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Virtual Reality and Immersive Journalism: Problems and Prospects in Nigeria

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Abstract

Virtual reality (VR) and immersive journalism represent one of the most significant technological turns in contemporary news production, allowing audiences to experience news events as first-person participants rather than as distant observers. Since the concept was formally introduced to describe news content produced through head-mounted displays and 360-degree video, immersive journalism has been embraced by leading global news organisations as a tool for deepening audience empathy, presence, and engagement. This paper interrogates the concept, theoretical underpinnings, and practice of virtual reality and immersive journalism, with specific attention to the Nigerian media environment. Anchored on Presence Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model, the paper adopts a qualitative, literature-based (desk research) methodology to examine the extent to which Nigerian newsrooms have adopted immersive technologies, the structural and socio-economic problems militating against adoption, and the prospects the technology holds for the future of news storytelling in the country. The paper identifies poor broadband and electricity infrastructure, the high cost of VR hardware, low digital literacy, inadequate journalist training, weak institutional investment, and unresolved ethical questions around authenticity and manipulation as the dominant challenges. The researcher recommends deliberate investment in broadband infrastructure, curriculum reform in journalism schools, public-private collaboration, and the development of context-specific ethical guidelines to enable Nigerian journalism to responsibly harness immersive technologies.

Keywords: 360-Degree Video, Presence Theory, Digital Divide, Broadband, Nigerian Media

Introduction

The evolution of journalism has always been tied to the evolution of technology, from the printing press through broadcast media to the internet and social media. The newest frontier in this trajectory is immersive journalism, a mode of news production that uses virtual reality (VR) and 360-degree video to



place audiences inside the news story as first-person participants rather than as passive recipients of a mediated account. The concept was formally introduced into scholarly discourse by De la Peña and colleagues, who conceptualised immersive journalism as the production of news content that enables audiences to gain first-person experiential access to the events and situations described in a news story (De la Peña et al., 2010). This evolution has been largely propelled by rapid advancements in information and communication technologies (ICTs), which have continually redefined how news is gathered, produced, and disseminated to audiences (Deuze, 2003; Okoro&Diri, 2013). Among the most disruptive of these technological innovations is virtual reality, a computer-generated simulation that immerses users in a three-dimensional environment, creating a psychological sense of “presence” within a mediated experience (Slater & Wilbur, 1997; Milk, 2015).

Since that foundational work, major international news organisations, including the New York Times, the BBC, and Al Jazeera, have experimented with VR and 360-degree formats to cover humanitarian crises, conflict, and social issues, driven by the assumption that immersive storytelling can generate a heightened sense of presence and empathy in audiences (Sirkkunen et al., 2016; Domínguez, 2017). Globally, journalism schools, technology companies, and media innovation initiatives such as Journalism 360 have invested substantially in exploring how immersive technologies can be integrated into everyday news practice. Immersive journalism, whether through 360-degree video, VR headsets, or augmented reality (AR) overlays, allows audiences to experience news events as though they were physically present at the scene (Doyle, Gelman, & Gill, 2016; Sirkkunen et al., 2016). Unlike conventional journalism, which relies on the audience’s imagination to reconstruct events from text, images, or two-dimensional video, immersive journalism situates the user within the story itself, thereby heightening empathy, engagement, and emotional connection to news content (Sundar et al., 2017; Van Damme et al., 2019).

In Nigeria, however, the adoption of virtual reality and immersive journalism remains at an embryonic stage. While Nigerian media organisations have progressively embraced digital and social media tools, the uptake of immersive technologies for news storytelling has been comparatively slow, constrained by infrastructural, economic, and institutional factors peculiar to the Nigerian media and communication environment (Adeyemi & Abimbola, 2023). Nigeria’s broadband penetration, though improving, still trails the National Broadband Plan’s targets, standing at approximately 46 percent in mid-2025 and rising to about 53 percent by early 2026, with pronounced disparities between urban and rural access (Nigerian Communications Commission [NCC], 2025; National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2022).

