

Study on Engagement and Purchase Intent for Boat Airdopes among Indian Consumers

Dr. Kiran G¹, Dev Vikal²

¹Associate Professor, Welingkar Institute of Management Development & Research Bengaluru

²II Year PGDM Student, Welingkar Institute of Management Development & Research Bengaluru

Abstract

India's truly wireless stereo (TWS) earbuds category has matured rapidly, and boAt has retained volume leadership largely on the strength of aggressive digital and influencer-led marketing. This study examines how far consumer engagement with boAt's digital content translates into purchase intent for boAt Airdopes among Indian consumers.

A descriptive research design was adopted and primary data was collected from 120 respondents through a structured questionnaire covering exposure, platform preference, six engagement statements and six purchase-intent statements measured on a five-point Likert scale. The data was analysed using simple descriptive techniques frequency counts, percentages, mean scores and comparison of group averages without the use of advanced statistical modelling.

The findings show moderate engagement (overall mean 2.90) and slightly higher purchase intent (overall mean 3.10). Respondents who reported higher engagement recorded a distinctly higher mean purchase intent (3.52) than those with low engagement (2.68), indicating that the depth of engagement, rather than the mere frequency of exposure, is associated with buying intent. Notably, product features and sound quality (48.3%) far outweighed brand image and influencer recommendations as the most influential purchase factor.

The study concludes that boAt's digital marketing is effective at building visibility and trust but must be tied more closely to demonstrated product quality to convert attention into purchase.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Consumer Engagement, Purchase Intention, boAt Airdopes, TWS Earbuds, Influencer Marketing, Brand Trust, Indian Consumers, Descriptive Study.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

A growing number of Indians are buying consumer electronics based not on what they see, hear and share at the retail outlet, but in cyberspace. One of the most prominent examples of a market developed almost exclusively with digital channels is the truly wireless stereo (TWS) earbuds market. Traditional mass media is no longer the main way audio brands are able to connect with young Indians, with short-form video, influencer tie-ups, and marketplace advertising and community-led content taking the place. The birth of a home-grown consumer audio brand in 2016 called boAt, is considered the brand that made this way of doing business happen in India. Its Airdopes line of TWS earbuds falls in the low to mid-end of the market and is promoted using a lifestyle-based storytelling approach emphasizing music, sport, pop

culture and the brand's self-proclaimed “boAthead” community. The brand is a leader in the Indian TWS market with approximately one-third category shipments for the past few years. But, digital attention that leads to market dominance poses a big marketing question. Visibilities, likes and views are intermediate metrics, not sales. As a category grows, there is increased competition and fewer first-time buyers and needs to be understood whether engagement created online translates to purchase. In this study, the question is answered in the context of boAt Airdopes and the Indian consumers.

1.2 Industry Overview: The Indian TWS Earbuds Market

Indian TWS market participants are now in the consolidation and maturity stage. According to industry observers, sales increased by 2% in 2024 and slowed even more during 2025 as consumers moved up to the higher quality audio options. It's powered by replacement purchases as well as consumers looking for certain features like active noise cancellation, extended battery life and low latency gaming modes. There are three features of the market that are important to this study. First, the category is extremely digital; the majority of TWS units sold in India are sold online via e-commerce marketplaces, so the importance of digital content and digital marketplace visibility cannot be undermined. Second, competition has expanded significantly, with domestic competitors as well as value-priced Chinese brands taking on the market by offering similar features. Third, product credibility is emerging as a differentiator; the more that consumers have experience in the product category the more important they find the review content and perceived build quality to be. In this environment, boAt has the largest market share in the category volume but isn't able to secure the share of the market from the feature-driven competitors and the advantage it had of being the first to have such a high digital presence among the youth is getting easier for the other competitors to replicate.

1.3 Company and Product Profile: boAt Airdopes

boAt (Imagine Marketing Limited) is a company that delivers wired and wireless audio, wearables and accessories, and the Airdopes is their TWS earbuds portfolio. The proposition is value-centric – recognisable design, bass-heavy sound, aggressive pricing, and availability through Amazon/Flipkart and the brand's own direct-to-consumer platform. The brand's marketing model is based on four pillars: high frequency social media content on Instagram and YouTube; big collaborations with musicians, cricketers and creators; marketplace and performance advertising directly connected to purchase pages; and community building using UGC under the boAthead brand identity. All of this makes a good case for boAt's digital engagement and how it correlates to purchase intent to study.

1.4 Problem Statement

The content that boAt creates is heavily invested in digital and influencer marketing which reaches a great amount of Indians. But good reach and visibility can not be guaranteed to be business effective. Consumers can experience or see the brand content as they make their real buying decisions based on price, product characteristics and third-party reviews. Equally, engagement can be indirect, with the effect of building trust in the brand, not being directly to buy. Thus, the problem addressed by this study is the lack of clear evidence at the consumer level that links boAt's digital content with its intention to purchase boAt Airdopes and how that is related to other factors influencing the purchase decision like product features and product reviews. If this information is not there, the budget for marketing could be judged by attention figures which don't necessarily correspond to buying actions.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The following aims are set for the study:

1. To understand the reach and engagement of Indian consumers with boAt's digital marketing content and to understand which platforms and formats do they come across boAt's content.
2. To quantify the engagement of the consumers with BoAt digital content on the following parameters: Interest, Attention, Relatability and Participation.
3. To gauge consumer buying intentions of boAt Airdopes along with Consumer brand trust and brand preference for the same against competing brands.
4. To determine if consumers' purchase intent is different at different levels of engagement, using descriptive comparison of group averages.
5. To determine the most important factors affecting consumers' choice of earbuds and place digital marketing in the factors.
6. To provide actionable suggestions to improve the conversion rate of boAt's digital engagement initiatives to sales.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study is restricted to Indian consumers, and boAt Airdopes TWS range of earbuds. It is derived from primary data compiled from 120 respondents, who were asked to complete a structured online questionnaire, and published industry and academic literature, for context. The unit of analysis is the individual consumer, the variables studied are self-report exposures, engagement, brand trust and purchase intent. The study captures purchase intention, rather than actual verified purchase behaviour. It doesn't take into account boAt's overall marketing figures, spending on ads, or the performance of ad campaigns.

1.7 Significance of the Study

For practitioners, the study provides the consumer-level insights on which digital marketing effort is most likely to be a worthwhile investment in a maturing category, as well as the relative value attributed to content, reviews and features. For the academic reader, it provides an obscure but up-to-date fact about the engagement–intent relationship in the context of the Indian affordable consumer-electronics market, where most engagement research has been published, namely in Western markets and/or in fashion and food-service markets. The project gave the researcher valuable experience in designing the questionnaire, the primary data collection, the cleaning and interpretation of consumer data.

