

# Podcasting in the Post-Broadcast Age: A Systematic Analysis of Transformation, Platformization, and Human Experience

Desmalinda<sup>a,1,\*</sup>, Fatma Nuraini Zahra<sup>b,2</sup>

<sup>a,b</sup> Universitas Islam Indonesia, Jl. Kaliurang Km 14,5 Sleman, Yogyakarta, Indonesia  
<sup>1</sup> desmalinda@uii.ac.id\*; <sup>2</sup> fatma.nuraini@uii.ac.id  
\* Corresponding author

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## ABSTRACT

According to Nielsen, podcast listening in Indonesia grew to over 3.6 million, with weekly episode consumption increasing by 10%. Podcasts have become popular among younger audiences due to their on-demand nature, diverse content, and personalized experience. This study analyzes the global transformation of podcast use between 2019 and 2024 as part of the evolving media landscape in the post-broadcast age. Using a systematic literature review and descriptive-qualitative analysis on 48 articles, the findings reveal that podcasts have developed in an interdisciplinary manner, functioning not only as entertainment but also as tools for education, journalism, the representation of marginalized communities, and platform-based economic strategies. Importantly, podcasts reshape human experience by fostering intimate listening cultures, participatory communities, digital literacy practices, and new forms of socio-cultural engagement. The results highlight the significant social, cultural, and political implications of podcasts, ranging from community empowerment and digital literacy to the challenges posed by the dominance of global platforms. The study suggests the need for policies to establish a regulatory framework that supports the local podcast ecosystem.

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## INTRODUCTION

The post-broadcast age has brought significant changes to the media landscape. In this age, audiences are no longer unified “mass publics” but fragmented, niche, and customizable media users (Andrejevic, 2009). One compelling phenomenon is the rise of podcasts as a popular platform reshaping how the public consumes and produces media. According to a Nielsen report, in 2020, podcast listenership in Indonesia increased by more than 3.6 million, while the average number of episodes listened to per week rose by 10 percent (Setiawan, 2021). Furthermore, We Are Social reports that, in 2023, 40.2% of Indonesian users listened to podcasts each week (Kemp, 2023). This data increased by 12.9% from the previous year. As of January 2025, Indonesia had the highest percentage of podcast listeners in the world, at 42.6% of weekly listeners.

Podcasting was initially developed by Internet entrepreneur and former MTV VJ Adam Curry in 2004. Curry contributed to the development of the software product iPodder, which



facilitated the routing of audio files to digital music players. Unlike conventional radio, podcasting does not broadcast programs linearly because it is an on-demand audio platform (Meisyanti & Kencana, 2020). Podcasting then began entering Indonesia in 2005 through the program *Apa Saja Podcast*. Over the past five years, since it first went on air, podcast content has significantly increased and become much more varied (Sirait, 2021). The emergence of the trend of disseminating audio-on-demand content through Podcasts has created several significant opportunities for users in Indonesia. Specifically, podcasts serve multiple functions: first, as an effective medium for providing information that broadens insights and fosters new perspectives. Secondly, podcasts facilitate the production of increasingly personalized content (Zellatifanny, 2020). Furthermore, podcasts serve as an efficient medium for disseminating audio content and offer substantial monetization opportunities. Functionally, podcasts complement conventional radio while coexisting with video-based platforms. A key technical advantage is that podcasts can be accessed securely and comfortably, with relatively minimal bandwidth requirements.

Podcasts in Indonesia began to develop and attract public attention, particularly in Java, and have potential for use in education, tourism, and other areas of growth (Rafiza & Irwansyah, 2020). The use of podcasts has also expanded into tourism marketing through storytelling, a new way to promote regional tourism in Indonesia (Hutabarat et al., 2023). Similarly, storytelling in comedy-based podcast content is effective for promotion, collaboration, and monetization (Dalila, 2020). In the context of *dakwah* content, podcasts such as the *Login Program* and *Jeda Nulis*, initiated by Habib Husein Ja'far, have shown positive impacts in promoting religious inclusivity by reaching wider audiences (Juhri & Hariani, 2023; Sary et al., 2021). Furthermore, podcasts have also been utilized in journalistic genres, particularly advocacy journalism, where podcast advocacy structures align media perspectives with survivors of child forced marriage, thereby strengthening advocacy journalism practices (Tifani & Rohmadtika, 2024).

Podcasts in Indonesia have also been examined from sociodemographic and user-satisfaction perspectives using the Uses and Gratifications theory and survey methods. Based on data from 394 randomly selected respondents, the findings indicate that podcast users in Indonesia are largely concentrated in major cities such as Jakarta and come from diverse backgrounds. Users reported expectations for entertainment and expressed satisfaction with ease of use and the perceived impact of podcast consumption (Panjaitan, 2021). Similar aspects were identified in a study on the motivations of urban youth in Indonesia to use podcasts, which found that young urban audiences prefer podcasts for their educational, entertainment, storytelling, social engagement, and multitasking benefits. These benefits also demonstrate the potential of podcasts as an educational medium (Stephani et al., 2021).

