

Content Management Strategy of Nabila May Sweetha as a Visually Impaired TikTok Creator: An Inclusive Digital Communication Perspective

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Abstract

This study examines the content management strategies of Nabila May Sweetha, a visually impaired TikTok content creator, in navigating a highly visual social media environment. Using a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in Everett M. Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations of content production and audience interaction, and documentation of digital content and engagement metrics. The findings reveal that Nabila's effectiveness as a content creator is driven by strategic message simplification, optimization of non-visual sensory elements such as voice and narration, collaborative practices, and the development of strong emotional connections with audiences. These strategies enable her to sustain visibility, adapt to digitalization processes, and successfully diffuse innovation across communication channels and social systems. This study's main contribution lies in demonstrating that effective digital innovation in social media content creation is shaped by adaptive communication strategies rather than physical ability, offering a new perspective on inclusive digital creativity.

Keywords: content management strategy; visually impaired content creator; TikTok; digital communication; diffusion of innovation

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital media has significantly reshaped communication practices and content consumption, particularly through visually oriented social media platforms such as TikTok that prioritize visual creativity, algorithmic distribution, and user

engagement. While these platforms provide new opportunities for content creators, they also raise structural challenges for individuals whose participation does not conform to dominant visual norms.

Existing studies in digital communication and disability studies have largely focused on issues of accessibility, representation, or audience perception of people with disabilities in digital spaces. However, there remains a limited understanding of how content creators with visual impairments actively manage content, adapt to platform dynamics, and strategically diffuse innovation within algorithm-driven social media ecosystems. Most prior research positions individuals with disabilities as objects of inclusion rather than as agents of digital innovation and communication strategy, leaving a clear gap in explaining their role in shaping digital creativity.

The presence of visually impaired content creators such as Nabila May Sweetha challenges these assumptions by demonstrating that physical limitations do not necessarily constrain digital participation or audience engagement. Instead, adaptive communication strategies, creative content management, and alternative sensory approaches enable sustained visibility and interaction within highly visual platforms.

This study advances prior literature by shifting the analytical focus from accessibility and representation toward content management strategies and innovation diffusion employed by a visually impaired creator in a competitive social media environment. Using Nabila May Sweetha as a case study and applying Everett M. Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory, this research offers a process-oriented understanding of how inclusive communication practices are developed, adopted, and circulated within online communities.

Accordingly, this study aims to:

1. Analyze the content management strategies employed by a visually impaired TikTok content creator in producing and distributing digital content.
2. Examine how adaptive communication practices enable sustained existence and audience engagement within a visually dominant platform.

3. Explain how innovation is diffused through communication channels, time frames, and social systems in the context of inclusive digital content creation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Innovation

Innovation in this study is understood as adaptive communicative practices that generate value by responding to structural constraints within digital platforms. Nasution and Kartajaya (2018) define innovation as a strategic process rooted in understanding user needs and translating creative ideas into practical solutions. In contemporary digital communication, innovation increasingly manifests through content strategies, narrative formats, and audience engagement rather than technological novelty alone (van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal, 2018; Bucher, 2018).

In this research, innovation is operationalized through observable indicators in Nabila May Sweetha's TikTok content, including: (1) the prioritization of narration and voice modulation over visual aesthetics; (2) the use of personal storytelling to create emotional engagement; (3) adaptation to TikTok's algorithmic logic through short-form, engagement-oriented content; and (4) collaborative practices that expand reach and normalize adaptive content strategies. These indicators allow innovation to be examined empirically as a content management strategy within a visually dominant platform.

Digitalization and Platform Affordances

Digitalization refers to the integration of digital technologies into social and communicative processes, reshaping interaction patterns and content circulation. Beyond early accounts of digitalization (Tapscott, 1995), recent scholarship emphasizes platform affordances as key determinants of user practices (Nagy & Neff, 2015; Bucher & Helmond, 2018).

In this study, digitalization is analytically connected to TikTok's specific affordances, including short-form video formats, algorithmic content recommendation systems based on engagement, audio-visual layering, and interactive features such as comments, duets, and live

sessions. These affordances enable visually impaired creators to emphasize narration, sound, and storytelling, providing alternative modes of participation beyond visual dominance. Digitalization thus functions as a structuring condition that shapes how innovation is produced, diffused, and received within TikTok's ecosystem.

Existence

Existence is analytically distinguished from visibility and popularity. While visibility refers to being seen and popularity to numerical reach, existence is defined as sustained recognition and legitimacy within a social system (Afkhai, 2018). In digital environments, existence is processual and relational rather than purely metric-based.

In this research, existence is identified through empirical indicators such as consistency of content production, recurrent audience interaction, continuity of personal narratives, and the creator's sustained presence despite algorithmic competition. These indicators position existence as an ongoing communicative process rather than a temporary outcome of platform visibility.

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Everett M. Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory (2003) provides the primary analytical framework for examining how adaptive content practices spread within TikTok's social system. Diffusion in this study is analyzed through four empirically identifiable phases: (1) initial exposure, marked by early audience encounters with narration-based content; (2) early adoption, reflected in repeated engagement and positive feedback; (3) acceptance, indicated by normalization of adaptive strategies through comments and collaborations; and (4) stabilization, characterized by sustained interaction and creator recognition within the community.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the content management strategies of Nabila May Sweetha as a visually impaired TikTok content creator.

Data Collection

Data were collected through:

1. **In-depth interviews** with the primary research subject conducted in two sessions, each lasting approximately 60–90 minutes.
2. **Non-participant observation** of TikTok content over a three-month period, focusing on content production patterns, audience interaction, and narrative development.
3. **Documentation** of approximately 30 selected TikTok content items, including videos, captions, comment threads, and engagement metrics.

Engagement Metrics Analysis

Engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares) were analyzed qualitatively by identifying interaction patterns, recurring audience responses, and thematic consistency in comments rather than as quantitative performance indicators.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Source and method triangulation were applied to enhance validity and credibility.

Ethical Considerations

This research adheres to ethical research principles. Informed consent was obtained from the research subject prior to interviews and content analysis. Publicly available content was analyzed with respect to creator privacy, and interpretations were contextualized to avoid misrepresentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Innovation as Adaptive Practice

The findings indicate that Nabila's innovation lies in her strategic emphasis on narration, voice modulation, and personal storytelling. Rather than relying on visual elements, she transforms sensory limitations into communicative strengths. As stated in one interview:

“Because I cannot rely on visuals, I focus on how people feel my story through my voice.”

This illustrates how innovation emerges as adaptive practice shaped by platform constraints.

Communication Channels and Diffusion

TikTok functions as the primary communication channel facilitating innovation diffusion. Features such as algorithmic recommendations, comment sections, and collaborative tools enable two-way interaction and rapid dissemination. Increased engagement following collaborative content reflects a transition from early adoption to broader acceptance.

Time Frame and Growth Patterns

The diffusion process unfolds gradually, with identifiable milestones including increased comment repetition, audience familiarity with recurring narratives, and sustained engagement over time.

Social System

The social system surrounding the content includes followers, fellow creators, and the broader TikTok community. Audience responses demonstrate empathy and normalization of adaptive content strategies, indicating acceptance within the platform’s social environment.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that adaptive content management strategies enable the successful diffusion of digital innovation within a visually dominant social media platform. Innovation is shown to be a strategic communicative process shaped by creativity and adaptability rather than physical ability.

This research is limited by its single-case design and platform-specific focus. Future studies may employ comparative approaches across platforms, explore audience interpretation in greater depth, or examine the role of algorithmic governance in shaping disability representation in digital media.

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