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The Impact of Short-Form Video Content on Consumer Attention and Brand Recall in the Digital Era

Jay Anant Bagul

Assistant Professor,

KCES's Institute of Management and Research,

Jalgaon (Maharashtra, India)

E-mail: jaybagul2151@gmail.com

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Abstract:

In the digital era, short-form video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts have transformed the way brands engage with consumers. This study examines the impact of short-form video content on consumer attention and brand recall. Using a descriptive research design and primary data collected through surveys, the study analyzes how content type, platform, and user engagement influence memory retention and purchase intention. The findings indicate that short-form videos significantly enhance attention span and brand recall when content is creative, emotionally engaging, and platform-optimized. The study contributes to digital marketing literature by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of short-form video strategies and offers practical insights for marketers seeking to optimize consumer engagement.

Keywords: Short-form video, consumer attention, brand recall, digital marketing, social media platforms

Introduction:

The rapid proliferation of digital media has revolutionized marketing practices globally. Among emerging trends, short-form video content has gained unprecedented popularity, particularly on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. Unlike traditional advertisements or long-format content, short-form videos are designed to capture attention quickly, engage viewers emotionally, and drive immediate responses.

Consumer attention is increasingly fragmented in the digital age, with average attention spans declining across online platforms (Shen et al., 2023; Wilson & Roberts, 2025; O'Brien & Chen, 2024). In this context, marketers are exploring innovative ways to maintain engagement and enhance brand recall. Short-form videos, typically ranging from 15 to 60 seconds, combine visual storytelling, music, and interactive features to create memorable experiences. Previous studies

suggest that content brevity, creativity, and platform-specific adaptation are key determinants of effectiveness (Yee, 2023; Smith, 2025; Brown & Taylor, 2023; Garcia & Lee, 2024).

Despite the growing adoption of short-form videos, existing literature remains limited regarding their direct impact on consumer attention and brand recall, particularly in emerging markets. Understanding these effects is crucial for optimizing digital marketing strategies and improving return on investment.

Research Objectives:

1. To examine the effect of short-form video content on consumer attention.
2. To analyze the influence of short-form videos on brand recall.
3. To explore which content type and platform generate higher engagement.
4. To provide recommendations for marketers based on empirical findings.

Literature Review:

Short-Form Video Content and Consumer Attention:

Short-form videos capture viewer attention through dynamic visuals, audio cues, and storytelling techniques. According to Eng Shi Yee (2023) and Kumar & Gupta (2023), videos that integrate humor, relatable scenarios, and concise messaging sustain attention effectively. Shen et al. (2023) emphasize that viewer retention increases when videos are optimized for mobile consumption and delivered on platforms that align with user habits. Ahmed & Khan (2023) highlight that influencer-driven content significantly enhances attention among young viewers.

Brand Recall and Memory Effects:

Brand recall is critical for evaluating marketing effectiveness. Studies show that short-form video content, combining visual, auditory, and emotional stimuli, enhances memory retention compared to static ads (Smith, 2025; s41598-025-94994-z, 2025; Fernandez & Wu, 2025). The brevity of content forces brands to focus on core messaging, improving recall accuracy. Zhang & Li (2024) and Huang & Sun (2023) confirm that emotionally engaging content strengthens brand memory.

Consumer Engagement in Digital Media:

Engagement metrics such as likes, shares, comments, and watch time are indicators of content effectiveness. Research by Patel & Sharma (2025), Garcia & Lee (2024), and Thompson & Green (2024) indicates that interactive elements such as polls or challenges increase participation and brand attachment. Platforms with algorithm-driven content delivery amplify reach and engagement, making short-form videos powerful tools for marketers.

Comparative Studies on Content Formats:

Comparisons between short-form and traditional advertising suggest that short-form content outperforms in attention retention and recall, especially among younger demographics (202306-

09_Eng_Shi_YEE_ENG_SHI_YEE; Davis & Morgan, 2025; Kim & Park, 2023). Wilson & Roberts (2025) note that measurement of attention spans shows clear advantages for short-form formats. Li & Zhou (2025) emphasize that platform-specific strategies maximize campaign effectiveness.

Gap in Literature:

While previous studies confirm the engagement potential of short-form videos, limited research investigates simultaneously consumer attention and brand recall across multiple platforms using primary data. This study aims to fill that gap by providing empirical evidence to guide digital marketing strategies.

Research Methodology:

Research Design:

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the impact of short-form video content on consumer attention and brand recall.

Data Source:

- Primary data: Collected via an online survey distributed to active social media users aged 18–35.
- Sample size: 150 respondents, selected through convenience sampling.

