ANALYZING THE EFFECT OF CENSORSHIP ON THE TOPICS DISCUSSED IN EGYPTIAN PODCASTS

Pegrum Bratcher, Hatem Tegan and Nigmatullina Shamsunovna

Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Al-Alsun and Mass Communication, Misr International University 2023, Cairo, Egypt

Abstract: This study contributes to understanding podcasting and alternative media in the context of Egypt. The study investigates the relationship between limited censorship on podcasts and the rise of youth podcast listeners. The study employs the Uses and Gratifications theory to hypothesize a correlation between the two variables, with a focus on exploring preferred topics, genres, format, length, and platform. Using in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of two students aged between 18 and 24 from Misr International University, the study finds that Apple podcasts were perceived as the platform with the most options and praises podcasts for their mobility and ease of use. The study also analyzes the impact of three popular Arabic podcasts that discuss censored or taboo topics.

Keywords: Podcasting, Alternative media, Censorship, Taboos, Uses and Gratifications theory, Egyptian youth, Qualitative methodology, In-depth interviews.

1. INTRODUCTION

Podcasts are a new type of media that has emerged recently as a modernized version of radio or, as some call it, "radio on-demand." Nowadays, listening instead of watching or reading can be an extremely convenient way to consume stories or information while engaging in other activities such as work, chores, studying, or hobbies. Podcasts, along with other types of content such as social media and YouTube, can be referred to as alternative media.

Alternative media is defined as media sources that are separate or divergent from established and dominant media types such as television, radio, and newspapers. Podcasts, social media, and YouTube are considered alternative media as they are independent and give a chance to marginalized groups to have a voice. They differ from the dominant media in content, production, and distribution.

Anyone with a voice recorder and an internet connection can produce podcasts. With podcasts, anyone can express their thoughts or air their opinions on social or political matters. Podcasts can be used for stand-up comedy, storytelling, teaching school subjects, raising awareness of social issues, or educating the growing generations about medical topics such as gynecology, ADHD, and depression, as well as many other psychological and mental disorders.

In the past, some topics were not accepted in conversations due to social norms, let alone in the media. Some negative behaviors that were rarely questioned in the past are being tackled in podcasts, which play a role in the shift from narrow-mindedness to broad-mindedness in Egyptian society. Egypt - a conservative society in a developing world - started to accept discussing some matters raised by the new generations that were forbidden to discuss in public before. Censorship in podcasts is seen to be limited as many podcasters discuss topics such as sex education, narrow-minded traditions and manners in dealing with others, negative behaviors in public places, cultural alienation, and class discrimination. In this paper, the researchers will examine how podcasts are an alternative medium that transcends the boundaries of censorship and societal and cultural taboos.

Through the lens of censorship and social taboos, the study analyzes the content of three prominent Arabic podcasts: 'Elissa The Podcast,' 'KefayaBaaa,' and 'The Mother Being.' These podcasts discuss topics that were previously censored or taboo, and the researchers will examine their impact on a sample of active listeners of Egyptian youth using in-depth interviews.

As for the theoretical framework, the Uses and Gratification theory is appropriate for this research because young people are disconnected from modern broadcast radio and usually seek out new forms of audio consumption online or ways to choose their music over the radio. The researchers aim to investigate the preferences of podcasts in Egypt, in terms of genre and topics most desired, as well as shed light on the difference between podcast and radio as an experience for the listeners and how they perceive it as a medium.

2. LITERATURE REVIEWBACKGROUND OF PODCASTS AS A MEDIUM

Podcasts are audio recordings that can be found online, streamed or downloaded to portable media devices such as computers or smartphones. Journalist Ben Hammersley is credited with coining the term in 2004 to describe a new phenomenon he was reporting on (Lewis E. MacKenzie, 2018). Since then, podcasts have become increasingly popular, thanks in part to the arrival of iPhones and iTunes in 2005, which included a podcast application that simplified accessing and distributing podcasts. The dissemination of these media files in a digital format is called podcasting (Chen & Melon, 2017).

Initially, podcasting was conceptualized similarly to radio, which was defined as a solely auditory medium with no visual identity (D. Hancock and L. McMurtry, 2018). However, radios are more difficult to get into and require equipment, editing, and organization to produce and broadcast. They do not offer many communication opportunities with hosts and are not as accessible to everyone. In a world ruled by mobile applications, going to a website to listen to the radio is less convenient than playing an episode repeatedly whenever suitable on an audio application. It is like radio on-demand, much like Netflix is a video-ondemand, and audio streaming firms planned to do to radio shows what Netflix did to TV shows (Guedes, 2019).

