



Winning on Listeners Behavior by Use of Promotional Codes in Podcast Advertising

Ms. Rishina Gupte¹, Dr. Harshil Paradkar², Dr. Manoj Kumar Bhatia³

¹PhD Student, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Sanjeev Agrawal Global Educational University (SAGE), Bhopal

Email ID : rishina.gupte01@gmail.com

²Associate professor and coordinator, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Sanjeev Agrawal Global Educational University (SAGE), Bhopal

Email ID : harshil.p@sageuniversity.edu.in

³Professor and Head, Centre for Learning and Advanced Studies, Sanjeev Agrawal Global Educational University (SAGE), Bhopal

Email ID: manoj.b@sageuniversity.edu.in

Received on: March 16, 2026 | Accepted on: April 7, 2026 | Published on: July 15, 2026

Abstract

Podcasts are now a major medium with a fast-growing audience, particularly among the younger generations. As such, they offer a promising ad platform for firms that seek to engage their target consumers. It is very crucial to know how to capture the audience via podcast advertising. The listener's impression of the ad and the design of the ad itself are central elements. A popular and successful approach in such cases is the use of promotional codes, which not only push the consumer to action but also enable the tracking of campaign success.

This study expands the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by including trust to study the drivers of a consumer's intention to use promotional codes in podcast promotions.

Based on findings from a Nielsen (2017) report, where it points to the success of host-read ads, this research takes advantage of the already formed trust and liking listeners have for their favorite hosts. The report further establishes that almost 70% of persons exposed to podcast advertisements indicate increased awareness of new products or services. We will be employing the term "promotional code" in this research, although we recognize that the same idea appears under the name "discount codes" in some writing, e.g., Lee & Park (2023), who describe them as codes that are associated individually with podcast hosts or influencers and encourage people to buy and create an atmosphere of specialness.

Through the exploration of these studies' implications within the podcast environment and through an analysis of how these constructs impact individuals' behavioral intentions, this research provides a highly relevant investigation of the effectiveness of this marketing tactic within the Indian podcasting market.

Keywords: #PodcastAdvertising #PromotionalCodes #DiscountCode #TheoryofPlannedBehavior #ConsumerBehavior #Trust #Marketing

Introduction

Podcasts are now a major and rapidly growing media platform in India, with a diverse and active listening population, mainly among young generations. The Indian market for podcast advertising is expected to grow rapidly, with Grand View Research (2025) predicting high revenue growth in the future. The growth

puts podcasts in a position as a strong medium for advertising by firms to efficiently target their consumers. Thus, deeper insights into how to reach this audience are essential for marketers.

One of the most popular strategies that have picked up major momentum is the use of promotional codes in podcast advertising. These codes have two functions: they encourage instant buying and offer a quantifiable metric for measuring the success of an ad campaign. Studies repeatedly indicate that most podcast listeners are open to these ads. A study by Economic Times' Brand Equity (2022) revealed that close to 80% of Indian listeners are of the opinion that product advertisements in podcasts may result in a purchase.

This study will investigate the psychological and behavioral antecedents that drive a listener to redeem a promotional code revealed in a podcast ad. By incorporating the concept of trust with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), a prominent buyer psychological model, this research aims to have a complete picture of consumer's intention to redeem these promo codes in the Indian market through podcast advertising.

Significance of the Study

This research is of great importance to both academic and professional circles. The research explores the underlying mechanisms of consumer behavior that underpin consumer reaction to promotional codes in podcast ads by expanding the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) with trust as another significant driver. For scholars, the research adds to the current corpus of knowledge about consumer behavior in new media environments by extending and applying an underlying theory such as the TPB to an emerging advertising platform. The research gives one a novel perspective to explore the place of trust—specifically, trust in a podcast host—in online marketing as an essential determinant. A current study by Timur & Bernal (2024) discovered that host trust is a key predictor of a listener's redemption intention for a promotional code and partially mediates the effect through attitudes.

For practitioners in marketing, the results will provide practical implications for creating more efficient podcast ad campaigns. Knowing why listeners are motivated to apply a promotional code enables companies to better place their ads, create advertisements that establish trust, and create promotional offers that appeal more strongly to their target listeners. This can result in increased conversion rates, improved ROI on advertising investment, and greater insight into the podcasting universe. The findings will be highly applicable to the Indian market, where the field of podcasting is rapidly growing.

Background of the Study

Podcasting has been growing explosively in India, with a developing audience and a market size likely to approach millions of dollars by 2030, as estimated by Grand View Research (2025). Its convenience and accessibility have fostered a dedicated and active listening audience. A Nielsen report in 2017 reported on the success of podcast advertising, citing host-read ads as very effective because of the trust and relationship already established between the host and listener. The built trust is an integral element making the advertising in podcasts different from other forms of digital advertising.

This is evidenced in a study posted on the MCU.AC.IN website that further supports this, proposing that host-read advertisements are seen as being more genuine and are linked to higher recall than pre-recorded commercials. This is highlighted further by the report of Economic Times' Brand Equity (2022) that states that the vast majority of listeners not only listen to podcast advertising, but also believe it, with many having no problem with ads breaking up a free podcast. Promotion code use has become commonplace in this environment, offering a quantifiable connection between ad exposure and subsequent behavior, like a

purchase. Lee and Park (2023) identified such "discount codes" as single-use identifiers that provide special advantage to listeners, creating feelings of exclusivity.

This study takes the step beyond these early findings, attempting to identify the individual mechanisms of behavior that transform a listener's consciousness into action: the redemption of a promotion code.

