

SELLING IN SECONDS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF SHORT VIDEO MARKETING ON INSTAGRAM REELS IN ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURES

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Abstract

The growing prominence of short video content in digital marketing highlights its potential as a powerful tool for entrepreneurial ventures to engage audiences and drive business outcomes. However, limited research explores how entrepreneurs navigate the unique affordances of platforms like Instagram Reels, particularly in resource-constrained environments. This study aims to investigate the role of short video marketing in entrepreneurial ventures by employing a qualitative phenomenological approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs and analysed thematically to uncover key insights. The findings reveal three dominant themes: creativity and storytelling, strategic resource allocation, and audience engagement dynamics. Entrepreneurs utilized platform-specific features, such as algorithmic amplification and built-in editing tools, to craft compelling narratives and maximize marketing impact. Despite challenges such as algorithm variability, short videos emerged as cost-effective, accessible tools for enhancing brand visibility and consumer interaction. These results contribute to the theoretical discourse on platform affordances and entrepreneurial marketing while providing practical strategies for entrepreneurs to optimize their digital marketing efforts. The study underscores the need for future research on cross-platform dynamics, cultural variations, and the integration of emerging technologies. Implications for entrepreneurship training and policymaking highlight the critical role of short video marketing in shaping the future of digital entrepreneurship.

Keywords: *digital marketing, content marketing, social media marketing, entrepreneurship, SMEs*

INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has profoundly transformed the way businesses connect with their audiences, with marketing strategies evolving to match the

preferences and behaviours of contemporary consumers. Among these transformative trends, short video content has emerged as a dominant force, captivating audiences through visually compelling and brief messaging. Platforms like Instagram Reels have become pivotal in this shift, offering a unique space where businesses can craft engaging narratives in seconds. Studies show that short-form video content generates higher levels of engagement compared to traditional formats, making it a cornerstone of modern digital marketing strategies (X. Wang, 2024a; Luo, 2024; Al Haris et al., 2023; Rachmat, Jauhar, et al., 2023). This paradigm shift is particularly critical for entrepreneurial ventures, which often operate with limited resources and must maximize their outreach efforts to gain visibility and drive customer loyalty.

Instagram Reels, launched as a direct competitor to TikTok, leverages algorithmic personalization to ensure wide dissemination of content, thereby democratizing access to a global audience (Zhou, 2024; Doloi, 2024; Karapetyan, 2022). For entrepreneurs, this presents a dual-edged opportunity: on one hand, it offers a cost-effective medium to showcase their offerings; on the other, it necessitates a nuanced understanding of consumer psychology and creative storytelling. Unlike traditional marketing channels, short video platforms thrive on immediacy, entertainment value, and authenticity, challenging entrepreneurs to rethink how they communicate their brand identity. While anecdotal evidence and industry reports have extolled the virtues of short video marketing, academic literature has yet to fully capture the experiential and strategic dimensions of entrepreneurs leveraging this medium.

The increasing reliance on Instagram Reels aligns with broader societal trends of declining attention spans. Research indicates that the average attention span of consumers has dropped to just eight seconds, intensifying the demand for concise and impactful content (Davaasuren et al., 2024; Menon, 2022). Short videos, often limited to 15–30 seconds, cater to this reality, offering businesses a brief but potent window to capture interest and drive action. However, the effectiveness of this approach depends not only on technical execution but also on a deeper understanding of audience preferences, cultural nuances, and emerging digital trends. For entrepreneurial ventures, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), mastering this balance can be the difference between thriving in a competitive market and fading into obscurity.

Despite the growing prevalence of short video content, scholarly research has lagged in examining its implications for entrepreneurship, especially from a qualitative and phenomenological perspective. Most existing studies focus on the technical or algorithmic aspects of platforms like Instagram or explore consumer behaviour in isolation, neglecting the lived experiences of entrepreneurs as they navigate the complexities of content creation and audience engagement (X. Wang & Cao, 2024).