It is against this backdrop that this paper examines the problems and prospects of virtual reality and immersive journalism in Nigeria. The paper is structured to clarify the core concepts, situate the discussion within relevant theories, review global practice, assess the current state of immersive journalism in Nigeria, identify the challenges confronting its adoption, and explore the prospects available for its growth.

Despite the demonstrated global potential of virtual reality and immersive journalism to revolutionise news production and audience engagement (De la Peña et al., 2010; Sirkkunen et al., 2016), the adoption of these technologies within the Nigerian media industry remains strikingly limited (Aririguzoh, 2019; Chukwu & Ugande, 2021). While scholarly and industry attention on immersive journalism has grown substantially in Western and some Asian media contexts (Watson, 2017; Shin & Biocca, 2018), there exists a considerable dearth of empirical research examining the phenomenon within the Nigerian and broader sub-Saharan African media context (Salawu, 2021; Ogunyombo, 2017). Nigerian journalism practice continues to grapple with fundamental structural challenges, including poor internet infrastructure, unreliable electricity supply, and limited technical expertise, which collectively constrain the feasibility of adopting resource-intensive technologies such as VR (Ekwueme & Folarin, 2017; Nwabueze & Oduah, 2018).



Furthermore, the high cost of VR production equipment (360-degree cameras, VR headsets, and specialised editing software) presents a significant financial burden for Nigerian media organisations already contending with declining revenues, advertising slumps, and economic instability (Duruaku, 2019; Musa & Yusha'u, 2013). Compounding these infrastructural and financial constraints is the near-absence of immersive journalism training within Nigerian journalism and mass communication curricula (Adeyemi & Alabi, 2020; Ojomo, 2018). Most journalism training institutions in Nigeria remain anchored in traditional pedagogical frameworks that emphasise print, broadcast, and conventional online journalism, with little to no exposure to immersive or VR-based storytelling techniques (Okoro & Diri, 2013; Wimmer & Wolf, 2005).

Consequently, practising journalists in Nigeria largely lack the technical competencies required to conceptualise, produce, and distribute immersive news content (Salawu, 2021). On the audience side, there is also a notable gap in VR technology accessibility, as the majority of Nigerian news consumers lack access to VR headsets or compatible devices necessary for experiencing immersive content (NBS, 2021; Pjesivac et al., 2020). This raises fundamental questions regarding the practicality and inclusivity of immersive journalism within a media market characterised by significant digital divides between urban and rural populations, as well as across socio-economic classes (Statista, 2022; Ogunyombo, 2017).

It is this convergence of infrastructural deficiencies, financial constraints, educational gaps, audience accessibility issues, and the paucity of empirical scholarship that constitutes the central problem this study seeks to address. Specifically, the study interrogates the extent to which Nigerian media organisations have adopted VR and immersive journalism practices, the specific challenges impeding wider adoption, and the prospects available for advancing immersive journalism within the Nigerian media ecosystem going forward.

Objectives of the Study

This paper sets out to:

1. clarify the concepts of virtual reality and immersive journalism;
2. situate the study within relevant theoretical frameworks;
3. assess the current state of virtual reality and immersive journalism adoption in Nigeria;
4. identify the problems confronting its adoption in Nigeria; and
5. explore the prospects for its growth within the Nigerian media landscape.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two complementary theories: Presence Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model. These frameworks have been identified in the literature as useful lenses for studying the adoption and effects of virtual reality in journalism (Mandela, 2024).

