the variables that influence how and why users adopt a new information medium (Asemah, 2011). According to Kaye and Medoff (2001), diffusion of innovation is an area of study which includes evaluating how information about the processes and technologies is communicated, evaluated and adopted (or not adopted). The main thrust of the diffusion of innovation theory is how the new ideas and discoveries spread to members of a social system. It is a theory that explains how innovations are introduced and adopted.

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory can provide a framework for understanding the process by which news media organizations in Nigeria may adopt and integrate short videos and reels into their practice and identify potential strategies for facilitating this process. The research method adopted in this study was an in-depth interview (IDI), employing a qualitative research approach. The qualitative approach enabled the researcher to gather comprehensive information about the adoption of short videos and reels in Nigerian news industries, including the factors influencing their adoption.

The population of this study consisted of professionals working in various news organizations in Nigeria. This includes journalists, editors, news directors and multimedia content creators who are involved in news production and decision-making processes. Also, social media managers and digital content strategists responsible for curating and disseminating news content on digital platforms were also considered part of the population. A sample size of ten respondents was drawn from different news media organizations, using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The news media organization was of four typologies including Newspaper (Print), Radio (Audio Broadcast), Television (Audio-Visual Broadcast) and a strictly online-based news media organization.

The participants from each media organization included a managerial staff or editor who is involved in news production and decision-making processes and also a journalist, social media manager or digital content strategists responsible for creating and disseminating news content on digital platforms. This is important because there is a need to gain understanding of the phenomenon from decision makers, the managerial staff, such as editors and news directors, who play a crucial role in shaping the overall content and direction of the news organization. Also, journalist staff, social media managers and digital content strategists are the individuals directly involved in the day-to-day production and dissemination of news content, their experiences and perspectives are invaluable in understanding the practical implications of incorporating short videos and reels in news coverage.

**Table 1: Population of Professionals from News Media Organizations in Nigeria**

S/N	Respondent	Qualification/Rank	Media Organization	Media Typology
1.	Adeshina Adebisi	Principal Producer	NTA Kaduna	Audio-Visual (Broadcast)
2.	Dauda Mohammed	Ass. Manager	NTA Kaduna	Audio-Visual (Broadcast)
3.	Abdulazeez Ahmed Kadir	General Manager	<i>Liberty Radio</i> , Kaduna	Audio (Broadcast)
4.	Bosan Yakusak	Bureau Chief	<i>Galaxy TV</i> , Kaduna	Audio-Visual (Broadcast)
5.	Frank Etioh	Social Media Manager	<i>Galaxy TV</i> , Lagos	Audio-Visual (Broadcast)
6.	Sagir Kano Salleh	Online Editor	<i>Daily Trust</i> Abuja	Newspaper (Print)
7.	Abdullahi Abubakar Umar	Social Media Content Producer	<i>Daily Trust</i> Abuja	Newspaper (Print)
8.	Rahaman Abiola	Editor in Chief	<i>Legit NG</i> , Lagos	Online Media
9.	Theophilus Ogbagi	Reel Creator	<i>Legit NG</i> , Lagos	Online Media
10.	Alao Abiodun	Fact Checker/Journalist	<i>The Nation</i> , Lagos	Newspaper (Print)

Source: Researcher Input (2023)

The primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured approach enabled the researcher to have a predetermined set of open-ended questions while also allowing for spontaneous probing and follow-up questions to explore emerging themes in more depth (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson & Kangasniemi, 2016). These interviews were conducted face-to-face and virtually through telephone, depending on the preference and availability of the participants. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit participants' perceptions, experiences and understanding towards the adoption of short videos and reels in their respective news organizations. The questions covered various aspects, including the decision-making process, perceived benefits and the overall practice in incorporating short videos and reels in news reporting and audience engagement. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the interviews. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and the data was organized, coded and categorized into themes and sub-themes manually. These themes were used to interpret the findings, drawing meaningful conclusions. The results were presented using thematic mapping, descriptive narratives and direct quotations.



DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study explored the potentials of short videos and reels and compared the adoption of these formats among news organizations in Nigeria. The theme “Potential” explores the perceived capabilities and possibilities of short videos and reels. It investigates the effectiveness of these formats in capturing the attention of younger audiences, its role in enhancing engagement and its potential contribution to the revenue base of news organizations. The “Comparative Analysis” examines the varying degrees of adoption among different news organizations, this is based on their similarities in distribution strategy, rate of adoption into news organizations’ daily practice and the reported challenges faced while adopting short videos and reels.

PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF SHORT VIDEOS AND REELS FOR NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

Sensitization, Education and Information Sharing

The idea of effectiveness emerged in respondents’ perceptions of short videos and reels as powerful tools for sensitization, education and information dissemination, particularly among the youth. Adeshino Adebisi who is a principal producer in NTA Kaduna calls attention to the potency of these media forms, stating, “it’s a very powerful tool in sensitization, in educating, informing the youth on social media.” This sentiment was resounded by Abdullahi Abubakar Umar who is social media content producer at *Daily Trust* Abuja, he points out the significance of short videos and reels in distributing information, especially to media houses, “the use of short videos reels are significant In terms of distributing information most especially to the media house and one thing with this new generation is that they always like what is easy...they don’t have interest in anything reading long pages of books” (Abdullahi Abubakar Umar). The consensus among respondents suggests that short videos and reels are perceived as effective means of communicating important messages, catering to the preferences of a demography that values concise and easily digestible content.

Effective Due to Short Attention Span of Younger Audiences

Respondents noted the shorter attention span inherent in most audiences as another factor that further contributes to its potential in capturing the attention of younger audiences (Abdulazeez Ahmed Kadir, Alao Abiodun, Rahaman Abiola and Theophilus Ogbagi). Abdulazeez Ahmed Kadir, the general manager of *Liberty Radio* Kaduna focuses on the short attention span of younger audiences, noting, “Short videos and reels are very effective especially for younger generations because the younger generation has a short attention span compared to the older ones.” Alao Abiodun, a fact checker/journalist at *The Nation* Newspaper, Lagos also connotes that “we have discovered that young viewers have a high attention span because they want the information to be summarized in a very brief way”. Rahaman Abiola the Editor in Chief at *Legit NG*, an online news platform stated that “it is very short and it aligns with the people of the internet...the time duration they use in watching a reel can’t be compared with that of a whole video clip”. Theophilus Ogbagi who is a Reel Creator at *Legit NG*, Lagos said that “younger people don’t read, once they storm in a longer article. Reels help us to keep the straight point to bring out a summary of everything we have been talking about in a simpler form”. This suggests that short videos and reels provide an effective solution to capture and maintain the interest of younger audiences who may be less inclined to engage with lengthy textual or visual news content. This means that the younger generations whose attention span



is shifting from traditional media can still be reached by news organizations with the incorporation of short videos and reels in their news dissemination.

Tells the Story Better

The issue of better storytelling emerged showing short videos and reels are effective and further contributing to its potential in capturing the attention of younger audience, with respondents pointing to the ability of short videos and reels to tell news stories better. Bosan Yakusak a Bureau Chief at *Galaxy TV* Kaduna stated, “Video has a way of telling stories better that even the deaf when seeing it they can be able to understand what’s going on” emphasizing the impact of visuals in conveying information. Sagir Kano Salleh, an Online Editor at Daily Trust Abuja also draw attention on the issue of better storytelling, stating “and in the case of videos it gives people the story of that video within a short period of time...within 5 minutes you can go through 2 or 3 videos in average...it eases people’s access to news and digital content.” This suggests that short videos and reels are not only seen as efficient information tools but also as platforms that enhance news story telling for journalism. Short videos and reels carry the potential of to tell news stories better compared to the way traditional news media disseminates them.

UNIQUE FEATURES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SHORT VIDEOS AND REELS

The analysis uncovered a number of features of short videos and reels that could have significant potential for news organizations in Nigeria as perceived by most the participants in the study:

Briefness

The concept of briefness emerged as a key characteristic of short videos and reels, emphasizing their concise nature. Dauda Mohammed the Assistant Manager, NTA Kaduna stressed out the relationship between brief nature of reels and audience engagement, stating, “the shorter the videos, the more it is shared, the more the attention span of the youths is taken, the more they share it with their friends but if it is long it gets boring.” Rahaman Abiola of *Legit NG* Lagos also laid emphasis on the concept of briefness, mentioning “they are short, they don’t take longer time and they easily convey a message to the audience. Reels have the ability of moving faster”. This suggests that brevity is not just a characteristic but a critical factor influencing the effectiveness of these media forms in reaching and engaging younger audiences. The short nature of short videos and reels present an opportunity for news organizations to disseminate news contents to their audiences who may not have all the time to read/watch/listen to full lengthy news stories.