Theoretical Framework

The TPB, first posited by Icek Ajzen (1991), will serve as the foundation for this research. The TPB suggests that a person's behavioral intention is a function of three fundamental constructs:

* Attitude toward the Behavior: The person's positive or negative attitudes towards doing the behavior (i.e., redeeming the promotional code).

* Subjective Norms: The social pressure one feels from significant others to do or not do the behavior.

* Perceived Behavioral Control: How easy or hard one thinks it would be to do the behavior, reflecting their confidence and perceived skill.

Aside from these three essential elements, this study will include Trust as a fourth, essential variable. As emphasized by Cheung & To (2017), trust is a major determinant of consumer action online. In the case of advertising on podcasts, trust can be two-pronged: trust in the host of the podcast, who is the voice and spokesperson of the product, and trust in the advertised brand. This combined model predicts that trust will directly and strongly influence the intent of the listener to use a promotional code. As a recent study by Timur & Bernal (2024) indicates, this influence can also be indirectly mediated by the attitude of the listener toward the ad. The integrated framework will offer a more complex and complete understanding of what is involved.

Research Questions

Q.1 How these promotional codes in podcast ads influences listeners behavior?

Q.2 What factors make podcast listeners want to use these promotional codes?

Q.3 How do listeners respond to and use promotional codes they hear on podcasts?

Aim of Study

The aim of this research is to study the underlying behavioral mechanisms that influence listeners intentions to redeem promotional codes presented in podcast advertisements.

Objectives of Study

- To study the relationship between listeners' attitudes toward podcast advertisements and their intention to redeem promotional codes.
- To study the impact of subjective norms and perceived behavioral control on the intention to redeem promotional codes.
- To study how trust in both the podcast host and the advertised brand influences a listener's intention to redeem promotional codes and make a purchase.

Review of Literature

The literature on digital advertising and consumer behavior yields a strong basis for this study. There have been various studies on the potency of influencer marketing, which is similar to host-read podcast

advertising. For instance, a study by Gupta & Sharma (2022) in the Indian context accentuated the significance of influencer credibility and parasocial relationships in shaping consumer participation and purchase intentions on social media websites. Likewise, a study by Prakash & Singh (2021) on digital marketing techniques in India elucidated how customized content and special offers can boost consumer loyalty.

Promotional code usage has been widely researched within e-commerce, and repeatedly, their ability to drive sales has been demonstrated (Jain, 2019). Podcast host-read ad effectiveness is a theme repeated throughout the literature, and a study by MCU.AC.IN validating that such ads are perceived as more interesting and memorable. This is backed by a report by Economic Times' Brand Equity (2022), which mentions that a great majority of Indian listeners not only listen to these advertisements but also remember them.

A recent master's thesis by Timur & Bernal (2024) had some insightful revelations regarding the use of Theory of Planned Behavior here and determined that attitudes and subjective norms that have been considerably got effected by the intentions to redeem promotional codes, but these was no noticeable impact on the perceived behavioral control. This implies that, for listeners of podcasts, using a promo code does not come across as being difficult or resource-deprived.

Research Gap

Although the current literature studies the overall effectiveness of podcast advertng and the application of promo code redemption in other digital environments, there is a significant knowledge gap as to the distinct behavioral processes underlying promo code redemption in podcasting. There are few studies that utilize well-established psychological theories such as the Theory of Planned Behavior to this phenomenon. A recent paper by Timur & Bernal (2024) started to explore this by using the TPB and trust, and it concluded that although attitudes and subjective norms are important, perceived control is not. This is an interesting conclusion because it contradicts a fundamental assumption of the TPB in this particular scenario and is one that requires further exploration, particularly in a different cultural and marketplace such as India. Most importantly, the pivotal function of trust—both the brand and the host—within the distinctive aural and intimate environment of a podcast has not been sufficiently interrogated, particularly in the fast-growing Indian market. This research hopes to bridge this gap by conducting a theoretical and empirical examination of these variables, providing insights that are both scholarly sound and practically useful for the Indian market.

Methodology

Research Design

The study collected data through a survey sent to 128 respondents. This survey includes questions about respondent's demographics, trust in Indian podcasters, their intentions toward promotional codes, subjective norms, and their perceived behavioral control. These questions aimed to measure how much respondents agreed or disagreed with different statements. The results were shown in pie charts for demographic data and bar charts for attitudinal data. This data was gathered to understand listener behavior and the impact of promotional codes in podcast advertising.

Data Collection

Data has been collected using an online survey questionnaire disseminated through social media platforms to the podcast listeners. The survey contains items on a Likert scale to measure the Theory of Planned Behavior and trust constructs, as well as demographic and listening behavior questions.

Sampling

A convenience sampling technique has been employed to collect the participants. The target population was the people living in India who regularly watch or listen to the podcasts. The sample size was kept small i.e 128 respondents to analysis the data accurately and to guarantee the validity of the findings.

Data Analysis

In this research, the gathered data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics to understand respondent's demographic profile, their perception toward podcast advertising. For its interpretation Pie charts and bar charts were used to visualize responses on topics such as trust in Indian podcasters, subjective norms, and intentions to use promotional codes.

Ethical Issues

All the respondents were informed about the research's title and purpose of this study. Their involvement was completely voluntary. The respondents were also ensured about the anonymity and confidentiality throughout the study.