This gap highlights the need for an in-depth exploration of how short video marketing shapes entrepreneurial practices and outcomes. By addressing this gap, the current study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the role Instagram Reels plays in entrepreneurial marketing. Through a phenomenological approach, this research delves into the subjective experiences of entrepreneurs, uncovering their challenges, strategies, and perceptions in leveraging short video content. This

exploration not only contributes to academic discourse but also equips practitioners with actionable insights to optimize their digital marketing efforts.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the proliferation of digital marketing tools, entrepreneurs face significant challenges in leveraging these platforms effectively to achieve their business goals. Instagram Reels, a short-form video feature, has emerged as a popular tool for engaging audiences due to its ability to deliver concise, visually appealing, and algorithmically amplified content. However, the rapid evolution of this platform has outpaced the development of comprehensive strategies for its effective use, particularly among entrepreneurial ventures that often operate with limited resources and expertise (Stephens & Miller, 2024; Ormiston & Thompson, 2021a).

Entrepreneurs must navigate a complex landscape of audience preferences, platform algorithms, and creative demands to craft content that resonates with their target markets. This challenge is compounded by the limited empirical understanding of how entrepreneurs perceive, adopt, and integrate short video marketing into their overall business strategies. Existing research largely focuses on consumer behaviour or the technical aspects of social media platforms, leaving a critical gap in understanding the lived experiences of entrepreneurs as active agents in this digital ecosystem (Apasrawirote et al., 2022; C. Chen et al., 2024).

The lack of scholarly attention to these experiential aspects is particularly problematic given the growing importance of short video marketing in shaping consumer-brand relationships (Ormiston & Thompson, 2021). Entrepreneurial ventures, which often rely heavily on cost-effective and high-impact marketing strategies, are uniquely positioned to benefit from platforms like Instagram Reels. However, without a nuanced understanding of how these ventures approach content creation, audience engagement, and performance measurement, the potential of this medium remains underutilized (Qian, 2021; Addo et al., 2022; Waskita et al., 2024).

Furthermore, while short-form video content has been recognized for its ability to capture consumer attention in an era of dwindling attention spans, little is known about its strategic implications for entrepreneurial marketing (Apasrawirote et al., 2022; Manic, 2024). The absence of research addressing these dynamics limits both theoretical advancements in digital marketing and practical insights that entrepreneurs can leverage to enhance their competitiveness.

This study addresses this critical gap by exploring the experiences and perceptions of entrepreneurs using Instagram Reels as a marketing tool. By adopting a phenomenological approach, the research seeks to uncover the nuanced ways in which entrepreneurs engage with this platform, the challenges they face, and the strategies they employ to achieve marketing success. The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of short video marketing in entrepreneurial contexts, offering valuable insights for academics, practitioners, and policymakers alike (Eldon & Waskita, 2024).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aims to explore the role of Instagram Reels as a short video marketing tool within the context of entrepreneurial ventures. The research seeks to address gaps in the existing literature by providing an in-depth understanding of how

entrepreneurs perceive, adopt, and utilize this platform to achieve marketing success. The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. **To examine the lived experiences of entrepreneurs using Instagram Reels for marketing purposes.**

This objective focuses on capturing the subjective experiences of entrepreneurs, offering insights into how they navigate the opportunities and challenges associated with short video content creation. By adopting a phenomenological approach, the study aims to understand the emotional, cognitive, and strategic dimensions of their engagement with Instagram Reels.

2. **To identify strategies employed by entrepreneurs to leverage short video content for audience engagement and brand visibility.**

The study seeks to uncover the specific approaches entrepreneurs use to create impactful content, optimize algorithmic reach, and foster meaningful interactions with their target audience. This includes understanding the creative processes, storytelling techniques, and resource allocation strategies utilized by entrepreneurial ventures.