Attention-Grabbing Visuals

Respondents stressed the significance of attention-grabbing visuals as a unique feature of short videos and reels for journalism. Dauda Mohammed of NTA Kaduna mentioned the importance of relevant visuals and clear language, stating, “Apart from it being short, having relevant visuals and clear language matters.” Frank Etioh who is a Social Media Manager at *Galaxy TV*, Lagos further noted that “one of the characteristics are attractive thumbnails...” This suggests that the recognition of attention-grabbing visuals by respondents as one of the key features and characteristics contributes to the attraction of short videos and reels, enhancing their ability to captivate and retain the attention of younger audiences. The use of creative designs and visuals



in which the audiences get to see before playing the video serve as a unique characteristic that make short videos and reels potent tools for news dissemination.

Less Data Consumption

Efficiency in data consumption emerged as an issue, pointing out one of the unique features and characteristics of short videos and reels that makes them effective tools for journalism. Abdulazeez Ahmed Kadir of *Liberty Radio* Kaduna dwelled on the importance of using the least data to watch a variety of content, stating “nobody wants to use a lot of data watching certain things; you want to use the least data to watch a lot of things, so that makes it effective.” Sagir Kano Salleh who is the Online Editor of *Daily Trust* Abuja also connotes that “it also consumes little amount of data and they give people access to more information”. This suggests that Short videos and reels, by requiring less data, become more accessible to a wider audience, particularly those using handheld devices, contributing to their potential in grabbing the attention of younger audiences. The concise nature of short videos and reels running usually sixty to ninety seconds (for reels) and at most five minutes (for short videos) contributes to why they consume less data, this suggests the audience have the opportunity to access more news content presenting an opportunity for news organizations to expand their reach.

Accessible with Handheld Devices

Accessibility with handheld devices emerged as a theme, emphasizing the changing dynamics of news media consumption. Abdulazeez Ahmed Kadir of *Liberty Radio* Kaduna pointed out that short videos and reels are effective for handheld devices, stating, “You can watch your short videos and reels in your handheld devices, your androids especially, nowadays laptops and iPads are becoming old-fashioned.” This suggests that handheld devices such as mobile phones enhance the accessibility of short videos and reels, aligning with the preferences of younger audiences who predominantly engage with content on smartphones and tablets. The accessibility and availability of short videos and reels on mobile phones presents some unique characteristics for news organizations to be able to reach younger audiences who mostly spend time with their mobile devices.

Shareability

The idea of shareability emerged as a distinctive feature of short videos and reels, emphasizing the potential viral nature of these formats for journalism. Bosan Yakusak of *Galaxy TV* Kaduna noted that they are not time-bound like traditional TV media and dwelled on their shareability, stating “You can share it; they are also not time-bound like traditional TV media... and that summarizes the information in a small given time.” Abdullahi Abubakar Umar of *Daily Trust* Abuja also stated that “even if you don’t follow the particular news account you can still get the contents elsewhere...this particular reel and short videos are shareable...” This suggests that the shareability of short videos and reels aligns with the interconnected nature of social media platforms. This feature not only enhances their reach but also indicates their potential to become influential sources of information within peer networks.



Hashtag and Caption

Respondents focus attention on the importance of features like hashtags and captions, as contributors to the potential effectiveness of short videos and reels. Frank Etioh of *Galaxy TV Lagos* pointed out the significance of attractive captions, stating, "... captions draw attention to your audience... any tags that have been used consistently, you can use it to draw attention to your views." This suggests that captions and hashtags contribute to the overall appeal and accessibility of short videos and reels. The use of hashtags and captions enhances the potential engagement and understanding of the content, contributing to its effectiveness in reaching younger audiences.