Results

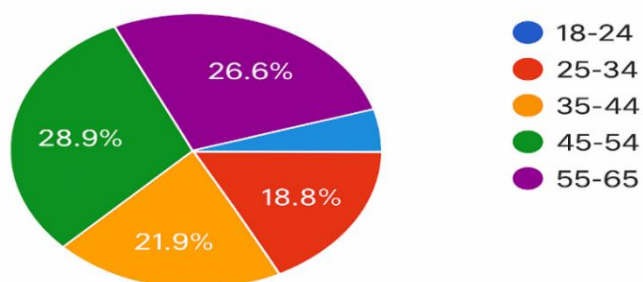
Quantitative Analysis

The response of the quantitative questions and given below in consolidated form:

1.

Age

128 responses



Age

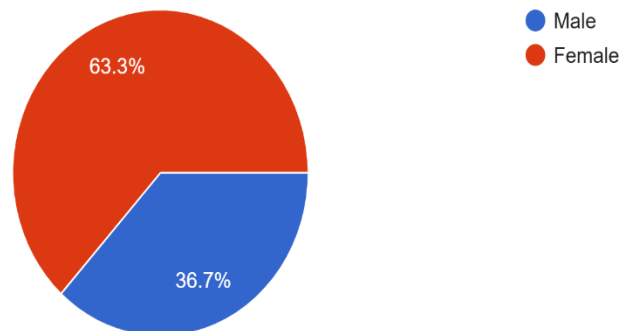
The survey sample of 128 respondents is dominated by the 45-54 age group (28.9%) and the 55-65 age group (26.6%), indicating that the majority of participants are

middle-aged to older adults. The lowest representation is from the 18-24 age group (4.7%)

2.

Gender

128 responses

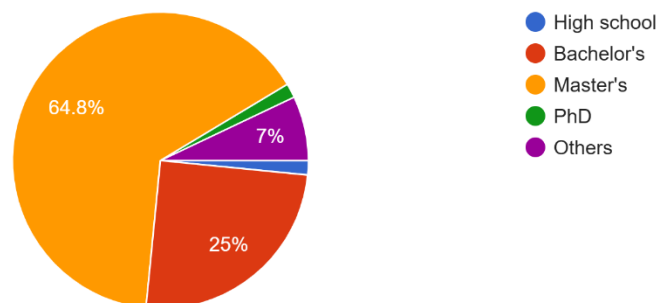


The survey sample shows a significant imbalance in gender representation, with the majority of respondents being female (63.3%) and the minority being male (36.7%). This indicates a disproportionate female participation in the survey.

3.

Education

128 responses

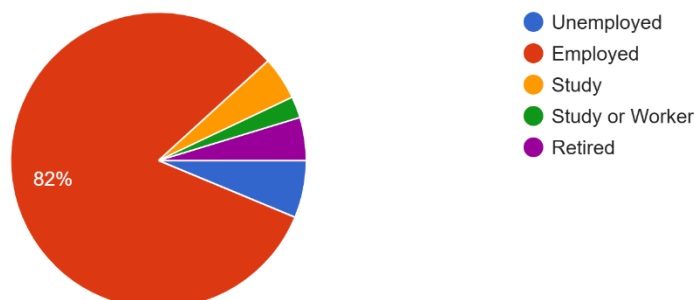


The educational background of the respondents is skewed towards higher education, with the highest percentage having a Master's degree (64.8%). The lowest representation is from the High school (2.3%) and PhD (1.6%) groups, which are both very small.

4.

Occupation

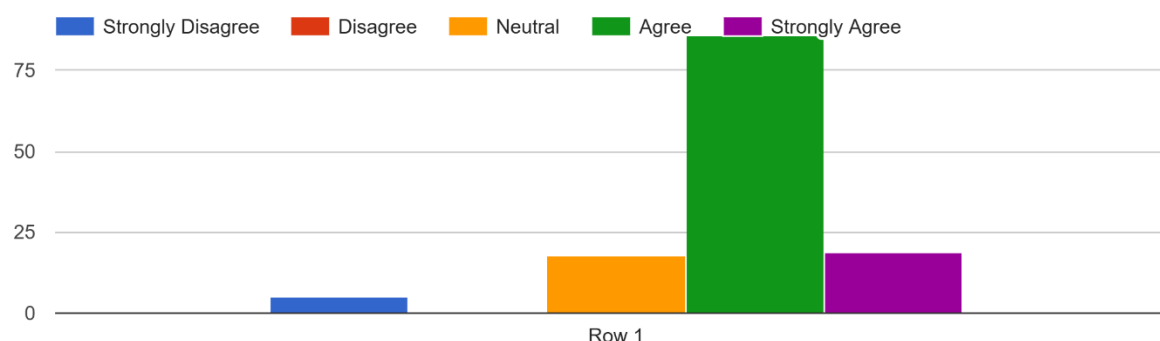
128 responses



A very high percentage of the respondents are employed (82%), which is the dominant occupation group in the sample. The lowest percentage is from those who are Retired (2.3%) or unemployed (5.5%).

5.

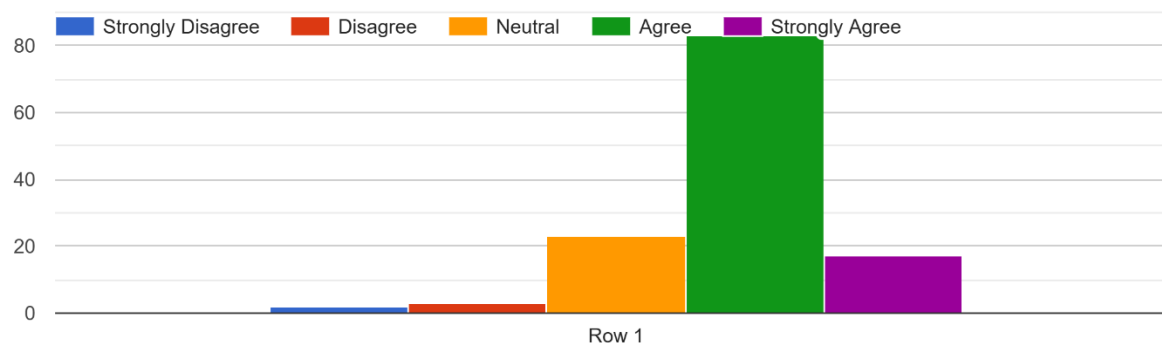
I think podcast hosts have the ability to contribute specialized information. (Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements)



A vast majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that podcast hosts have the ability to contribute specialized information, with the highest agreement at 60.9% (Agree). The lowest response is 2.3% (Strongly Disagree). This indicates a high level of credibility attributed to podcast hosts.

