Practices and Challenges in Adopting Short Videos and Reels in Nigeria's Newsrooms: A Qualitative Study of Selected Journalists

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Abstract

This study investigates the adoption practices and challenges of integrating short videos and reels into news dissemination among selected Nigerian news outlets. Anchored by the Diffusion of Innovations theory, it examines how these organizations leverage short-form video formats to engage audiences, particularly younger demographics. Through in-depth interviews with 10 professionals from diverse media organizations, including print, radio, television and online platforms, the study finds that short videos and reels enhance audience engagement and reach within their operations. However, challenges such as funding constraints, unreliable internet, inadequate equipment and limited training hinder effective integration. Strategic practices include high-frequency production and platform-specific distribution, with ethical considerations like content verification emphasized. Recommendations include investing in training, securing funding and establishing dedicated digital content teams to improve the use of short videos and reels in news delivery.

Keywords: Short Videos, Reels, Digital Journalism, Multimedia Journalism, Newsrooms

Introduction

The Nigerian news industry has undergone significant transformation due to digital technology and social media proliferation. With over 200 million people and increasing internet penetration, Nigeria has seen a surge in smartphone usage and social media engagement (Ahmed & Musa, 2016; Atakiti, Ogunwemimo & Ogunwemimo, 2025). This digital shift has reshaped news consumption and production, with short videos and reels emerging as key tools for news dissemination. Traditionally dominated by print and broadcast media, the Nigerian news landscape now incorporates online platforms and social media,

driven by platforms like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube (Ugo, Erungworo, Ochuole & Eyo, 2023).
Short-form videos, as described by some scholars, are mobile-native formats marked by strategic brevity and a minimalist aesthetic suited for rapid consumption, involving narrative compression, where complex ideas or stories are distilled into visually and emotionally engaging content, often layering moving images, sound, text overlays and interactive elements to create dense semiotic packages (Kaye, Chen & Zeng, 2021). Reels, in this context, specifically denote the short-form video features on platforms, such as Facebook Reels, Instagram Reels or Tiktok, which align with the broader characteristics of short-form videos but emphasize algorithmic delivery, visual storytelling and user engagement (Malik et al, 2025).

News organizations could clout these formats to enhance audience interaction and extend reach beyond traditional media. However, possible challenges such as infrastructure and ethical concerns could complicate their integration. This study, therefore, explores the practices and challenges of integrating short videos and reels into Nigerian news practices

Literature Review
The rise of short-form video content on platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, or YouTube Shorts has transformed digital journalism, prompting news organizations to adopt these formats to engage audiences, particularly younger demographics. This started with the evolution and transformation of social media platforms in the past decades, which proved quite disruptive and presenting opportunities to the news ecosystem globally. The increasing dependence of news organisations on social media platforms has gradually shifted from being merely a matter of location of access to one that directly shapes how news is retrieved and consumed. Some reports demonstrated that social media is now the primary gateway for online news consumption across different contexts (Newman et al., 2023; Newman, 2022). In response, news organisations have started to allocate significant resources into developing forms of news specifically designed for platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. These platforms are not just spaces for repackaging existing stories, but are governed by their own internal logics and tacit norms which directly influence news output (Hermida & Mellado, 2020; Ekström & Westlund, 2019). This trend, progressively referred to as social media journalism (Hendrickx, 2021; Adornato, 2018), has attracted growing academic attention, with recent studies seeking to understand the implications of news practices shaped within these digital ecosystems (Hase, Boczek & Scharkow,

2022; Negreira-Rey, Vázquez-Herrero & López-García, 2022; Vázquez-Herrero, Negreira-Rey & López-García, 2022; Al-Rawi, Al-Musalli & Fakida, 2021).
The earliest studies largely centred on Facebook (Hille & Bakker, 2013; Hermida, 2012) and Twitter(now X) (Hermida, 2013; Ahmad, 2010), investigating how these sites altered the dynamics of news production and circulation. At a time of economic downturn, social media were even presaged as the salvation of journalism (Lewis & Molyneux, 2018). Subsequently, however, attention shifted as new platforms like Instagram and TikTok gained prominence. These platforms, with their audio-visual focus and, in the case of TikTok, increasingly embedded themselves within journalistic workflows, albeit unevenly and sometimes contentiously (Hendrickx, 2021; Maares & Hanusch, 2020; Vázquez-Herrero, Direito-Rebollal & López-García, 2019). Studies have emphasized how such platforms introduced new tensions into newsroom routines, compelling journalists to direct multiple and sometimes conflicting professional roles. Comparative analyses, however, remain relatively underexplored, despite the fact that each platform comes with distinct features, affordances and constraints that complicate direct comparisons yet make them necessary for understanding the full spectrum of digital news practices (Hendrickx, 2023).

