

Podcast: A New Age Phenomenon

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Abstract: *The purpose of this dissertation is to look into the rising popularity of podcasts among Jalandhar's youth. The way people consume digital media has changed significantly as a result of the quick development of technology, the growing accessibility of smartphones, and the expansion of internet connectivity. Podcasts are a type of digital audio or video content that are becoming more and more popular around the world. They offer a special platform for storytelling, information sharing, and enjoyment. The advent and proliferation of digital media have significantly transformed the landscape of information consumption, particularly among the youth. This dissertation examines the growing trend of podcast consumption among the youth in Jalandhar, a prominent city in the Indian state of Punjab. Through a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the study explores the factors contributing to the popularity of podcasts, the preferred genres, and the impact on the youth's daily lives and cultural engagement. Findings reveal that podcasts have emerged as a favored medium due to their accessibility, diverse content, and the convenience they offer for multitasking. Educational content, entertainment, and motivational topics are identified as the most popular genres. The study also uncovers that podcasts are not only a source of information and entertainment but also play a significant role in shaping the perspectives and social interactions of the youth. This trend highlights the potential of podcasts as a tool for educational purposes and community building. The dissertation concludes with recommendations for content creators and policymakers to harness the power of podcasts to engage and educate the youth in Jalandhar effectively.*

Keywords: podcast, listeners, trend, phenomenon, youth

1. Introduction

1.1 What is a Podcast

A podcast is a type of digital media made up of spoken-word audio or video content presented in episodes. It's similar to a radio broadcast, but you can download or stream it whenever you want via the internet. The subjects that podcasts address are immensely diverse and include news, humour, education, real crime, narrative, technology, interviews, and much more.

Podcasts are usually created as series, with new episodes coming out every day, every week, every two weeks, every month, or at another interval. Depending on the format and content, they can last anywhere from a few minutes to many hours. Podcasts can be accessed by listeners via a variety of websites and applications, including Stitcher, Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts, and many more. Users of these platforms can frequently subscribe to the podcasts they like to receive new episodes as soon as they are released.

The accessibility of podcasts is one of their many amazing benefits. They are available for listening on computers, tablets, smart speakers, cellphones, and other internet-enabled devices. Because of its adaptability, podcasts can be listened to while driving, working out, cleaning the house, or anytime you have some spare time to pass. With its ability to give a platform to a wide range of voices and viewpoints, podcasting has grown in importance as a form of contemporary media consumption. Podcasts are produced by a wide range of people and organisations, from small producers operating from their homes to large media corporations with in-house production teams and professional facilities. All things considered, millions of listeners worldwide choose podcasts because they provide an easy, enjoyable, and frequently educational way to interact with a vast range of content.

1.2 Significance of the study

It's critical to understand how young people consume content as digital media continues to develop. This study offers insights into the changing nature of media consumption by illuminating young preferences and behaviours. Knowing that podcasts are becoming more and more popular among young people can help marketers and content developers develop campaigns and strategies. Content providers can increase engagement and reach by customising their work to the interests and listening preferences of younger viewers. Podcast popularity is a reflection of larger social and cultural trends. By examining this phenomenon, we may add to the larger conversation about youth culture and its evolution by understanding how young people interact with current topics, narratives, and discussions.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of a study outline the specific goals or aims that the research seeks to achieve. They provide a clear focus and direction for the study, guiding the research process and informing the methodology. Our research to study the growing trend of podcasts among youth is based on certain objectives:

- To know the awareness and usage of podcasts among the youth population.
- To identify the preferred genres of podcasts among youth.
- To analyze the frequency and duration of podcast consumption among youth.

Hypotheses of the study:

- The most preferred genre of podcast among youth is comedy podcasts.
- The duration of podcast consumption among youth is approx. one hour

Volume 5 Issue 7, July 2017

www.ijser.in

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- Podcaster is a factor that influences the podcast consumption among youth

2. Review of Literature

Podcasting, a term derived from the hybrid of 'iPod' and 'broadcast', refers to audio broadcasts distributed via the Internet. This medium has been around since the era of the audio tutorial movement and the Sony Walkman, as noted by Simonson (n. d.). Despite not being a new technology, the full range of benefits that podcasting can offer, particularly when integrated into higher learning and online classrooms, continues to be explored and discovered.

According to **Gaden (2010)**, podcasters create digital media files which are then uploaded to their websites. Users can either listen to these podcasts directly on the site or download them to an MP3 player or other media listening devices. This flexibility in access and usage has contributed to the growing popularity of podcasts across various demographics.