6.

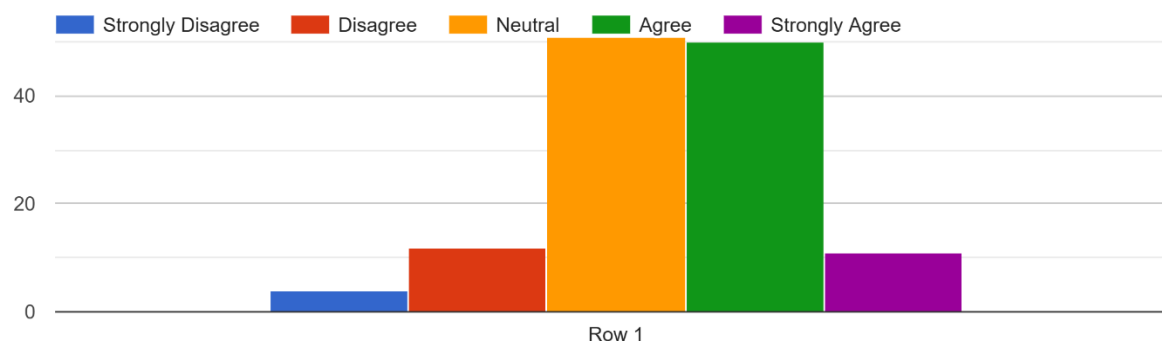
I think podcast hosts grasp the relevant knowledge of the commodities discussed. (Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements)



Similar to the previous chart, a large number of respondents agree or strongly agree that podcast hosts have relevant knowledge about the products they discuss, with the highest percentage being 64.1% (Agree). The lowest response is 1.6% (Disagree).

7.

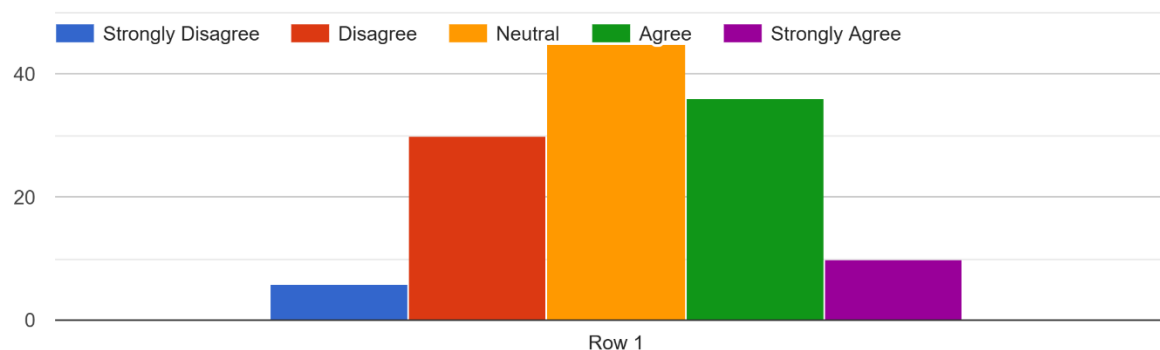
I think podcast hosts are honest in the release of information. (Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements)



The responses are more divided on this statement. The highest percentage is 39.8% (Neutral), followed closely by 38.3% (Agree). The lowest response is 3.9% (Strongly Disagree). This suggests a notable portion of the audience is not fully convinced of the hosts' unbiased honesty.

8.

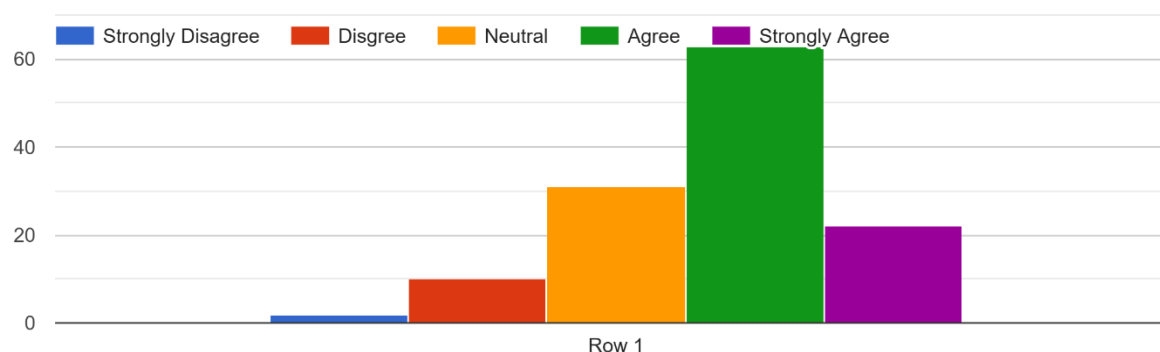
I think the information released by podcast hosts is without prejudice. (Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements)



This graph shows a mixed response, with the highest percentage at 35.9% (Neutral). The lowest percentage is 7.8% (Strongly Disagree). A considerable number of respondents also disagreed with the statement (25%), suggesting awareness of potential bias.