Instagram and TikTok stand out because of their emphasis on video and audio-visual content, unlike Facebook and X which primarily act as referral gateways to news websites (Opgenhaffen & Hendrickx, 2023; Dagoula, 2022; Tsuriel et al., 2021). Instagram's introduction of Stories and Reels, alongside other features like Highlights and Guides, has extended the ways in which journalism can be packaged (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2019). TikTok, meanwhile, has become a global force since 2018, powered by its algorithm-driven nature, which shapes personalized exposure to content while raising concerns regarding its impervious processes (Harriger et al., 2022). For journalists, these spaces are not just channels of distribution but also sources of information, since interactions in the form of comments and direct messages increasingly shape reporting agendas (Hendrickx, 2021).

Using short-form videos and reels in news practices is becoming the norm in news practices. News organizations increasingly pull in short videos to align with audience preferences. According to Reuters' reports, 49% of top news publishers actively publish on TikTok, with adoption rates varying from 90% in Indonesia to 31% in Japan, reflecting differences in platform penetration and audience behaviour (Newman, 2022). Despite the prospects, adopting short videos presents some challenges. Monetization remains a hurdle, with TikTok offering no direct revenue for publishers and YouTube Shorts yielding minimal earnings per views

(Newman, 2022). Ethical concerns also arise, particularly regarding content verification and the risk of oversimplification (Newman, 2022).
While studies offered some perspectives regarding the prospects and challenges of short-form videos in journalism or the so called social media journalisms, they often overlook the socio-economic contexts of national news ecosystems. This study addresses this gap by exploring the practices and challenges of adopting these formats across diverse Nigerian media types (print, radio, television and online). As a qualitative assessment of short-form video integration in journalism practices, it contributes to understanding how Nigerian news organizations navigate digital transformation, offering some exploratory ideas into their social media journalism practices.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to investigate the practices and challenges of adopting short videos and reels in selected news organizations. Adopting the Diffusion of Innovations theory, the research explores how news organizations integrate these formats and the factors influencing their adoption. A qualitative approach was employed to capture in-depth insights into the experiences and perspectives of news professionals. In-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with ten professionals from Nigerian news organizations, representing four media types: print (newspapers), audio (radio), audio-visual (television) and online-only media platforms. The population included journalists, editors, news directors, social media managers and digital content strategists involved in news production and dissemination.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants with relevant expertise in journalism, multimedia content creation and digital media management (Campbell, et al, 2020). Five news organizations were chosen based on their type, size and convenience, reflecting diversity in media type and operational scale. From each organization, two participants were interviewed, one managerial staff (e.g., editor, news director) and one operational staff (e.g., journalist, social media manager) to capture both strategic and practical perspectives. This resulted in a sample of ten respondents, ensuring a balanced representation of decision-making and content creation roles. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face or via telephone, based on participants' availability, between June and August 2024. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes and followed a guide with open-ended questions on adoption practices, challenges and ethical considerations. Follow-up questions were used to explore emerging themes.

Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following six-phase approach: familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition and reporting (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Transcripts were manually coded to identify patterns and trends related to short video adoption, challenges and strategies. Themes were organized into categories, such as usage patterns, creation strategies and ethical considerations, to address the research objectives. The findings were supported by direct quotations and, where appropriate, visual aids like charts to enhance clarity.

Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent, with participants consenting to being named as the issues discussed is not quite sensitive to require anonymity. The methodology ensured an exploration of the adoption practices of short videos and reels, providing exploratory insights into digital transformation within selected Nigerian newsrooms.

Data Analysis and Findings

1. Current Practices in Adopting Short Videos and Reels

1.1 Pattern of short videos and reels adoption practices

News professionals in Nigeria are embracing short videos and reels as a tool for reaching audiences, especially the younger demographic. As R1 of *Liberty Radio* Kaduna explained, "Since the attention span of younger generations is short, I look for 2 mins or 5 mins, something catchy and we post them…" Likewise, R10 observed that "We value the importance of short videos and reels because only we know how helpful it has been to us in reaching our audience targets, especially the younger ones". These remarks point to an awareness that younger viewers now demand quick, catchy formats and journalists are consciously shaping their practice to meet that demand.