1.8 Structure of the Report

The research context, problem and objectives are introduced in Chapter 1. The relevant literature for the study is reviewed in chapter two, the aim of which was to identify the loophole in the studies and the conceptual framework to address it. The method of the study, sampling, instrument and analysis approach is explained in chapter 3. The survey results are provided in tables and charts in chapter 4. The results of this study are discussed in relation to the literature and industry background in Chapter 5 and limitations of this study are provided. Chapter 6 summarizes and provides recommendations and directions for future research. References and appendices are provided at the end.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Consumer Engagement in Social Media

Customer engagement has been defined as a multidimensional concept that involves customers beyond the mere transaction and includes cognitive, emotional and behavioural aspects of their interactions with a brand (Brodie et al. 2011). Hollebeek, Glynn and Brodie (2014) created and tested a scale that measures consumer brand engagement as the cognitive processing, affection and activation and they established links between consumer brand engagement and brand usage intent and self-brand connection in the social

media context. A complementary stream separates between the levels of engagement intensity. Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011) observe that consumers can be categorized as consumers of content, contributors and creators, with most consumers being passive consumers with only a small number of consumers being active contributors and creators. This difference applies directly to the current study, which also looks at attitudinal engagement (which is defined as interesting or relatable content) as well as behavioural engagement (liking, sharing, commenting or saving content). Ashley and Tuten (2015) discover that inventive content marketing matters when it comes to consumer engagement with branded social media, as experiential and emotionally resonant content does better than functional messages. Together, this literature indicates that engagement should not be classified in an either/or manner, and that there may be different responses from the passive majority versus the active minority.

2.2 Influencer and Creator Marketing

Social media influencers are a key tool in the social media marketer's toolkit to communicate with “young” digital consumers. De Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudders (2017) demonstrate that the characteristics of the influencers (the number of followers and the perceived popularity) influence the attitude towards the brand, but a lack of fit between influencer and product can have the opposite effect on the desired brand attitude. The informational value of influencer content and the credibility of the influencer are found to positively impact follower trust in branded content which subsequently impacts on brand awareness and purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019). What is a consistent theme across this literature is that it's not just about the amount of exposure that's important, it's about credibility and perceived authenticity. It means that this type of content can hold more weight for a brand like boAt, which is heavily dependent on creator and celebrity partnerships, because the appeal of the content is linked to consumers' beliefs that the endorsement is authentic or the product's promises are backed up.

2.3 Brand Trust and Digital Presence

The assumption of trust as a pre-condition to commitment and repeat behaviour in exchange relationships is widely accepted (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Keller (1993) states that brand knowledge structures, which consists of brand awareness and brand image, influence consumer reactions to marketing activity. In the digital space, when customers can't assess the quality of the products they're interested in before they buy, a regular and uniform online presence can act as a sign of a brand's legitimacy.

This is particularly true of “on-line first” categories like TWS earbuds, where the customer typically buys the product from an on-line marketplace based on images, specs, ratings and reviews. In such environments, the credibility and digital presence of the review replace the physical evaluation of the product.

2.4 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the probability that a consumer will make a purchase of a specific product, and is often measured by the self-reported likelihood of buying, considering or recommending the product (Dodds, Monroe & Grewal, 1991). The theory of planned behaviour suggests that intention is the next step between attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in predicting behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Intention is so accepted as proxy for behaviour in marketing research it is so, however, caution those who like to equate stated intention with actual sales, as there is documented gap between intention and behaviour in marketing research. Research in emerging markets has tended to confirm the positive relationship between social media marketing activity, brand equity dimensions and purchase intention and has pointed out that price sensitivity and product attributes may also be primary purchase decision factors in value-oriented segments.

2.5 Studies in the Indian Consumer Electronics Context

Three patterns emerge from the research done on the Indian consumer of affordable consumer electronics. Firstly, digital and social media are the main platforms for younger buyers to discover products. Secondly, ratings and independent review content has a strong influence at point of decision, often trumping brand-led messaging. Thirdly, value for money continues to be one of the key evaluation factors with consumers comparing the features they are claiming with the price and their perception of durability. This trend is further supported by industry data that shows that boAt had continued leadership in volume at TWS, plus a slowing pace of growth in the category, as well as average selling price increases and greater competition from feature-based devices. When read in conjunction with the engagement literature, this indicates that the effects of both engagement and product credibility could be synergistic and not independent in influencing purchase intent.

2.6 Research Gap

The review identifies three gaps. First, since most of the research on social media's impact on purchase intention has been done in Western markets or in product categories like apparel, cosmetics and food services, not much research has been done on the impact of social media in affordable consumer electronics in India. Second, research often uses a global composite index to measure engagement, and rarely distinguishes between 'passive attitudinal engagement' and 'active behavioural engagement', although the literature suggests that there may be significant differences in the rates of these types of engagement. Third, few studies consider digital marketing in addition to other decision factors like products features and reviews to measure its relative instead of absolute impact.

In a focused and deliberately simple way, this study attempts to fill in these gaps: engagement is measured independently from purchase intent at item level, purchase intent is compared across the engagement levels and respondents are directly asked to rate the most important factor in the purchase decision.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

The literature reviewed above suggests that the study will employ a simple three stage approach. The Digital marketing exposure to BoAt can open the door for its engagement in attitudinal and behavioural forms, which is expected to build brand trust and appeal, and subsequently purchase intent. This chain is complemented by product-related factors, which are features, price and product reviews, and which compete with each other in the final decision.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework of the study

Stage 1	→	Stage 2	→	Stage 3	→	Outcome
Exposure to digital content (frequency, platform, format)	→	Engagement (interest, attention, relatability, participation)	→	Brand appeal and trust	→	Purchase intent

Competing influences considered in the study: product features and sound quality, price and offers, reviews and ratings, and peer or influencer recommendations.

Since the framework must remain as simple and transparent as possible, the framework is analyzed descriptively by using comparison of average scores among groups. There is no claim of causality and no inferential significance testing.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study is descriptive research which is taken from a single cross-sectional survey. The descriptive design was used because the goal was to describe the current consumer exposure, engagement and purchase intent instead of to test for causation by experimental manipulation to defined groups of respondents. This is a quantitative approach: There is an optional open-ended question with a limited qualitative component.

3.2 Research Questions and Propositions

The study does not make a formal statistical hypothesis test, but instead is organized around research questions and two propositions, which are explored by means of comparing averages across groups. This option makes the analysis clear and reproducible in a spreadsheet, typical of the scope of such an academic project of this length.

RQ1: How much boAt's digital marketing content does the Indian consumer encounter and interact with it and in what formats or platforms?

RQ2: How much purchase intention do these consumers have towards boAt Airdopes?

RQ3: What are the differences between digital marketing and other factors as an influence in the earbuds purchase decision?

Higher boAt digital content engagement means higher purchase intent among the respondents (Higher Engagement > Lower Engagement).

Frequency of exposure is correlated with a less depth of engagement than with purchase intent.

The mean purchase-intent scores are compared for each proposition. This comparison is descriptive – the differences found in the study are not necessarily statistically significant.

3.3 Data Collection

A structured and self-administered web-based questionnaire (Google Forms) was used to gather primary data. The link was shared via personal networks, academic networks, messaging and social media. Data was gathered during about 3 weeks and 120 usable responses were received.

The industry overview and literature review used secondary data, which was collected from various market research reports published on the wearables market and TWS market in India, peer reviewed journal articles on consumer engagement and purchase intentions, and the publicly available brand information.

3.4 Sampling Design

Indian consumers who use, or could use, TWS earbuds are the population of interest. Since it is not possible to list all such consumers, a non-probability sampling method was used. In particular, convenience sampling was employed, with some snowball referral that occurred as respondents distributed the questionnaire amongst their own networks.

