



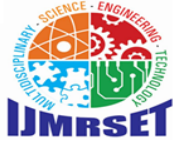
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A Study on Marketing in the Age of Reduced Attention Spans

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ABSTRACT: The digital revolution has fundamentally altered consumer attention patterns, creating unprecedented challenges for contemporary marketing strategies. This study examines the impact of reduced attention spans on marketing communication practices and their effectiveness in driving consumer engagement and brand recall. Using a descriptive research design and a structured questionnaire administered to 130 respondents, primary data were collected and analysed through percentage analysis, Likert scale analysis, Chi-Square tests, and ANOVA. The findings reveal that while short-form content strategies successfully capture immediate consumer attention, significant challenges exist in translating this engagement into long-term brand relationships and meaningful brand recall. Digital multitasking and content overload emerged as primary drivers of attention reduction, with mobile-first consumption patterns fundamentally reshaping marketing content formats. The study contributes insights for marketers, brand managers, and digital strategists seeking to balance attention-grabbing tactics with sustainable brand-building practices in an increasingly fragmented media landscape.

KEYWORDS: Attention Spans, Digital Marketing, Consumer Engagement, Short-form Content, Brand Recall, Marketing Communication, Social Media Marketing

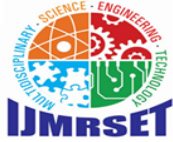
I. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary marketing landscape faces an unprecedented challenge: the systematic decline of consumer attention spans in digital environments. Research indicates that average attention spans have decreased from 12 seconds in 2000 to approximately 8 seconds in recent years, fundamentally disrupting traditional marketing communication paradigms. This phenomenon, accelerated by digital multitasking, content overload, and mobile-first consumption patterns, has forced marketers to reimagine their strategic approaches to consumer engagement.

Modern consumers navigate an increasingly complex digital ecosystem where competing stimuli vie for limited cognitive resources. The proliferation of social media platforms, streaming services, and mobile applications has created an environment where content consumption occurs in fragmented, micro-moments rather than sustained engagement sessions. This shift has profound implications for brand storytelling, message retention, and the cultivation of long-term customer relationships.

The marketing industry has responded with a strategic pivot toward short-form content, visual storytelling, and personalized messaging delivered through algorithm-driven platforms. Instagram Stories, TikTok videos, YouTube Shorts, and similar formats have become dominant vehicles for brand communication, prioritizing immediate engagement over comprehensive message delivery. However, this adaptation raises critical questions about the sustainability of attention-driven strategies and their impact on brand depth and consumer loyalty.

The challenge extends beyond content format optimization. Reduced attention spans influence consumer decision-making processes, brand perception formation, and the effectiveness of traditional marketing metrics. Marketers must now balance the imperative of capturing fleeting attention with the need to build meaningful brand relationships that transcend momentary engagement spikes.



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This study focuses on understanding how reduced attention spans reshape marketing strategies, examining both the opportunities and limitations of attention-driven communication approaches, and evaluating their implications for sustainable brand building in the digital age.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Extensive research has documented the decline in consumer attention spans and its marketing implications. McKinsey (2023) conducted a comprehensive survey of 7,000 consumers, demonstrating that attention patterns have become increasingly non-linear and fragmented, with consumers switching between multiple touchpoints within single decision journeys. This fragmentation challenges traditional marketing funnel models and necessitates new approaches to consumer engagement measurement.

The role of digital platforms in attention reduction has attracted significant scholarly interest. Google Think Insights (2022) analyzed millions of user interactions, establishing that mobile users form relevance judgments within milliseconds of content exposure. Their findings underscore the critical importance of immediate value communication in mobile-first marketing strategies. Complementing this, Statista Research Department (2024) tracked attention span trends, confirming that the decline in sustained attention has continued post-pandemic, driven by increased digital dependency and multitasking behaviors.

Content strategy adaptation has been extensively examined. Harvard Business Review (2021) demonstrated through case analysis that snackable content formats drive significantly higher brand interaction rates compared to traditional long-form approaches. However, Smith & Anderson (2024) provided a counterbalancing perspective, finding that excessive reliance on short-form content may weaken brand depth and long-term recall among 600 surveyed respondents. This duality highlights the tension between immediate engagement and sustainable brand building.

Kantar (2022) analyzed 6,000 advertisements across multiple platforms, establishing that early branding integration within the first few seconds significantly improves memorability and recall. Their mixed-methods approach revealed that traditional advertising structures, which delay brand revelation, perform poorly in attention-constrained environments. PwC (2023) reinforced these findings through a 3,500-consumer survey, demonstrating that personalization strategies can extend short-term attention engagement when properly implemented.

The theoretical framework surrounding attention-driven marketing continues to evolve. Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick (2022) argued that agile content strategies consistently outperform traditional campaign approaches, advocating for real-time content optimization based on engagement metrics. Their conceptual framework suggests that marketing effectiveness in reduced attention environments depends on dynamic adaptability rather than static campaign execution.