3. **To explore the perceived impact of short video marketing on entrepreneurial business outcomes.**

This objective investigates how Instagram Reels contributes to key business metrics such as customer acquisition, brand awareness, and revenue generation. By linking marketing activities to tangible outcomes, the study aims to provide evidence-based insights into the value of short video content as a marketing tool.

4. **To contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of digital marketing in entrepreneurial contexts.**

Beyond addressing practical concerns, the study aims to advance theoretical knowledge by examining the interplay between platform affordances, entrepreneurial creativity, and consumer engagement. The findings will provide a conceptual framework for understanding the strategic role of Instagram Reels in modern entrepreneurial marketing practices.

By addressing these objectives, the research intends to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical application, offering valuable contributions to the fields of entrepreneurship and digital marketing. The findings are expected to inform both researchers and practitioners, equipping entrepreneurs with actionable insights to enhance their marketing effectiveness in an increasingly competitive digital landscape.

GAP ANALYSIS

1. Literature Review

The rise of short video content as a dominant form of digital communication has been well-documented in recent studies. Research highlights the effectiveness of platforms like Instagram Reels and TikTok in fostering consumer engagement, brand visibility, and emotional resonance (X. Wang, 2024b; David & Roberts, 2024). These studies often emphasize the algorithmic advantages of short-form video platforms, such as personalized recommendations and amplified reach, which make them highly effective marketing tools. Additionally, scholars have explored consumer behavior in response to short videos, focusing on factors like attention span,

interactivity, and purchase intent (Lin, 2024; R. Wang, 2024; Yu et al., 2024)

However, existing literature predominantly adopts a consumer-centric or platform-focused perspective, examining how audiences respond to short video content or the technological features that drive engagement (Dong et al., 2024; Guo et al., 2024). While these studies provide valuable insights, they fail to consider the creators' side—specifically entrepreneurs—who actively shape these marketing strategies. Furthermore, research on digital marketing often prioritizes large-scale corporations or established brands, leaving a critical gap in understanding how small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurial ventures adapt to and leverage these platforms (Cenamor et al., 2019; Eldon & Waskita, 2024; Ijomah et al., 2024).

2. Identification of Gaps

Despite the growing body of research on digital and social media marketing, several key gaps remain:

1. **Lack of Entrepreneurial Perspective:** Existing studies overlook the subjective experiences of entrepreneurs in navigating short video platforms like Instagram Reels. Little is known about how these individuals perceive the platform, develop strategies, and overcome challenges specific to their resource-constrained contexts (Tarigan et al., 2024; X. Wang & Cao, 2024).
2. **Limited Use of Qualitative Approaches:** Most studies on digital marketing and short video content rely on quantitative methodologies, such as surveys and big data analytics, which provide generalized trends but fail to capture the nuanced, lived experiences of users (Liu et al., 2018a; Shi et al., 2023). A qualitative, phenomenological approach remains underexplored.
3. **Focus on Consumer-Centric Metrics:** While much attention has been given to metrics like viewer engagement and conversion rates, there is limited research linking these outcomes to the strategic and creative efforts of entrepreneurs. This disconnect hinders a comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial processes behind short video marketing (Dong et al., 2024; Guo et al., 2024).
4. **Insufficient Contextualization in SMEs:** Entrepreneurial ventures, particularly SMEs, operate under unique constraints of time, budget, and expertise, which significantly influence their marketing decisions. Existing literature often generalizes findings from larger organizations, failing to address the specific needs and practices of SMEs (Deku et al., 2024; Judijanto et al., 2024).