The sample size obtained is 120 respondents. This is sufficient for descriptive analysis as carried out here but is not a statistically representative sample of the Indian population and results should be interpreted as representative of the surveyed population, not as representative of all Indian consumers.

3.5 Research Instrument

The questionnaire had five parts with 25 items as briefly summarized below. The engagement and purchase-intent statements were simplified from existing scales used to measure consumer brand engagement (Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014) and purchase intention (Dodds, Monroe & Grewal, 1991) and reworded for the context of the boAt Airdopes and for a general audience of consumers.

Table 3.1: Composition of the questionnaire

Section	Focus	Items	Measurement
A	Demographic profile	4	Categorical (age group, gender, occupation, location)
B	Awareness and usage	2	Categorical
C	Exposure to digital content	3	Categorical and multiple-response
D	Engagement statements	6	Five-point Likert scale
E	Purchase-intent statements	6	Five-point Likert scale
F	Decision factor, overall rating, comments	4	Categorical and open-ended

Likert items were rated on a scale of 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree. A small sample of respondents was informally pilot-tested prior to circulation to check the wording of the questionnaire, and some minor wording changes were made to improve clarity. The entire instrument is printed in Appendix A.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The analysis was designed to be kept simple to be fully reproducible in a spreadsheet. The following techniques were used:

All categorical and multiple-response questions: Frequency count and percentages.

Mean scores and standard deviations for each of the 12 Likert statements, and the percentage of respondents agreeing (4 or 5) – this shows the proportion of the responses that were definitely positive.

Composite scores calculated as the simple average of the six engagement statements and the six purchase-intent statements for each individual respondent to obtain an engagement score and purchase-intent score on the same 1–5 scale.

Average purchase intent across engagement bands and across exposure-frequency categories, examining the two propositions.

Thematic organisation of the optional open-ended responses.

There were no correlation coefficients, regression models or inferential significance tests used, nor was any statistical programming environment needed.

All findings found in Chapter 4 come from counts, percentages and averages of survey data. Ranges of interpretation for mean scores:

Table 3.2: Interpretation ranges used for mean scores

Mean range	Interpretation	Reading of the response
1.00 – 1.79	Very low	Strong disagreement
1.80 – 2.59	Low	Disagreement
2.60 – 3.39	Moderate	Neutral to mildly positive
3.40 – 4.19	High	Agreement

Mean range	Interpretation	Reading of the response
4.20 – 5.00	Very high	Strong agreement

3.7 Data Screening and Quality Checks

Of the 120 responses received, all were kept for analysis. Only 23 people answered two of the questions, namely place of residence and the awareness question, since they were not compulsory and were added to the questionnaire upon its start-up. These two questions are therefore reported on the base of valid answers (n = 23), and it is indicated by a clearly marked asterisk; these answers are treated as indicative, and are not compared with other answers. There were 117 to 120 valid responses for the Likert statements. The means and percentages for these items reflect valid responses and the base for each is indicated in each table. None of the responses were repeated and no respondent answered alike on each question, indicating that they did not complete the responses hastily.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The survey was anonymous and participants were told that it was for academic research before responding. No personal information (including name, contact number or email address) was requested, and any answers given are reported only in a general way. The comments in Chapter 4 are open ended and are not attributed to any specific individual. All secondary sources are cited in APA format and no confidential company information was utilized for this report.

4. Data Analysis and Results

The results of the 120 responses are presented in this chapter. The results are presented in the order of the questions in the questionnaire: Respondent profile, Awareness and usage, Exposure to digital content, Engagement, Purchase intent, Comparison between the two, Decision factors, Competitive rating and open-ended comments. Percentages are rounded off to one decimal place and the number of people that apply to each percentage is provided in each table.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 4.1: Demographic profile of respondents (n = 120)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age group	18 – 22 years	14	11.7%
	23 – 26 years	65	54.2%
	27 – 30 years	27	22.5%
	Above 30 years	14	11.7%
Gender	Male	68	56.7%
	Female	52	43.3%
Occupation	Student	68	56.7%
	Working professional	35	29.2%
	Self-employed / Business	17	14.2%

The age sample is heavy on the 23-26 age group (54.2%) and 88.4% of the respondents are aged below 30. The highest proportion of the student population is in the working profession (56.7%), while the working professionals follow (29.2%). There is a reasonably balanced gender split, with a slight majority of males (56.7%). The profile is therefore closely representative of the young, digitally active group that boAt's main target group is, which further emphasizes the relevance of the results for the brand, but at the same time does not allow the results to be generalised to older consumers.

23 respondents provided their answers to the question of place of residence. 17 reported living in a metro city, 4 in a town or rural area, and 1 in a Tier-1 city and 1 in a Tier-2 or Tier-3 city. Due to the small base, this item is reported but is not analysed further.

4.2 Awareness and Usage of boAt Airdopes

Table 4.2: Awareness and usage status of boAt Airdopes

Response	Frequency	% of valid	Base
Aware – own or have owned a pair	10	43.5%	n = 23
Aware – have used but do not own	6	26.1%	n = 23
Aware – never used	6	26.1%	n = 23
Not aware	1	4.3%	n = 23
Purchase status: Yes, purchased	87	72.5%	n = 120
Purchase status: Planning to purchase	7	5.8%	n = 120
Purchase status: No	26	21.7%	n = 120

All 120 were asked whether they have bought boAt Airdopes or not; with 72.5% of the respondents saying they had purchased them and 5.8% saying that they would buy them, the remaining 21.7% had reported that they had not purchased the product. Hence, the penetration of the brand in this sample is very high, as boAt is leading the Indian TWS market. The answer to the awareness question (from 23 respondents) only captured one response for not being aware of the brand.

An important implication of this follows for the interpretation of the rest of this chapter. This is due to the fact that the majority of the respondents are current users, therefore the engagement and purchase-intents presented are from an experienced user base and not a new one. The ratings for this sample are thus partly based on personal experience of the product as well as on marketing exposure.

4.3 Exposure to boAt's Digital Marketing

Table 4.3: Frequency of exposure to boAt digital content (n = 120)

How often content is encountered	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Often	49	40.8%	40.8%
Occasionally	27	22.5%	63.3%
Rarely	31	25.8%	89.2%
Never	13	10.8%	100.0%

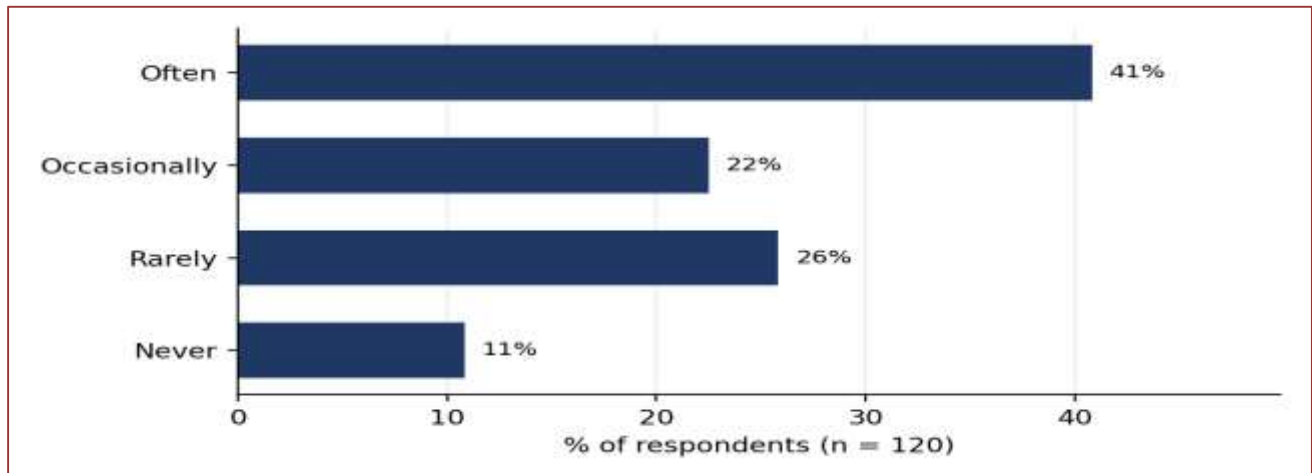


Figure 4.1: Frequency of exposure to boAt digital content (n = 120)