Podcasts can often be recordings of a conversation between a host and a guest speaker or a single monologue of a person sharing their thoughts on a particular topic, concept, event, or media
(Nigmatullina, 2019). Podcasting can require as little as just a digital voice recorder and software to upload the recordings onto a suitable web page. Thus, the basic technology is cheap, easy to use, and portable (Bartle et al., 2021).

The flexibility of listening and the relative lack of editorial and formal scrutiny in the production position podcasts as a different, more radical, and more culturally urgent medium than other media. No matter how deep or obscure someone's interests are, there will be a podcast for them, and there is little to nothing that

can stop them from starting their podcast. Podcasting culture thus manages to be both personal and communal, thanks to the active choice the listener has to exercise and the modes of consumption, whether through headphones, a stereo system, car speakers, or other modes. In the end, it is a one-on-one experience chosen by the user (D. Llinares et al., 2014).

When choosing a podcast to follow, the audience handpicks the content that interests them. The two-way communication that podcasts offer is much more attainable and flowing than radio, which could be more inflexible. With comments and shared lives, the audience can connect with the podcaster and even participate in podcast discussions. Some podcasts may be based on this type of communication in the first place, where each episode is with a bulk of the audience on a public matter. Podcasts are also more portable, flexible, and accessible than the radio as they only require an internet connection. There are podcasts on YouTube, Anghami, Spotify, and Apple Music on every smartphone, and they only need a little effort or equipment to produce. Anyone can produce a podcast with a recorder and a platform of choice. It is the most basic and raw way, and it works.

According to podcastinsights.com, 80% of podcast consumers listen to most of each podcast episode and follow seven shows per week on average. Compared to music listeners, podcast listeners are more loyal, affluent, educated, and have a higher purchasing power (Guedes, 2019). Podcasts offer a serial production, which some audio scholars see as fitting for fictional thrillers and describe Serial as consisting of parts that break down to form the spine of a structure that audio dramatists can use. Podcasting is found to be a viable alternative platform for content creators and storytellers, especially. It plays with the human aspect of storytelling and gossip, making listening to a podcast very similar to listening to a friend tell a story. When listening to stories and thrillers during the day, the indulging experience leads a listener to care about what is happening. They want to listen to the whole story before leaving the podcast episode (D. Hancock and L. McMurtry, 2018).

There is a need to produce and upload podcast episodes at a pace where people remember what is happening. However, at the same time, some scholars believe that the consistency of traditional public radio needs to be updated. An inconsistent release schedule is similar to what happens in the real world with telling and hearing stories. Podcasting is a fast production, and free distribution processes are pivotal to the narrative, allowing a story to be updated and diverted at any minute and enabling a more immersive and interactive narrative than traditional media might allow nowadays (D. Hancock and L. McMurtry, 2018).

It was noted in a paper that studied two Brazilian podcasts that there was an increase in listeners over the years, possibly due to internet popularization and the rapid increase in mobile phones. The scientific content was found to be uninvestigated, despite the public's great interest. Amusing and informal podcasts were the most appealing to the public, and they usually listened to them on informal sites (Wentzel et al., 2018).

Podcasting removes global barriers to reception and capitalizes on its strengths; mobility, intimacy, and ease of use. These features introduce a scenario where audiences are producers, where the technology we already have takes on new roles and where audiences, cut off from traditional media, rediscover their voices and gain them back in alternative media (Berry, 2006).

The Uses of Podcasting in Education, Health and Politics

The learner control and flexibility that podcasting provides are considered the most obvious ways in which it can support constructive learning. A growing body of evidence suggests that experimenting with podcasting tools and technologies is pedagogically fruitful for both learners and teachers. Podcasting offers learners and teachers flexibility and control, as well as opportunities for learner motivation, clarity of instruction, novelty,

engagement, widening of learning locations, engagement with dialogue, and collaboration around opportunities for learners to get involved in the construction of learning for others by creating their podcasts (Kidd, 2011).

A lecturer can also give students more control by recording a lecture and making it available for download. The lecture can be listened to when the learner is most receptive, and they can repeat it again if they feel inclined (Seitzinger, 2006).