Audio Visual Information

Respondents pointed to the importance of audio-visual information as a unique feature contributing to the effectiveness of short videos and reels. This was noted by Sagir Kano Salleh of *Daily Trust Abuja* who said that "they give people access to more information and audio visuals give broad understanding of the message". The acknowledgment of the provision of broader understanding through audio-visual content imply that these features contribute to the effectiveness of short videos and reels in conveying news stories convincingly. The feature of having both visuals and sound that goes with short videos and reels makes them tools that news media organizations can utilize to effectively carry out their journalism practices.

Automated distribution controlled by Algorithm

The concept of Algorithm emerged as a unique feature of short videos and reels contributing to its potential in capturing younger audiences. Abdullahi Abubakar Umar of *Daily Trust Abuja* dwelled on the role of algorithms in news content discovery, stating, "This short video, at times they are the ones that come their way if they are surfing the net... even if you don't follow the particular news account, you can still get the contents elsewhere..." This points to the significance of digital platforms in news content distribution. The visibility and shareability of short videos and reels are influenced by algorithms, providing an avenue for wider dissemination and reaching audiences beyond the immediate follower base.

POTENTIAL OF SHORT VIDEOS AND REELS FOR AUDIENCE EXPANSION & ENGAGEMENT

This aspect explores how the adoption of short videos and reels serves as a strategy for news organizations to expand their audience base and enhance engagement. The emerging issues include increasing followers and reach, the ease of transmission, the ability to convey messages in multiple languages and the encouragement of feedback and contributions.

Increasing Followers and Increased Reach

Respondents acknowledge a significant surge in followers and reach beyond traditional reach due to the adoption of short videos and reels. Dauda Mohammed of NTA Kaduna said that "The last time we opened our social media pages, we had about 7-8000 likes, viewers and followers, but as of now, we have reached 14,000..." Sagir Kano Salleh of *Daily Trust Abuja* also said that "The reach/engagement that the video got was a hundred times the circulation of the newspaper...videos are distributed faster than the traditional newspaper." Another respondent noted that "An account that was having 1.9k followers before, you knew it, has



increased to 12k followers...so it has a high possibility of people following.” (Rahaman Abiola, *Legit NG Lagos*). Alao Abiodun of *The Nation Newspaper*, Lagos noted that “...when we convert them to visuals, it goes a long way for people to view...It’s a multiplication for us in producing video and reels because we might have millions of followers who are interested in that content and they might also share for others to view.” This suggests that short videos and reels contribute to an increase in audience reach and engagement, surpassing the traditional methods of media circulation. The mention of a rapid increase in followers signifies the effectiveness of short videos and reels in attracting and retaining an audience.

Ease of Transmission

Respondents focus attention on the seamless transmission of content facilitated by short videos and reels. Abdulazeez Ahmed Kadir of Liberty Radio, Kaduna said that “it’s far easier to transmit...These days it doesn’t have to be a television station because people create podcasts and it goes on Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, it goes on the different platforms you could think of...” This suggests that the ease with which short videos and reels can be shared across various platforms, including social media and podcasts, showcases their adaptability to contemporary news media consumption patterns. Unlike traditional transmission that requires a lot of technology, reels are easier to transmit when compared. This implies a strategic advantage in reaching diverse audiences through multiple channels.

Ability to Convey Messages in Multiple Languages

The respondents recognize the potential of short videos and reels in conveying messages in multiple languages. This is seen as crucial for connecting with a diverse audience. Abdulazeez Ahmed Kadir of *Liberty Radio Kaduna* stated that “...Also, you can easily pass your message across in the language you want.” The ability to customize news content in different languages enhances accessibility and inclusivity, serving the linguistic preferences of different viewers.

Feedback and Contributions

The issue of feedback and contributions points to the interactive nature of short videos and reels. respondents noted the active engagement of the audience, with individuals coming forward to express opinions and contribute to discussions. According to Bosan Yakusak of *Galaxy TV Kaduna*, “On topical issues, people come to the message box to air their opinions and contributions. It has made a way of enhancing our organization.” This not only enhances the relationship between the media organization and its audience but also contributes to the overall enrichment of the news content. This suggests that the nature of short videos and reels to exist on the interactive web (social media) makes it possible for audiences to give immediate feedback and make contributions to news stories posted by news organizations.