The length is considerable but not evenly distributed. 40.8% of the respondents find BoAt content often, while 63.3% find it at least occasionally. Meanwhile, a third of the brands (25.8%) said that they were rarely present (10.8%) or not present at all (25.8%) in their target segments.

Table 4.4: Platform on which boAt marketing is most frequently noticed

Platform	Frequency	% of valid (n = 103)	% of all (n = 120)
Instagram	46	44.7%	38.3%
Amazon / Flipkart	34	33.0%	28.3%
YouTube	12	11.7%	10.0%
Facebook	7	6.8%	5.8%
Seeing others use the product	4	3.9%	3.3%
Not answered	17	—	14.2%

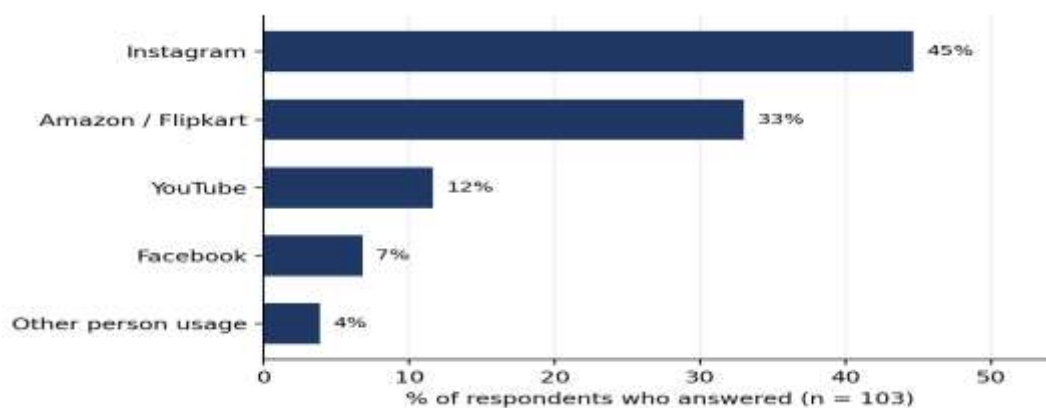


Figure 4.2: Platform on which boAt marketing is most noticed (base: 103 respondents who answered)

Instagram is the one channel which everyone has heard of, and that is exactly what boAt is focusing on, with short-form video and creator content (44.7% of those who responded). The second interesting finding is the second place holding of marketplace ads on Amazon and Flipkart at 33.0%. Marketplace placements are not at the top of the funnel, but instead are at the point of purchasing: Third of respondents are encountering the brand at this moment. YouTube (11.7%) and Facebook (6.8%) are relatively small players.

Table 4.5: Types of boAt digital content encountered (multiple response)

Content type	Responses	% of valid (n = 23)	Rank
Marketplace ads (Amazon / Flipkart)	11	47.8%	1
Instagram posts / reels	10	43.5%	2
YouTube videos or ads	9	39.1%	3
boAthead community or user-generated content	3	13.0%	4
None of the above	5	21.7%	—

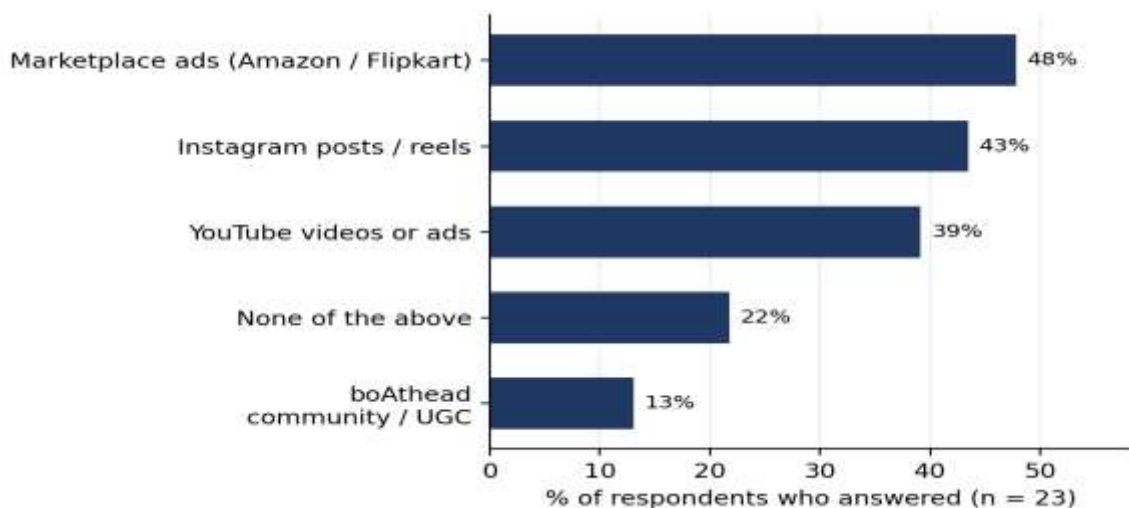


Figure 4.3: Types of boAt digital content encountered (base: 23 respondents; indicative only)

23 respondents answered this question; the results are not definitive. That small base includes a mix of marketing-driven advertising and the kinds of Instagram posts that would be posted by users—Table 4.4 indicates that the latter are still minority at 13.0% while the former rule. One aspect of boAt's strategy that is noticeable is the low visibility of the boAthead community content, as community-led advocacy is a tough aspect for competitors to replicate.