Distribution practices also reflect this adjustment. Respondents stressed the need to spread content across as many platforms as possible. As R2 of *Galaxy TV* Kaduna noted, "Our news now is published on Facebook, on YouTube live and other platforms…and the wide reach of this media gets to everyone at a particular given time." Similarly, R3 of *Legit NG* Lagos remarked that "we have a weekly plan and monthly target where we produce 2-3 videos a day and in a month, we do nothing less than 40 reels and we distribute them on social media platforms." In this case, the commitment to multiplatform prominence is evident, though private media houses appear to drive this practice more actively than their state-

owned counterparts. Production quantity and volume is another issue raised by the respondents. R4 of *Galaxy TV* Lagos recounted that "In terms of news, we do nothing less than 15–20 videos a day." R5 of *Daily Trust* Abuja added that "On a day, we do like 3 or 4 compilations of a graphic in a reel and share them on social media." R3 reinforced this point, describing how "in a month, we do nothing less than 40 reels." Such testimonies demonstrate a culture of high-frequency output, with journalists working to ensure a constant stream of content. Evidently, this relentless pace reveals both the competitive pressure of the digital space and the belief that visibility depends on volume.

Beyond volume, there is also a habit of adapting traditional news for digital consumption. As R6 of *Legit NG* Lagos explained, "This reel we make are inspired by some of the stories that are done before…many times we tend to convert written news to videos in as much as the previous ones have high-ranking engagementsand it has helped us a lot in our productions." Likewise, R7 of *NTA* Kaduna noted the tendency to focus on "stories of human angle, human interest, something that will benefit the society." What emerges here is a strategy of recycling and repackaging content, where past stories with proven appeal are given a new lease of life through video. Altogether, these practices stress how news organisations are gradually reworking their routines, concentrating on younger audiences, adopting multiple platforms, producing in high volume and repurposing content. In essence, the respondents reveal a journalism landscape where speed, adaptability and audience metrics now shape editorial decisions.

1.2 Creation and Distribution Strategies

The respondents are not only producing short videos, but also deliberately shaping them around strategies that respond to the peculiar dynamics of online consumption. A central point presented by some of the respondents is the need for brevity. As R7 of *NTA* Kaduna insisted, "So the strategy is the video has to be short, clear, precise, the language has to be very clean, no insults, abusive languages, no nudity…" His words emphasize the discipline of making content easily digestible, while at the same time avoiding offensive contents. The emphasis on clean language and the rejection of nudity communicates to a conscious attempt to maintain professionalism by keeping content in line with journalistic ethics. Another clear strategy is the use of reels for breaking news. R7 observed that "it is a very important tool for dissemination of news especially breaking news that just happened and are still hot before it goes around." In the same vein, R5 of *Daily Trust* Abuja stressed the urgency of timeliness: "An event may come and you just have to go with the time because of the competitive nature

of the news space…" Here, short videos become the quickest way to capture audience attention in a crowded information environment where speed determines relevance.

Respondents also drew attention to the editorial considerations behind selecting what to post. R1 of *Liberty Radio* Kaduna explained, "So, the issue of prominence and nearness, editorial judgment are what is actually newsworthy…so those are the deciding factors on what videos you post, where, when and on which of the platforms". This shows that beyond immediacy, journalists weigh the significance of a story, its proximity and its relevance before deciding how to frame it as a reel. The pull of social media trends is also unmistakable. R2 of *Galaxy TV* Kaduna put it plainly: "Well, I will tell you that it's based on trending news…so we depend more on trending and topical issues". R8 of *Daily Trust* Abuja confirmed this approach: "First of all, we will find out what is trending. Then when it comes to the public, will it interest everyone?" For R6 of *Legit NG* Lagos, "The idea is to determine what is trending… time count is important and we check the level of engagement on different platforms". This points to an almost algorithmic orientation, where stories are measured by their potential resonance within online discussions.

