

# **The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Purchase Behavior: A Study on Boat Lifestyle – Helpful or Harmful?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the far-reaching impact of social media marketing on buying behaviour among consumers with a specific case study on boAt Lifestyle, one of India's fastest-growing audio and wearable tech brands. As the world places greater emphasis on digital communication, brands are adapting increasingly to use social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter to reach consumers, market goods, and generate sales. The goal of this research is to gauge whether social media is an effective aid in informing buying decisions or turns negative by encouraging impulse purchases and unattainable expectations. The research employs a mixed-method strategy, where primary data are gathered using surveys and interviews and secondarily from industry reports, marketing case studies, and scholarly literature. The research looks into various aspects of consumer behaviour such as awareness, perception, decision-making, influencer trust, satisfaction, and post-purchase experience. The research framework is based on consumer behaviour models and social media interaction theories, giving a systematic framework to measure the influence of digital interaction on consumer psychology. Major findings indicate that social media has proven to be extremely effective in raising brand awareness, product recall, and customer engagement for boAt, but also presents difficulties in the areas of deceptive promotions, excessive dependence on influencer support, and fleeting brand loyalty. Customers are commonly attracted to visually appealing posts and limited-period offers that can lead them to adopt impulse buying behaviours. Meanwhile, there is increasing suspicion on the part of consumers regarding the genuineness of influencers and the validity of online reviews. The study also emphasizes evolving consumer expectations, including authentic content, genuine user reviews, and socially responsible branding. boAt's capacity to evolve its social media strategy in accordance with such values can make or break its long-term sustainability and customer loyalty. In addition, social commerce, user-generated content, and data-driven personalization are cited as future directions with the potential to augment customer experience. Lastly, the research concludes that social media, as a great marketing platform, is equally beneficial and detrimental. It depends greatly on how ethically and strategically it is applied. For digital-first companies like boAt Lifestyle, success comes in finding a balance between creativity and genuineness, providing real value to customers, and fostering long-term connections above and beyond transactional. This study adds to the body of knowledge on digital consumer behaviour and provides actionable recommendations for marketers, brand managers, and digital planners seeking to leverage the power of social media ethically.

**Keywords:** social media, consumer purchase behaviour

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The fast-paced digital era has seen social media rise to become a pervasive force transforming communication, sharing of information, and relationships between consumers and brands. Supported by the billions of active users worldwide, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter (now X), YouTube, and TikTok, among other platforms, have evolved beyond being mere networking

platforms—they are now mighty marketing platforms that drive consumer tastes, decisions, and buying habits. Growing social media penetration into everyday life has revolutionized the way consumers engage with brands, view product information, and make purchasing decisions. This is especially true for the lifestyle and electronics category where consumer interactions are highly influenced by visual content, endorsements by influencers, customer reviews, and personalized ads.

This research delves into the role of social media in influencing consumer buying habits, with boAt Lifestyle being one of India's leading consumer electronics and audio technology brands of choice.

boAt Lifestyle has gained popularity in a very short time and has become a brand that is well known in Indian households, particularly among millennials and Gen Z consumers. Founded in 2016, boAt has created a niche for itself in being fashionable, inexpensive, and yet quality audio products like headphones, earbuds, smartwatches, and speakers. Unlike others in the space, not just its value-for-money or fashionable product look but also its robust and impactful use of social media marketing differentiates boAt. The brand has perfected the game of positioning itself on online spaces as a young, dynamic, and aspirational brand. Leveraging collaborations with influencers, celebrities, gym enthusiasts, and music stars, boAt has been able to establish a strong emotional bond with its target market. Its marketing efforts tend to trend on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, thereby driving its brand recall and visibility even higher.

The power of social media to shape purchasing decisions is based on its capability to create trust and social proof. Consumers get influenced by seeing their friends or their favourite influencers consuming a product and enjoying it, which creates a psychological stimulus called the "bandwagon effect," where individuals tend to purchase something just because others are purchasing it. For boAt, influencer marketing is highly influential in creating perceptions among customers. The company collaborates with celebrities and online content creators to highlight product benefits, drive new product launches, and even provide discount codes, thus driving impulse purchases. Additionally, user-generated content like unboxing, review, and testimonial content lends a sense of authenticity and familiarity to the brand image.

Yet, although social media has many benefits for business marketers, it also presents significant questions regarding how it shapes consumer purchase behavior. Are consumers making rational and educated decisions based on quality and function of product, or are they being influenced by the glamour and hype generated through social media? This brings us to the central question of this thesis: is social media marketing for brands such as boAt beneficial in delivering value-oriented information to consumers, or detrimental in the sense of portraying unrealistic expectations and

instigating impulsive, emotionally-charged buying behaviors?