Podcasts have emerged as a popular cultural phenomenon among younger generations in Indonesia, particularly in urban areas. They are expected to continue growing both globally and nationally, driven by advancements in internet connectivity and smartphone technology (Sirait & Irwansyah, 2021). Although podcasts remain a relatively contemporary object of study, research in the Indonesian context has expanded to examine various aspects, including content dissemination, sociodemographic factors, and popular culture. Based on this literature review, investigating how podcast usage is transforming in the over-the-top era in Indonesia, particularly through approaches that focus on changes in the media landscape and content commodification, presents an important and interesting avenue for further research.

In fact, in developed countries like the United States, podcasts have become a business for the younger generation because the Anchor platform offers a monetization option, allowing podcast creators to apply to place ad slots on their episodes. In the context of Indonesia, the presence of podcasts also opens new spaces for audiences to produce content aligned with their desires and creativity, including monetization opportunities. This phenomenon indicates a shift in media content production standards (Zellatifanny, 2020).

However, no study has systematically reviewed the global podcast transformation, highlighting socio-cultural and industry formation. In terms of media format, podcasts have undergone significant changes and developments, offering a new form of human experience in media consumption, including the transformation of audio content into audiovisual podcasts across diverse platforms.

Furthermore, this study offers a novel contribution by systematically synthesizing global research to reveal how podcast usage evolves across the post-broadcast age. Therefore, this study provides a more comprehensive perspective on contemporary media dynamics. Through discussions of changes in the format, access, and consumption of podcasts, this study aims to analyze how podcast usage is transforming globally in the post-broadcast age, identify the economic and social factors driving this change, and assess its impact on the media industry and human experience.