Visual appeal is another priority as raised by some of the respondents. As R4 of *Galaxy TV* Lagos explained, "After you have prepared news or post, you have to work nicely on your graphic cover because the cover is very important and has to be attractive in the sense that you can present it". In this case, thumbnails are not an afterthought, but a strategy for drawing in viewers. Respondents also noted the importance of consistency. R5 stressed that "in other instances, we can relaunch and reconceive ideas… Also thinking of having a constant time so that we say if we are launching at 6am, the next is exactly going to come at 6am". Such consistency in release timing helps build audience expectation and creating a regular traffic that viewers can follow.

Human-interest stories remain a favoured choice, reflecting their universal appeal. R7 of *NTA* Kaduna explained that reels often highlight "stories of human angle, human interest something that will benefit the society". Similarly, R8 questioned whether a story "will interest everyone", showing how journalists consciously look for content that resonates emotionally with their audiences. Finally, performance metrics heavily influence content strategy. R3 of *Legit NG* Lagos noted, "We don't just produce any type of reels…the over-performed ones are the ones we basically work on…as far as it has high engagement". R6 echoed this, stressing that "we check the level of engagement on different platforms". These

remarks show how content selection is increasingly driven by audience response, with successful reels serving as templates for future production. In summary, the strategies reveal a newsroom culture increasingly shaped by brevity, timeliness, prominence, trends, visual appeal, consistency, human interest and performance data. In fact, short videos are not just another output format but a calculated response to the pressures of digital space in Nigeria.

1.3 Choices of Platform

The platforms chosen for reels and short videos are not random, but apply some consideration of audience habits, demographics and even revenue opportunities. Respondents pointed out that different platforms serve different groups. As R7 of *NTA* Kaduna explained, "We use them because those are the social media the youths normally use, i.e., Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, X and Threads…" Likewise, R1 of *Liberty Radio* Kaduna emphasised the logic of tailoring distribution: "WhatsApp is the first because it is the easiest and virtually everyone is on it…. Because people will tell you Facebook is for unserious people but on YouTube you get serious-minded people, so each of the platforms has its own target audience that is why we post on every platform". In essence, journalists think in terms of who is watching, where and align content to these user patterns.

This sense of audience segmentation is echoed by R2 of *Galaxy TV* Kaduna who noted, "We primarily utilize YouTube, X, Facebook and Instagram. TikTok is also used when active. We choose platforms based on their active status". The decision is therefore not only about reach, but also about which platforms are exciting at a given time. Financial considerations also play a role in making a choice. For some organisations, according to some of the respondents, the selection of platforms is influenced by revenue generation potential. R4 of *Galaxy TV* Lagos stated it plainly: "Most platforms we use are YouTube and Instagram that's all…reason is revenue; we use those platforms to create revenue for the company". Similarly, R3 of *Legit NG* Lagos admitted, "We primarily use Facebook/Instagram because we majorly make revenues from them". Here, platform choice is directly tied to sustainability, showing how economic realities guide digital strategies. What becomes evident is that newsrooms adopt a dual logic in choosing platforms. On one hand, they are mapping the demographics of their audiences and on the other, they are chasing the perceived streams of revenue. In this case, short videos are not just about visibility, but also about survival.

Challenges Regarding the Integration of Reels and Short Videos in Newsrooms

While newsrooms appear to be embracing short videos, they also encounter obstacles that shape how these formats are used. Language surfaced as a recurring concern. R7 of *NTA* Kaduna explained, "Another challenge here again is the use of language; the social media handle is far and wide you cannot really say the story will only be in English". This reflects the difficulty of serving a linguistically diverse audience, where one language cannot fully capture the range of users online. Some respondents pointed to weak internal support within their organisations. As Mohammed lamented, "We have been singing for days now that other staffs should be donating contents, but they are not giving us content…since they were not directed to do it, but to volunteer or assist and they have not been really forthcoming". This lack of collective commitment means that social media teams often carry the entire burden without adequate backing from colleagues.

Financial pressures also remain critical. R9 of *NTA* Kaduna described it this way: "We have high cost of production, transportation is high because of fuel and money is not easy to find. We do not get sponsors, patronage on those that pay for such things". Journalists sometimes dip into their own pockets, as R7 noted: "Most of the times we buy data from our own private pocket". Clearly, limited funding weakens the capacity for sustained video production and puts pressure on staff themselves. Internet connectivity compounds these difficulties. R1 of *Liberty Radio* recounted the frustration: "Imagine finding yourself in Kafanchan, an interior where you need to send certain news, you need to go immediately, so what do you do when there is no network". Similarly, R2 of *Galaxy TV* pointed to technical setbacks: "There's a gadget we make use of called TVU but the challenge of this TVU is that places where there's no network it can't work…" In a profession where timeliness is everything, slow or absent internet disrupts the entire process.