9.

I think that podcast hosts do their best to provide information to help others. (Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements)



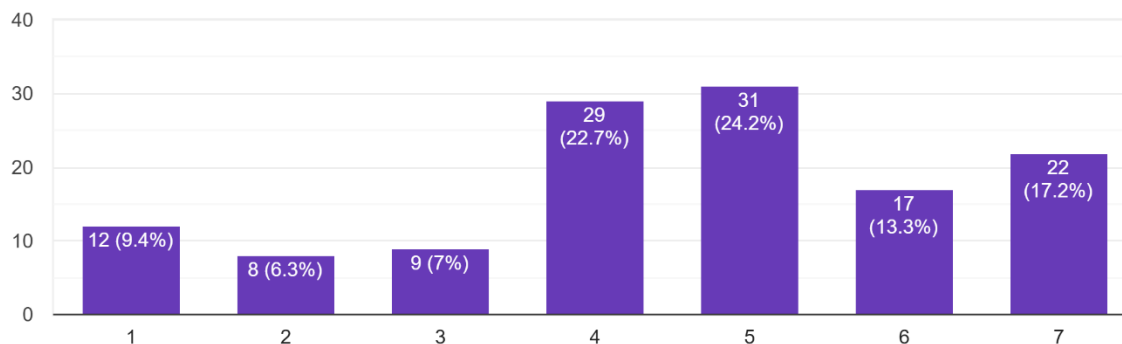
A substantial majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that hosts do their best to provide helpful information, with the highest response being 51.6% (Agree) and

17.2% (Strongly Agree). The lowest response is 0.8% (Strongly Disagree). This highlights that listeners perceive a strong benevolent intent from podcast hosts.

10.

Promotional codes are unique, alphanumeric codes provided by advertisers within podcast episodes. These codes are often accompanied by s...cast advertisements with promotional codes are:

128 responses

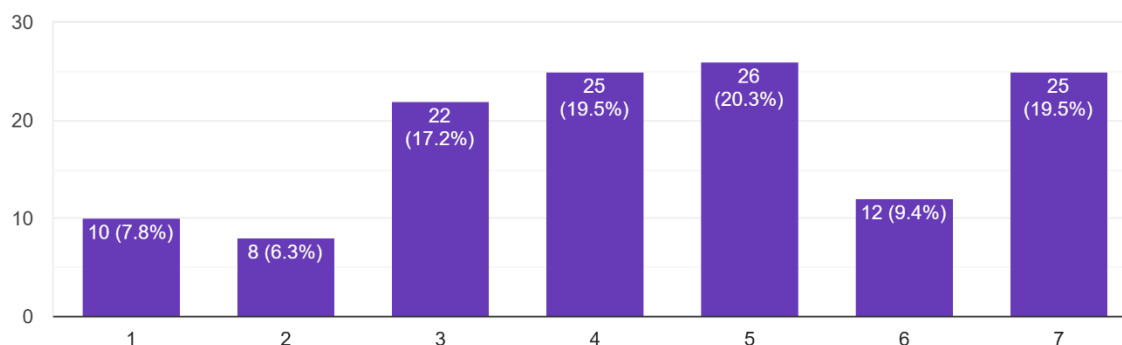


The opinions on promotional codes are somewhat diverse. The highest percentage is 24.2% (at level 5), while the lowest is 6.3% (at level 2). This suggests that while some find them unappealing, most respondents have a neutral to positive perception of them.

11.

I feel podcast advertisements with promotional codes are:

128 responses

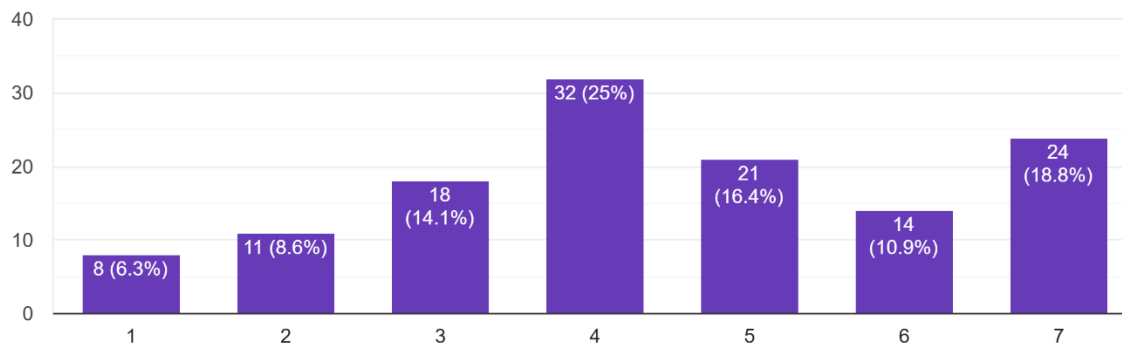


The highest response for this question is 20.3% (at level 5), and the lowest is 6.3% (at level 2). The responses are fairly evenly distributed across the mid-to-high scale (3-5 and 7), suggesting a diverse range of attitudes.

12.