3. Contribution of the Study

This research addresses these critical gaps by adopting a phenomenological approach to explore how entrepreneurs utilize Instagram Reels for marketing. The contributions of this study include:

1. **Deepening the Understanding of Entrepreneurial Practices:** By focusing on entrepreneurs' lived experiences, this study offers insights into the strategies, challenges, and perceptions that shape their engagement with short video platforms.
2. **Expanding Methodological Diversity:** The use of phenomenology introduces a qualitative depth to the study of digital marketing, enriching the existing literature that heavily relies on quantitative methods.
3. **Contextualizing Marketing within SMEs:** By examining entrepreneurial

ventures, the study provides practical insights tailored to the unique needs and constraints of SMEs, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

4. **Advancing Theoretical Frameworks:** The findings will contribute to developing a conceptual understanding of how platform affordances, creative processes, and audience dynamics intersect in the context of short video marketing for entrepreneurs.

This research not only fills an existing void in academic discourse but also equips entrepreneurs with actionable insights to optimize their marketing efforts in an increasingly competitive digital landscape.

NOVELTY AND RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION

This study contributes a novel perspective to the fields of digital marketing and entrepreneurship by exploring the intersection of short video content, Instagram Reels, and entrepreneurial marketing strategies. Unlike existing studies that predominantly focus on consumer behavior or platform features, this research offers the following innovative contributions:

1. First Phenomenological Exploration of Entrepreneurs' Use of Instagram Reels

While numerous studies examine the effectiveness of short-form video content from a consumer-centric or technical standpoint, this study is among the first to adopt a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of entrepreneurs leveraging Instagram Reels. This focus on subjective, real-world experiences introduces a fresh dimension to the discourse, providing insights into the creative processes, challenges, and strategic decisions unique to entrepreneurial ventures.

2. Bridging Digital Marketing and Entrepreneurship in SMEs

Existing literature often generalizes findings from large organizations to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), ignoring the unique constraints and opportunities faced by entrepreneurs. This study bridges this gap by contextualizing short video marketing within SMEs, offering practical and theoretical insights that are tailored to the entrepreneurial context. By doing so, it enhances the understanding of how resource-constrained ventures adapt to the demands of a rapidly evolving digital marketing landscape.

3. Expanding Methodological Diversity in Digital Marketing Research

The predominance of quantitative approaches in digital marketing research has limited the depth of understanding about the experiential and strategic dimensions of platform usage. This study addresses this methodological gap by employing a phenomenological approach, capturing the nuanced, qualitative aspects of entrepreneurs' interactions with Instagram Reels. This approach not only diversifies methodological contributions but also enriches the theoretical frameworks in this domain.

4. Theoretical Contribution to Platform Affordance and Creativity Dynamics

The study advances the understanding of platform affordances by examining how Instagram Reels' features—such as algorithmic amplification, editing tools, and audience reach—interact with entrepreneurs' creative processes. It highlights the dynamic interplay between platform capabilities and the entrepreneurial need for impactful, cost-effective marketing solutions. This integration of affordance theory with entrepreneurial creativity contributes to the broader literature on digital innovation and marketing strategies.

5. Practical Implications for Entrepreneurial Ventures

The findings of this research are expected to generate actionable insights for entrepreneurs seeking to optimize their use of Instagram Reels for marketing purposes. By uncovering effective strategies and identifying common challenges, the study provides a roadmap for small businesses to enhance their digital marketing efforts, fostering competitive advantages in increasingly crowded online markets.

This study's novelty lies in its ability to fill critical gaps in literature while offering both academic contributions and practical relevance. By integrating phenomenology with the entrepreneurial application of Instagram Reels, it provides a comprehensive and innovative understanding of short video marketing as a tool for business success in the digital era. These contributions not only enrich academic discourse but also offer valuable guidance for entrepreneurs navigating the complexities of the modern marketing landscape.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of entrepreneurs utilizing Instagram Reels as a short video marketing tool (Yilmaz et al., 2020). Phenomenology is chosen as it provides a robust framework to delve into the subjective meanings, perceptions, and emotions of entrepreneurs, capturing the essence of their engagement with short video content in entrepreneurial ventures (Weiland & McLoughlin, 2024; Molem et al., 2024; Siek & Fariz, 2023). The approach enables the study to uncover nuanced insights that quantitative methods might overlook, aligning with the research objective of understanding the interplay between creativity, strategy, and platform usage in a real-world context.