The demand for brevity also presents its own strain. R8 of *Daily Trust* Abuja observed, "Especially compressing a lot of information into video in a very little time". For R5, "It's about communication and it takes time to put information at once". The challenge here is balancing speed with substance, without losing accuracy. Another issue relates to the crowded and sometimes chaotic digital space. R4 remarked, "Challenges include everyone being a journalist on social media. Not everything can be posted; some content needs censorship. Competing with social media influencers is also challenging". This suggests a constant

struggle for legitimacy, with trained journalists competing against influencers and unverified sources.

Negative public reactions can also be demoralising, according to some of the respondents. R4 of *Galaxy TV* Lagos explained, "Another challenge is negative comments because they are discouraging". Beyond criticism, the issue is how hostile interactions erode the morale of those producing content daily. Creativity and relevance remain pressing. R10 of *The Nation* expressed the dilemma bluntly: "Mostly we have a dilemma of what will interest the viewers". R3 of *Legit NG* Lagos added, "The first one has to do with creativity…Another challenge we have is resources in terms of reference pictures, illustration". These remarks show that it is not enough to produce content; it must be fresh and compelling to hold attention.

Censorship within organisations further complicates the problems. As Mohammed put it, "So many at times you might go and cover something and you want to post it, but our supervisors will say no…" Editorial gatekeeping, while sometimes necessary, can stifle content flow and frustrate producers. Security concerns are also raised. R4 explained, "There are some happening news in this country, but we cannot access such places because of the challenge of insecurities". Here, the physical risks of journalism in Nigeria intersect with digital adaptation, limiting what can be reported. Similar, some respondents recounted how cultural contexts presents some problems. "Another challenge that has to do with our culture…" R4 noted, suggesting that some forms of content may not be socially or regionally acceptable. This cultural sensitivity often shapes what can be filmed and shared.

Finally, the broader environment remains challenging. R4 summed it up: "And again, I will add the conducive environment because our environment is not media-friendly". In essence, infrastructural weaknesses, political pressures and societal attitudes combine to make the media space difficult for innovation. These voices together reveal how adopting short videos is not simply a matter of technology or creativity. It is also shaped by financial limitations, weak infrastructure, internal organisational dynamics, cultural expectations and a precarious security environment. Technical challenged are particularly emphasized.

Respondents also spoke about the everyday technical and logistical hurdles that slow down their efforts to integrate short videos into newsroom routines. Transportation and mobility emerged strongly. As R7 of *NTA* Kaduna explained,

"There might be a breaking news you want to go there on time and post it and you find out that the vehicle on ground has been committed to other things". Similarly, R2 of *Galaxy TV* Kaduna added, "Another thing is logistics, we do not have enough vehicles for reaching out to location we are needed and with the current state of fuel increment". These accounts show how even the most urgent news stories can be lost to simple problems of mobility and resources. The problem of electricity is just as pressing. R4 of *Galaxy TV* Lagos lamented, "And again power supply system, we don't have that here our power supply is very poor". This is not a new problem in Nigerian media, but its effect is amplified when dealing with digital content that demands consistent editing, uploading and distribution. Poor power supply often breaks the rhythm of production, creating delays that are costly in a competitive online environment.

Equipment gaps also surfaced. R7 admitted, "The last challenge is the use of personal phones for uploading and posting", a statement that suggests many journalists rely on personal gadgets in the absence of proper organisational provision. R9 echoed this frustration, saying, "Slow system, it tends to drag you back…you might not get your ultimate speed". Clearly, the lack of up-to-date tools forces staff to improvise, often at the expense of efficiency and quality. The issue of training also came up. R5 of *Daily Trust* Abuja explained, "Sometimes it requires training and always difficult to understand…. Sometimes it takes time before we start adapting them". This points to the learning curve journalists face when new platforms or editing tools emerge. Without structured training, adaptation becomes slow and discouraging.