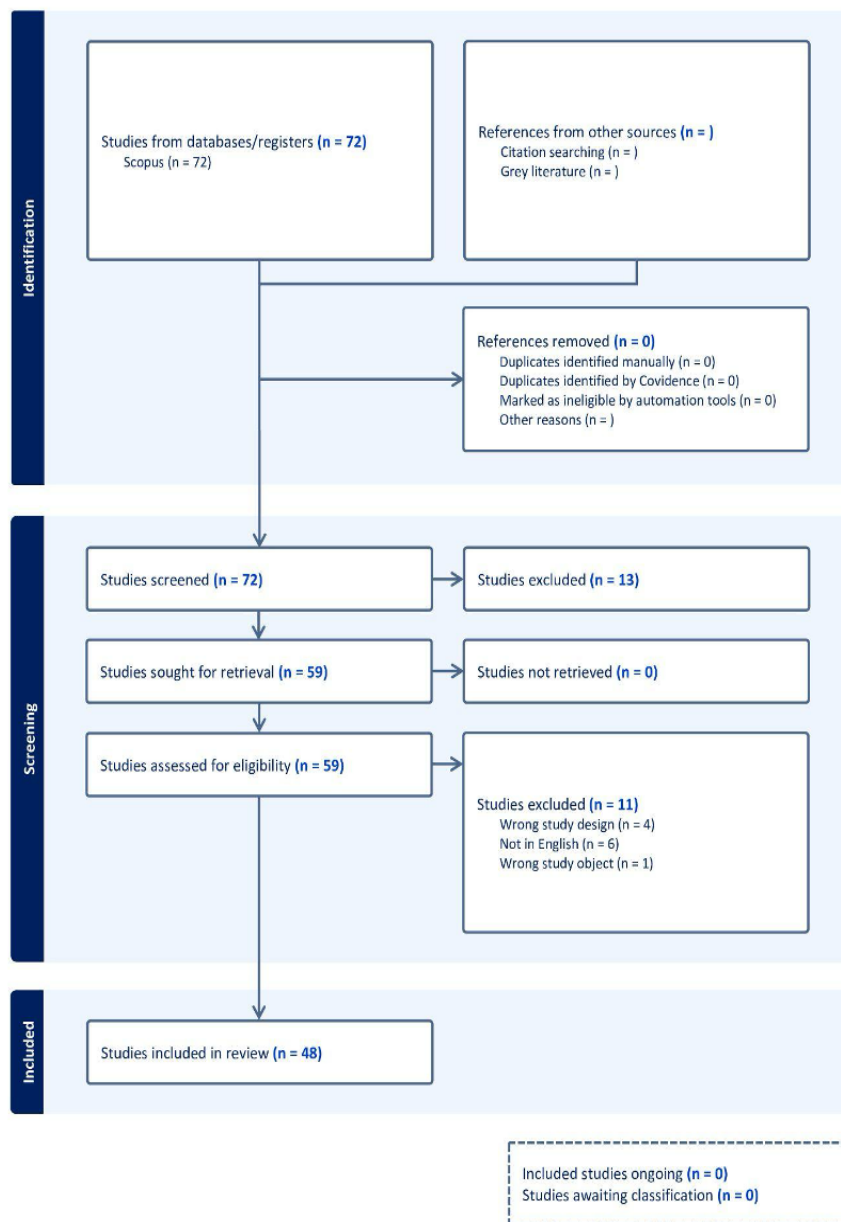
## METHOD

This research employed a systematic literature review (SLR) using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework to select the target journals. PRISMA is a minimum set of evidence-based items for reporting in systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA, 2025). The primary database used in this study is Scopus, chosen due to its extensive coverage of peer-reviewed international publications. The search query used in this study was: [(“podcast” OR “digital audio” OR “audio streaming”) AND (“OTT” OR “over the top” OR “new media”) AND (“transformation” OR “shift” OR “evolution” OR “revolution”) AND (“consumption” OR “adoption” OR “use”)] with a publication period limited from 2019 to 2024. This time frame was selected to capture recent developments in podcast usage and platform transformation in the contemporary digital media environment.

To ensure a systematic selection process, the study applied explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria consist of articles indexed in Scopus, published between 2019 and 2024, written in English, and focusing on podcasts as the primary subject of analysis, particularly on podcast use, audience practices, or digital transformation. Meanwhile, articles were excluded if they were published outside the 2019–2024 period, were non-journal publications, were not written in English, or did not specifically address podcast usage.

The data are selected through 4 phases in PRISMA: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The identification stage, as shown in Figure 1, resulted in 72 articles after applying database filters and access criteria. The article selection and screening stage is then carried out to ensure relevance to this research. The screening process was conducted using the Covidence. Covidence facilitates the collaborative selection of titles, abstracts, and full texts, and records each screening decision transparently, thereby supporting accurate and systematic data extraction.

The article screening stage, as shown in Figure 1, begins with assessing relevance based on titles and abstracts. Based on these criteria and screening, 13 articles were excluded, leaving 59 articles for further screening. The next stage is a review of article eligibility by examining the full text of the articles, including the main content, findings, and recommendations from previous studies, to ensure their relevance and suitability to the discussion of the problem. In this phase, 11 articles were excluded because they did not meet the eligibility criteria, such as not being in English or not focusing on podcasts as the object of study. Thus, based on the number of articles removed, 48 articles were considered eligible for extraction and further analysis (included).



**Fig. 1.** Flowchart of the reviewed article selection process  
Source: Researcher (2025)

All selected articles demonstrate clear research procedures, data collection methods, and analysis, as well as strong research rigor. In addition, these articles analyze the use of podcasts in various contexts, and their findings can contribute significantly. Subsequently, in the included stage, the collected data were extracted using a data extraction form designed to accurately summarize the articles, based on 48 previously validated articles. Each article was thoroughly reviewed, and relevant information was extracted as data and tables across several categories. The collected data categories included publication year, research objectives, country, podcast platforms used, research topics, and research results. These five aspects served as the guide for the research review.

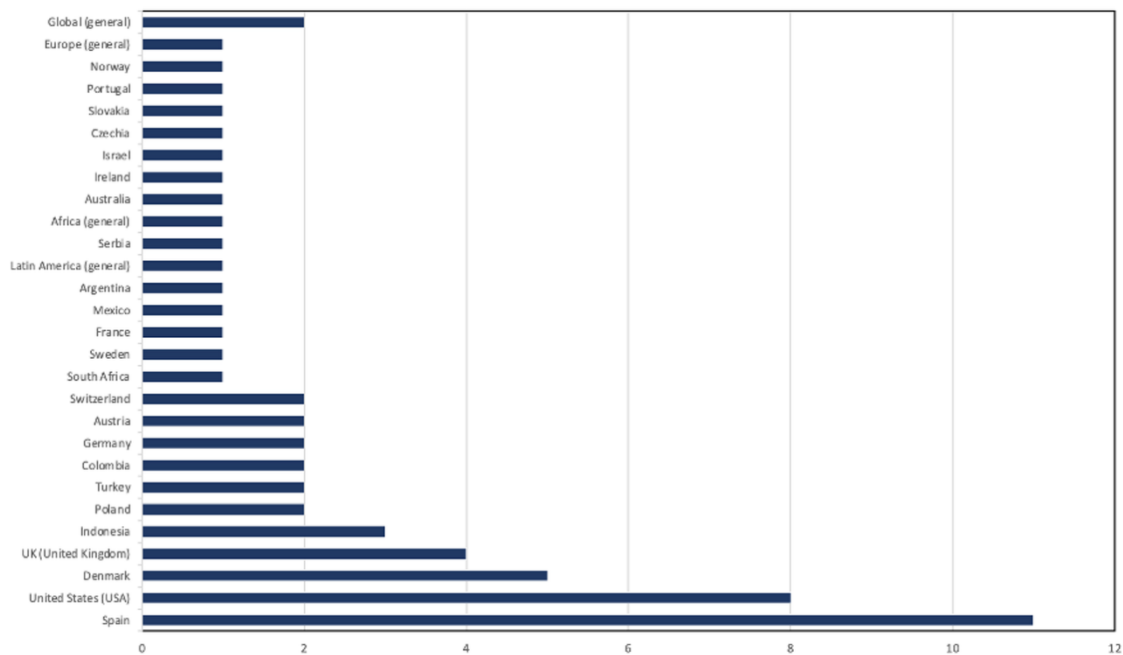
To strengthen the reliability of the selection process, two researchers independently screened articles at the title/abstract and full-text stages using Covidence. Any differences in inclusion decisions were discussed until consensus was reached. If disagreements persisted, the final decision was made through a joint re-evaluation against the predefined