There is increasing suspicion that the aesthetically pleasing, glossy social media content tends to depict a super-realistic version of reality. Products are often promoted with greater emphasis on lifestyle appeal than technical features or long-term quality. For boAt, consumers may be attracted to the brand because it is linked with fitness, fashion, music festivals, and sports personalities, and not necessarily by carefully assessing the functionality of the product. Post-purchase dissonance may result when the product experience fails to live up to the perceived image. Thus, it becomes important to analyze if boAt's social media strategy is enabling customers with helpful information or merely playing with emotions to generate business.

From a business point of view, it becomes vital to know the effects of social media on consumer behavior so that more moral, accountable, and sustainable marketing approaches could be designed. Brands now have to strike a balance between creativity and credibility and entertainment and education. Whereas attention-grabbing content may attract, it is the value provided after purchase that will guarantee customer loyalty in the long run. For boAt, which operates in an extremely competitive and saturated market, gaining and sustaining consumer trust is critical. This study, therefore, aims to reveal not just how boAt utilizes social media to gain customers, but also how these efforts shape consumers' decision-making process, brand attitudes, and overall satisfaction.

The other key aspect of this research is the influence of peers and online reviews. Traditional advertising allows only one-way communication, with consumers offering opinions and experiences silently. Social media, however, has made it possible for two-way communication, allowing consumers to give their opinions and experiences freely. This forms a cycle of ongoing feedback that has the potential to create or destroy the brand image. Exploring how consumers are affected by such feedback regarding boAt products will give insightful knowledge on the credibility and authenticity of social media influence.

In addition, this study will also investigate demographic factors like age, gender, and income to see how various consumer groups react to boAt's social media campaigns. For instance, do students prioritize aesthetics and prices, while corporate professionals care more about durability and performance? Does influencer

marketing work differently with different age groups? These are important questions for marketers looking to craft tailored content for various target audiences.

#### *Need for the study*

- To understand how social media platforms influence consumer perceptions and decision-making processes in the context of lifestyle and electronic brands like boAt.
- To identify the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies such as influencer collaborations, user-generated content, and visual branding in driving product sales.
- To analyze whether consumers are making informed and rational decisions or are being driven by emotional and impulsive factors influenced by social media promotions.
- To assess the role of social media in shaping brand loyalty, trust, and customer satisfaction post-purchase, especially among youth demographics.
- To explore the gap between perceived value created by social media content and actual product performance as experienced by consumers.
- To evaluate the ethical considerations and long-term implications of persuasive marketing practices employed on social media platforms.
- To provide data-driven insights that can help companies like boAt refine their digital marketing strategies for better consumer engagement and transparency.
- To contribute to academic and professional understanding of digital consumer behavior in India's rapidly growing social commerce landscape.

#### *Scope of the study*

- The study looks into the impact of social media marketing on boAt Lifestyle product consumer purchase behaviour.
- It targets common social media sites like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook as central means of marketing communication.
- The study encompasses both boAt-generated promotional content and user-generated content in the form of reviews and unboxing videos.

- The research focuses mainly on millennials and Gen Z consumers with a presence on social media and are part of boAt's main customer base.
  - It examines the role played by influencer sponsorships and online campaigns in influencing consumer trust and brand consciousness.
  - The geographic location is confined to Indian consumers, particularly from urban and semi-urban areas with high internet activity.
  - Consumer behaviour is studied based on awareness, interest, evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase experience.
  - The research addresses positive and negative consequences of social media impact, such as spontaneous purchasing and regret of purchase.
  - Surveys and questionnaires will be used to gather data from current or prospective boAt consumers on social media.
- Results are to assist marketers, organizations, and academic researchers in providing insights into ethical and effective social media techniques.

#### *Significance of the study*

- Emphasizes the increasing influence of social media on consumer purchase behavior in the age of digitalization.
- Sheds light on how boAt Lifestyle leverages social media platforms to affect purchasing decisions.
- Aids marketers in comprehending the impact of influencer marketing and visual content in promoting brands.
- Adds to digital marketing, consumer psychology, and behavioural economics literature.
- Helps companies assess whether their social media campaign is generating trust or leading to impulse purchases.
- Provides consumers with a more accurate insight into how their choices might be swayed by online content and trends.
- Points out the discrepancy between online brand representation and real-world product performance as felt by the user.
- Promotes ethical marketing by discussing the possible negative consequences of manipulative online promotions.

- Aids the creation of more consumer-centric, transparent, and well-informed social media marketing strategies.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The increasing impact of social media on consumption purchase behaviour has been a popular research area in marketing and behavioural studies. With the continuous evolution of digital technologies, social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook have become pivotal to how consumers find information, assess products, and make purchasing decisions. A number of studies have pinpointed social media as an information source and also as a convincing marketing channel, frequently crossing the boundaries between authentic content and advertisements. Scholars concur that contemporary consumers, especially millennials and Gen Z, increasingly use word-of-mouth recommendations, influencer sponsorships, and visually communicated brand stories to shape opinions and make buying decisions. The shift has rendered classic marketing frameworks less potent than online-first approaches.