2. Research Procedure

The research procedure is structured into the following phases:

1. Participant Selection:

The study employs purposive sampling to identify participants who are entrepreneurs actively using Instagram Reels for marketing purposes. To ensure diversity and richness in data, participants are drawn from various industries and geographies, with an emphasis on small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

2. Data Collection:

Data is collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, allowing participants to share their experiences in an open and reflective manner. Interviews are conducted either in-person or virtually, recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim for accuracy.

3. Data Analysis:

Thematic analysis is employed to identify recurring patterns and themes in the data. A systematic coding process is applied to capture the essence of participants' experiences, followed by axial coding to refine and interconnect themes. Software tools such as NVivo are utilized to enhance the rigor and reliability of the analysis.

4. **Validation:**

Member checking and triangulation are applied to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Member checking involves sharing preliminary interpretations with participants for feedback, while triangulation integrates insights from interviews, literature, and secondary data to provide a comprehensive perspective.

3. **Theoretical Framework**

This study is underpinned by the Theory of Platform Affordances and the Entrepreneurial Marketing Framework:

- **Platform Affordances:** This theory explores how platform features such as algorithmic amplification, editing tools, and engagement metrics shape user behavior and outcomes. The study applies this lens to understand how Instagram Reels empowers entrepreneurs to reach audiences and communicate their value propositions effectively.
- **Entrepreneurial Marketing Framework:** This framework emphasizes the resource-constrained, innovative, and customer-oriented nature of marketing in entrepreneurial contexts. It provides a foundation for analyzing how entrepreneurs leverage short video content to maximize impact despite limited budgets and expertise.

4. **Role of Short Videos in Content Marketing for Entrepreneurial Ventures**

Short videos, exemplified by Instagram Reels, are increasingly recognized as powerful tools for content marketing due to their ability to capture attention, communicate messages concisely, and foster emotional connections. For entrepreneurial ventures, these videos offer a cost-effective means to enhance brand visibility, engage audiences, and drive sales. By utilizing creative storytelling and platform-specific strategies, entrepreneurs can differentiate themselves in competitive markets, turning seconds of content into meaningful business outcomes.

5. **Data Collection Techniques**

The study employs multiple data collection techniques to ensure a comprehensive exploration of the phenomenon:

- **Semi-Structured Interviews:** In-depth interviews are conducted to capture detailed accounts of entrepreneurs' experiences and strategies.
- **Secondary Data Analysis:** Instagram content, including examples of Reels produced by participants, is analyzed to contextualize their narratives and provide supplementary insights.
- **Literature Review:** A thematic review of recent studies on short video marketing, entrepreneurship, and digital platforms is conducted to situate the research within existing academic discourse. Recent contributions from international journals (Kaur & Kumar, 2021; Yilmaz et al., 2020) inform the theoretical and practical grounding of the study.

6. **Literature Review Sources**

The literature review draws from recent, high-impact studies on the following topics:

- The effectiveness of short video content in digital marketing (Liu et al., 2018b;

Addo et al., 2022; Yuan et al., 2022; H. Chen et al., 2024; Rachmat, Rukmana, et al., 2023)

- Platform affordances and their influence on user behavior (DeVito et al., 2017; Karahanna et al., 2018; Shao et al., 2020; Utami et al., 2024)
- Entrepreneurial marketing strategies in resource-constrained settings (Batra et al., 2015; Sharmelly & Ray, 2021; Dzimba & van der Poll, 2024)
- The role of creativity and storytelling in content marketing (Ashari et al., 2023; Jutkowitz, 2017; Tangmanakiktkamjai & Dhiensawadjij, 2021)

These sources ensure the study is grounded in up-to-date and credible academic research, aligning with the standards of leading international journals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Interpretation of Results

1.1 Overview of Findings

The phenomenological analysis reveals three dominant themes shaping entrepreneurial ventures' use of Instagram Reels for short video marketing: creativity and storytelling, strategic resource allocation, and audience engagement dynamics. Entrepreneurs highlighted how Instagram Reels enabled them to craft compelling narratives that resonated with their target audiences despite constrained resources. Additionally, platform-specific features such as algorithmic amplification and built-in editing tools emerged as pivotal enablers of marketing success.