I feel podcast advertisements with promotional codes are:

128 responses

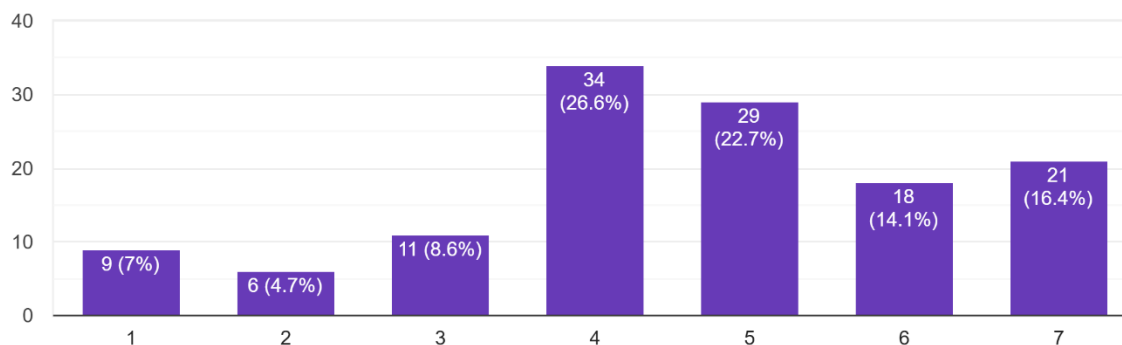


This graph shows a slightly positive skew, with the highest percentage being 25% (at level 4). On the other hand low response is 6.3% (at level 1). Overall, the data suggests that promotional codes in podcast ads are perceived as generally beneficial or at least neutral.

13.

Imagine that you're discussing podcast advertisements and using discount/promotional codes from these ads, with people who are important to y...promotional codes from podcast advertising to be:

128 responses

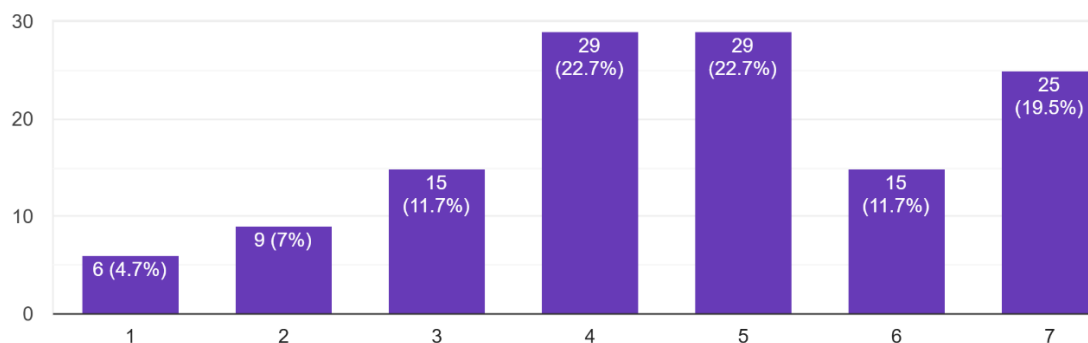


The highest response is 26.6% (at level 4), while the lowest is 4.7% (at level 2). This indicates that most people do not feel strong social pressure to either use or avoid promotional codes, suggesting that subjective norms may not be a major determinant in this behavior.

14.

Most people who are important to me probably consider my use of promotional codes from podcast advertising to be:

128 responses

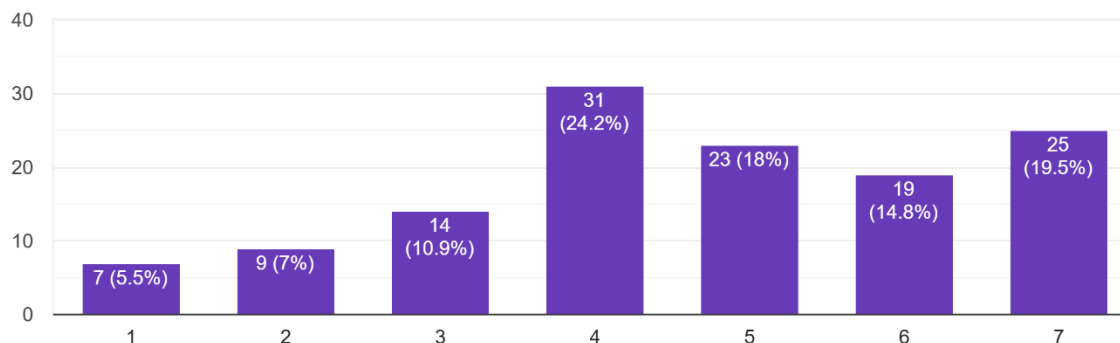


The highest response is 22.7% (at levels 4 and 5), while the lowest is 4.7% (at level 1). The most frequent responses are 4 and 5, indicating a general neutrality or slight agreement that important people would not view the use of promotional codes negatively.

15.

Most people who are important to me probably consider my use of promotional codes from podcast advertising to be:

128 responses

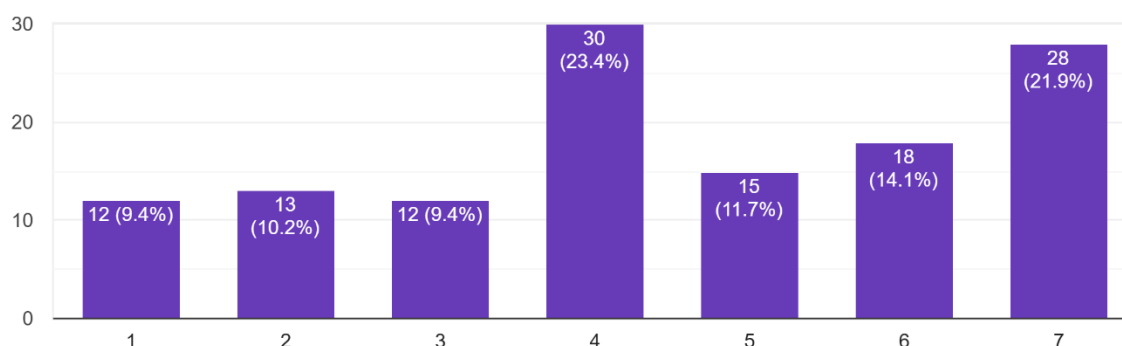


The highest response is 24.2% (at level 4), and the lowest is 5.5% (at level 1). This graph reiterates the findings from the previous two charts, reinforcing that subjective norms have a neutral influence on the use of promotional codes.