One study aimed to identify and develop teaching strategies and resources suited to large science classes, such as the creation by students of new media like podcasts. There is considerable potential to link new media with modern learner-centered pedagogical approaches, where students learn through active engagement with content and with peers. Moreover, new media was found to have increasing relevance professionally and engage university students in authentic tasks and work-integrated learning. Podcasts were found to be used more frequently in education. For example, learning complex subjects by listening to an educational podcast on YouTube or Spotify proved to have positive results for students. At a large university, creating a three-minute podcast about a fundamental chemistry concept was set as a minor assignment. According to an anonymous class survey, students considered this assignment a positive educational experience (Bartle et al., 2010).

Warren Kidd's study suggested a pedagogical model to help listeners/learners receive their information. The model was quite similar to the structure and format of any podcast, not just an educational one. The model is as follows:

- Recording short files works best (between 3 and 8 minutes), making it easier to retain the attention of learners/ listeners.
- Announcing the program/context at the very start of each podcast is crucial.
- It helps to inform listeners of the nature of the audio if three or four keywords are identified at the start of each podcast, which is then picked up and used/developed through the recording to 'locate' the content for the listener.
- The frequent use of the technique of counting and summarizing points provides a means to locate the audience within the audio.
- Recordings can adopt the specialist language and give time for the definition of this language and its deconstruction through the recordings.
- Each podcast recording can be recapped at the end using the keywords mentioned in its

introduction. (Kidd, 2011)

In higher education, podcasts offer portability, flexibility, convenience, and the possibility of listening anywhere at any time. They also facilitate multitasking while on the move, especially with easy Internet access. Applications like Spotify offer the chance to listen to an episode repeatedly and control playback speed. Podcasts are convenient for learners and enthusiasts as they offer free content that can be tailored to the listener's needs. With the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, learning shifted to be more digitally inclined, and podcasts helped a lot in the learning process as they enhanced services to distance and online students (Fernandez et al., 2015).

Based on the taxonomy developed by Carvalho et al. in 2008, podcasts could be classified into four types: informative, where the speaker teaches different concepts, presents analyses, descriptions of tools or equipment, readings of excerpts/poems, and so forth; feedback/comments, where the teacher provides feedback on students' assignments and group work; guidelines, in which the speaker/teacher states the

guidelines for fieldwork and practical work; and recommendations about studying, group dynamics, and reflective learning. Authentic materials, such as interviews, news, and radio programming, can be used as examples or references for specific subjects (Fernandez et al., 2015).

Many learning institutions integrating podcasting into their education system have reported positive results. These reports can be credited to the ease of producing and consuming podcasts and how educational podcasts improve the students' learning experience. Many advantages of podcasting in education have been found, even though podcasts are mainly characterized as on-demand internet radio talks.

With podcasts, a listener can pick and choose the content and style that fits their particular lesson or study material, and it could range from fictional stories to educational and inspirational TED talks, current events/world news to history, sports to pop culture/entertainment, as well as investigative journalism. Using an array of styles and structures from different podcasts can help a teacher keep their teaching method in class fresh and engaging, and podcasts can also expose students to a wide variety of communication styles, including narration, casual dialogue, scripted dialogue, and interviews. In addition, there is the possibility of featuring diverse subjects and materials to keep a class exciting and give students access to a whole world of knowledge and wisdom. Podcasts can provide new subject material with traditional textbooks that were not an option (Nigmatullina, 2019).

As for the use of podcasts in health and well-being, the ability of digital communication to improve clinical practice is quite promising. Given their popularity and growing nature, podcasts will continue to play a significant role in interactions with students, peers, and patients. Podcasts are a rapidly growing social media phenomenon in medicine, with roots in critical care and increasingly spreading to other fields. There has been a steady but considerable spread of podcast use in gynaecology, aided by social media platforms' quick rise in popularity and the benefits of accessibility, universality, and portability (Chen & Melon, 2017).

An intriguing aspect of constructive learning is the possibility of social presence or online social engagements and connections with fellow learners and an instructor or expert. According to the University of Southern Queensland, it can affect the quality and quantity of contact, enthusiasm, and involvement. However, it was easier to form connections online than in a classroom (Seitzinger, 2006).

One study showed that developing and promoting health and research-related podcasts is practical. They also stated that more research is necessary to identify the best ways to develop and promote medical educational podcast sessions to maximize audience reach. Understanding audience segmentation stimulates co-learning and helps grow the knowledge of community members, healthcare practitioners, or researchers. For instance, Free Open Access Medical education (FOAM) often uses podcasts. The FOAM movement has shifted the way healthcare practitioners communicate with each other and serves as a supplement to traditional pedagogical methods to grow medical students' knowledge. In addition, using social media platforms like podcasts promotes the translation of evidence-based medicine to the medical community to increase knowledge (Balls-Berry et al., 2018).