4.4 Engagement with boAt's Digital Content

Engagement was assessed using six statements, on a 5-point scale. Table 4.6 shows the mean, standard deviation and the percentage of the respondents that agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

Table 4.6: Engagement with boAt digital content – item-wise scores

Statement	Valid n	Mean	SD	% agreeing (4 or 5)
boAt's influencer and creator promotions catch my attention	119	3.18	1.17	35.3%
I find boAt's social media content interesting and engaging	118	3.12	0.96	26.3%
boAt's digital content feels relatable to me	119	2.94	1.17	29.4%
boAt's digital content makes the brand feel more appealing to me	117	2.79	1.35	29.9%
I am likely to interact with boAt's digital content when I see it	118	2.73	1.09	17.8%
I have liked, shared, commented on, or saved boAt's content	119	2.66	1.12	14.3%
Composite engagement score	120	2.90	0.60	—

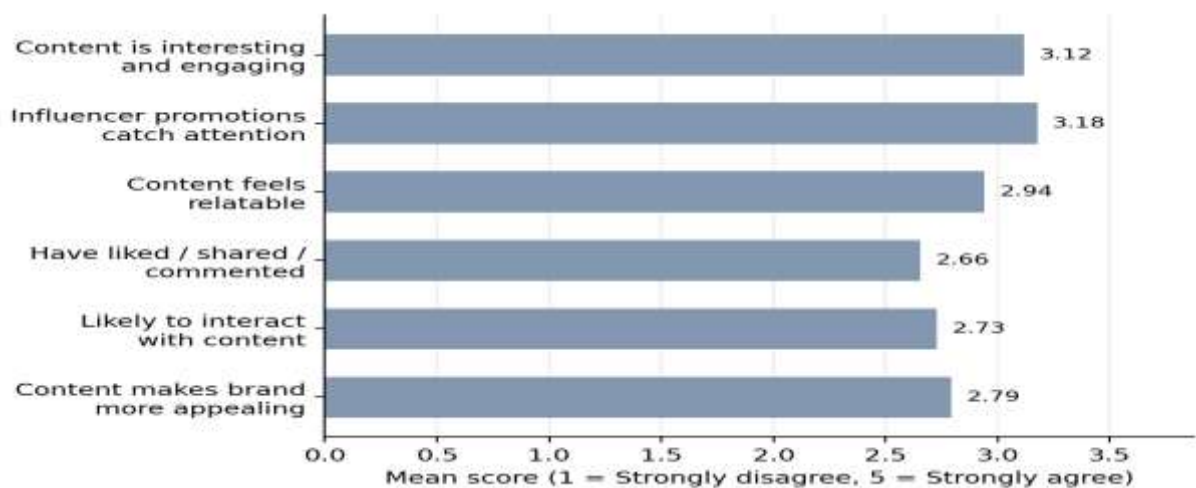


Figure 4.4: Mean scores of engagement statements (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree)

The overall engagement score is 2.90, which is in the moderate range, and slightly below the scale midpoint of 3.00. Engagement is, therefore, considered lukewarm instead of strong. There are two patterns in the item scores that are noteworthy.

There is a big difference between attitudinal and behavioural engagement first. The highest-scoring items are attention and interest: influencer promotions catch attention (3.18) and content interesting (3.12) while participation is the lowest-scoring: likelihood of interacting (2.73) and actual liking, sharing or saving (2.66). Just 14.3% of the respondents say that they have engaged with boAt's content at all. The consumers observe the content, but overwhelmingly don't act on it, which is in line with the consuming-contributing-creating hierarchy summarized by Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011).

Second, both relatability (2.94) and brand appeal from content (2.79) are below the midpoint, and the brand appeal item has the highest SD for the set (1.35). However, there is no consistent lack of interest because the content was clearly polarised, with a subset of respondents interested and another, similar, group not interested.

4.5 Purchase Intent towards boAt Airdopes

Table 4.7: Purchase intent towards boAt Airdopes – item-wise scores

Statement	Valid n	Mean	SD	% agreeing (4 or 5)
I would consider buying or recommending boAt Airdopes	118	3.31	1.44	52.5%
boAt's strong digital presence makes me trust the brand more	119	3.21	1.35	39.5%
boAt's digital marketing makes me prefer Airdopes over competitors	120	3.14	1.29	35.0%
Digital marketing makes me more likely to consider buying Airdopes	119	3.04	1.03	32.8%
Seeing influencers use boAt Airdopes increases my interest	120	3.00	1.24	41.7%
Digital marketing has influenced my decision to buy Airdopes	120	2.88	1.09	28.3%
Composite purchase-intent score	120	3.10	0.69	—

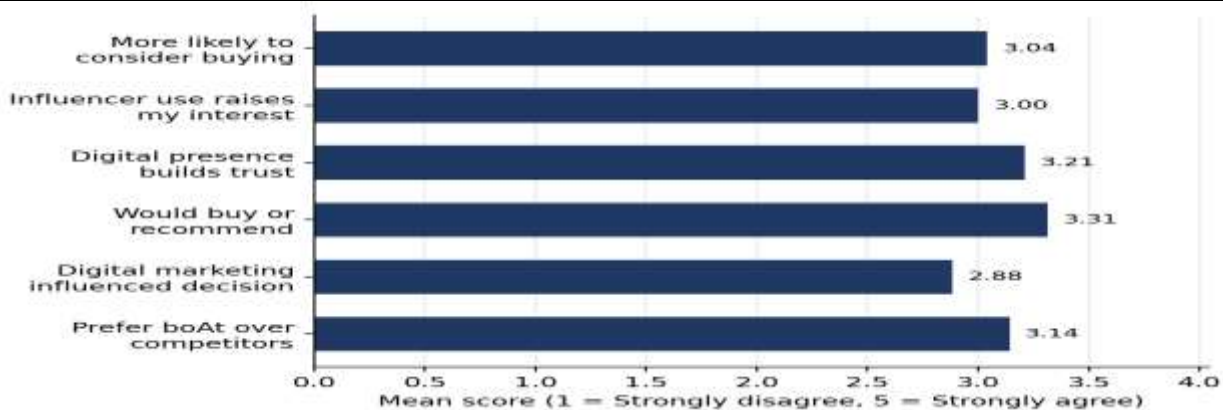


Figure 4.5: Mean scores of purchase-intent statements (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree)

The composite purchase-intent score is 3.10, which is a moderate score, slightly above the engagement score of 2.90. The pattern is helpful to the item. The best response is general willingness to buy and/or recommend (3.31), where 52.5% agree, the only place where a majority of respondents agree in the entire survey. BoAt's digital presence earns a trust rating of 3.21.

Contrastingly, the weakest link is the direct link with digital marketing of the purchase decision (2.88, 28.3% agree). This means that the respondents are much more inclined towards purchasing/recommending boAt Airdopes than digital marketing influencing their decision. The two interpretations are that consumers are really reacting to price, to features/experience, or that they are being 'misled' by marketing; or that they are simply underestimating the importance of advertising to their own behavior, as has been documented before. The fairly positive trust item score indicates that having a digital presence is more of a credibility signal than it is a direct purchase motivator.

The influencer item (3.00) had the biggest disparity between the positive and negative responses with 41.7% agreeing and 40.0% disagreeing. However, it is clear that a significant minority (and perhaps an equal number) are not benefiting from the content made by influencers, but not the majority.

4.6 Engagement and Purchase Intent Compared

For each respondent, a composite engagement score was calculated and respondents were divided into three bands, with the average score for purchase intent calculated for each band, examining Proposition 1. It is not a comparison of group averages which would require a statistical model and would be reproduced from the models generated by the response sheet.