PRACTITIONERS’ CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SHORT VIDEOS AND REELS

This explored the existing knowledge among employees within news organizations regarding the practical creation and utilization of short videos and reels. The emerging issues include limited knowledge outside the news and program department, varied proficiency among staff and a generally good level of knowledge among team members.



Limited Knowledge Outside News and Program Department

Respondents in some news organizations reported limited knowledge and interest in short videos and reels among employees and staff, indicating a gap in understanding and utilization of visual content across other departments within the news organization. Dauda Mohammed of NTA Kaduna stated that “out of the six departments we have here, only the news and program department have the knowledge and interest on this short video we posted...” According to Bosan Yakusak of *Galaxy TV* Kaduna, “so it might not be everybody within the media organization that has the knowledge.” Abdullahi Abubakar Umar of *Daily Trust* Abuja mentioned that “Some don’t even know the importance of social media, talk more of how to create contents for it. So, it’s not everyone.” Rahaman Abiola of *Legit NG* Lagos noted this issue saying “Well not everyone knows about reels creations because we have different departments...But there are a number of people in the organization that are trained on that.” This indicates a common sentiment among respondents that knowledge about short videos and reels is predominantly concentrated within specific departments, notably the news and program department. This indicates that some news organizations have recently started training short video and reel creators and also dedicating specific departments responsible for reel and short video creation.

Different Level of Knowledge among Employees

Respondents in some news organizations reported different levels of knowledge among employees concerning short videos and reels creation. While some employees possess the necessary skills, others may lack the expertise. According to Abdulazeez Ahmed Kadir of *Liberty Radio* Kaduna, “No, not all my staff can create these short videos and reels, but some can and I say some in the sense that we are privileged to have two radio stations and a television arm...” Sagir Kano Salleh of *Daily Trust* Abuja further stated that “We have the dedicated people who are recruited in video journalist and editors...for my team, I will say everyone can do that, using a desktop on a conventional app” Rahaman Abiola of *Legit NG* said “Well not everyone knows about reels creations because we have different departments...But there are a number of people in the organization that are trained on that.” And finally, Theophilus Ogbagi of *Legit NG* Lagos noted that “Reels and shorts are relatively new and the knowledge level is at grade C...” This suggests that the current state of knowledge regarding the creation and distribution of news content using short videos and reels is different among employees within news.

Good Knowledge among Dedicated Team Members

Within specific teams, particularly those dedicated to video journalism and editing, respondents expressed confidence in their employees’ ability to create short videos and reels. Sagir Kano Salleh of *Daily Trust* Abuja noted that “We have the dedicated people who are recruited as video journalists and editors...for my team, I will say everyone can do that...” Alao Abiodun of *The Nation* newspaper Lagos connoted that “We have the video unit which is under the online desk...For our employees most of them know to an extent”. This suggests that certain departments or units in the news organizations are knowledgeable when it comes to practical creation and distribution of short videos and reels for journalism. The acknowledgment of good knowledge among team members indicates the importance of having dedicated employees and departments within news organizations responsible for creation and distribution of short videos and reels.



POTENTIAL OF SHORT VIDEOS AND REEL FOR REVENUE EXPANSION

Here, we explored the ways in which the adoption of short videos and reels contributes to revenue expansion for news organizations. The emerging issues include Digital Advertising and Social Media Monetization.

Digital Advertising

Respondents discussed the revenue-generating potential of short videos and reels through digital advertising. According to Dauda Mohammed of NTA Kaduna, “If they want to post content on our social media handles, they have to pay a token fee.” Abdulazeez Ahmed Kadir of Liberty Radio Kaduna also mentioned that “Just because of those short videos and reels they were posting on TikTok and so on, people started looking for them to do adverts and videos for them, some of those videos ended as an advert on our platform and it has benefited the station.” Abdullahi Abubakar Umar of *Daily Trust* Abuja also noted that “people will always place their adverts for the views of a wider audience...lots of people are promoting their brand through media houses and they normally do it in the form of videos and the organization (media house) usually benefits from it.” According to Theophilus Ogbagi of *Legit NG* Lagos, “recently we had a brand that sponsors contents, we make contents for them on our reel platforms because they know there will be more reach through our fan base.” This suggests that news organizations are now charging fees for posting content on their social media handles, reflecting a shift towards monetizing digital spaces. The connection between short videos/reels and advertising opportunities is evident, with brands recognizing the effectiveness of these formats for promotion.