Software compatibility and subscription costs add yet another dimension to the technical challenges. R8 described the limits encountered: "At times you have to be a premium user, at times pro user, you realize that the package you are on does not allow you to use certain features". Here, financial constraints intersect with technical barriers, making it difficult to fully explore the creative potential of digital production. Older gadgets also fail to keep up with updated software, leaving journalists stranded with incomplete tools. Put together, these accounts underline how technical and logistical gaps are not abstract problems, but daily realities that interrupt production flow and successful adoption of technology. From electricity to phones, software and training, each shortcoming weakens the newsrooms and journalists' ability to compete effectively in the fast-paced space of digital journalism.

Ethical Considerations Regarding Short Video and Reels Adoption

Even as newsrooms embrace short videos and reels, journalists remain mindful of ethical boundaries that define professional reporting. Verification and gatekeeping were repeatedly stressed. R7 of *NTA* Kaduna explained, "Whatever we post we must first verify that what we are posting is true and nothing but the truth". He further added, "Firstly, in terms of credibility we have a gatekeeper in the organization that whatever you are posting and there is a question mark on it they tell you not to post it". R1 of *Liberty Radio* Kaduna confirmed this cautious approach: "We do not just see a video and post; the editors sit down and see what the ethical issues are surrounding this video". In fact, R2 of *Galaxy TV* Kaduna put it simply: "Investigation is vital to verify information". These testimonies reveal the deliberate effort to maintain credibility in an environment that misinformation spreads rapidly.

Avoiding rumours was also described as non-negotiable. Mohammed insisted, "We don't follow rumours or third-party gist". R10 of *The Nation* Lagos echoed this position, saying, "Any content that is controversial or that has controversies we try as much as possible to stay away from it". The caution here is clear—journalists resist the temptation of sensational content if it is unverified, even when such content could generate traffic. Safety remains another consideration. Mohammed stated, "If there is no guarantee of security, we don't fly that story". Yakusak expanded on this, noting, "Protecting anonymity and blurring backgrounds are part of maintaining ethics". Such remarks underline how journalists weigh not just the factual content of a story, but also the security of sources and communities involved.

There is also a strong emphasis on originality. R9 of *NTA* Kaduna emphasised, "We source for our materials; we don't do copyright. Our materials are originated by us…we get them with our own camera and gadget". In the same spirit, R4 of *Galaxy TV* Lagos explained, "We have correspondence in almost all the states within the country so we work with them hand in hand". For R3 of *Legit NG* Lagos, trust was tied to networks of reliable informants: "As a news firm we have so many people like connected, ones that are very reliable that give us information both locally and internationally". These views reveal a commitment to avoiding shortcuts and grounding their work in first-hand content.

Censorship was equally recognised as part of the ethical framework. R4 captured it bluntly: "Censorship is applied to sensitive content". While censorship is often criticised in journalism, respondents here describe it as a necessary layer of

restraint to filter sensitive or potentially harmful material before it reaches the public domain. From these accounts, it becomes apparent that ethical practice is not an afterthought, but a living concern shaping newsroom decisions on short video production and distribution. Verification, safety, originality and censorship all combine to create a professional boundary within which reels are produced, even in the fast and fluid digital terrain.

Additional Issues Raised by Participants

Beyond daily practices and challenges, respondents reflected on broader concerns and recommendations around the use of reels and short videos. One recurring idea was the need for stronger regulation of online content. As R7 of *NTA* Kaduna remarked, "What I want to add is, in anything you do and there is no control, it's bound to be abused…. It's not everything that must be posted; it's not everything that is for public consumption". R2 of *Galaxy TV* Kaduna added, "The future of the media is in social media. Contents should be censored". R5 of *Daily Trust* Abuja also cautioned that "not everyone has the knowledge to identify what's fake and most people has fallen…. So we'll have to be careful to be aware that not everything that goes out in the name of news you would fall for". These perspectives reveal a strong sentiment that without regulation, short-form news can easily slip into misuse and misinformation. At the same time, respondents noted that audiences must look beyond reels to fuller versions of stories when depth is required. R9 of *NTA* Kaduna advised, "When you see reels go for the main video so that you can have full knowledge". This comment points to an awareness of the limits of brevity and a reminder that not all stories can be reduced to a minute-long clip without losing important detail.

Concerns about misinformation were also raised. R5 explained, "Short video and reels have actually made everybody be involved as a journalist…. So we'll have to be careful to be aware that not everything that goes out in the name of news you would fall for". R3 of *Legit NG* Lagos went further, recalling that "Sadly we have seen big media outfits using short videos and reels and come back to apologize later because they didn't cross check, so people need to be very careful especially in this era...." These statements underscore the risks of speed-driven production in an age where corrections often come after damage is already done.