Table 4.8: Purchase intent across engagement levels (n = 120)

Engagement band	n	Mean purchase intent	SD	% with intent ≥ 3.50
Low (below 2.50)	20	2.68	0.81	15.0%
Moderate (2.50 – 3.49)	80	3.09	0.59	31.3%
High (3.50 – 5.00)	20	3.52	0.70	50.0%
All respondents	120	3.10	0.69	31.7%

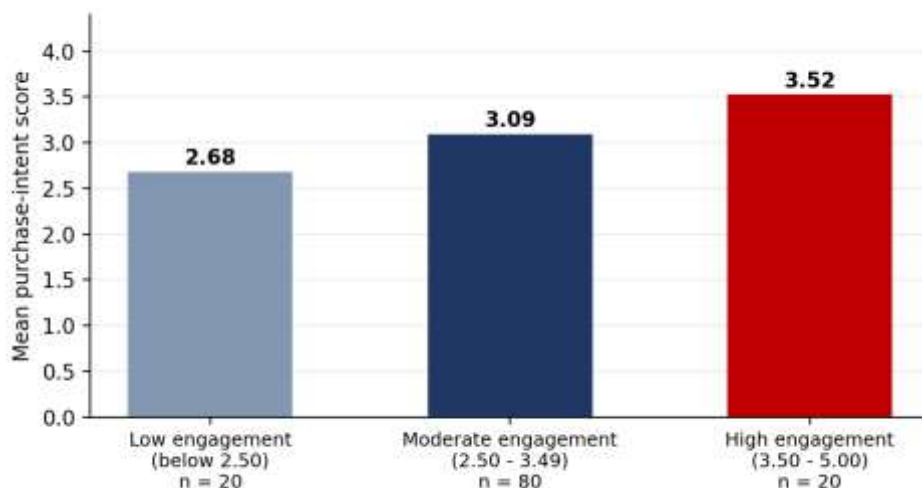


Figure 4.6: Mean purchase intent across engagement levels

Pattern is consistent, all the way through it goes in one direction. The difference between the low and high engagement groups is 0.84 points on a five-point scale, with means of 2.68 and 3.52, respectively. The mean purchase intent scores are 2.68 for the low engagement group, 3.09 for the moderate group and 3.52 for the high engagement group, with a difference of 0.84 points on a five-point scale between the low and high engagement groups. The share of people with a very positive intent score (3.50 or higher) increases even more dramatically from 15.0% to 50.0% — the highly engaged group is over three times more likely to have a very high purchase intent than the low-engagement group.

Proposition 1 is thus descriptively supported. There are 2 requirements that must be met. The first is that there are only 20 respondents in the extreme bands, so that the averages are sensitive to individual responses. Most importantly, this comparison is of association, not direction: it could be that consumers who are already fond of boAt prefer to interact with its content, but not that it makes them more fond of boAt. Data gathered here aren't able to distinguish these explanations.

4.7 Frequency of Exposure and Purchase Intent

Proposition 2 was examined by comparing mean purchase intent across the four exposure-frequency categories.

Table 4.9: Purchase intent across frequency of exposure (n = 120)

Frequency of exposure	n	Mean purchase intent	Range across groups
Often	49	3.07	Highest – lowest = 0.32 points
Occasionally	27	3.27	
Rarely	31	2.95	
Never	13	3.17	

In this place there is no discernible pattern. The group that sees boAt content occasionally has the highest mean intention (3.27), while those who see it often have 3.07 and those who never see it have 3.17 — higher than the often exposed group. There is 0.32 points total spread across the four groups, whereas there is 0.84 points total spread across the engagement bands in Table 4.8.

Thus, it is not how many times a consumer is exposed to content that is related to purchase intention but how meaningfully the content is interacted with. The number of times a consumer sees a piece of content, in other words, is therefore related to a much greater degree to how meaningfully a consumer interacts with it than is the purchase intention. The discovery also serves as a warning against using impressions or reach alone as a measure of marketing effectiveness. It should be read with the sample composition, where a majority of users are existing users and have an intention which may be based on product experience and not on their current advertising exposure.

4.8 Factors Influencing the Purchase Decision

Table 4.10: Most influential factor while buying earbuds (n = 120)

Most influential factor	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Product features and sound quality	58	48.3%	1

Most influential factor	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Reviews and ratings	25	20.8%	2
Brand image and digital presence	17	14.2%	3
Price / offers	16	13.3%	4
Influencer / peer recommendations	4	3.3%	5

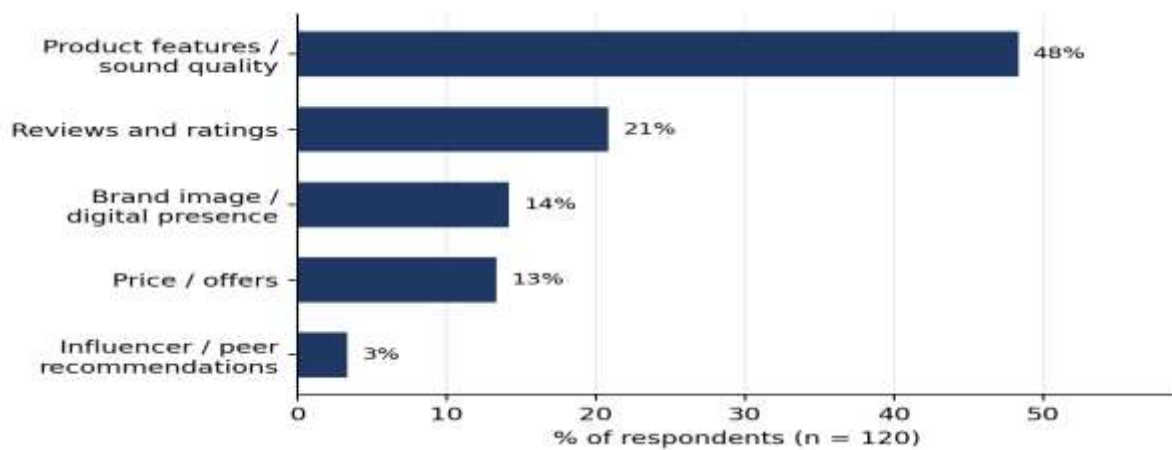


Figure 4.7: Most influential factor while buying earbuds (n = 120)

This is the most important finding in the study. Respondents overwhelmingly name product features and sound quality as the most influential factor (48.3%) and reviews and ratings are the next most frequently named factor (20.8%). Combined, 69.1% indicate that product substance and independent verification are most important.

Brand image and digital presence is the number one influence for 14.2% and influencer/peer recommendation for 3.3%. This is starkly contrasted by the findings from the engagement section; the top-scoring section was the engagement with influencer posts (3.18), and 41.7% agreed they felt more interested in posts if they were from an influencer, but very few feel that an influencer recommendation is the determining factor.

It's clear that influencer content is used at the awareness and interest phase, and product evidence at the point of decision. Last but not least at 13.3% comes 'Price or offers'. It implies that this relatively young, urban and largely brand-experienced group has become accustomed to the inexpensive price range and differentiates on performance not price.