Presence Theory

Presence Theory, associated with the work of Slater and Wilbur (1997) and further developed by Slater (2009), explains the psychological state in which users of an immersive system feel as though they are physically located within the virtual environment, rather than merely observing it from outside. Slater (2009) distinguishes between “place illusion,” the sense of actually being in a place, and “plausibility illusion,” the sense that the events occurring are real. Applied to immersive journalism, Presence Theory helps to explain why VR and 360-degree news content are believed to generate stronger emotional engagement and empathy in audiences than conventional text or video reports. Central to the theory is the idea that presence arises not simply from technological sophistication but from the interplay between a system’s responsiveness to a user’s movements and the believability of the depicted scenario; Slater



(2009) further notes that even users who remain consciously aware that a virtual environment is not real can nonetheless respond to it with genuine emotional and physiological reactions, a phenomenon that underlies much of the interest in VR as an empathy-generating medium for journalism. Within immersive journalism scholarship, presence is frequently treated as the mechanism that links exposure to a VR news story with downstream outcomes such as attitude change and prosocial intention, making it a critical construct for understanding both the promise and the limits of the format (Sundar et al., 2017).

Technology Acceptance Model

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), posits that the adoption of a new technology is primarily determined by users' perceptions of its usefulness and ease of use. TAM has been widely applied in studies of digital and immersive technology adoption in African contexts, including assessments of VR adoption barriers in Nigerian institutions (Adeyemi & Abimbola, 2023). In the context of this paper, TAM provides a useful framework for understanding why Nigerian journalists and media organisations, despite awareness of immersive journalism's global promise, may remain reluctant to adopt it if the technology is perceived as costly, complex, or impractical within existing newsroom structures. Central to TAM are two belief constructs: perceived usefulness, the degree to which an individual believes that adopting a technology will enhance their performance, and perceived ease of use, the degree to which they believe that using it will be relatively effortless. Davis (1989) theorised that these two beliefs jointly shape a user's attitude toward a technology, which in turn predicts behavioural intention to adopt it and, ultimately, actual usage. Later extensions of the model incorporated external variables such as organisational support, cost, and infrastructural readiness as antecedents of perceived usefulness and ease of use, factors that are especially salient in resource-constrained settings such as Nigeria, where journalists' beliefs about VR's practicality are shaped as much by structural realities, including bandwidth, hardware cost, and electricity supply, as by the technology's inherent attributes. Applied to this study, TAM therefore offers a lens not only for explaining individual journalists' attitudes toward immersive tools but also for situating those attitudes within the broader infrastructural and institutional constraints explored in subsequent sections.

Literature Review

Virtual Reality

Virtual reality refers to a computer-generated simulation of a three-dimensional environment that users can interact with using specialised electronic equipment, such as head-mounted displays (HMDs), gloves fitted with sensors, or mobile-based VR viewers. The technology creates a sense of "presence," the psychological feeling of actually being in the simulated environment, by tracking the user's head and body movements and adjusting the visual and audio field in real time (Slater, 2009). Contemporary VR systems have evolved from expensive, laboratory-bound Cave Automatic Virtual Environments (CAVEs) to increasingly affordable consumer headsets and inexpensive cardboard viewers that work with ordinary smartphones, a development that has been central to VR's spread into journalism (Bailenson, 2018).

Immersive Journalism

Immersive journalism is the application of virtual reality and related technologies to news production, enabling audiences to experience news events in the first person rather than merely reading, hearing, or watching a report about them. De la Peña et al. (2010) originally conceptualised immersive journalism as a practice in which the participant, typically represented digitally, gains access to the sights and sounds of a news event, and possibly the feelings and emotions that accompany it. The underlying premise is that heightened presence produces heightened empathy and understanding, allowing journalism to move



audiences beyond detached spectatorship into experiential engagement with the realities depicted (Sirkkunen et al., 2016).

Immersive journalism, however, is not without conceptual tension. Because it blurs the boundary between the represented and the real, scholars caution that it can create ambiguity between factual reporting and constructed experience, raising questions of manipulation, staging, and the erosion of journalistic objectivity (Aitamurto, 2019). This tension is particularly salient in an environment such as Nigeria's, where public trust in media institutions is already a subject of considerable scholarly and public concern.