inclusion and exclusion criteria. This procedure was applied to maintain inter-rater consistency and reduce subjective bias during article selection. At the analysis stage, the researcher uses a descriptive-qualitative approach. This process is carried out by interpreting the data and giving it meaning, drawing on previous research on podcasts in Indonesia that have been processed using Covidence, as well as other relevant documents. The researcher describes the phenomenon under study and then relates it to existing theories.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Typology of Podcast Usage in Various Countries

The review of articles using the PRISMA format (N=48) was then analyzed to identify the transformation in podcast media usage in the over-the-top (OTT) era, focusing on the economic and social factors driving this transformation as well as its impact on the media industry and audience behavior. Based on the 48 selected articles, research on podcast usage was most prevalent in Spain, with 11 articles, followed by the United States (USA) with 10. As shown in Figure 2, European countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) had 5 articles, and Denmark and research with an international scope each had 4 articles. Indonesia followed with 3 articles, then Poland, Turkey, and DACH (2 articles), and 1 article from various other countries.



**Fig. 2.** Frequency of research on podcast usage by country  
Source: PRISMA (2025)

The use of podcasts in Spain focuses on adapting traditional media to digital platforms, diversifying business models, and engaging listeners. For example, the radio group Prisa developed the Podium Podcast platform, and other news media and radio stations use podcasts to expand their audience reach and to pursue new monetization models beyond conventional radio (Alonso-Fernández et al., 2022; Martínez-Costa et al., 2022; Sellas & Solà, 2019). Meanwhile, in the United States, podcast usage centers on the podcast ecosystem, which is currently dominated by major platforms, and based on their functions, podcasts are used as media for information, learning, social activism, politics, and personal audience relationships. Sullivan (2019) explained that there has been a shift from podcasting, which was originally open with RSS technology and allowed anyone to

distribute content freely, to being dominated by large platform companies like Apple Podcast and Spotify, which control the ecosystem of podcast distribution, production, and monetization.

**Table 1.** The Classification Based on the Most Commonly Used Platform

Podcast Platform	Frequency	Country
Spotify	15	United States, Spain, Denmark, Turkey, UK, Europe, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Australia, Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Portugal, Norway, Indonesia
Apple Podcasts	11	United States, Spain, Denmark, UK, Sweden, France, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Australia, Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Ireland, Israel
iVoox	5	Spain, Latin America
All platforms	4	UK, US, Global, International Contexts
YouTube	3	Spain, Indonesia
SoundCloud	2	United States, Poland, Czechia, Slovakia
Google Podcasts	2	Spain, Australia, Poland, Czechia, Slovakia
Podium Podcast Website	2	Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia
Podimo	2	Denmark, Spain, USA, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia
Websites	2	Colombia, Poland, Germany, Austria, Switzerland
General Podcast Platforms	2	United States, Ireland
Acast	1	Sweden, Denmark, France, Spain, USA, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia
Binge Audio	1	Sweden, Denmark, France, Spain, USA, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia
Majelan	1	Sweden, Denmark, France, Spain, USA, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia
Overcast	1	Spain
Spreaker	1	Spain
Telegram Podkas Community	1	Spain
Internet Radio Platforms	1	Poland
Audible	1	Spain
Google Music	1	United States
Radio	1	Colombia
Music Distribution Apps	1	Colombia
Digital Sound Platforms	1	Colombia
Open-access podcasts in sport and exercise science	1	UK
Patronite	1	Poland
AMIA.org	1	United States
Stitcher	1	United States
Amazon Music	1	United States
iHeartRadio	1	United States
Museum App	1	Poland, Czechia, Slovakia
Amateur/Start-up Podcasts in the African Mediascape	1	Africa
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	

Source: Primary Data from PRISMA (2025)

Related articles on podcasts in the UK focus on their functional aspects: podcasts are not merely a form of entertainment but also an informal learning medium and a tool for social and environmental activism. Similarly, in Denmark, podcasts serve as a medium of voice for marginalized groups, particularly women, who share their life experiences and challenge social norms that restrict them (Adler-Berg, 2022b). This indicates that podcast use can also be an important tool for social change that cannot be achieved through conventional media. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, podcasts are positioned as an educational medium, such as for digital literacy and religious preaching, as well as the development of podcast content that is relevant to current issues and platform algorithms (Hidayah, 2021; Kurniawan et al., 2024; Saripudin et al., 2023).