4.9 Competitive Rating of boAt's Digital Marketing

Table 4.11: Rating of boAt's digital marketing against competing brands (n = 120)

Rating	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Much better	38	31.7%	31.7%
Somewhat better	42	35.0%	66.7%
About the same	34	28.3%	95.0%

Rating	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Somewhat worse	6	5.0%	100.0%
Much worse	0	0.0%	100.0%

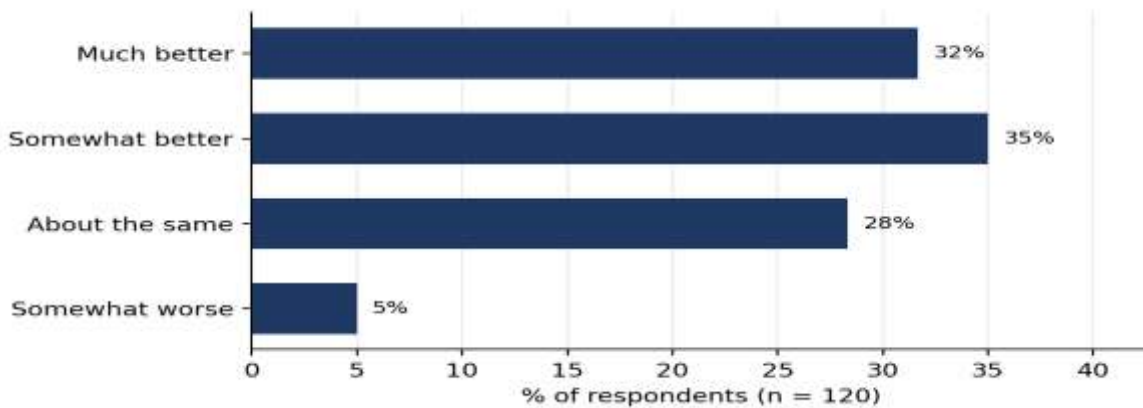


Figure 4.8: Rating of boAt's digital marketing against competitors (n = 120)

66.7% of the respondents say that boAt's digital marketing is better than that of its competitors like earbuds and 31.7% say it is much better. Only 5.0% rate it worse and none rate it much worse. Relative competitive perception of boAt's marketing is therefore quite positive – much more positive than is indicated by the engagement scores in Table 4.6.

It's telling that it doesn't feel consistent. Respondents agree boAt out-markets its competitors and at the same time report moderate personal involvement with the marketing. For now, the company is being rewarded for its execution of the product compared to other competitors, but not for the individual involvement they're having with the product, which means that this marketing edge is becoming a category norm instead of a brand asset.

4.10 Open-ended Responses

17 respondents offered optional comments. Due to the small number, these are not treated as a finding but as qualitative colour.

Table 4.12: Themes emerging from open-ended responses (n = 17)

Theme	Mentions	Illustrative content
Marketing should promise quality that the product delivers	4	Concern that claims outpace performance
Positive view of value for money	2	Good features for the price
Positive view of advertising	2	Enjoyment of boAt's ads
Product build and material should improve	1	Reference to headphone material quality
No suggestion / general appreciation	8	Neutral or non-specific responses

Four out of 17 respondents have raised a substantive theme which is 'Boat's Marketing must match with the Product'. Along with the build material comment, this reinforces the quantitative data that showed that product substance is more important than promotion in the purchasing decision. The rest of the comments were positive but not specific.

4.11 Summary of Key Findings

Table 4.13: Summary of key findings

No.	Finding	Supporting evidence
1	Brand penetration in the sample is very high	72.5% have purchased; 5.8% plan to
2	Reach is broad but not continuous	63.3% see content at least occasionally; 36.6% rarely or never
3	Instagram leads, marketplace ads a close second	44.7% and 33.0% of valid responses
4	Engagement is moderate, not strong	Composite mean 2.90 on a 1–5 scale
5	Attention exceeds participation by a wide margin	Attention 3.18 vs. interaction 2.66; only 14.3% have interacted
6	Purchase intent is moderate and slightly higher than engagement	Composite mean 3.10; 52.5% would buy or recommend
7	Consumers do not credit marketing for their decision	Lowest intent item at 2.88; only 28.3% agreement
8	Higher engagement accompanies higher purchase intent	2.68 → 3.09 → 3.52 across engagement bands
9	Exposure frequency alone shows no clear pattern	Spread of only 0.32 points across frequency groups
10	Product substance dominates the decision	Features 48.3% and reviews 20.8%, against 3.3% for influencers
11	boAt is seen as out-marketing its competitors	66.7% rate its marketing better; only 5.0% worse
12	Consumers ask that claims be matched by quality	Leading open-ended theme

5. Discussion

5.1 Interpreting the Engagement Findings

The bottom line is that the data tells us that boAt does not get enough participation and they do get attention. When it comes to the brand's influencer promotions, 3.18 of respondents have noticed them, while 3.12 have found them reasonably interesting, and only 14.3% have liked, shared, commented on or saved the content from the brand, with the composite engagement score, at 2.90, falling below the midpoint

of the scale. This distribution is similar to the hierarchy of consumers identified by Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011) as being active consumers, active contributors, and content creators, in which the vast majority of consumers are passive consumers of brand content.

The finding is welcome to correct the common practice of engaging in the manner of reporting it. It can be misleading to look at the amount of interactions on an aggregate level when it corresponds with a very low participation rate on a follower base. The moderate score of 'relatability' (2.94) confirms that boAt's content is effective in being seen but not seen as 'personal', as explained by Ashley and Tuten (2015) that creative strategy is a key element in engaging people.

5.2 The Engagement–Intent Relationship

The increase in purchase intent from 2.68 to 3.09 to 3.52 as the engagement increases (as seen in Table 4.8), aligns with the general trend of the engagement literature, which states that consumer brand engagement is positively correlated with brand usage intentions (Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014). It also posits the theoretical stance that intention is formed by attitudes towards the brand and the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

These data, however, do not, however, allow for the determination of the direction of the relationship, and that should be stressed, not directed to the footnote. Those who already liked and used boAt Airdopes have all the reasons to pay closer attention to boAt's content which would create exactly that pattern. With 72.5% of the sample being existing purchasers, this reverse explanation is at least as credible as the marketing led one. The truth is, the sample population shows a positive correlation between the two, but not necessarily between engagement and purchase intent.

The finding is further substantiated by the difference between the results from exposure frequency (Table 4.9) and from exposure. In case that exposure would drive intent, the group that has been exposed the most should have had the highest intent, but it didn't. The metric to measure intent is engagement, not impressions.

5.3 Digital Marketing in Relation to Competing Decision Factors

The most managerially relevant finding of the study is when digital marketing is considered in conjunction with other decision factors. Together, product features and sound quality (48.3%) and reviews and ratings (20.8%) make up 69.1% of the stated primary influence, while brand image and digital presence make up 14.2% and influencer or peer recommendations 3.3%. The difference between the level of engagement with influencer content and the level of decisiveness from influencer recommendations is stark: influencer promotion has the highest engagement rating of any of the engagement items, while less than 1 respondent on every 25 considers influencer recommendation to be a decision maker.

This aligns with the mediated perspective on the effectiveness of influencers in the literature (Lou & Yuan, 2019; De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017), which argues that credibility and informativeness (but not exposure) are the key drivers of their effectiveness. It also fits with the nature of an on-line first category driven by marketplace. Once the purchase is over on Amazon or Flipkart, the final inputs of the consumer are specifications, ratings and reviews, which are all on the same screen as the Buy button. Influencer content helps drive consideration—marketplace page completes the sale.

The relatively low weighting of price or offers (13.3%) is another indicator of maturity of the category. With affordable choices everywhere, low price isn't a differentiator, and it dovetails with the industry trend of higher average selling prices and increased consumer demand for higher-end audio capabilities.