Simonson (n. d.) identifies several qualities of effective podcasts: they typically represent a single idea that can be communicated verbally, they are often part of a series with interconnected episodes, and they are available in an electronic format that is easily accessible, commonly as an MP3 file. Moreover, these podcasts are stored on websites or other internet locations for easy access and are frequently updated to ensure current relevance.

The ongoing discovery of the benefits of podcasting in educational contexts highlights its potential as a dynamic tool for enhancing learning experiences. As educational institutions and educators continue to integrate podcasts into their curricula, the insights from these early studies by **Simonson and Gaden** provide a foundational understanding of how podcasts can be effectively utilized to support and enrich higher education.

According to **RedSeer's data**, India has 57.6 million estimated monthly podcast listeners, a significant increase from the 71 million recorded in 2020. India now has the third-largest global listener base in the world, behind the United States and China.

According to a **PwC Global Entertainment & Media Outlook report**, by 2023, this figure should increase to 17.61 million.

It has quickly grown to be one of the nation's most varied content-driven sectors. These days, podcasts about queerness and sexuality, as well as many pertaining to many cultural traditions, are available in a number of regional languages.

In the first year of the pandemic, podcast consumption in India climbed by 29.3%, according to **KPMG's Media and Entertainment Report 2020**. The largest music and podcast streaming platform in the world, Spotify, debuted about thirty original podcasts in less than a year with local creators, and JioSaavn, an Indian streaming platform, witnessed a 200-fold increase in content in 2020 over 2019.

According to **KPMG's media and entertainment research from September 2020**, one of the major listening trends

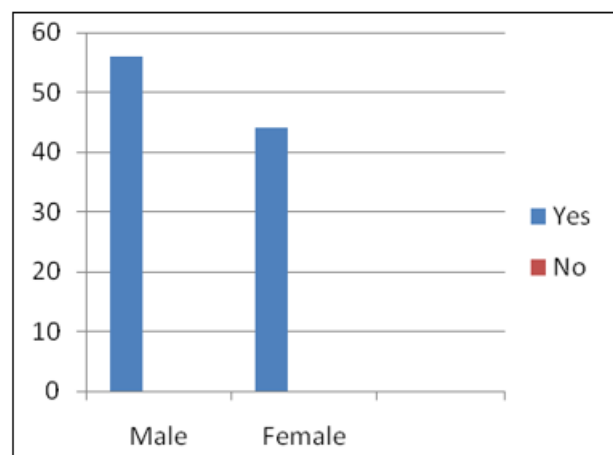
worth keeping an eye on following the pandemic will be podcasts. The company reported that after COVID-19 forced people inside, podcast listening increased by 23%.

According to **YouGov and Spotify survey** in 2021, it revealed that half of Indians preferred to listen to at least one episode of this type of podcast each week.

According to **Edison Research and Triton Digital's Infinite Dial 2021**, there has been a big increase in the number of Americans who listen to podcasts on a weekly basis (28% of them), and the audience's diversity has increased. Thirty percent of Americans now possess a smart speaker, a 22% increase in ownership. The percentage of people owning a smartphone has increased to 88%. TikTok usage increased, especially among the 12-to 34-year-old demographic. Facebook usage has decreased. Additional observations include a rise in the streaming of video games and a decline in driving. The study, which involved conducting telephone interviews with 1, 507 Americans, offers crucial information for comprehending the patterns of digital media consumption.