Unlike Western countries such as the United States and Spain, where podcast development is oriented toward monetization and platform-based business strategies, podcast usage in Indonesia remains in an early stage, with a stronger emphasis on knowledge dissemination, social values, and community engagement. Furthermore, podcasts in Indonesia serve as alternative spaces for discussing social, cultural, and religious issues connected to everyday life. These differences highlight how podcast development is shaped by local factors, including cultural context and the structure of the media ecosystem, which in Indonesia is still adapting to the dominance of global platforms.

Podcasts have become a popular medium today due to their ease of production and distribution through various platforms. In Indonesia, podcasts began to develop and gain public recognition in 2018, following the emergence of podcast distribution platforms such as Spotify (Meisyanti & Kencana, 2020). This is also in line with the global trend showing that the platform receiving the most attention for podcast use is Spotify. Spotify has become the most popular platform, with 15 articles reviewing it from various parts of the world, followed by Apple Podcasts, as part of the origin of podcasts, with 11 articles focusing on countries in Europe and America. Spain's leading local platform, iVoox, has a discussion frequency of 5 articles; YouTube follows with 3 articles, and the rest include Google Podcasts, SoundCloud, and various other local podcast platforms.

Although new local platforms are emerging, they have yet to compete with giants like Spotify and Apple Podcasts, which dominate globally. This indicates that podcasts, as a medium, have become platformized by these two platforms. The transformation in podcast production, distribution, and monetization processes that depend on major platforms shows that platformization changes how cultural production operates under platform dependence. As mentioned by Nieborg and Poell (van Dijck & Poell, 2015), platforms have made cultural production dependent on a few strong digital platforms and turned cultural commodities into contingent commodities. This dependence on platforms is evident in producers' reliance on them to reach wider audiences, access user preference data, and adhere to rules and policies.

This pattern is reinforced by Sullivan (2019), who identified platform dependence in the United States, particularly with respect to Spotify and Apple Podcasts. Such dependency also extends to monetization practices, as podcasters increasingly must conform to platform rules and subscription-based systems, creating tension between creative freedom and commercial pressures (Adler-Berg, 2021; Adler-Berg, 2022a). In Indonesia, Kurniawan (2024) shows that the success of podcasts on YouTube depends heavily on the relevance of topics trending in society, reflecting how platformization makes commodities contingent. Through podcasts, cultural commodities become modular and continuously adapted using platform data, making them responsive to audience preferences and trends.

### **The Interdisciplinarity of Podcast Studies**

The data presented in Table 2 confirm that podcast studies are interdisciplinary. This statement is a logical consequence of podcasts' nature as a medium. As Marshall McLuhan (1964) stated, 'the medium shapes and controls the scale and form of human association

and action,' meaning that media not only serve as a tool for conveying messages but also shape the way humans interact, think, and act, thereby producing different social, cultural, political, and economic side effects.

**Table 2.** Article synthesis

Author	Research Aim
Sellas (2019)	analyzing the Podium Podcast project as a case of creative freedom, flexibility, and innovation beyond the constraints of traditional radio.
Sullivan (2019)	Investigating the historical development of podcasting and how technological, economic and institutional platforms have shaped its ecosystem.
García-Marín (2020)	Identifying the factors that influence engagement in podcasting as an interactive digital medium.
Makina (2020)	Identifying the types of podcasts developed to achieve students' learning objectives.
Barrios-Rubio (2021)	Understanding the consumption patterns of adolescents and youth in Colombia concerning radio, music, and podcasts, and the reasons for their use.
Adler-Berg (2021)	Exploring the tension between creativity and commercialization among independent podcasters on paid platforms.
Shaw & McNamara (2021)	Exploring the attitudes and reasons of practitioners for listening to open-access sports science podcasts.
Hidayah (2021)	Exploring the motives for podcast use for religious outreach (dakwah) and its effectiveness in disseminating religious messages.
Adler-Berg (2022a)	Exploring the experience of independent podcasters shifting to paid subscription platforms.
Adler-Berg (2022b)	Investigating how independent female podcasters in Denmark challenge social and cultural norms.
Dowling et al. (2022)	Examining the use of exclusive language by right-wing podcasters to delegitimize journalism.
Carvajal et al. (2022)	analyzing the phenomenon of daily news podcasts from the perspective of strategy and business models.
Doliwa (2022)	analyzing the role of internet radio and podcasts as alternative media to mainstream outlets in Poland.
Özel (2022)	Examining the factors behind podcast popularity in Turkey and the role of Spotify in user adoption.
Caro-Castaño & Hurtado (2022)	analyzing the engagement strategy of the podcast <i>Estirando el chicle</i> and its relation to parasociality.
Mulki & Ormsby (2022)	Examining how the podcast BGC amplifies the voice of marginalized groups and drives social-environmental change.
Tobin & Guadagno (2022)	Identifying dispositional factors that influence podcast listening habits and their impact.
Jones & Morris (2022)	Investigating whether podcasts and popular music compete in the audio market, and the implications for the industry.
Smalley et al. (2022)	Investigating the influence of natural soundscapes on psychological recovery, motivation, and personal memory.
García-Marín (2022)	Describing the origins and early development of the first podcast community in Spain.
Mañas-Pellejero & Paz (2022)	analyzing podcast fandom in Europe and its differences from general audiences.
Pérez-Alaejos et al. (2022)	Identifying the role of digital podcast platforms in structure, production, and marketing.
Martínez-Costa et al. (2022)	analyzing the use of podcasts by digital-native media in Spain within journalistic products.
Alonso-Fernández et al. (2022)	Explaining the evolution of podcasts as on-demand distribution and its impact on Spanish radio.
Rime et al. (2022)	Defining podcasts through their origins, evolution, and new designs without altering the essence of the medium.
García-Estévez & Cartes Barroso (2022)	Analyzing branded podcast trends and proposing a new classification framework.
Fernandes & Morais (2022)	Understanding the potential of audio NFTs and their relation to podcast production, distribution, and business.