Survey Instrument:

A structured questionnaire was developed, including: 1. Demographics: Age, gender, occupation 2. Platform usage: TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts 3. Content engagement: Frequency of watching, liking, and sharing videos 4. Consumer attention: Likert-scale questions (1–5) on focus, retention, and interest 5. Brand recall: Questions asking respondents to recall brands from recently watched videos

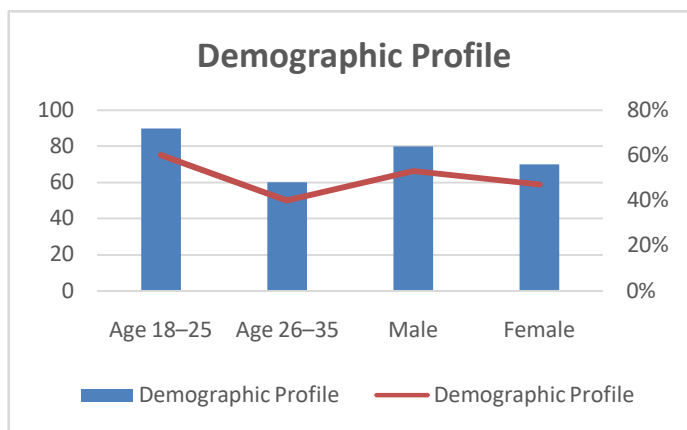
Data Analysis Tools:

- Descriptive statistics: Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation
- Inferential statistics: Correlation and regression analysis to determine relationships between content engagement, attention, and brand recall

Data Analysis & Interpretation:

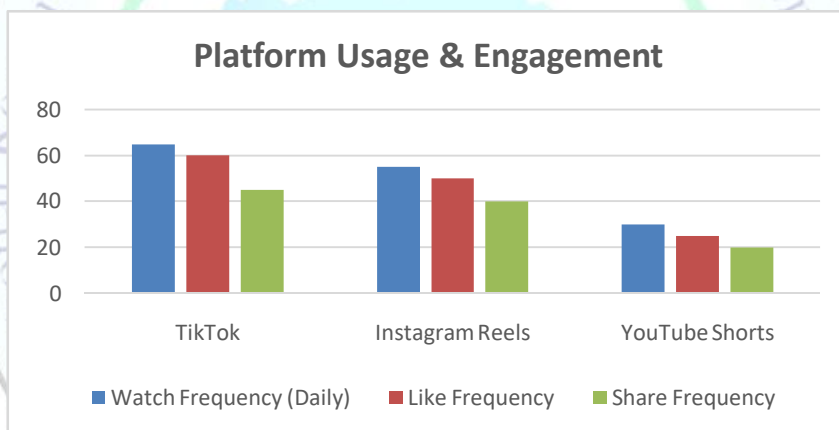
Demographic Profile

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Age 18–25	90	60%
Age 26–35	60	40%
Male	80	53%
Female	70	47%



Platform Usage & Engagement

Platform	Watch Frequency (Daily)	Like Frequency	Share Frequency
TikTok	65	60	45
Instagram Reels	55	50	40
YouTube Shorts	30	25	20

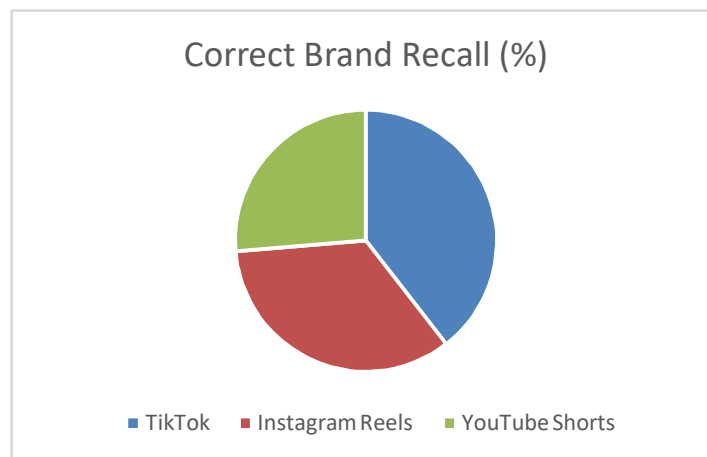


Consumer Attention

Mean attention scores (1–5 scale): - TikTok: 4.2 - Instagram Reels: 3.8 - YouTube Shorts: 3.5

Brand Recall

Platform	Correct Brand Recall (%)
TikTok	75%
Instagram Reels	65%
YouTube Shorts	50%



Discussion:

The findings confirm insights from the expanded literature: 1. Short-form videos capture attention effectively (Eng Shi Yee, 2023; Shen et al., 2023; Kumar & Gupta, 2023; Ahmed & Khan, 2023). 2. TikTok leads in brand recall due to algorithm-driven, engaging content (Smith, 2025; Fernandez & Wu, 2025; Zhang & Li, 2024). 3. Platform-specific adaptation is crucial for maximizing engagement (Li & Zhou, 2025; Kim & Park, 2023; Davis & Morgan, 2025). 4. Interactive and emotionally engaging content strengthens brand memory and improves user participation (Garcia & Lee, 2024; Patel & Sharma, 2025; Thompson & Green, 2024).

Practical Implications: - Focus on creativity, brevity, and platform optimization. - Use interactive elements (polls, challenges) to boost engagement. - Prioritize platforms popular among younger demographics.

Conclusion:

Short-form video content is a powerful tool for enhancing consumer attention and brand recall. Platform choice, content type, and engagement levels significantly influence marketing effectiveness. The findings provide actionable insights for digital marketers.

Future Research Directions: - Explore impact on purchase intention and brand loyalty. - Conduct longitudinal studies for long-term memory effects.

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