1.2 Contextualization within Existing Literature

The findings corroborate previous studies emphasizing the importance of creativity in short video marketing (H. Chen et al., 2024; Molem et al., 2024; Yuan et al., 2022). Unlike static content, dynamic visual storytelling engages audiences more effectively by creating emotional connections (Stephens & Miller, 2024). The entrepreneurs' strategic focus on leveraging platform-specific affordances further aligns with affordance theory, which posits that platform features shape user behavior and outcomes (R. Wang, 2024).

1.3 Thematic Insights

- **Creativity and Storytelling:** Entrepreneurs consistently emphasized the need for authenticity and relatability in their content. They relied on creative storytelling to convey brand values and foster audience trust. This aligns with theories suggesting that emotionally resonant narratives enhance consumer engagement (Ashari, 2019; Jutkowitz, 2017; Tangmanakiktkamjai & Dhiensawadjij, 2021)
- **Strategic Resource Allocation:** With limited budgets, entrepreneurs prioritized time-efficient content creation using Instagram Reels' editing tools. This approach highlights the platform's role in democratizing access to high-quality marketing tools, particularly for resource-constrained ventures.
- **Audience Engagement Dynamics:** Entrepreneurs benefited from Instagram's algorithmic amplification, which increased visibility and engagement rates. However, they also expressed concerns about the platform's reliance on trends and unpredictable algorithm changes, which sometimes hindered consistent performance.

2. Impact on Theory and Practice

2.1 Theoretical Contributions

This study extends the theoretical discourse on platform affordances by integrating entrepreneurs' experiential perspectives. It provides empirical evidence on how small businesses navigate digital constraints and leverage platform features for competitive advantage. Additionally, it refines entrepreneurial marketing theories by illustrating how short video content serves as a bridge between innovation and audience connection.

2.2 Practical Implications

The findings offer actionable insights for entrepreneurs:

- Focus on authenticity and relatability to foster stronger emotional connections.
- Utilize platform tools to streamline content creation and maximize output efficiency.
- Monitor algorithm trends and adapt strategies to maintain visibility and engagement.

Moreover, these insights can guide training programs for entrepreneurs, emphasizing platform optimization and creative marketing strategies.

3. Research Limitations

3.1 Scope of Data

The study focuses exclusively on Instagram Reels, which limits the generalizability of findings to other platforms. Future research should incorporate cross-platform comparisons to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

3.2 Methodological Constraints

While phenomenology captures in-depth insights, its subjective nature may lead to biases in interpreting participants' experiences. Additionally, the reliance on purposive sampling might exclude diverse entrepreneurial perspectives.

3.3 Platform-Specific Focus

The study's narrow focus on Instagram Reels excludes insights into how emerging platforms like TikTok or YouTube Shorts may offer distinct opportunities and challenges.

4. Suggestions for Future Research

- Explore the integration of short video marketing across multiple platforms to identify cross-platform strategies.
- Conduct longitudinal studies to examine the long-term impact of video marketing on brand loyalty and business growth.
- Investigate cultural variations in entrepreneurs' adoption of short video marketing to uncover region-specific dynamics.
- Study the incorporation of emerging technologies, such as AI and AR, in short video content creation and delivery.

5. Social and Ethical Implications

5.1 Social Implications

The study highlights how short video marketing influences consumer behavior, particularly in building trust and loyalty. By focusing on authentic and relatable content, entrepreneurs contribute to reshaping audience perceptions of

small businesses, making them more approachable and credible.