Social Media Monetization

Respondents draw attention to the direct connection between the adoption of short videos and reels and revenue expansion through social media monetization. This is evident as Dauda Mohammed of NTA Kaduna stated that “We, being an organization that creates content now, have also keyed into this revenue-driving force, in the sense that social media now makes payment when we share, especially news content that is originated by us and gets more shares and likes.” Frank Etioh of *Galaxy TV* Lagos also noted that “in terms of revenue, our short videos are very effective because we have been able to give revenue to the company’s account.” Sagir Kano Salleh of *Daily Trust* Abuja mentioned that “so far, we have been getting some coins from the video lately...there is revenue on platforms like YouTube and Twitter.” Rahaman Abiola of *Legit NG* Lagos further stated that “the bigger your reach, the bigger your money...reels have really helped the media organization in getting more money, so that is why we mainly keep focus on that.”

And lastly, Alao Abiodun of *The Nation* Newspaper Lagos connoted “the more it circulates, the more revenue we get when the views go higher the engagement brings about revenue for us.” This suggests that news organizations are capitalizing on the financial opportunities presented by social media platforms, where increased views and engagement translate to tangible revenue. While traditional news organizations focus on expanding reach, particularly through reels and short videos, they are strategically aiming at earning royalties generated from social media views and engagement and as well maximizing monetary returns.



COMPARATIVE NOTE ON THE ADOPTION OF SHORT VIDEOS AND REELS AMONG NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

This evaluated the rate of adoption of short videos and reels among the different news organizations; radio, TV, newspaper and online media, showcases varying degrees of adoption, with online news organizations leading. News organizations reported they disseminate stories of human interest in the form of short videos. Respondents from all typologies of news organizations noted the importance of human angle and human-interest stories in short video and reel formats. This suggests that the suitability of stories for short video and reel formats is not dependent on the type of news media organization. The use of social media platforms for distribution is a common trend among all news media typologies. Respondents mention using social media platforms such as Facebook, Tiktok, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube to distribute their short videos and reels. This points to the importance of social media in reaching younger audiences who prefer consuming news in this format.

In terms of investment in short video and reel production, Sagir Kano Salleh of *Daily Trust* Abuja mentions that his news organization is investing more in short video and reel production, while also mentioning that graphics created for traditional news are also used for short video reels creation. This draws attention to the relevance newspaper organizations are placing on short video and reel production as part of their strategy. In terms of challenges relating to funding, equipment, gadgets and working tools, *Legit NG* Lagos, a strictly online media organization reported not having any of the mentioned challenges while adopting short videos and reels, noting that the organization is intentional about making available all that is needed for seamless adoption of short videos and reels. The TV stations (NTA and *Galaxy TV*) reported having some technical and logistical challenges including transportation vehicles, slow equipment and gadgets needed for work, data challenges, having to use personal funds and mobile phones for the uploading of videos and reels. This suggests that some of the traditional TV news organizations have not fully incorporated short videos and reels in their news creation and distribution as these challenges hinder the seamless integration of this innovation. The Radio station (*Liberty Radio*) reported having challenges related to slow internet connection and poor power supply, and this further suggests that the radio news organization have gone far in integrating this innovation however, they are still limited by slow internet connection and electricity. The newspaper organizations (*Daily Trust* and *The Nation*) reported to have dedicated employees and departments responsible for creating and distributing short videos and reels and are investing more in online media.

Legit NG Lagos, as a strictly Online Media, emerges as the front runner in the adoption of short videos and reels. The Editor in Chief (Rahaman Abiola) reported a strategic focus on monitoring social media trends, producing high-engaging content and leveraging different social media platforms for revenue generation. This approach positions *Legit NG* as a leader, leveraging the nature of online platforms for both audience engagement and financial sustainability. Audio-Visual (Broadcast) news media organizations, represented by NTA and *Galaxy TV*, demonstrated significant adoption of short videos and reels. These organizations recognize the need to engage younger audiences with catchy and brief content. The broadcast media reported using short videos and reels as tools to engage audiences and draw them to seeing the full stories and news content in their network transmission. While not surpassing Online Media in adoption, these Audio-Visual news organizations display a proactive approach in integrating visual elements into their content strategy.