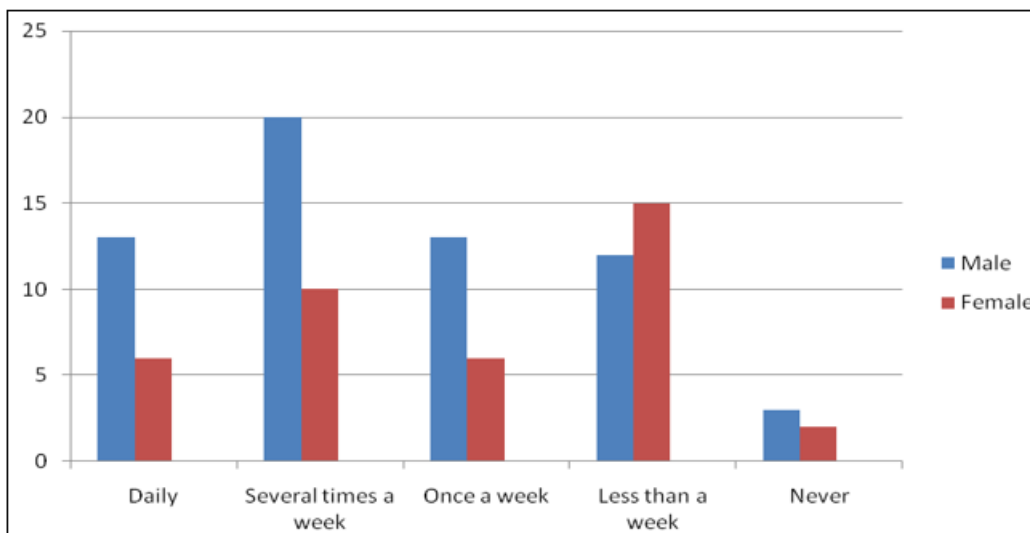
3. Data Analysis and Interpretation

1) Response regarding awareness of podcasts



The research paper investigates the growing trend of podcast consumption among the youth. The study reveals that awareness of podcasts is exceptionally high, with 100% of respondents indicating familiarity with the medium. The gender distribution among those aware of podcasts is relatively balanced, with 56% being male and 44% female. This widespread awareness highlights the pervasive reach and influence of podcasts among young people. The findings underscore the importance of podcasts as a significant and evolving medium for information dissemination, entertainment, and education among the younger demographic.

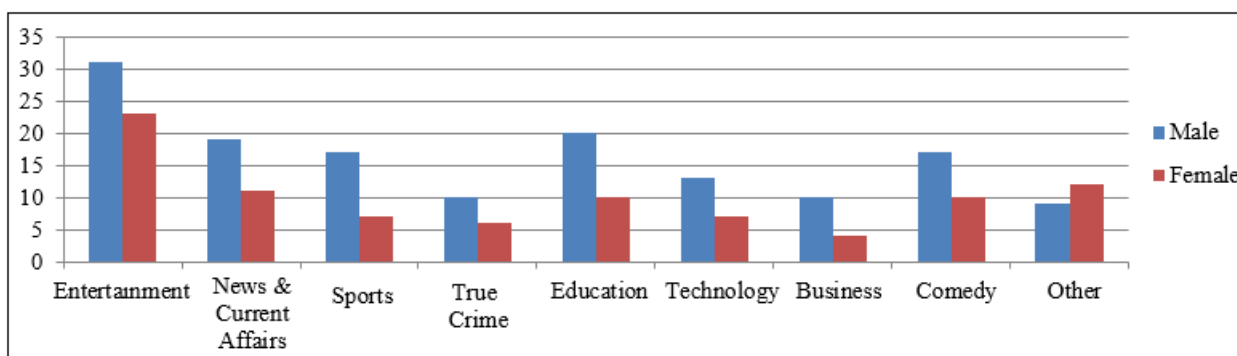
2) Response regarding the frequency of listening to podcast



The survey results on podcast listening frequency among the youth reveal diverse listening habits. The research explores how often young people listen to podcasts, revealing varied listening habits. The data shows that 19% of respondents, including 13 males and 6 females, listen to podcasts every day. 30% of respondents, comprising 20 males and 10 females, tune in to podcasts multiple times throughout the week. 19% of respondents, with 13 males and 6 females, listen to podcasts once a week. 27% of respondents, including 12 males and 15 females, listen to podcasts less frequently than once a week. 5% of respondents, consisting of 3 males and 2 females, reported that they never listen to podcasts.

These findings indicate that while a significant portion of youth engages with podcasts regularly, there is still a substantial number who listen less frequently or not at all. The data also suggests a slight gender difference in listening habits, with males generally listening more frequently than females.

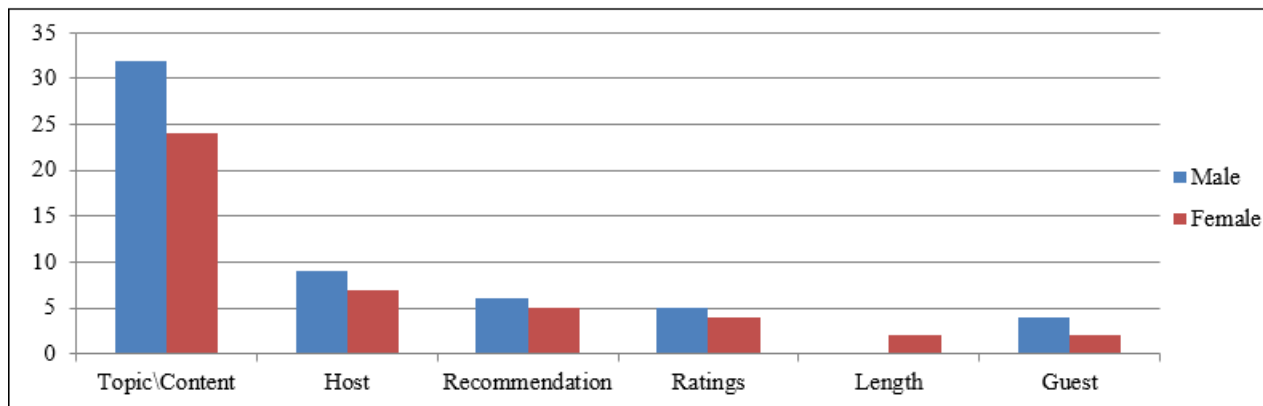
3) Response regarding kind of podcast preferred by the youth the most