360-Degree Video, Augmented and Mixed Reality

Closely related to virtual reality journalism is 360-degree video, a format captured with omni directional cameras that allows viewers to look around a scene in every direction, typically via a smartphone, computer screen, or VR headset. Because it is considerably cheaper to produce than fully rendered VR environments, 360-degree video has become the dominant format in immersive news production worldwide (Van Damme et al., 2019). Augmented reality (AR) overlays digital information onto the physical environment through a smartphone or smart-glass interface, while mixed reality (MR) blends real and virtual elements interactively in real time. Together, these formats constitute what is broadly referred to as "immersive media" or "extended reality" (XR) in contemporary media scholarship.

Global Trends in Immersive Journalism Practice

Since the pioneering work of De la Peña and colleagues, immersive journalism has grown into an established, if still niche, practice among leading global news organisations. Notable early examples include the New York Times' distribution of over one million Google Cardboard viewers to subscribers in 2015 to accompany its VR documentary series, and the United Nations' 2015 production *Clouds Over Sidra*, a 360-degree film depicting the life of a Syrian refugee child that became a widely cited case study in immersive humanitarian storytelling (Pérez-Seijo&García-Orosa, 2020).

Industry-wide collaborations have also driven the field forward. Journalism 360, a global network formed in partnership with the Google News Initiative and the Online News Association, has supported numerous experimental projects exploring 360-degree video, augmented reality, and spatial audio in news storytelling, funding early-stage innovation across newsrooms worldwide (Knight Foundation, 2017). Similar democratisation efforts have extended immersive training to young filmmakers across the Middle East and Africa, including participants from Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya, reflecting a growing, if still uneven, engagement with immersive storytelling on the African continent (AJ Contrast, 2018).

Nonetheless, even in well-resourced newsrooms, adoption has faced persistent obstacles. A widely cited reflection from a Danish newsroom experiment found that despite editorial enthusiasm, the sustained production of 360-degree content struggled against newsroom time pressures, unclear return on investment, and the absence of dedicated personnel and equipment (Krogsgaard, 2017). Scholars have similarly noted that immersive journalism confronts unresolved normative questions, including how to reconcile the subjective, experiential nature of VR storytelling with journalism's traditional claims to objectivity and verification (Aitamurto, 2019; Van Damme et al., 2019). These global patterns of enthusiasm tempered by practical and ethical constraint provide a useful comparative backdrop for examining the Nigerian experience.

Virtual Reality and Immersive Journalism in Nigeria

The Nigerian media landscape has undergone considerable digital transformation over the past two decades, with newsrooms increasingly embracing online publishing, social media engagement, mobile journalism, and data-driven storytelling. Virtual reality and immersive journalism, however, remain



largely exploratory rather than institutionalised practices within the Nigerian media industry. Consistent with this pattern, existing Nigerian media technology scholarship suggests that while awareness of tools such as VR and augmented reality is gradually increasing among media professionals, actual adoption remains constrained by significant infrastructural and knowledge gaps, and that practitioners' depth of understanding of immersive journalism remains generally limited (Adeyemi & Abimbola, 2023; Aririguzoh, 2019).

Where immersive technologies have found application in Nigeria, it has often been outside conventional news journalism, in areas such as advertising, entertainment, cultural heritage preservation, and, to a growing extent, education, where VR is being explored as a tool for experiential learning in Nigerian secondary and tertiary institutions (Adeyemi & Abimbola, 2023). A handful of independent filmmakers and international NGO-affiliated projects have produced 360-degree content involving Nigerian stories and storytellers, often through externally funded training initiatives rather than sustained newsroom investment (AJ Contrast, 2018).

This suggests that the seeds of immersive storytelling capacity exist within the Nigerian creative and media ecosystem, even though they have not yet been substantially absorbed into mainstream journalistic practice. Mandela's (2024) review of virtual reality as a tool for immersive journalism similarly found a pronounced contextual and methodological gap in the literature, with existing empirical work concentrated in North America, Europe, and parts of Asia, and comparatively little systematic research or newsroom experimentation documented in African, and specifically Nigerian, contexts. This gap mirrors the broader pattern of technology diffusion in Nigeria, where innovations tend to arrive first in urban, well-resourced, and internationally connected media houses before, if at all, diffusing to the wider industry.