Using self-reported data from an internally collected survey of 10,089 subscribers to The Curbsiders, Justin Berk and his colleagues found that approximately 38% identified as internists, specialists, faculty, or posttraining physicians; 23% as residents or fellows; 20% as advanced practitioners such as physician assistants or nurse practitioners and 15% identified as students. Podcast audiences also extend across the spectrum of practitioners, educators, and trainees. Whether formally or informally, podcasting will undoubtedly become a key component of medical education. As more clinician educators adopt this approach, robust research should be conducted to determine how and when they may best be employed to

improve learner outcomes. More research is needed to see how podcasts may be tailored for information retention while benefiting the hidden curriculum. Clinician educators must be included in the discussion to build on what has already been accomplished and determine how to assess resources in the future critically (Berk et al., 2019).

Many researchers have studied the use of podcasts in politics. In 2012, South Korea finalized a presidential election that displayed a high level of political participation through podcast-based internet use and smartphone access. Podcasts and social media were top-rated regarding politics and social participation. 'NaneunGgomsuda' (NGS) is a podcast ranked first among Korean-speaking users for political participation (Koo et al., 2014). This vital podcast is growing fast in popularity and acts as an alternative to traditional media in political and societal conversations. Those who understand Korean politics and the language worldwide can access this program, regardless of time or geographical location (Koo et al., 2014). Koo and their colleagues described the new phenomenon of podcast media that discusses social and political issues as having an overall favorable and productive result (Koo et al., 2014).

The NaneunGgomsuda podcasters innovatively used podcasting as an alternative medium for politics in Korea. The four producers audaciously covered controversial political issues while avoiding domestic censorship by using the iTunes server in the U.S. (Kwon, 2012). NGS was not a professionally polished media outlet. The four panelists utilized simple and lively conversation methods to encourage listeners to perceive the podcast as entertainment. The NGS team also engaged the listeners through a group of new communication platforms, both online such as Twitter and offline, such as "Talk Concerts", a hybrid form of events between public talks and concerts and book signings (Koo et al., 2014, p.432).

Censorship in the Cyberspace

Previous literature has claimed that we are experiencing a polarization of the 'digital native' and the 'digital immigrant', sometimes referred to as a 'global citizen' or 'digital citizen', whose reference point for identity construction is cyberspace itself (Kidd, 2011). Thus, content such as podcasts plays a significant role in the audience's awareness of some matters that may influence their personalities and educate them on various topics. Consequently, it has challenged censorship boundaries in certain countries as the new media emerged as a wild and uncontrollable place for users to express themselves and express their views more boldly.

Censorship over local media varies from country to country in the MENA region. Some impose total control of traditional media, which tends to act as the mouthpiece of their current regime. Nevertheless, journalists are permitted some freedom in some countries, such as Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco. Even still, there is always a distinct distrust by these countries' young populations of their state-run media. Large state-owned operators such as Etisalat in the UAE, STC in KSA, and Omantel in Oman dominate the Middle East region. "Most of these operators have either direct or indirect government backing, which limits the ability of operators to freely launch and/or deploy services, especially the new upcoming social networking services such as social media and on-demand services like Netflix and Spotify." Purohit continued to state that these restrictions exist because of the conservative regimes adopted by most Middle Eastern governments and their dictation that telecom regulators are to follow. Just like with everything else, the more the regime suppresses freedom of discussion of topics and imposes censorship, the more the public is drawn to them, and the more there is emotion in using them. The same is true with social networking services and taboo topics that can be easily tackled in social media (Sangani, 2011).

YouTube has allowed creators and creatives to make a name for themselves without subjecting themselves to the traditional gatekeepers of media conglomerates. Independent performers have used podcasts and

videos for commentary and for producing diverse content on various topics that would be censored and banned from other more traditional media (Kay, 2018). The problem of extreme censorship and heavy gatekeeping is a problem faced by many countries such as Egypt, India, and China.

The internet has allowed users to create new "imagined selves and imagined worlds" and has the potential to create communities of sentiment that operate beyond the boundaries of a nation and its gatekeeping activities. YouTube and other social media platforms have allowed these types of communities to emerge, including new media spaces and discursive networks such as digital comedians with large subscriber bases and commentators. Freedom of speech is not absolute in many countries, and restrictions could be for reasons such as the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, the danger of disturbing the public order, attack on decency or morality, contempt of court, as well as defamation, incitement to offense and conflict, and speech against the sovereignty and integrity of a country. The freedom from censors and gate-keeping has become a breeding ground for comedy content, such as satirical parodies and comedy sketches on a range of issues such as regionalism, corruption, superstition, gender discrimination, and political and media institutions. The narratives of such comedy content use the acceptance of satire and parody as a possible way to talk about social matters and critically engage with issues in the nations. This engagement might be considered a social movement (Kay, 2018).