Respondents also called for stronger adoption of reels across the media industry. R4 advised that "The future of the media is in social media…. Media organizations should invest more in social media. Encourage individuals in content creation for improvement". R8 of *Daily Trust* Abuja stressed the same

urgency: “The media industry should realize the potential production of reels and short video…so that they can keep capturing the attention of people everywhere”. R6 of *Legit NG* Lagos described reels as “the cash tag now” and argued that “media organization should ensure they engage in it to be able to reach wider audience”. R9 connected the practice to journalism’s social role: “We really need to get better as journalist and media practitioners and our goals are to give voice to the voiceless through our stories.” Meanwhile, R10 of *The Nation* tied adoption to economic gain, suggesting, “Media organization should involve fully in the participation of reels creations so as to engage to wider audience…with that we get more revenue so that’s just it”. Thus, these reflections present three layers of concern: the risk of misuse and misinformation, the call for audiences to seek fuller context and the insistence that reels are central to the future of journalism, both as a means of reaching wider publics and as a potential source of revenue.

Discussion

The findings of this study illuminate the strategic adoption of short videos and reels in the studied organisations, revealing both innovative practices and significant barriers. The results align with global trends while underlining unique contextual challenges in Nigeria’s media landscape. What the findings show is that Nigerian newsrooms are learning how to survive in the new world of digital journalism, but they are doing so in a way that reflects both global trends and local conditions. The adoption of reels is not just copying what is happening elsewhere; it is being shaped by the everyday realities of the Nigerian media space. One clear shift is the focus on younger audiences. Short videos are created with brevity and sharpness because journalists know young people will not sit for long reports. This ties with what scholars call the age of fragmented attention (Hase, Boczek & Scharkow, 2022; Hendrickx, 2022). But in Nigeria, it is also tied to the country’s youthful population. What looks like a global trend is, in this case, also a response to demographics locally.

The multiplatform strategy of spreading content across Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp and X shows how journalists now think about reach. They know each platform has its own audience and its own culture. At the same time, the economic logic is visible. Platforms like YouTube and Instagram are not just about visibility but about revenue. In this way, platform choice carries both communicative and financial weight. This reflects the political economy of digital journalism, where financial survival is always part of editorial decisions (Newman, 2022). But these practices meet some constraints. Poor power supply, slow internet, rising transport costs and dependence on personal gadgets show

how the weight of infrastructure is pressing on innovation. Journalists often carry the cost personally, using their own phones and data to keep production going. This makes digital journalism practices of journalists both ambitious and fragile at the same time.

Professional challenges are also evident. The crowded online space means journalists are competing with influencers and self-styled citizen reporters who push content without checks. There is also the pressure of compressing complex news into one-minute clips, risking oversimplification as argued by some scholars (Hendrickx, 2023; Negreira-Rey, Vázquez-Herrero & López-García, 2022; Hermida, 2012). Yet what is remarkable is the insistence on professionalism. Journalists still stress verification, originality and ethical restraint. This shows that even in the race for speed, credibility is not being abandoned. Concerns about misinformation and calls for regulation reveal a wider anxiety about the blurred lines between trained journalists and unverified sources. But these journalists are not only worried. They are also hopeful. Many see reels as the future of journalism, a tool for capturing attention and bringing in revenue. In essence, reels are carrying two dimensions in the country. On one side, they are a strategy for survival in a tough economic climate for journalists. On the other, they are being imagined as tools for renewal, proposing new ways to connect journalism with society. The Nigerian case therefore shows both convergence with global media practice and divergence shaped by the realities of infrastructure, professional constraints, digital divide and indigenous realities.

This study contributes to the literature by addressing the scarcity of research on short video adoption in African media markets, particularly Nigeria. Unlike global studies focusing on well-resourced environments (e.g. Newman, 2022; Hendrickx & Picone, 2020; Maares & Hanusch, 2020), it places how Nigerian news organizations navigate digital transformation amidst socio-economic, professional and technical constraints. The findings extend the Diffusion of Innovations theory by demonstrating how contextual factors shape technology adoption in developing news ecosystems. Practically, the study stresses the need for training, funding and dedicated digital teams to enhance short video integration, offering actionable insights for newsroom leaders.