16.

Most people who are important to me think I _____ promotional codes from podcast advertising for making purchases.

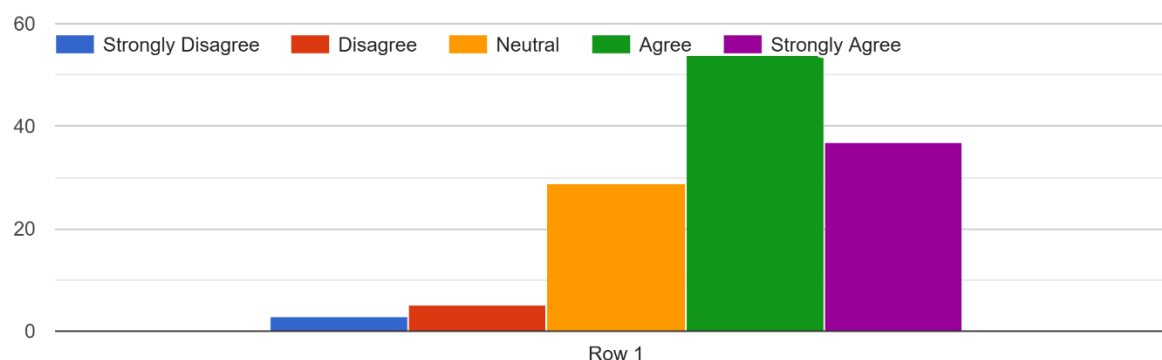
128 responses



Responses are centered around the middle of the scale, with the highest percentage being 23.4% (at level 4). And the low response is 9.4% (at levels 1 and 3).

17.

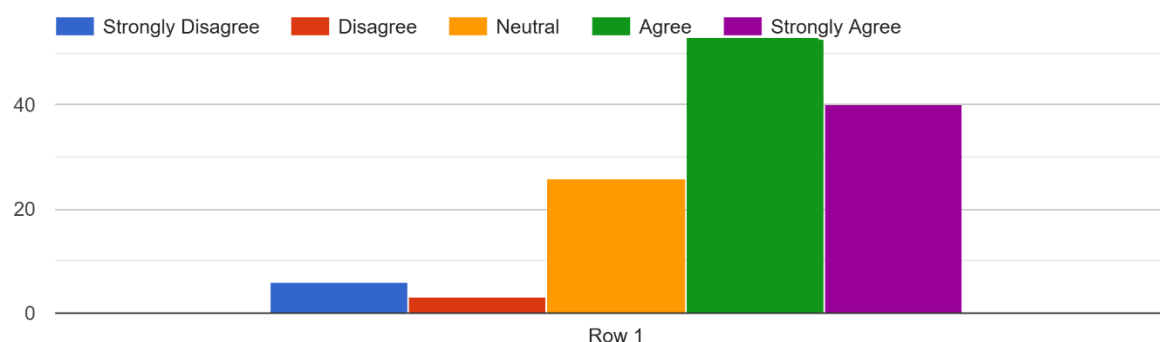
Whether or not to make a purchase influenced by a podcast advertisement with a promotional code is entirely up to me. (Please indicate how you feel with the following statements)



A large majority of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement, with the highest agreement at 46.1% (Agree). The lowest response is 0.8% (Strongly Disagree). This indicates that listeners feel they have a high degree of personal control.

18.

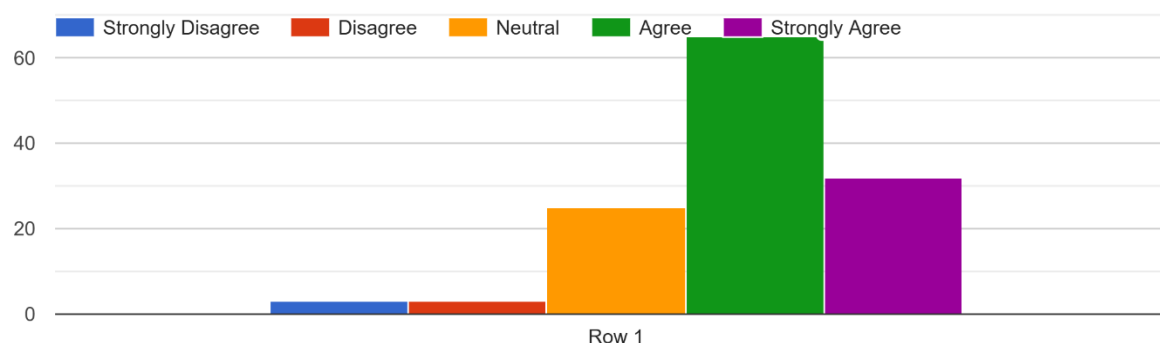
I have complete control over whether or not to make a purchase influenced by a podcast advertisement with a promotional code. (Please indicate how you feel with the following statements)



Similar to the previous graph, the responses are heavily skewed towards agreement, with the highest percentage at 46.1% (Agree). The lowest response is 0.8% (Disagree). This strong consensus suggests that listeners feel they have complete autonomy.