The study explored the preferred types of podcasts among respondents, revealing a diverse range of interests, the most popular category, Entertainment, preferred by 54% of respondents, including 31 males and 23 females. The variety of content, from stories and interviews to celebrity gossip and music, appeals to a broad audience seeking fun and engaging content. Chosen by 30% of respondents, with 19 males and 11 females showing interest in News and Current Affairs. Many youth prefer news and current affairs podcasts as they offer a convenient way to stay informed about global and

local events. These findings highlight that entertainment podcasts are the most favored among the youth, followed by a significant interest in news, education, and comedy. The data also reveals gender differences in podcast preferences, with males generally showing higher interest in most categories except for the 'others' category, where females show more interest.

4) Response regarding factors influencing your podcast listening decision



The study examined the factors that influence respondents' decisions to listen to a particular podcast, revealing several key influences:

The majority of respondents, comprising 56%, with 32 males and 24 females are primarily influenced by the topic of the podcast. The subject matter of a podcast plays a crucial role in capturing the interest of listeners, as they seek content that aligns with their personal interests, hobbies, or curiosity about specific topics or themes. A significant portion of respondents, accounting for 16% with 9 male and 7 female, consider the host of the podcast when making their listening decisions. A charismatic or knowledgeable host can enhance the listening experience, providing credibility, rapport, and entertainment value to the content. Some respondents, comprising 11% with 6 male and 5 female, are influenced by recommendations from friends, family, or online sources.

4. Conclusion

Hypothesis 1:

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the hypothesis stating "the most preferred genre of podcast among youth is comedy podcasts" is partially supported but not entirely accurate. While comedy podcasts are indeed popular, with 27% of respondents expressing a preference for this genre, they are not the most preferred among youth. Instead, the most favored genre is Entertainment, chosen by 54% of respondents. This genre encompasses a wide range of content, including stories, interviews, celebrity gossip, and music, appealing to a broad audience seeking fun and engaging content. Additionally, other genres such as News and Current Affairs, Education, and Sports also garnered significant interest among youth, with 30%, 30%, and 24% of respondents respectively expressing preference for these categories. True Crime, Technology, and Business genres also received notable attention from respondents.

Therefore, while comedy podcasts are popular among youth, they are not the sole or most preferred genre. The study reveals a diverse range of interests among youth when it comes to podcast content, indicating that preferences vary widely and are influenced by individual tastes, interests, and informational needs.

Hypothesis 2:

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the hypothesis stating "the duration of podcast consumption

among youth is approximately 2 hours" is not entirely accurate.

The study revealed a diverse range of preferences among youth when it comes to the duration of podcast consumption. While some respondents (55%) reported listening to only one podcast episode in a single session, indicating shorter listening sessions, a significant portion (39%) listened to two to three podcast episodes, suggesting slightly longer sessions. Additionally, smaller percentages of respondents engaged in even longer listening sessions, with 4% listening to four to five episodes and 2% listening to more than five episodes in a single session.

These findings suggest that the duration of podcast consumption among youth varies widely, with preferences ranging from brief sessions to more extensive listening experiences. While some individuals may indeed consume podcasts for approximately 2 hours, as hypothesized, this does not represent the majority of youth listeners. Instead, the study highlights the flexibility and adaptability of podcasts to accommodate diverse listening habits and preferences among youth.

Hypothesis 3:

The hypothesis that "the podcaster is a factor that influences podcast consumption among youth" is supported by the findings of the study, highlighting the multifaceted nature of podcast selection. While the topic of the podcast emerged as the primary influencer, with 56% of respondents citing it as their main consideration, other factors such as the host, recommendations, ratings, length, and guests also played significant roles in guiding listeners' decisions.

The study revealed that a significant portion of respondents (16%) considered the host of the podcast when making their listening decisions. A charismatic or knowledgeable host can enhance the listening experience, providing credibility, rapport, and entertainment value to the content. Recommendations from friends, family, or online sources also influenced the podcast selection process for 11% of respondents, demonstrating the importance of word-of-mouth endorsements in guiding listeners towards podcasts they might otherwise overlook.

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