Social media marketing has also been particularly effective for youth-oriented lifestyle and tech brands. Research suggests that consumers are extremely responsive to visually appealing content, emotional messaging, and aspirational content, all of which are defining features of social media campaigns. Of particular importance has been influencer marketing, as a result of the level of trust and relatability that consumers feel towards content creators. Influencer promotions, as per recent studies, tend to be more effective than those of celebrities, particularly if the influencer promotes a specialty interest or way of life that the audience also shares. But the success of these promotions also relies on perceived authenticity by the audience.

For the Indian context, studies have indicated a phenomenal growth in digital acceptance and online shopping behaviour. Soaring smartphone penetration, low-cost internet availability, and popularity of mobile-first platforms have allowed brands such as boAt Lifestyle to become successful through social media promotion. boAt utilized influencer partnerships, user-generated content, and youth-focused digital campaigns successfully to build a strong brand image. However, little research has been conducted on how these efforts

ultimately shape consumer decision-making—whether it results in rational, informed selections or spontaneous, emotional ones.

Also, literature discusses possible negative aspects of social media influence, including misleading advertising, excessive dependence on trends, and post-purchase dissonance. Some authors claim that customers are more likely to be swayed by the appearance and image of a company than by the product's quality or value for money. This necessitates more subtle comprehension of social media's influence—not only as a promotional medium but also as a strong psychological and behavioural influence. Current research highlights the importance of conducting more brand-specific, consumer-focused research, particularly in rapidly growing markets such as India.

This research fills part of that void by exploring boAt Lifestyle—a company whose identity and customer base it has developed primarily through social media. It uses existing theories and previous research to investigate whether or not social media serves as an assistive decision-making medium or a negative influence that manipulates consumers.

## III. FINDINGS

### *Heavy Trust in Influencers*

- 68.9% always trust influencers or celebrities endorsing boAt products.
- This is indicative of the high credibility boAt has established using influencer marketing.

### *Perceived Social Media Content Creativity*

- 51.2% rate boAt's social media content as creative and informative.
- 34.9% also find them promotional or exaggerated, indicating a mixed perception of authenticity.

### *Extensive Regret Following Social Media-Influenced Purchases*

- An impressive 72.7% of shoppers confessed they have regretted buying a boAt product under the influence of social media.
- This presents a possible disconnect between product experience and marketing hype.

#### *Strong Impulse Buying Influence*

- 51.1% strongly feel and 26.7% feel that boAt's ads induce impulse buying.
- This shows the power of persuasive and emotive advertising.

#### *Content Type Preferences*

- 60.5% are most drawn to discounts and offers.
- This was preceded by 25.6% who believe in product features and specs, which means value-based content is more effective than celebrity endorsements.

#### *Social Media as a Useful Buying Aid*

- 77.3% think social media is useful in making a decision to purchase boAt products.
- Reflects the influence of online platforms in determining consumer decisions.

#### *Consumer Perception of Manipulation*

- 86.4% think social media tricks or encourages them to buy.
- Signals an important ethical issue around aggressive marketing methods.

#### *High Recommendation Rate*

- 88.6% will recommend boAt to others on the platform based on what they viewed online.
- Indicates high brand advocacy in spite of problems such as post-purchase regret.

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The current research aimed to investigate the intricate correlation between consumer purchase behavior and social media marketing with a focus on the case of boAt Lifestyle, India's top consumer electronics brand. In a world where online interactions define success in business, social media has not only become a marketing instrument, but has also become a strong driver of purchasing habits, consumer attitude, and brand loyalty. The study establishes that social media affects consumer behavior to a large extent, particularly among millennial and Gen Z consumers. With targeted advertising, influencer marketing, interactive visuals, and time-limited promotions, boAt has been able to exploit the potential of social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter in terms of tapping into

consumers' attention and driving demand. The influence though is a double-edged sword — while fuelling brand awareness and speeding up purchase behavior, it is also causing concerns regarding impulse purchases, disinformation, and consumer dissatisfaction.

Surveys, data analysis, and case studies indicated that boAt customers are driven strongly by visual appeal, peer reviews, and perceived brand image. Although most consumers were satisfied, large numbers complained of post-purchase regret due to failed expectations created by social media campaigning. This calls for genuine communication, where the brand reconciles creativeness with sincerity.

The study also identified some primary challenges — influencer saturation, algorithm changes, and diminishing organic reach — that brands like boAt have to navigate. Growing demand for personalized, authentic, and value-based content makes digital strategy even more challenging. At the same time, newer trends such as social commerce, user-generated content, augmented reality, and AI-driven personalization offer promising opportunities for future engagement.

The research finds social media to be both beneficial and detrimental, depending on how responsibly it is handled. For boAt and other brands like it, the path ahead is through balancing digital initiatives with consumer values, emphasizing real engagement over visibility, and leveraging social platforms not merely to sell, but to establish deep brand-consumer relationships.

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