

Podvertising: Podcast Listeners' Advertising Attitudes, Consumer Actions and Preference for Host-Read Ads

Margaret Moe

Department of Communication Arts, Lee University, Ocoee St, Cleveland, USA
mmoe@leeuniversity.edu, mlunger@leeuniversity.edu

Abstract: While comparatively few scholarly studies exist on podcast advertising, market research substantiates the effectiveness of podcast advertisements. This academic study probed podcast listeners' attitudes toward podcast advertising and motivations for consumer actions through survey research with 1714 respondents. Extending past research on attitudes toward advertising within a medium (A_{am}), consumer action, and listener preference for host-read podcast advertisements, this study proposes a theoretical framework that seeks to contribute to a fundamental understanding of how listeners interact with and process podcast advertising. Scale development included modifying existing scales for other media as well as original scale development using qualitative methods that were tested for validity and internal consistency. Results from the survey revealed that: (1) Podcast listeners have favorable attitudes toward podcast advertising, particularly host-read advertisements; (2) Podcast listeners are motivated by functional and socio-emotional reasons for consumer actions, which correlate with positive attitudes toward podcast advertising; and (3) The podcast consumption levels of listeners are moderate predictors of their attitudes toward podcast advertising and subsequent consumer action, while gender and age are weaker predictors.

Keywords: *Podcast advertising, advertising in a medium, attitudes toward advertising, host-read advertising, advertising consumer action.*

1. Introduction

Imagine a dedicated podcast listener enjoying the latest episode of her favorite true crime podcast. As an advertisement is about to begin, she considers skipping ahead 15 seconds, but her thumb hovers above the "skip" button as her favorite host begins an endearing story about how his toddler Owen helped cook dinner the other night using an already-prepped meal kit. No longer considering forwarding past the ad, the listener smiles, visualizing the scene and marveling at how Owen has so quickly become a toddler—it seemed only yesterday that he was still a baby! She considers purchasing a meal kit and searches for a link in the show notes. While this podcast listener installs ad blockers on her computer to avoid online advertising and pays for subscription streaming services to avoid interruptions to her broadcast content, she is still willing to listen and respond to ads on her favorite podcast. Podcast advertising is a marketing marvel that achieves higher conversion and satisfaction rates than advertising on other broadcast platforms. Few academic studies examine podcast advertising, but an abundance of market research indicates that podcasts have high conversion rates, with engaged listeners who enjoy advertisements (hereinafter referred to as ads) when regular podcast contributors incorporate personal material. While academic research on podcast listeners has been increasing, there is still limited scholarship on how these listeners interact with advertising, representing a knowledge gap.

Therefore, the goal of this study is fourfold: 1) to develop and validate scales for podcast advertising that employ both qualitative and quantitative methods for scale development, validity and internal consistency; 2) to determine the advertising attitudes of podcast listeners and examine the degree to which these listeners are influenced by ads featuring podcast hosts; 3) to understand how the consumer actions of podcast listeners correlate with their attitudes regarding podcast advertising; and 4) to explore how variables such as age, gender, and podcast consumption affect podcast advertising attitudes and consumer action. According to the findings of this study, podcast audiences attach high value to podcast advertising, particularly host-read ads, and this positive attitude correlates with increased consumer action. Results from the survey confirmed market research that indicates listeners have favorable attitudes toward podcast advertising, particularly host-read advertisements. Additionally, podcast listeners are motivated by functional and socio-emotional reasons for consumer actions, which correlate with positive attitudes toward podcast advertising. Furthermore, podcast consumption levels of listeners are stronger predictors of their attitudes toward podcast advertising and subsequent consumer action, while gender and age are weak predictors, indicating

that marketers could better target audiences based on the number of podcasts to which they regularly listen rather than more traditional demographic categories.