During the Covid-19 pandemic and worldwide mandated quarantine, Kenan Thompson, a longtime cast member of Saturday Night Live, announced in a Twitter thread of three tweets that due to boredom, having watched everything on Netflix and looking for something new, he and his longtime friend Tani Marole had decided to start a podcast called "You Already Know." Thompson and Marole joined millions of other podcasters worldwide, including some celebrities, highly influential people, and average citizens, who choose to broadcast their everyday thoughts and perspectives to fans and listeners (Bratcher, 1). This example shows that anyone could start a podcast anytime, talk about whatever they want, and gain a niche. It also shows how mandatory quarantine during the Covid-19 pandemic led many people to try alternative media content regarding consumption and production. According to Bratcher, podcast research indicated that the industry was growing fast. In 2018, a report found that 73 million people in the U.S. listen to a podcast at least once a month (Bratcher, 5). Moreover, statistical data on podcasts showed that activity would probably continue to increase, especially since podcast use has more than doubled in the last seven years, increasing 122% since 2014 (The Podcast Consumer, 2019).

For individuals looking to voice their opinions in spaces relatively safe from the censorship and monitoring of the state, it seems logical that they start to develop positive attitudes towards recording their voices on their mobile and uploading it to the web. It draws less attention than establishing a radio transmitter, buying studio equipment, and broadcasting live over closely watched airwaves. For a group of podcasters wanting to make their voices heard in Vietnam, podcasting was the perfect means to do it— the first Loa.fm podcast appeared in April 2015 and was developed by an international team of collaborators supervised by editor Quyên Ngô. It is committed to covering challenging stories notwithstanding their level of political sensitivity and its largest audience share, whose ongoing growth is in Vietnam itself. Podcasts have therefore proven to be the most convenient resource for disseminating knowledge, awareness, and information in heavily censored regimes such as Vietnam (Frary, 2017).

Knowledge gap and Criticism

It has been found that no research has been conducted on podcasts and podcasting in Egypt, as well as podcast censorship in Egypt. Additionally, papers or studies on self-development and mental health

podcasting, which is a hot trend nowadays on social media, were not found. Most of the research focused on the academic side of education rather than self-learning on topics like psychology, sociology, or self-help. None of the studies applied any distinct theory, and only one study was found to apply the uses and gratifications theory, which is why the researchers decided that it would be the most suitable theory for this academic research on podcast censorship.

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

This research investigates how podcasts are challenging taboos and pushing censorship boundaries, as well as exploring their effects on Egyptian youth. The research analyzes two prominent Egyptian podcasts through the lens of censorship, examining their language, topics, and effect on society. Censorship in podcasting is necessary because podcasts play a significant role in spreading openmindedness in Egypt and raising awareness of negative social behaviors that must be reduced or stopped. Therefore, this study will investigate the relationship between limited censorship in Egypt and the rise in podcast listeners, as well as investigating if there is a correlation between taboo topics covered and a rise in demand.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Uses and Gratifications theory will be used in this paper. It aims to understand why and how people actively seek out specific media and material and how it meets their needs. It is an audience-centered approach to understanding mass media.

Elihu Katz first introduced the Uses and Gratification Approach, which suggested that people use media to their benefit. Katz, along with Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch, broadened the perspective of the concept in the early 1970s. The Uses and Gratifications Approach rejected the outdated theory that presupposed the audience was a passive group that consumed what was presented to them. Instead, it presented the audience as an active force that seeks out specific media and content to achieve specific results or attain gratifications that satisfy their personal needs.

According to Blumler (1974), audience gratifications can be derived from at least three distinct sources: media content, exposure to the media per se, and social context that typifies the situation of exposure to different media. Audiences use the media in diverse ways that fit their relative needs. Some use it to kill time, while others use it to communicate with friends and family. Some use it to enhance their self-worth, while others use it to keep up with current events.

The Uses and Gratifications theory suggests that motivations for information access affect user satisfaction (Liang et al., 2007). This theory has helped explain people's behavior using many new communication technologies and applications.