Liberty Radio, operating within the audio (Broadcast) realm, demonstrates a notable adoption of short videos and reels. The General Manager (Abdulaziz Ahmed Kadir) acknowledges the effectiveness of visual content in reaching a target audience, especially the younger demographic. This signifies that they recognize the power of having visuals to go with the news stories in order to better serve their audience preferences within the radio industry. Newspaper (Print) media organizations, *Daily Trust Abuja* and *The Nation Lagos*, showcase a progressive and evolving adoption of short videos and reels. *Daily Trust Abuja*'s Online Editor (Sagir Kano Salleh) drew attention to the adaptation of traditional written news into visual formats, indicating a strategic effort to incorporate multimedia elements. *The Nation Lagos* (Alao Abiodun) dwells on a consideration of prominence and trend analysis, showcasing a mixed approach within the context of print journalism. While not leading in adoption rates, these organizations showcase an awareness of the importance of visual storytelling within their traditional print frameworks.

Online Media, driven by *Legit NG Lagos*, leads in adoption rates. Audio-Visual (Broadcast) media follows closely, recognizing the need to serve younger audiences and adapt to changing consumption habits. Audio (Broadcast) media, represented by *Liberty Radio*, showcases a recognition of visual content's effectiveness within the radio industry. Newspaper (Print) media, while not at the forefront, exhibits a growing acknowledgment of the importance of visual storytelling within the context of traditional print journalism. The exploration of each organization's approach to visual content sheds light on varying degrees of adoption, with online media leading.

The study also revealed that the types of stories suitable for short video and reel formats are similar across all media typologies, emphasizing the importance of human interest stories. Regardless of the medium, be it radio, TV, newspaper, or online media, respondents noted the significance of human interest stories in these visual formats. Also, the reliance on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and TikTok for short video and reel distribution emerges as a common choice of platform connecting all media organizations. In terms of investment in short video and reel production, the study revealed varying approaches across different news organizations, with newspaper media organizations emphasizing their strategic focus on short video and reel production by investing more and showing more interest in pursuing new strategies. This is probably because the newspaper industry is likely to be hit more by the decline in revenue caused by the digital revolution. The online news media are already doing their business in the digital space and leading the way in digital innovation and adoption of new technology. The study also identified the challenges faced by different news organizations in adopting short videos and reels, with strictly online news organizations demonstrating more adoption process compared to traditional broadcast and print news organizations.



CONCLUSION

Findings from the study revealed that short videos and reels hold great potential in reaching more audiences in the Nigerian news industry. Respondents pointed to their effectiveness especially among the youth. The briefness of these formats aligns with the evolving preferences of younger audiences and the multimedia principle supports the importance of visuals in conveying information. The study found that short videos and reels strategically expand audience reach and engagement, contributing to revenue expansion for news organizations through emerging advertising opportunities. The adoption rates varied among different media organizations, with online-based news platforms demonstrating more integration compared to traditional broadcast and print organizations. Current practices in the Nigerian news industry include intentional strategies to engage younger audiences, high-frequency production of short videos and reels and the adaptation of traditional news content into visual formats. Strategies also involve creating concise and clear videos, capitalizing on breaking news, consistent timing, creating visually appealing thumbnails and prioritizing appealing content. Based on these findings, it becomes evident that the integration of short videos and reels into news practices offer a significant potential to engage audiences, particularly the younger one, while presenting more lucrative opportunities for revenue generation. This points to the importance of embracing and adapting to emerging communication channels by news media organizations in Nigeria, recognizing the symbiotic relationship between innovation, audience reach and sustainability in the changing media industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. News organizations should invest in training programs to enhance staff skills in short video production, content creation and platform utilization.
2. News organizations should dedicate departments and staff responsible for short videos and reels creation to address staff commitment challenges, ensuring active participation in short video and reel content creation.
3. News organizations should seek support and explore partnerships to overcome funding challenges, skill gaps and technical knowledge associated with adopting new technologies.
4. News organizations should also invest in audience research and data analytics in order to recognize more sustainable and rewarding means of adapting to new and emerging digital channels of communication.



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