Problems Confronting Virtual Reality and Immersive Journalism in Nigeria

The literature reviewed above points to several converging challenges confronting the adoption of virtual reality and immersive journalism in Nigeria. These are discussed in turn below.

Poor Broadband and Digital Infrastructure

Immersive content, particularly high-resolution 360-degree video and VR, requires substantial bandwidth for both production workflows and audience access. Yet Nigeria's broadband penetration, though improving, stood at only about 45.6 percent as of May 2025 and roughly 53 percent by January 2026, still short of the National Broadband Plan's target of 70 percent penetration by 2025 (NCC, 2025; Phillips Consulting, 2025). Fibre-optic infrastructure remains heavily concentrated in Lagos, Abuja, and a few other urban centres, leaving large parts of the country reliant on slower and less stable connections (Phillips Consulting, 2025). This infrastructural imbalance directly constrains both the capacity of newsrooms to produce and stream immersive content and the ability of ordinary Nigerians to consume it.

The Urban–Rural Digital Divide

Beyond the national aggregate figures lies a sharper urban–rural disparity. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), only about 23 percent of rural Nigerians used the internet, compared with more than 60 percent of urban dwellers, a pattern corroborated by the GSMA Mobile Connectivity Index, which placed rural internet adoption at between 20 and 25 percent against urban usage exceeding 60 percent (NBS, 2022; GSMA, 2023). Since immersive journalism depends on high-capacity connectivity for both production and distribution, this divide effectively excludes a substantial proportion of the Nigerian population, and by extension much of the country's most compelling rural and community stories, from meaningful engagement with the format.



High Cost of Hardware and Production

Virtual reality headsets, 360-degree cameras, editing software, and the technical expertise required to operate them remain relatively expensive, particularly against the backdrop of Nigeria's challenging macroeconomic environment and the depreciation of the naira. Rising data costs compound this problem: the average cost of one gigabyte of data in Nigeria rose from roughly ₦287.50 to ₦637.50 between 2023 and 2025, while monthly household expenditure on internet services surged from about ₦176.87 billion in 2023 to ₦721.18 billion by mid-2025 (Within Nigeria, 2026). For media organisations already operating on thin margins, the additional capital investment required for immersive equipment is difficult to justify without a clear and immediate return on investment.

Epileptic Power Supply

Nigeria's chronic electricity supply challenges impose an additional layer of cost and unpredictability on any technology-intensive media practice. Telecommunications operators alone reportedly consume more than 40 million litres of diesel monthly, at an annual cost exceeding 350 million United States dollars, simply to keep network infrastructure running (Phillips Consulting, 2025). For newsrooms seeking to produce and edit immersive content, which typically demands power-intensive computing hardware, unreliable electricity supply translates into higher operating costs and reduced production capacity.

Inadequate Training and Digital Literacy Among Journalists

Immersive journalism demands new production competencies, including spatial storytelling, 360-degree camera operation, VR editing software, and an understanding of how presence and interactivity shape audience experience. Nigerian journalism training, both at university level and within newsroom professional development programmes, has been slow to incorporate these emerging competencies into curricula, leaving a substantial skills gap (Adeyemi & Abimbola, 2023). This mirrors global findings that newsroom adoption of immersive formats is frequently constrained less by technology itself than by the absence of trained personnel with the time and expertise to sustain production (Krogsgaard, 2017).

Weak Institutional Investment and Unclear Business Models

Nigerian media organisations, many of which already struggle with declining advertising revenue and the broader economic pressures confronting the print and broadcast industries, have shown limited appetite for investing in a technology whose commercial returns remain uncertain. Without a demonstrable business case, immersive journalism risks being perceived by media managers as a costly experiment rather than a strategic priority, a pattern also observed in better-resourced newsrooms abroad (Krogsgaard, 2017).