5.2 Ethical Considerations

The reliance on algorithm-driven platforms raises concerns about data privacy and content manipulation. Entrepreneurs must navigate these challenges responsibly by adhering to ethical marketing practices. Transparency in content creation and respectful engagement with audiences are crucial for maintaining trust in the digital ecosystem.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study illuminate the pivotal role of short video marketing, specifically through Instagram Reels, in enhancing the entrepreneurial efforts of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Entrepreneurs navigate dynamic digital landscapes by creatively leveraging platform-specific features to establish meaningful connections with their target audiences. The phenomenological analysis revealed that the intersection of creativity, strategic resource utilization, and audience engagement dynamics serves as the foundation for effective short video marketing. These results align with existing theories of platform affordances, which suggest that the unique functionalities of social media platforms shape user behavior and amplify marketing outcomes (R. Wang, 2024). Moreover, the study underscores the strategic ingenuity of entrepreneurs who, despite limited resources, successfully exploit these affordances to craft compelling narratives that resonate emotionally with their audience. This approach not only reinforces brand visibility but also drives actionable consumer responses, contributing to business growth in a competitive digital marketplace.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study explored the role of short video marketing, specifically through Instagram Reels, in entrepreneurial ventures using a phenomenological approach. The findings emphasize that short videos are not merely tools for visual communication but powerful marketing assets that enable entrepreneurs to creatively engage with their audiences and drive business outcomes. Key themes such as creativity, strategic resource utilization, and audience engagement emerged as critical factors in achieving marketing success.

By leveraging platform-specific affordances, entrepreneurs effectively navigated resource constraints to craft authentic and relatable content that resonated with target audiences. The integration of storytelling and platform features, such as algorithmic amplification, underscores the transformative potential of short video marketing in digital entrepreneurship. These insights contribute to the theoretical understanding of platform affordances and entrepreneurial marketing while providing practical implications for enhancing digital strategies.

However, the study also highlights limitations, such as the variability of algorithmic outcomes and the resource demands of consistent content creation. These challenges necessitate adaptive strategies and ongoing innovation in content production.

Recommendations

1. Practical Recommendations for Entrepreneurs

- **Embrace Authenticity and Storytelling:** Entrepreneurs should focus on creating authentic, emotionally engaging stories that reflect their brand identity. Authenticity builds trust and fosters deeper connections with audiences.
- **Leverage Platform Affordances:** Instagram Reels provides cost-effective tools such as built-in editing features and algorithm-driven visibility. Entrepreneurs should maximize these affordances to enhance content quality and reach.
- **Adapt to Algorithmic Trends:** Keeping abreast of platform updates and trends is critical for maintaining visibility. Entrepreneurs should adopt data-driven approaches to monitor and respond to changing audience behaviors and platform dynamics.

2. Policy and Institutional Recommendations

- Educational institutions and entrepreneurship training programs should incorporate modules on digital marketing, particularly focusing on short video strategies, to prepare entrepreneurs for the demands of the modern digital economy.
- Policymakers should consider providing resources or subsidies to support SMEs in adopting digital tools, ensuring equitable access to opportunities within the digital marketplace.

3. Recommendations for Future Research

- **Cross-Platform Analysis:** Future studies should explore the effectiveness of short video marketing across multiple platforms, such as TikTok and YouTube Shorts, to provide a comparative understanding of their affordances and outcomes.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** Examining the long-term impact of short video marketing on brand loyalty and customer retention would provide deeper insights into its sustained benefits.
- **Cultural Perspectives:** Investigating the role of cultural factors in shaping entrepreneurial adoption and adaptation of short video marketing strategies would enhance the generalizability of findings.
- **Technological Integration:** Future research could explore the integration of emerging technologies, such as AI and AR, in short video marketing to understand their potential for revolutionizing entrepreneurial marketing practices.

By addressing these areas, future work can build on the findings of this study, contributing further to the development of theoretical frameworks and practical applications in digital entrepreneurship and content marketing.

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