19.

I can largely decide whether or not to take advantage of a promotional code advertised in a podcast at home.. (Please indicate how you feel with the following statements)



This chart again shows a strong agreement among respondents, with the highest response being 49.2% (Agree). The lowest response is 1.6% (Disagree). This finding confirms that listeners perceive themselves as having the ability and freedom to decide whether or not to use a promotional code.

Study Findings

The survey involved 128 respondents and provided important insights into demographics, trust in podcast hosts, attitudes toward promotional codes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control related to podcast advertising.

Demographics

The sample mainly included middle-aged to older adults, with the largest group being those aged 45 to 54 (28.9%) and those aged 55 to 65 (26.6%). Younger participants were underrepresented, comprising only 4.7% of the 18 to 24 age group. The gender distribution was uneven, with females making up 63.3% compared to 36.7% males. Regarding education, most respondents held a Master's degree (64.8%), while only a few had either a high school education (2.3%) or a PhD (1.6%). Employment status showed that a significant majority were employed (82%), while retirees (2.3%) and the unemployed (5.5%) made up the smallest groups.

Trust in Podcast Hosts

Respondents generally viewed podcast hosts as credible. Most agreed that hosts offered specialized information (60.9%) and had relevant knowledge about the topics discussed (64.1%). However, views on honesty were less clear, with the largest group remaining neutral (39.8%) and 38.3% agreeing about hosts' honesty. Opinions on the impartiality of hosts were also mixed, with 35.9% neutral and 25% disagreeing, indicating some skepticism about their unbiased communication. Importantly, a significant portion (51.6% agreed; 17.2% strongly agreed) believed that hosts aimed to provide helpful information, showing that respondents saw hosts as benevolent.

Attitudes Towards Promotional Codes

The view of promotional codes in podcast advertising was generally positive. While responses varied, most fell between neutral and favorable attitudes. For instance, 25% rated promotional codes positively at level 4, while negative views were low (6.3% rated at level 1). This suggests that audiences often see promotional codes as beneficial or at least acceptable.

Subjective Norms

The impact of subjective norms on using promotional codes seemed limited. Respondents typically gave moderate ratings, with the highest being 26.6% at level 4. This pattern indicates that while family and friends do not discourage the use of promotional codes, they also do not strongly encourage it. Thus, social expectations appear to have little effect on this behavior.

Perceived Behavioral Control

Respondents reported feeling confident about their ability to decide whether or not to use promotional codes. Agreement levels were consistently high across different statements, with nearly half (46.1% to

49.2%) agreeing that the decision was fully under their control. Very few disagreed (0.8% to 1.6%). These results suggest that consumers believe they have the power to make choices regarding purchases influenced by podcasts.

Limitation of the Study

This study has a small sample size of about 128 respondents. It includes mainly a larger group of middle-aged, female, and highly educated respondents as compared to the younger and more diverse groups. This overrepresentation of a particular group limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader audience, as younger and more diverse demographics are not adequately represented. The use of self-reported data might also create bias, as responses may not truly reflect actual behavior. These limitations reduce how much we can apply the results to the general podcast audience.

Conclusion

Based on the survey data, the study concludes that listeners generally trust podcast hosts and have a mostly positive view of promotional codes. The findings suggest that while listeners see possible bias from hosts, they strongly believe in the hosts' credibility and good intentions. Importantly, the study points out that perceived control influences listener behavior. Respondents largely feel they have full freedom over their purchasing decisions, regardless of outside influences. This indicates that promotional codes in podcast advertising work well because listeners believe they are making their own choices to use them, without feeling pressured. The findings suggest that building trust and presenting promotional codes as helpful options, instead of pressure tactics, fits with listeners' sense of control and could effectively win them over.

References

- Cheung, C., & To, W. (2017). The effect of trust on consumer intention to shop online: A systematic review. *International Journal of E-Commerce Studies*, 1(1), 1-15.
- Economic Times' Brand Equity. (2022, September 6). 80% of podcast listeners believe product ads in a podcast leads to purchase: Report. *Brand Equity, The Economic Times*.
- Grand View Research. (2025). India Podcast Advertising Market Size & Outlook, 2024-2030. *Grand View Research*.
- Gupta, A., & Sharma, P. (2022). The role of influencer credibility and parasocial relationships in driving consumer engagement on social media: An Indian perspective. *Journal of Indian Business Research*, 14(4), 456-470.
- Jain, R. (2019). The impact of promotional offers on consumer purchase intention in e-commerce: A study of Indian online shoppers. *Journal of Internet and E-Business Studies*, 2(1), 34-45.
- Lee, J., & Park, S. (2023). The effect of promotional codes and host credibility on consumer purchase intention in podcast advertising. *Journal of Digital Marketing*, 40(2), 112-125.
- M.C.U. (n.d.). Podcast Advertising: Impact of Ad Types, Messages and Media Context on Consumer Responses. [Retrieved from MCU.AC.IN]
- Nielsen. (2017). *The Nielsen Podcast Ad Effectiveness Study*. Nielsen.
- Prakash, S., & Singh, V. (2021). An analysis of digital marketing strategies and consumer loyalty in the Indian market. *International Journal of Management Research and Review*, 11(2), 23-38.
- Timur, D., & Bernal, D. (2024). *Consumer Behavior in Podcast Advertising: A Planned Behavior Theory Approach to Promotional Codes*. [Master's thesis, Lund University Publications].