Author	Research Aim
Heiselberg & Have (2023)	Identifying listeners' expectations of podcast hosts and their influence on the listening experience.
Saripudin et al. (2023)	Designing and evaluating podcast-based learning media to enhance digital literacy.
Karathanasopoulou & Williams (2023)	Examining podcasts as a feminist medium for revealing trauma and conducting activism.
Mustafić & Tufan (2023)	analyzing podcast audiences in Turkey and Serbia while taking into account socio-cultural diversity.
Harrison et al. (2023)	Investigating the influence of environmental context on podcast listener engagement.
Shamburg et al. (2023)	Exploring adult informal learning through podcasts.
Royston (2023)	To analyze how African podcasts embody new orality and reshape media cultures.
Katzenberger et al. (2023)	To gain insights into news podcasters in the DACH region: profiles, roles, and values.
Rime et al. (2023)	To explore how creators produce podcasts and use personalization for innovation.
López-Villafranca (2023)	To analyze video podcasts on Spotify Spain, focusing on Gen Z audience behavior.
Rae & Diprose (2024)	To investigate how rural women use podcasts to tell stories, build communities, and gain capital.
Caoilte et al. (2024)	To explore listeners' experiences of mental health-related podcasts.
Kurniawan et al. (2024)	To analyze Indonesian YouTube podcasters' strategies for audience engagement.
Artiles-Rodríguez et al. (2024)	To assess the effectiveness of podcasts as a didactic strategy in higher education.
Katzenberger & Keil (2024)	To explore profiles, practices, and role perceptions of podcasters globally.
Sharon & John (2024)	To explore how podcasters imagine and address their audience, shaping intimacy and relationships.
Mikuláš et al. (2024)	To investigate the role of podcasts as a strategic tool for museums in Poland, Slovakia, and Czechia.
Acton et al. (2024)	To understand the influence of edutainment podcasts on equine owners' husbandry decisions.
Williams et al. (2024)	To describe the expansion of a women-focused podcast (WIA) into a broader inclusivity (FYI Podcast).
Paisana et al. (2024)	To examine how Spotify's podcast ranking system reflects algorithmic curation and discovery.
Colbjørnsen (2024)	To analyze Spotify's exclusive licensing deal with The Joe Rogan Experience and its implications.

Source: Primary Data from PRISMA (2025)

In the context of this study, podcasts are understood not merely as audio distribution channels but as media that shape audiences' everyday mediated experiences. The findings in Table 3 demonstrate that podcast usage extends across multiple social and institutional domains. The most prominent theme is platformization and business strategies, indicating that podcasts are closely linked to platform economies, monetization practices, and evolving market dynamics. This is followed by their role as educational tools, in which podcasts serve as media for both formal and informal learning. In addition, podcasts play an important role in fostering audience engagement and community building, as reflected in listener interaction, participatory culture, and the formation of online communities. Podcasts also serve as spaces for identity expression, representation, and activism, particularly for marginalized groups and community empowerment. At the same time, podcasts are increasingly integrated into journalistic practices and broader media ecosystems, reflecting the changing relationship between traditional and digital audio media.