Ethical and Credibility Concerns

The immersive, first-person nature of VR journalism raises distinct ethical questions that Nigerian media institutions have yet to systematically address. Because immersive formats can blur the line between factual reporting and constructed experience, they raise the risk of audience manipulation, misrepresentation, and the erosion of the boundary between journalism and entertainment (Aitamurto, 2019). In a media environment such as Nigeria's, where concerns about misinformation, sensationalism, and declining public trust in journalism are already well documented, the absence of clear ethical guidelines for immersive content production represents a significant, largely unaddressed, professional risk.



Low Public Awareness and Demand

Finally, the relative novelty of VR and immersive media in Nigeria means that public familiarity with, and demand for, immersive news content remains low. Adoption of any technology, per the Technology Acceptance Model, depends substantially on perceived usefulness and ease of use among the target audience; where audiences neither own the requisite devices nor understand the value proposition of immersive news, media organisations face weak incentives to invest in content that few can readily access or appreciate.

Prospects of Virtual Reality and Immersive Journalism in Nigeria

Despite the challenges outlined above, the literature also points to several prospects for the growth of virtual reality and immersive journalism in Nigeria, discussed below.

A Young, Mobile-First, and Digitally Curious Population

Nigeria possesses one of the youngest and most digitally engaged populations in the world, with smartphone and mobile internet use as the dominant mode of digital access; approximately 73 percent of internet access in Nigeria occurs via mobile devices (Telecom Review Africa, 2023). Because low-cost 360-degree video can be viewed on ordinary smartphones without dedicated headsets, this mobile-first orientation positions Nigeria's youthful population as a receptive audience base for immersive content, provided affordability and connectivity constraints can be progressively addressed.

Expanding Digital and Creative Technology Ecosystem

Nigeria's technology and creative industries, from its globally recognised film industry, Nollywood, to its expanding fintech and startup ecosystem, provide a rich talent pool of visual storytellers, software developers, and technically skilled young professionals who could be redirected toward immersive media production. International training initiatives that have already engaged Nigerian filmmakers in 360-degree video production demonstrate that local creative capacity exists and can be scaled with adequate investment and structured mentorship (AJ Contrast, 2018).

Government and Private Sector Infrastructure Investment

Ongoing government and private sector efforts to bridge Nigeria's digital divide offer a foundation on which immersive journalism could eventually be built. Initiatives such as the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy's Broadband for All programme, the Project 774 Local Government Connectivity scheme leveraging satellite technology, and state-level digital transformation projects such as Abia State's dedicated internet access initiative all point to a policy environment increasingly attentive to closing connectivity gaps (Borgen Project, 2025; Vanguard, 2025). Continued progress on these fronts would directly reduce one of the most significant structural barriers to immersive content production and consumption.

Growing Global Interest in African Immersive Storytelling

International news organisations, NGOs, and immersive media networks have shown sustained interest in supporting African-produced immersive content, motivated in part by the recognised power of first-person storytelling to convey humanitarian and social realities authentically (Pérez-Seijo&García-Orosa, 2020). This global appetite, combined with growing pan-African immersive media networks and challenge grants such as those historically offered through Journalism 360, offers Nigerian journalists and media start-ups potential avenues for funding, training, and international partnership that could accelerate local capacity building (Knight Foundation, 2017).



Potential for Educational and Institutional Integration

Nigerian universities and journalism training institutions are beginning to show interest in immersive technologies, particularly within education-focused departments experimenting with VR for experiential learning (Adeyemi & Abimbola, 2023). This nascent institutional engagement, if extended into journalism and mass communication curricula, could help cultivate a new generation of Nigerian media professionals equipped with the technical and ethical grounding necessary to responsibly produce immersive news content.