In 2015, the emergence of digital media threatened traditional media. However, new forms of media were added to the world where new technologies were not immediately apparent, so there needed to be a theory to study and measure what attracts users to specific media and how it benefits them (Williams, 2015). The Uses and Gratification theory is suitable for this research because young people are disconnected from modern broadcast radio and usually seek out new forms of audio consumption online or ways to choose their music over the radio (Berry, 2006).

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESISRESEARCH QUESTIONS

The literature review and theoretical framework led to the following research questions and hypotheses. The first set of questions aim to investigate the preferences of podcasts in Egypt; in terms of genre and topics most desired.

Podcast Preferences in Egypt

● What are the most popular podcast genres for Egyptian podcast listeners?

● What is the most preferred length for Egyptian Podcast listeners?

● What are the types of audio media that can be considered a podcast?

The second section is mainly to tackle the difference between podcast and radio as an experience for the listeners and how they perceive it as a medium.

Podcasts vs Radio

● What is the definition of podcasts for Egyptians?

● Can podcasting take the place of the radio?

● Would Egyptians like podcasts when visual media is available?

● What Impact do podcasts have on the Egyptian Audience?

● How accessible are podcasts for the Egyptian audience?

● Can a podcast change someone's mindset in Egypt?

Hypotheses

● There is a correlation between limited Censorship on podcasts and the recent rise in podcast listeners

Independent variable: Limited Censorship

Dependent variable: The Rise in Podcast Listeners

● The more taboos are tackled in podcasts, the more demand there is for them Independent variable: Taboos tackled

Dependent variable: Rise in Demand

6. DEFINITIONS

● Censorship refers to suppressing or prohibiting any elements of books, movies, or news deemed offensive, socially unacceptable, or a security risk.

● Taboos are the social or religious taboo that forbids affiliation with a specific person, place, or thing or restricts or prohibits specific conduct.

● Podcasts are digital Audio files that can be downloaded to computers and mobile devices over the internet. They typically come in a series with new episodes subscribers can receive automatically.

● Demand is defined as the desire of customers, clients, and employers for a specific good, service, or another thing.

7. METHODOLOGYMETHOD

A qualitative technique will be used in 2 in-depth interviews with an educated female and an educated male member of the active podcast audiences of the 'Kefaya ba2a' and 'The Mother Being' podcasts.

Population and Sampling for the in-depth interviews

A purposive sample of educated Egyptians aged between 18 and 24 who are avid and active podcast listeners will be selected. The sample will be drawn from Misr International University due to its diverse community and the likelihood of finding individuals who enjoy listening to podcasts and fall within the required age group.

8. Results and Discussion

Background Information about the Respondents The Interviewees were introduced to podcast listening through friends mostly and found them on YouTube or Apple Podcasts. The idea of alternative media seemed more appealing to some interviewees excited to explore this new media type. For some, it became a daily routine ongoing for over 4 and 5 years.

Podcasting Consumption Habits

The genre preferences of the interviewees varied, including comedy, true crime, history, storytelling, financial independence, political podcasts, political satire, mental health, and psychology. Some preferred to consume podcasts on YouTube, while others preferred Spotify or Apple.

Most interviewees preferred to listen to podcasts in the evening, after work or during their commute, when they were too tired to focus and preferred to listen to something interesting. While some listened to their podcasts while doing other tasks, often preferring to have some background noise when doing tedious work. One interviewee stated, "podcasts mimic a real-life conversation, and like that, it can make them feel less alone and also work well when playing in the background." In terms of drawbacks, the interviewees had a unified opinion: podcasts are less immersive than films, so distractions can detract from attention. Some podcasts need to be more consistent with their uploads, which can be frustrating for listeners. However, they all rated the convenience of podcasts above seven on a scale of 1 to 10.

Podcasts referred to by the interviewees

Genre	Podcast
History Podcast	Dark History
Comedy/History	Vulgar History
Psychology	Psychology in Seattle,
Culture	The Jordan B. Peterson Podcast
Comedy	Radio KafrEl-sheikh
Culture	El Habiba
Hard Core Sarcastic	Kefaya Ba2a
True Crime	This is Love
Culture	Kalam Yenawar
Politics	Podcast 11
Educational	The Blue Planet podcast
Storytelling	Jules and James

Table 1: Some of the podcasts referred to by the interviewees

Favorite Platforms of Egyptian Youth:

To some, Spotify was more convenient because it consumes less data and gives more priority to free platforms than paid ones. Apple Podcasts was the more suitable application for others, especially with its extensive directory. Other podcast platforms mentioned in the interviews were Podeo and Anghami. All podcast listeners preferred the free service over the paid one in all the applications mentioned earlier, with the option to choose.