Limitations include the small sample size (ten respondents), which may limit generalizability and the focus on urban-based news organizations, potentially overlooking rural media practices. Future research could explore audience perspectives on short video news consumption and compare adoption practices

across African countries to broaden the regional understanding. Despite these limitations, the study provides a foundation for understanding the opportunities and challenges of short videos and reels in transforming Nigeria's news industry.

Conclusion

This study provides an analysis of the adoption of short videos and reels in the studied organisations. The findings reveal that Nigerian news organizations strategically leverage these formats to engage younger audiences through ample production, platform-specific content and visually appealing strategies. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok and YouTube are selected based on audience demographics and revenue potential, reflecting adaptive responses to digital trends. However, challenges such as financial constraints, unreliable infrastructure, linguistic diversity and ethical concerns, including misinformation risks, hinder effective integration. Clearly, the turn to reels and short videos by Nigerian newsrooms and news professionals shows how journalism is adjusting to the digital tide in its own way. It is not just about technology but about how journalists now organise their work, how they think of audiences and how they keep their content alive in a crowded information space. Brevity, speed and presence across different platforms have become the new realities for relevance as digital technologies continue to disrupt news practices locally. Still, these changes sit within the realities of the country's news ecosystem. The weight of the constraints affects how far and how fast newsrooms and journalists can adopt and integrate innovations in their work.

What is evident, however, is that journalists continue to hold on to their professional principles. Verification, originality and ethical restraint remain relevant even in the fast and sometimes chaotic world of social media. Reels present two realities to news professionals. They are tools of survival, keeping media houses connected to younger audiences and offering fresh revenue channels. They also carry the promise of renewal, giving space for more distribution of content and making journalism feel more impactful to the public. The experiences of the selected journalists, therefore, reflects both alignment with global media changes and a divergence shaped by local realities. It is this mix of ambition and limitation, innovation and struggle, defining how short-form video continues to shape the future of journalism in the country.

The findings emphasize the need for strategic investments to overcome barriers and harness the potential of short videos for audience engagement and revenue generation. This study lays a foundation for future research into digital journalism

practices in Nigeria and similar media markets, highlighting the symbiotic relationship between technological innovation and sustained relevance in the evolving news industry.

Recommendations

The findings of this study highlight the transformative potential of short videos and reels in the studied organisations, alongside significant barriers to their adoption. To address these challenges and optimize the integration of these formats, the following recommendations are proposed for news organizations, policymakers and industry stakeholders:

i. News organizations should invest in comprehensive training programmes to enhance staff skills in short video production, editing and platform-specific content creation. Targeted workshops on digital tools, storytelling techniques and ethical verification processes can address the limited digital skills identified by respondents. Collaborations with technology companies or academic institutions could facilitate cost-effective training, ensuring journalists are equipped to produce high-quality, engaging content.
ii. Establishing dedicated digital content teams within newsrooms is critical to overcoming staff commitment challenges. These teams, comprising multimedia journalists, social media managers and content strategists, should focus exclusively on short video and reel production, as suggested by the high-frequency output of media organizations. Dedicated teams can streamline workflows, reduce reliance on personal resources and foster innovation in content creation, aligning with global best practices.
iii. News organizations should seek financial partnerships and explore diverse monetization strategies to mitigate funding constraints. Collaborations with advertisers, tech platforms, or international media organizations could provide resources for equipment, data and production costs. Adopting monetization models such as branded content, video ads, or subscription-based exclusive videos, as projected to drive $78.5 billion in digital ad spending by 2025 (Associated Press, 2023) can enhance financial sustainability.
iv. Policymakers and industry stakeholders should address infrastructural barriers, particularly unreliable internet and power supply. Investments in affordable, high-speed internet access and reliable electricity are essential to support timely content dissemination. Public-private partnerships could fund infrastructure upgrades, enabling newsrooms to compete in the digital space.
v. Finally, news organizations must strengthen ethical frameworks to combat misinformation and maintain credibility. Implementing vigorous gatekeeping and verification processes, as practiced by some media organizations, should

be standardized across newsrooms. Training on identifying and countering fake news, coupled with transparent content moderation policies, can mitigate risks associated with short video brevity. These recommendations provide a roadmap for Nigerian news organizations to harness the potential of short videos and reels, fostering digital transformation and sustained relevance in a competitive media landscape.

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