5.4 Trust, Competitive Perception and the Erosion of a Marketing Advantage

Marketing was the least endorsed of the set (with 39.5% agreement) while the trust item was ranked rela-

tively high (3.21). These collectively indicate that boAt's digital presence is more of a credibility signal rather than a direct sales driver in a category where the product is not physically seen prior to purchase. This resonates with Keller's (1993) description of brand knowledge affecting consumer response and the enabling conditions for commitment being trust (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

There is a strategic element to the competitive rating. Though two-thirds of the respondents think that the digital marketing efforts of BoAt are better than that of its competitors, the engagement with it is still moderate. High level of relative execution is being rewarded, but individual involvement is not high. With similar creator reach and marketplace exposure available for market purchase, the marketing power that used to be an edge for boAt is becoming a requirement of the category. This is consistent with industry analysis that foresees the end of the first time buyer cycle and rising competition on this basis.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The results must be considered in the context of the following limitations:

1. Sampling: It was a convenience (non-probability) sample of 120 respondents. The sample is not large enough or statistically representative of Indian consumers, as it is primarily a group of young, mostly urban and mostly students.
2. Findings are indicative of the surveyed group only. The sample size includes 72.5% of the respondents who are existing buyers of boAt Airdopes. The results reflect the views of an experienced user population, not future first time buyers, and may well be more positive for the brand than would a typical population.
3. Analytical approach: analysis is limited to frequencies, percentages, averages and comparisons of group means. Inferential tests were not performed and therefore the differences cited here have no claim to statistical significance, nor can any causal relationship be inferred between engagement and purchase intention.
4. Only 23 respondents answered two questions (place of residence and the awareness question) which were added after circulation was started. The results of these items are indicators only and the same applies to multiple-response content-type question. Self-report bias: self-reported engagement and self-reported intent were measured at one time only.
5. Respondents can underestimate the effect of their own advertising exposure, they may respond with socially desirable answers, and they may overestimate their exposure to advertising.
6. Purchased intent is a declared intention: intent is not behaviour. These scores are not predictions of sales because the documented disparity between intention and behaviour means that such scores are not necessarily reflective of behaviour.
7. The scope: The study includes the one brand and one product category at one moment and there is no comparison of competitor brands on the same parameters and no evaluation of the marketing expenditure or the effectiveness of the campaign carried out by boAt.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the relationship between consumer engagement with the digital marketing of boAt with the consumer purchase intent of boAt Airdopes among the Indian consumers. So, according to the 120 responses, it's a qualified yes, but there's one thing that matters about the place in the decision of marketing.

The level of engagement with boAt's digital content is moderate (composite mean 2.90), and significantly higher in attitude than in action – with consumers noticing the content and especially the content created by influencers, but only a minority (14.3%) ever interacting with it. Purchase intent is also in the moderate range (composite mean 3.10) though more than half (52.5%) would consider to buy or recommend the product. People in the high engagement band indicated a mean purchase intent score of 3.52 compared to 2.68 for people in the low engagement band, and were more than three times as likely to say they had strong purchase intent. So engagement and intent go hand in hand, but there's no parallel relationship between engagement and frequency of exposure: it's more about how engaged someone is, than how many times they've seen something.

The thing is, though, that what people say their purchase is driven by is not digital marketing. Product features and sound quality (48.3%) and reviews and ratings (20.8%) are the most influential factors in the decision, with brand image (14.2%) and influencer recommendation (3.3%) the next most significant. Meanwhile, 66% of the respondents said BoAt's marketing is better than its rivals, and the greatest single reason for intent to buy or recommend is attributed to BoAt's marketing, not any other reason.

Overall, the findings suggest that boAt's digital marketing is effective in creating visibility and establishing a competitive position, yet it is not as effective in building brand trust and is only successful at the awareness and consideration stage and is overpowered by product evidence in the point of decision. If the category is maturing and the number of first-time buyers is declining, the more capable contenders are stepping in and, in a mature category, reach will not be enough to hold leadership. More important is the need to make the brand's digital presence more strongly associated with the tangible product quality, as expressed by the respondents in their free text comments.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been made: These are directed towards boAt's marketing practice and are all connected to evidence.

6.2.1 Move evidence from claim to evidence

Content should prove rather than state that it performs the way it was marketed to do, 48.3% of people who decide on features and sound quality do. And the top open-ended comment was 'Content should demonstrate performance, not state it. The content mix should not consist only of lifestyle-led information, but should include more comparative sound tests, battery and latency demonstrations, durability and build-quality content and specification explainers. The marketplace page is a vital marketing instrument and should be treated as such. When asked about the various inputs which help them decide to purchase a product, a third of respondents said they had noticed boAt's marketing on Amazon and Flipkart. Investing in listing quality – images, comparison tables, description of features, structuring answers to negative listings, verified-review programmes – targets the consumer where the decision is made and should be resourced as such and not as a channel-management activity.

6.2.3 Reposition influencer activity towards credibility

Influencer content gets the attention (3.18, the highest engagement score) but is influencing only 3.3% of respondents. The notion is not to limit the use of influencers but to focus on the type of content they should be posting: the influencers who use the product and give it an evaluative stamp are those who should be examined, and the requirement is that the product actually be used, not just mentioned in passing. This element guides students to take an active role. This element helps students to be part of the process. There is significant scope for participation as only 14.3% of respondents have ever engaged with boAt's content.

Low-effort mechanics, such as polls on feature preference, save-worthy comparison content, saving guide content, and user-review contests are more likely to help convert passive viewers into contributors than more posts. The Community is a differentiator for the city. The community is a differentiating factor for the city (6.2.5). The element of boAt's content mix that was the least visible amongst the respondents to the survey was boAt's community or user-generated content (UGC), with only 13.0% of them having seen it. While the corporate effort may be harder to copy, it is the area of the brand's strategy that should be given more visibility and a greater presence, for instance, with the inclusion of user content in main line campaigns and on the product pages. 6.2.6 (Measure the quality of engagement, not reach) The purchase intent data shows a difference of 0.84 points between purchase intent and depth of engagement, and only a 0.32 point difference between purchase intent and number of times visitors view the content, suggesting that metrics like save and share rates, demonstration content completion, review sentiment and conversion of content viewers to product-page visitors are better indicators of engagement quality than the number of impressions or follower growth, indicating the need for reporting to shift from impressions to the number of followers to indicators of engagement quality. 6.2.7 Address price-segment maturity Enjoyability, service and room for personalization were the most common reasons, whereas only 13.3% cited price or offers. Therefore, the promotion through discounts should be replaced by communication based on performance per rupee, with rational comparison of performance features with similar brands at similar price points.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

1. Make use of a more representative, larger and geographically diverse sample (Tier-2 cities, Tier-3 cities and older age groups) for generalisation beyond a young urban base.
2. Talk to prospective buyers and existing users to differentiate between a prospective buyers' perception and an experienced users' perception.
3. Use a longitudinal or experimental study design that is able to determine the direction of the engagement–intent relationship; a cross-sectional survey cannot answer this question.
4. Compare it with the other brands like Boult, Noise, realme and JBL on the same questions to find out if BoAt's marketing edge is apparent when the same questions are asked about its competition.
5. Link – expressed intention to purchase data/re-platform analytics to measure intention-behaviour gap as opposed to assuming.
6. For the category of marketplace review content, which was particularly powerful in these findings, analyse the specific role and how consumers compare these reviews to brand generated content at the point of decision.

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