



Understanding Short- Form Videos and its potential

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The average human attention span has decreased by one-third (33%) in last two decades from 12 seconds in the year 2000 to 8 seconds in the year 2015. According to the study conducted by Microsoft, social media and constant stimulation from smartphones are the important reason for this decline in the attention span. Although this results into decreased productivity, focus and efficiency, the same study by microsoft highlighted that average internet video watch time among users is 2.7 minutes i.e, 162 seconds. This has grabbed the attention of the social media content creator and they started focusing on “short-form videos” or “bite-sized content” generated either by users or by the marketers.

With the advancement of new media and internet technology social media platforms paved the way into the lives of people in a more dynamic fashion than any other media form. Short-form videos has also become an integral part of social media platforms. Applications such as Youtube, Instagram and TikTok can be used to disseminate information and knowledge through text messages, photos and video sharing. Shot-form video content became popular through these applications throughout world. According to Zhang, “a short video, in its strictest and traditional sense, is any video that does not exceed ten-minute duration. Video that exceeds the ten-minute limit is already considered long-form”.

The short-form video concept is typically characterized by its short, bite-sized duration ranging from 15 to 60 seconds together with a high variety of content, making it suitable for the average human attention span of eight seconds (Microsoft Canada, 2015). Various researchers have also defined short-form videos duration in the range between 15 seconds to a minute in length.(Zhu et al., 2019, Shutsko, 2020, Wang, 2020).

Short-form videos are trending form of media to gain new information and knowledge while sharing different skills of video or content creation. It is also identified that the relative

convenience of content generation, rapid content transmission, and emphasis on sociality are the distinct attributes of a short video platform. Short-form videos are trending and becoming more popular than ever because of increased smartphones market with accessible and affordable internet technology in the era of Web 4.0. Omar and Dequan (2020) defined Short-format videos as videos that can be easily recorded, edited and consumed on a smartphone (Omar and Dequan, 2020).

Short videos are not only trending with the media house but also among the user who are generating content. Media is using short video format for marketing and advertising purposes to reach audience in few seconds to promote or sell their products. Whereas users has also turned as prosumer, consuming and producing the content as well. This is done with the help of various applications providing easily accessible users interface compatible with smartphones. These factors paved the way for short videos to become a part of popular culture. Short video content has enormously grown on digital platform and is one of the most growing business sector throughout the world. This research paper focuses on the short-form videos its characteristics, growth and popularity. Another objective of the research is to identify the types of short-form videos and to highlight the possibilities of expression in the future.

Characteristics / Features of Short-Form Video

As short-form videos are the most preferred and consumed medium of expression among digital audience, here follows the list of characteristics of the short-form videos:

- **Duration:** short-form videos time duration is 15 seconds to 60 seconds in length, within the average internet video watch time. According to the Chen,Wu, and Zhang (2015) users tend to be more tolerant in terms of quality to longer length videos, compared to short-format videos in terms of length of videos. Users of short-form videos appreciate brevity as well as easily digestible and creative content delivered quickly.
- **Variety of Content:** wide range of content from engaging comedy videos to educational ones, also the influencer marketing and promotion of products and services are part of short videos. Entertaining and informational user generated content like lip-syncing on songs or dialogues, fashion and cooking tips, spiritual and personal growth videos are the different types of content that can be created for digital audience. short -form videos are suitable to create any type of content.
- **Aspect Ratio:** as short-form videos are short in length and specifically made for digital content, it is assumed and research from a US based organization Emarketer also shows that 75% of adults in US consume short videos on mobile devices. Due to this it is created on portrait aspect ratio than landscape videos aspect ratio to match the platforms on which they are popular i.e, social media apps. Vertical videos or portrait videos are shot on 9:16 aspect ratio to avoid any black bars on top and bottom of the videos.
- **Users Experience:** as consumers are also video creators they have all types of tools and functions in the apps from lip- syncing music videos, and choosing soundtracks to accompany them, using different speed options- time-lapse, fast, normal, slow motion, adding a preset filter. Users are also strongly encouraged to engage with other users through 'response' videos or utilizing 'duets'-users can duplicate videos and add

themselves alongside. Various other features are also available and possible through smartphone and apps interface.

- **Localisation of Content:** the most distinct feature of short-form videos are they are adaptable and can be localised in terms of content, information and local and regional languages. The content is so much localised that political parties are using these apps to promote their campaigns on these apps. Youths, influencer marketing and local products marketing are also paving way through these short-form videos giving them chances of monetising their content. This helps in promoting the business and contributing towards the economic growth.