Attitudes towards Content

The interviewees preferred podcast hosts to be charismatic, honest, direct, informative, and uncensored. Some also added the need for freshness and cleverness, requiring hosts to have suitable voice mannerisms, alertness, wit, and a possession of a dark sense of humor.

Most interviewees preferred monologue podcasts over celebrity ones because they found conversations with celebrities to be vapid, less about the information, and more about publicity. They called it the "one-man show" type of podcast because they want to feel like they are conversing with the host. Another important trait was the host's personality, which is often reflected in their opinion on certain public matters, especially taboo ones that traditional media shy away from tackling.

Only one interviewee stated that more podcasts should have guests and enjoyed the interaction and different opinions of each guest. The reason is that with a scripted one-person show, the content can be planned out and delivered in a way that is less spontaneous than podcasts with guests. "The podcasts that bring on guests offer more Q&As and show the guests' expertise, which I find very interesting," said the interviewee when asked to elaborate.

The interviewees preferred podcasts to have an exciting topic, sound editing, and non-monotonous delivery of their monologue. Most interviewees liked shorter podcasts, at most 30 minutes long. One interviewee noted that "audience participation is more prevalent in podcasts than in traditional media, allowing listeners to feel more involved."

9. CONCLUSION

The in-depth interviews proved fruitful, providing better insight into what Egyptian youth prefer in podcasts and their attitudes towards the content. Podcasts are considered audio files that could vary in length and feature a host and an interesting topic. They are recorded in a monologue and sometimes in interviews with celebrities, experts, and prominent figures. Egyptian youth view podcasts as a medium with no censorship, noting that it is its biggest perk and stating that it is better than the radio, more convenient and honest, and a simulation of a conversation with the host. With the growing popularity of on-demand media and the increase in the pace of a user's life, podcasts would replace the radio if it has not already, at least among youth, thanks to its accessibility and the possibility to consume it while multitasking.

The most prominent genres among podcast listeners in Egypt were psychology, comedy, and mental health, and other less popular genres such as true crime, history, and politics. To Egyptian youth, there are two types of podcasts: the "One-Man-Show," where the host holds a monologue about a particular topic, and podcasts with guests, where several opinions can be voiced in the form of an interview. The most popular platforms in Egypt, due to their accessibility, are Spotify, Anghami, Apple Podcasts, and YouTube.

Egyptians mostly prefer podcasts to be shorter lengths and only sometimes prefer visual media over audio. To Egyptian youth, each medium has its time and place, and podcasts work well in commutes, road trips, and before bed when one needs to rest their eyes and unwind.

When testing the hypotheses, the researchers found that there is indeed a positive correlation between limited censorship on podcasts and the recent rise in podcast listeners. Egyptian listeners found the

directness and honesty of a podcast host more appealing than a radio channel's scripted audio. The researchers also noted that while tackling taboos in podcasts did not specifically lead to more demand for them, it did not push listeners away and was an additional feature found appealing by the Egyptian youth. However, the fact that it is a relatively new medium in Egypt slows its growth in popularity. Users listen more to podcasts due to word of mouth rather than publicity.

REFERENCES

Balls-Berry, J.; Sinicrope, P.; Valdez Soto, M.; Bock, M.; Patten, C. (2018) "Linking Podcasts With Social Media to Promote Community Health and Medical Research: Feasibility Study" Jmir Formative Research. Vol. 2. Issue. 2. (pp. 3, 6). Mayo Clinic, Rochester, United States. CrossRef

Bartle, Emma; Longnecker, Nancy; Pegrum, Mark (2010). "Can Creating Podcasts Be A Useful Assignment In A Large Undergraduate Chemistry Class?" (pp 104, 107). Proceedings of the 16th UniServe Science Annual Conference 2010, University of Sydney. Australia. ISBN Number 978-0-9808597-1-3

Berk, Justin; Shreya P. Trivedi; Watto, Matthew; Williams, Paul; Centor, Robert (2019). "Medical Education Podcasts: Where We Are and Questions Unanswered" (pp. 2176, 2177). Society of General Internal Medicine. United States. CrossRef

Berry, Richard. (2006). "Will the iPod Kill the Radio Star? Profiling Podcasting as Radio" (pp. 143-156). Convergence: The International Journal   of   Research   into   New   Media Technologies. University of Sunderland, UK. CrossRef

Bratcher, Tegan R. (2021). "Power To The Podcasts: Publics, Opinions, And The

Economy Of Black Podcasts". Doctoral Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. (Pp. 1, 5). North Carolina, United States.