**Table 3.** The Classification of Research Themes Based on Their Type of Use

Podcast Usage	Description	Frequency
Educational & Learning Tool	Podcasts as a medium for formal/informal learning, edutainment, professional training, digital literacy, and science communication	11
Audience Engagement & Community Building	Podcasts as a medium to strengthen engagement, parasocial relationships, fandom, and user participation in digital spaces	10
Phantomization & Business/Market Strategies	Podcasts integrated into the platform economy (Spotify, Podimo, Apple, etc.), monetization models, branded podcasts, and new business models	12
Identity, Representation & Activism	Podcasts as voices for marginalized groups, feminist spaces, activism, religious outreach, or community empowerment	9
Journalism & Media Ecosystems	Podcasts as a medium for journalism, alternative media, cultural ecosystems, and their relationship with radio/music	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>48</b>

Source: Primary Data from PRISMA (2025)

In this sense, podcasts influence how audiences make sense of themselves and their social worlds in everyday life, with effects that extend across educational, cultural, political, and economic spheres. These practices also reflect the effects of podcasts that reach various spheres, so analyses of them cannot be limited to a single academic discipline. Maulianza et al. (2022) argue that new media offer several advantages, including multimedia capability, speed, immediacy, flexibility, wide reach, and interactivity. These characteristics demonstrate how digital media drive changes in the ways media institutions produce and distribute content across multiple platforms. Such adaptation is undertaken to align with increasingly mobile, on-demand, and participatory audience habits. As a form of new media, podcasts not only transform patterns of information consumption but also influence media industry strategies, the dynamics of the creative economy, and the formation of listener communities. At the same time, podcasts expand opportunities for social representation and socio-cultural engagement. This development underscores the need to examine podcast phenomena through multiple perspectives.

### Interpretation of Podcast Content Trends from 2019 to 2024

According to Marshall (1964), the law of retrieval suggests that new media revive older functions in improved forms. In podcasts, the auditory function of radio reappears as a more interactive, personal medium suited to digital audiences. This aligns with Permatasari (2020), who argues that media shifts do not eliminate older forms but allow them to adapt by redefining their functions within contemporary contexts. As shown in Table 4, podcast content from 2019 to 2024 underwent a significant transformation, evolving from entertainment and education into spaces for participation, digital activism, and platformization.

This aligns with MacKenzie and Wajcman's (1999) view that the same technology can produce different effects depending on the historical and cultural context in which it is used. In other words, although podcasts are technically still based on auditory functions like the radio, the sociocultural implications they generate will differ because they emerge in the post-broadcast age, amid the complex dynamics of economic, political, and cultural factors in each country, as previously explained.

**Table 4.** Trends in Podcast Content from 2019 to 2024

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Definition and ecosystem of podcasts as a medium	Podcasts as a learning and engagement medium	Practical uses (edutainment, religious outreach, training) and business-model experiments	Podcasts as social spaces, activism, and digital journalism	Intimacy, trauma, regional context, and digital education	Platformization, institutions, Gen Z, and community empowerment

Source: Primary Data from PRISMA (2025)

In 2019, studies on podcasts began to be widely understood as a new medium, distinct from traditional radio, characterized by flexible creativity mediated by technology platforms. Research during this period focused more on defining what a podcast is, its distinctive characteristics, and how its ecosystem is formed (Sellas & Solà, 2019b; Sullivan, 2019). From the beginning, podcasts were seen as a space for content innovation, allowing producers to break away from the constraints of linear broadcast radio formats. This perspective emphasizes that podcasts are not merely “radio on the internet,” but a medium with unique governance in distribution, production, and consumption. As Sellas (2019) stated, podcasts, particularly through “podium” platforms, demonstrate that the limitations of traditional radio can be overcome through opportunities for creative experimentation and the inherent flexibility that characterizes podcast platforms.

Entering 2020, the research focus shifted to the use of podcasts in education, combined with digital technology. This year, studies highlighted two main characteristics. First, podcasts began to be positioned as edutainment media that not only transfer knowledge but also encourage interactivity and emotional engagement from listeners. For example, Garcia-Marin (2020) emphasized how podcasts, with their transmedia nature and amateur characteristics, can create a sustainable dynamic of connection between creators and listeners. Second, podcasts are understood as a means capable of bridging formal and informal learning (Makina, 2020), expanding access to digital literacy, and introducing new learning methods that are contextual to the needs of the digital generation. The pandemic context further underscores this relevance, as the need for distance-learning media has increased sharply, making podcasts a flexible, easily accessible alternative that can adapt to students' learning pace. Thus, 2020 marked an important phase in the transition of podcasts from merely an entertainment medium to a more practical educational one.

Then in 2021, podcasts increasingly expanded their use as a means of edutainment, religious preaching, and even a space for monetization experiments. As research by Shaw (2021) shows, podcasts serve as an alternative medium for disseminating knowledge that is difficult to access through traditional academic channels. An example in this study is open-access sport science podcasts, which provide flexible and authentic information for sports practitioners (such as coaches, nutritionists, and gym owners). With their mobile and audio-based nature, these podcasts allow listeners to learn while engaging in other activities. Meanwhile, the presence of paid platforms, such as Spotify (Global), Podimo (Denmark), Patronite (Poland), Overcast (Spain), and Noice (Indonesia), has sparked discussions about the tension between creativity and commercialization. Berg (2021a) highlights how independent podcasters face dilemmas in balancing creative autonomy with economic needs within subscription platform ecosystems. This phenomenon indicates that 2021 marked a critical point when podcasts were no longer seen solely as a medium of expression but also as part of the digital platform economy.