Benefits / Purpose of Short-form videos

Some of the benefits of short-form videos are:

- **Instant gratification:** short-form video content is quick to consume and gives better opportunity to the audiences to be able to focus. Bite-sized content provides instant gratification with fresh content consumed constantly triggering dopamine release further satisfying consumers. This quick reward cycle keeps users hooked encouraging them to watch more promoting more engagement. According to Hubspot, short-form videos rank number 1 for engagement and lead generation.
- **Engagement:** short-form videos are highly engaging as data from Agility PR solution state of Short-Form Video 2024 report shows that 66 percent find short content video to be most engaging indicating consumers watch more videos than ever before and the demand for short-form content has increased. Catering to the limited attention span easily digestible, bite-sized and engaging content shot videos are trending now. Statistics also reveals that short-form videos are 2.5 times more engaging than long-form content.
- **Algorithmic:** the unique selling proposition of short-form videos lies in algorithm. Algorithm will offer only that content what the users want to see or what they might want to see. This means content which users like to see or enjoy watching will be shown. This further ensures high engagement level offering a personalized set of content to each user. For example if someone watch lot of fitness videos, they will naturally receive suggestion for such content more. This is the power of algorithm enabling to understand the interest of the user and short-videos are providing best user experience in this regards.
- **Shareability:** Short-form video are most likely to become viral or trending in a short period of time of their appearance on the social media. According to HubSpot 2023 video marketing report almost half (47%) of marketers believe that short-form videos are likely to become viral. This virality increases visibility and brand recognition. If the content resonates with the audience interest it is likely to be shared repeatedly across different social media platforms. As short-form videos are versatile they can easily be adapted across multiple platforms like youtube, instagram, facebook without losing their effectiveness, maximizing its shareability and impact.

- **Affordability:** short-videos are more affordable than long-form videos as 60 seconds content will require less filming time, simple editing, limited casts or set and will definitely needs contained conceptualization. Self-produced content with the help of smartphone apps and basic editing is not quick but quiet affordable. This eliminates the need for big productions or large equipments making it more affordable.
- **Users generated content:** Users generated short-form videos like testimonials, reviews etc creates trustworthiness and authenticity among the audiences.it also helps in increasing reach and engagement. According to a report by Businesswire, only 38 percent people are likely to trust the recommendations from a brand about a product where as 61 percent are likely to trust recommendations from influencers, family or friends. Users are encouraged to create and share their videos to promote a product or service, take up a challenge or participate in a trend. User generate content also is valuable in getting feedbacks about a product.
- **Brand development:** As marketer are using short form videos to promote their products. Statistics reveals that 73% of consumers prefer short-form videos to search for a product and 44% of the marketers are expected to use short videos in 2024. Therefore, brand development through social media using short form videos has a great potential in near future. According to RetailDive, 79% of consumer rather watch a video to learn about a product or a brand through short videos than text. Also, the trust, credibility, testimonials, reviews, feedback and recommendations through short videos helps in brand development.
- **Monetization:** influencer marketing has paced up because of short video content giving creators the opportunity to earn or monetize their content. Paid collaborations of brand with influencers, opportunity for small businesses, brand partnerships all create more earning opportunities for brands as well as for influencers. Some websites also pay their users or content creators every time they upload short, original videos. TikTok launched the TikTok Creator Funds to provide monetarily help to top-tier content creators on TikTok providing avenues for creators to monetize their content, incentivizing continued engagement. On Youtube videos, through advertisements content creator can monetize their channel.
- **Feedback and interaction:** Social media platforms provide feedback and interaction with the audiences instantly. Similarly, short-form videos receive instant feedback from viewers which can be measured through its virality, shares, views, plays, like and comments. Furthermore, interaction with the audience is possible making it more interactive and engaging from the point of view of the users also.
- **Localisation:** Easy adaptability and accessibility of short-form videos make it best option to use it for and by local or regional users. Common people can become content creators, earn income and become famous at global level also. Gaining popularity through social media platforms, promoting their local brands, showcasing their talent all can be done through short-form videos.

Types of short-form videos

Based on the various types of content short-form videos are classified as:

1. **Influencers Marketing Content/Selling Products-** According to Brown and Fiorella (2013) “in a marketing context, influencers are normally noncustomers incentivised to recommend a brand or a product”. Influencer marketing approach is cost-effective to reach audience of digital media and also leads to higher intentions to purchase and recommend. So using short-videos through influencer marketing increases brand value, attracts audience and purchase intention too.
2. **Entertainment-** Content creators uses short-form videos for entertainment purposes. Short-form videos empower creators to showcase their creativity, humor, and talent within a brief timeframe giving them opportunity to become famous. Making reels on latest dance hook step to trending music/songs through lip-syncing and also acting comic scene are few of the examples. Celebrity trends, challenges and repeated sharing by followers, creating own pages for entertainment purposes are all part of it.
3. **Education-** short-form videos can be used for delivering educational content for learning purposes. Micro-learning is about delivering concise and captivating content within 2 to 4 minutes. This engaging educational content focuses on specific learning objectives or skills to the targeted audience. Specific pages for learning can be dedicated to on short-form video apps targeting specific audience.
4. **Expertise-Knowledge sharing-** use of short-form videos for expertise-knowledge sharing is also on rise on social media apps. Expertise are using these platforms to reach audience locally and globally as well. Many doctors, gym trainers, yoga experts, astrologers are giving advices, opinions and recommendations on these platforms. They have millions of followers from worldwide giving them popularity as well as opportunity to generate income and to establish their business.
5. **Inspirational Videos-** inspirational videos in form of short video messages are appealing to viewers emotions. They appeal viewers emotions by giving them valuable information, raising awareness to a cause, to improve moods and to motivate someone. Motivational videos in a bite-sized content could be on spiritual content, inspiring humanistic stories or could be positive messages promoting good moods.
6. **Reviews and Testimonials-** With the advent of influencer marketing users of these platforms reviews and give their testimonials on the products through short videos. These reviews and testimonials creates trust and credibility of the product or the brand along with the opinions and the promotion. This could be one of the marketing strategy of the brand as they collaborate also with the famous content creators.
7. **Reels and Montages-** in US people spend almost 1 hour and 16 minutes daily watching short videos. Users generated content is spiralling over the apps. Mostly users make reels and montages of their day out, special days, celebrations, precious moments,

announcements, travelogue or festivities sharing their lives with others. These reels includes the use of filters, music/songs, special effects and other editing techniques.

8. Silent videos- Silent videos accompany text, audioless animation- GiF, captions or memes. They are just form of visuals or text and are without any kind of sounds. Silent videos are surging and are quiet popular on short form videos format also. Including subtitles, engaging video or text, using graphics and animation is on high. The absence of audio, unreasonably, makes content even more accessible.
9. Mini-Series- The new and the latest trend in short-form video is the audio or video mini-series or bite-sized episodes of soap operas. Many new applications has entered the market showcasing mini-serials of 60 to 90 seconds per episodes compromising 60-70 episodes in one soap operas. These newly launched applications are ReelShorts, Pocket FM, Dramabox delivering dramatic content of serials shot in potratiat mode, low budget and highly captivating for the audiences with lesser attention span.
10. How To videos- how to videos are created by the users to deliver tutorials regarding a product through a short-form video. A feature or a walkthrough to a place could be another interesting content of how to videos. How to draw or colour, how to do yoga and exercise or cooking or craft, fashion and decor all this could be part of How To Videos on instagram, youtube, TikTok like platforms.

Potential of Short-form Videos

According to vidico in 2024 it is expected that short-form video will dominate 90% of internet's traffic. Sources like woosuite and linkedin indicates that revenue generated from short-form video advertisements is going to surpass 10 billion dollars. More than half (57%) of Gen Z prefer to learn about products and servies from short-videos (Hubspot.com). This also indicates that Gen Z and easily be targeted through short-form video platforms. According to Hubspot and Techjury 44% of marketers are expected to use short-form videos in the year 2024. These projections highlights the kind of financial opportunities presented by short-form video advertising and its increase effectiveness and engagement in consumers attention across various digital platforms.

Short-form videos also have few challenges like no-indepth information is generated due to over simplification of complex topics within shorter period of time span. The brevity of information and speed at which it spreads can leads to misinformation. Due to consistent consumption of the short, quick and highly engaging videos, lower retention rate and reduced attention span will be increasing. Brand development and monetization could become an issue with content creators without the availability of a proper channel. Short lived viral challenges and trends could be another issue in sustaining short-form videos. While discussing serious and sensitive issues its quality and importance can be compromised with the use of short-form videos. Other challenges of short-form videos could be audience fragmentation, brand consistency and resource allocation. Also, for platforms that are based on search engine optimization, short-form videos may provide less SEO value than longer format videos.

Despite all these challenges there are potential opportunities in the future for short-form videos on digital platforms. With the advancement of technology the future of short videos will be highly creative, engaging and interactive. Augmented reality (AR), Virtual reality (VR) and 3D with advancement in editing technologies will be offering new possibilities to content creators. Augmented reality and virtual reality can be used to increase video engagement through creativity making content visually attractive and memorable. Micro-learning giving bite-sized content to learn from could be another future possibility.

Micro-influencers are other potential for the short videos where partnering with individuals who are small influencers but with high followings. This is done to use their authenticity to reach niche audience to sell your brand. Exploring niche content market is also possible through this leading to diverse range of content. Short-form video has seen a very smooth and successful transition from long format videos within a short span of time. It is now becoming one of the most powerful tool not only for marketing but also for entertainment. One of the recent as well as most promising format of short-videos is audio or video mini-series, where short 60-90 seconds drama episodes are going to be a rage in the near future. This is the time to tap in to the great possibilities of short-form videos.

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