Diversification of Revenue and Storytelling for Underreported Issues

Immersive formats offer Nigerian newsrooms a potentially powerful tool for humanising underreported issues, ranging from the humanitarian consequences of insurgency and displacement in the North-East, to environmental degradation in the Niger Delta, to the lived realities of urban poverty. Given VR's demonstrated capacity to enhance empathy and audience engagement with distant suffering in other contexts (Van Damme et al., 2019), Nigerian media organisations that successfully adopt the format could differentiate themselves editorially while attracting new international partnerships, grants, and audiences interested in authentic African narratives.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative, exploratory design anchored on desk research. Desk research, being a low-cost, secondary-data-based technique, relies on the review, synthesis, and critical analysis of existing scholarly literature, industry reports, and documentary evidence rather than primary fieldwork (Mandela, 2024). Sources were purposively identified through targeted searches of Google Scholar and the websites of relevant regulatory and industry bodies, using search terms including “immersive journalism,” “virtual reality journalism,” “360-degree video,” and “Nigeria digital divide.” Priority was given to peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings; industry and news reports from bodies such as the Nigerian Communications Commission, the National Bureau of Statistics, GSMA, and reputable Nigerian and international news outlets were used specifically to establish current infrastructural and socio-economic statistics not yet captured in the peer-reviewed literature. Sources were reviewed for relevance, credibility, and recency, with preference given to publications from 2015 onward, supplemented by foundational, frequently cited works predating this period.

As a limitation, the desk-research design does not generate new primary data on Nigerian newsroom practice or audience reception, and the analysis is consequently constrained by the currency and depth of the secondary sources available, several of which are grey literature (industry and news reports) rather than peer-reviewed scholarship. The paper's conclusions should therefore be read as a synthesis of the best currently available evidence rather than as empirically validated findings, and the recommendations include a call for primary, Nigeria-specific research to address this gap.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Virtual reality and immersive journalism represent a compelling evolution in the practice of news storytelling, one capable of deepening audience empathy and engagement in ways that conventional formats often cannot achieve. Global experience, however, demonstrates that even in well-resourced media environments, the adoption of immersive journalism is neither automatic nor without significant challenges. In Nigeria, these challenges are magnified by persistent infrastructural deficits, high costs, inadequate training, weak institutional investment, and unresolved ethical questions.



Nevertheless, this paper has shown that Nigeria's youthful, mobile-first population, its vibrant creative and technology sectors, ongoing infrastructural investments, and growing global interest in African immersive storytelling together constitute a meaningful foundation for future growth. Realising this potential will require deliberate, coordinated action across government, media institutions, journalism educators, and professional bodies. With sustained investment and context-appropriate strategies, Nigerian journalism stands to benefit substantially from the immersive turn already reshaping global news practice, positioning Nigerian media not merely as consumers of imported technological innovation but as active contributors to the evolving global grammar of immersive storytelling.

Based on the foregoing analysis, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the adoption and responsible practice of virtual reality and immersive journalism in Nigeria:

1. Government and private telecommunications operators should accelerate investment in broadband and last-mile connectivity infrastructure, with particular attention to rural and underserved areas, to narrow the urban–rural digital divide that currently constrains both the production and consumption of immersive content
2. Journalism and mass communication departments in Nigerian universities should review and update their curricula to incorporate training in 360-degree video production, basic VR storytelling techniques, and the ethical considerations unique to immersive formats'
3. Media organisations should explore cost-effective entry points into immersive journalism, such as smartphone-compatible 360-degree video, rather than capital-intensive, fully rendered VR productions, as a pragmatic first step toward building institutional capacity'
4. Professional bodies such as the Nigerian Union of Journalists and the Nigerian Press Organisation, in collaboration with media regulators, should develop context-specific ethical guidelines governing the production and labelling of immersive news content, to safeguard audience trust and journalistic credibility'
5. Nigerian media houses should pursue partnerships with international immersive journalism networks, technology companies, and funding initiatives to access training, equipment grants, and technical mentorship'
6. Further empirical research, including newsroom case studies and audience reception studies, should be conducted to build a Nigeria-specific evidence base on immersive journalism, given the currently limited scholarly literature on the subject within the country.

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