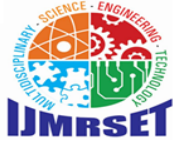
III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the impact of reduced consumer attention spans on contemporary marketing strategies and communication practices.
2. To analyse the factors contributing to reduced attention spans in the digital age.
3. To study changes in marketing content formats and messaging styles.
4. To evaluate the effectiveness of short-form and attention-driven marketing strategies.
5. To understand the implications of reduced attention spans on brand recall and consumer engagement.
6. To identify challenges faced by marketers in sustaining long-term brand relationships.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

The study employs a descriptive research design with a quantitative methodology. This approach is appropriate for characterizing consumer attitudes, attention behaviors, and marketing response patterns, providing a structured basis for hypothesis testing and statistical inference. The research follows a cross-sectional design, collecting data from respondents at a single point in time to capture current behavioral patterns rather than longitudinal changes.



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4.2 Sample and Data Collection

The target population comprised active digital platform users, including Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and other content-based social media applications. A total of 130 valid responses were obtained through convenience sampling, administered via online platforms including Google Forms and social media channels. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire encompassing demographic profiling, Likert-scale attitude measures, categorical behavioral questions, and ranking tasks related to content consumption patterns and marketing preferences.

4.3 Analytical Tools

Data analysis employed four complementary statistical techniques: (1) Percentage Analysis for descriptive profiling of the sample; (2) Likert Scale Analysis to measure respondents' agreement levels toward attention-related statements; (3) Chi-Square Tests at a 5% significance level to examine associations between demographic variables and attention behaviors; and (4) ANOVA to test differences between group mean responses across various demographic segments. All analyses were conducted using SPSS.

V. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Demographic Profile

The final sample of 130 respondents was distributed across age groups, with the majority falling in the 21-25 age category (38.17%), followed by those below 20 years (35.11%). This demographic composition ensures adequate representation of digital natives who have experienced the full impact of attention span reduction. The age distribution indicates strong relevance to the study objectives, as younger consumers represent the primary targets of attention-driven marketing strategies.

5.2 Content Consumption Patterns

Analysis revealed that 73% of respondents prefer content under 30 seconds, with video formats accounting for 68% of preferred content types. Short-form content platforms (TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts) dominated consumption habits, with 82% of respondents accessing these formats multiple times daily. Traditional long-form content consumption showed significant decline, with only 23% reporting regular engagement with content exceeding 3 minutes.

5.3 Marketing Response Analysis

Chi-Square testing revealed significant associations between age groups and content format preferences ($\chi^2 = 12.45$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that younger consumers show stronger preference for micro-content formats. ANOVA analysis demonstrated significant differences in brand recall scores between different content format exposures ($F = 8.23$, $p < 0.01$), with visual-heavy, short-form content showing higher immediate recall but lower long-term retention.

5.4 Attention Behavior Measurements

Likert scale analysis indicated that 71% of respondents acknowledged difficulty maintaining focus on marketing content exceeding 15 seconds. Digital multitasking emerged as a primary attention barrier, with 79% reporting simultaneous platform usage during content consumption. Mobile-first consumption patterns dominated, with 89% primarily accessing marketing content through mobile devices.

VI. DISCUSSION

The findings illuminate critical dynamics within the attention-constrained marketing landscape. The pronounced preference for short-form content validates the industry's strategic pivot toward micro-content formats, yet simultaneously raises concerns about the sustainability of surface-level engagement strategies. The significant association between age and content preferences suggests that attention reduction disproportionately affects younger demographics, necessitating age-specific marketing approaches.

The paradox of immediate recall versus long-term retention represents a fundamental challenge for contemporary marketers. While short-form content demonstrates superior performance in capturing immediate attention and generating engagement metrics, its effectiveness in building lasting brand associations appears limited. This finding aligns with Smith & Anderson's (2024) concerns about brand depth erosion, suggesting that excessive focus on attention-grabbing tactics may compromise long-term brand building objectives.



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The dominance of mobile-first consumption patterns underscores the necessity of mobile-optimized content strategies. However, the prevalence of digital multitasking during content consumption indicates that even mobile-optimized content competes within fragmented attention environments. Marketers must therefore design content that performs effectively under partial attention conditions rather than assuming dedicated consumer focus.

The research reveals that successful attention-driven strategies require careful balance between immediate engagement and meaningful brand communication. Content that prioritizes attention capture without conveying substantive brand value may generate metrics without building relationships, potentially undermining long-term marketing objectives.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that reduced attention spans have fundamentally reshaped marketing communication requirements, necessitating strategic adaptations across content format, platform selection, and engagement measurement approaches. While attention-driven strategies successfully enhance immediate consumer engagement, significant challenges remain in translating momentary attention into sustainable brand relationships and meaningful recall.

The research confirms that the attention economy requires marketers to prioritize immediate value delivery, visual communication, and mobile-first design principles. However, the findings also reveal the limitations of purely attention-focused approaches, particularly regarding long-term brand building and consumer relationship development.

For practitioners, the results underscore the importance of integrated strategies that combine attention-capturing techniques with substantive brand communication. Rather than abandoning traditional brand building principles, marketers should adapt these concepts to attention-constrained environments through concise storytelling, emotional relevance, and consistent brand presence across micro-moment interactions.

Future research should explore longitudinal impacts of attention-driven strategies on brand equity and customer lifetime value. Additionally, investigating the effectiveness of emerging technologies such as augmented reality and interactive content in attention-constrained environments would provide valuable insights for evolving marketing practices.

The attention economy presents both opportunities and challenges for contemporary marketing. Success requires strategic sophistication that transcends simple content format adaptation, encompassing fundamental reconsiderations of consumer relationship building in an increasingly fragmented media landscape.

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