In 2022, research highlighted the diversification of podcast functions, including their role in activism, fandom formation, and digital journalism (Mañas-Pellejero & Paz, 2022; Özel, 2022). Podcasts serve a strategic function not only as a means of scientific education but also as a transformative medium that promotes ecological awareness (ecoliteracy) and equitable sustainability (Mulki, 2022). Through audio narratives, podcasts also serve as

catalysts for building listeners' collective imagination and encouraging more inclusive social movement actions. This year, podcasts have also begun to be used as an audio-based marketing medium because they allow brands to remain consistently present in listeners' daily lives, a phenomenon Garcia-Estevez (2022) refers to as branded content. In line with Orrantia's (2019) findings, investing in podcast storytelling is not merely about content production but about building an emotional connection between the brand and the target audience. Podcasts are no longer seen as a supporting medium but as a primary medium for articulating brand image and strengthening its position in the public sphere. In other words, podcasts are increasingly being positioned not only as an entertainment medium but also as a strategic tool for public communication.

Research trends in 2023 show a sharp shift compared to previous periods. The focus of research is no longer solely on technical dimensions, business strategies, or platform adoption; it now emphasizes identity, intimate experiences, feminism, and the representation of marginalized communities. Studies in 2023 show that podcasts function as more than a new media format, creating spaces for representation, intimacy, and cultural connection. Karathanasopoulou (2023) highlights podcasts as a feminist medium for discussing trauma and bodily experiences that are often neglected in mainstream spaces, while Royston (2023) emphasizes podcasts in Africa as a form of new orality that links digital practices with oral traditions. Heidelberg (2023) further shows that host quality shapes listening experiences and strengthens intimacy between podcasters and audiences. Overall, these findings indicate that podcasts increasingly serve as safe spaces where individuals and communities share stories, build networks, and challenge dominant narratives, particularly for marginalized groups.

Entering 2024, research highlights the increasing strength of platformization, particularly the dominance of Spotify, Apple, and YouTube (Colbjørnsen, 2024). Video podcasts have also emerged as a new format favored by Generation Z, combining community, advertising, and content innovation (López-Villafranca, 2023). Meanwhile, podcasts also facilitate the growth of mental health literacy by providing accessible, reflective language and can help develop a deeper sense of self-compassion (Caoilte et al., 2024). In addition, community empowerment and the representation of marginalized voices are increasingly receiving attention (Mikuláš et al., 2024).

The transformation of podcasts shows that digital media do not develop linearly as mere technological innovations, but shift in function according to society's social, cultural, and economic needs. This suggests that the main value of podcasts lies not in their audio form itself, but in their ability to create intimate, personal relationships that fit the mobile rhythms of digital life. At the same time, this development reveals how an initially open space for expression has become increasingly shaped by platform logic, algorithms, and commercialization, in which creativity operates alongside demands for visibility and monetization. Yet podcasts have also become alternative spaces for groups underrepresented in mainstream media to construct narratives, build communities, and forge new forms of solidarity. In this sense, podcasts represent the paradox of contemporary media: they expand opportunities for the democratization of voices and experiences, while simultaneously becoming more dependent on global digital power structures that shape the distribution of public attention.

## CONCLUSION

Post-broadcast age brings podcasts into an interdisciplinary medium that goes beyond entertainment, taking on strategic roles in education, journalism, community-building, and the digital economy. Their development demonstrates that podcasts are not merely alternative audio channels but rather an integral part of the global media ecosystem, influencing social, cultural, and political practices. Furthermore, the results of this study highlight that podcast development is closely linked to broader processes of media

convergence and platformization, which influence how content is produced, distributed, and consumed. This study carries implications for knowledge across various fields. Academically, scholarship on podcasts underscores the importance of cross-disciplinary approaches to understand the dynamics of content, audiences, and platforms. Socially, podcasts serve as effective participatory spaces for building communities, enhancing the representation of marginalized groups, and improving digital literacy and public health. From an economic-political perspective, the dominance of global platforms highlights issues of digital sovereignty and the sustainability of local content ecosystems.

This study offers recommendations for future research on developing comparative cross-national studies to understand how cultural and political factors influence podcast usage and its impacts, as well as its integration with social media and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. In addition, to achieve a deep examination, podcast research demands analyses that incorporate diverse academic perspectives to understand its role and transformation comprehensively. Considering current media convergence efforts by the Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI), the country needs to design regulatory frameworks that support the local podcast ecosystem, prevent it from becoming entirely dependent on global platforms, and encourage the sustainability of educational and representative content. This can be achieved through incentives for local content production, support for distribution, and the strengthening of independent creators' capacity.

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