Fernandez, Vicenc; Sallan, Jose M.; Simo, Pep (2015). "Chapter 14 Past, Present, and Future of Podcasting in Higher Education" (pp. 305, 308, 314, 320-326). Exploring Learning & Teaching in Higher Education, New Frontiers of Educational Research, Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg 2015. CrossRef

Frary, Mark. (2017). "Power to the podcast" article. (pp. 24-27). indexoncensorship.org. CrossRef

Guedes, Tomás Sousa. (2019) "SPOTIFY: The Netflix of Audio" (pp. 16, 26, 27). Master of Finance, Lisbon School of Economics and Management.

Hancock, Danielle; McMurtry, Leslie (2018)"Chapter 5: 'I Know What a Podcast Is': PostSerial Fiction and Podcast Media Identity". (Pp. 83, 88-91, 94, 99). Podcasting: New Aural Cultures and Digital Media. Springer International Publishing. Cham, Switzerland. ISBN: 978-3-319-90055-1. CrossRef

Katz, Elihu; Blumler, Jay and Gurevitch, Michael (1974). "Uses of Mass Communication by the Individual." Mass Communication Research: Major Issues and Future Directions. Eds. W.P. Davidson and Fredrick Yu. New York. United States.

Katz, Elihu; Blumler, Jay and Gurevitch, Michael (1974). The Use of Mass Communication. Beverly Hills, California. United States.

Kay, K.. (2018) "Riffing India Comedy, Identity, and Censorship" (pp. 22-25, 29, 31, 32, 37, 43, 44) New Indian Nuttahs: Comedy and Cultural Critique in Millennial India, Palgrave Studies in Comedy. India. CrossRef

Kidd, Warren. (2011) "Utilising podcasts for learning and teaching: a review and ways forward for e-Learning cultures". (Pp. 52-56). Management in Education. Cass School of Education and Communities, University of East London. United Kingdom. CrossRef

Koo, Chulmo; Chung, Namho; Kim, Dan J. (2014). "How do social media transform politics? The role of a podcast, 'NaneunGgomsuda' in South Korea." (pp. 421, 422, 426, 427, 432). Information Development. Sogang University, South Korea. CrossRef

Kwon, K., (2012). The power relationship in information society and the formation of resistance: the case of "I'm a petty-minded creep". Information Society. 23, 35–79 (in Korean).

Llinares, D.; Fox, N.; Berry, R. (2018) "Introduction: Podcasting and Podcasts— Parameters of a New Aural Culture". (pp. 1-5). Podcasting New Aural Cultures and Digital Media. Springer International Publishing. Cham, Switzerland. ISBN 978-3-319-90055-1. CrossRef

Melon, Jerome; Chen, Zhuoran (2017) "Evolution of social media: review of the role of podcasts in gynaecology" (Pp. 477, 479.) The International Urogynecological Journal. Sydney, Australia. CrossRef

Nigmatullina, Almira Shamsunovna (2019) "The Benefits of Listening To Podcasts," Scientific Bulletin of Namangan State University: Vol. 1: Iss. 8, Article 71. Available at: https://uzjournals.edu.uz/namdu/vol1/iss8/71

Sangani, Kris. (2011). "What role did social media and capable devices have on the ongoing events in the Middle East? Kris Sangani investigates." Consumer Technology: Politics. (Pp. 88-90). Engineering & Technology August 2011. Reuters.

Seitzinger, Joyce. (2006). "Be Constructive: Blogs, Podcasts, and Wikis as Constructivist Learning Tools" (pp. 4-7, 10, 12). The elearners Guild's Learning Solutions emagazine.

The podcast consumer 2019. (2019, April 5). [website] Retrieved from https://www.edisonresearch.com/the-podcastconsumer-2019/

Wentzel, Lia C.P; Dantas-Queiroz, Marcos V; Queiroz, Luciano L. (2018). "Science communication podcasting in Brazil: the potential and challenges depicted by two podcasts." (pp. 1891, 1894). An Acad Bras Cienc Journal. Annals of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences. Brazil. CrossRef

Williams, David Lindsey. (2015). "So why do people use Facebook and Twitter? Uses and gratifications of social media use." (Pp. 4). Strategic Direction. Dalton State College.