2. Review of the Literature

Podcast Advertising: The growth of podcast audiences is notable at a time when traditional broadcast media advertising is decreasing. Since 2018, linear radio and television advertising revenues have declined, although digital advertising mitigated industry losses (Balderston, 2020; Benes, 2020; RAB & Borrell Associates, 2020). In comparison, podcast audiences grew steadily from 2010 (when there were 27 million weekly listeners) to 2021 (when the number of weekly listeners grew to 80 million; (Edison Research, 2021a). This increase in audience members has been accompanied by a growth in advertising revenue. Although it's expensive, she knows that using the code will provide extra income for the show's host, whom she considers a friend and would like to help. The "Share of Ear," a tracking study on audio use and consumption, reports that podcasting is responsible for all of the growth in ad-supported audio (Edison Research, 2021b). Revenues from podcast ads increased 275% from 2015 to 2017 to reach \$257.4 million (IAB, 2021), and an additional 48% from 2018 to 2019 to reach \$708 million (IAB, 2020). Future podcast revenues have been forecasted to surpass \$1 billion in 2021 and \$2 billion in 2023 (IAB, 2021).

The expanding podcast advertising market is not only gaining listeners and advertisers but also effectively reaching consumers with more memorable ads. One brand recall study (Midroll Media, 2018) found superior recall rates for podcast ads (80%) compared with digital mobile ads (45%) and digital desktop ads (35%). A 2019 case study found that a podcast campaign increased unaided recall by 1,550%, and brand recall by 640% (Vetrano, 2019). While the brand lift achieved through podcast advertising varies by industry, research has shown that lift rates can exceed those of advertising in other forms of media, such as print or linear broadcast media, by a factor of 30 (Claritas, 2020). Not only do listeners recall podcast ads, but they also generally tend to respond positively and even listen actively to them (Vilceanu, Johnson, & Burns, 2021). In a study by Midroll Media (2018), 90% of the surveyed podcast listeners reported that they listened to podcast ads rather than skipping them. Once Apple introduced podcast analytics, networks confirmed that listeners were getting through 80% to 90% of any given podcast episode, and few listeners were skipping ads (Westwood One Podcasts, 2019; Mohan, 2018). After hearing podcast ads, listeners journey through the various purchase funnel stages (Nielsen, 2021; Meyers, 2020; Mancusi, 2017b; Swant, 2016).

In one study, 54% of podcast listeners reported that they were more likely to consider brands advertised on podcasts (Edison Research, 2019). In another study, 61% of those exposed to podcast ads said they were likely to purchase the advertised goods or services (Midroll Media, 2018). Even the so-called unreachable consumers, known to avoid advertising by paying for ad-free content in other media, reported that podcast ads were the best way for a brand to reach them (Edison Research, 2020c). Nearly two-thirds of frequent podcast listeners engage in product research or purchase-related behaviors as a result of advertising exposure from podcasts (Nielsen, 2021). The largest share of podcast advertising revenue comes from host-read ads and announcer-read ads, rather than from supplied ads (IAB, 2021). Host-read ads, which are native advertisements delivered by podcast hosts (IAB, 2021), have proven to be the most popular with listeners (Nielsen, 2020; Riismandel, 2020; Edison Research, 2020c; Westwood One Podcasts, 2019; Edison Research, 2021b). Next in terms of listener preferences are announcer-read ads, which are pre-produced and incorporated into podcast content, with a producer or announcer reading from a manuscript (IAB, 2021; Riismandel, 2020).

Supplied ads, which are pre-recorded advertisements provided by an agency or brand (IAB, 2020), are least preferred and twice as likely to be considered "forced" (Nielsen, 2017, p. 4). While host-read ads are the most common type of podcast ad, the percentage has been decreasing. In the first year, the IAB collected data about host-read ads, they comprised 66.9% (IAB, 2018), 66% in 2019 (IAB, 2020) and 56% in 2020 (IAB, 2021). Host-read ads are valuable because listeners perceive them as more authentic than other advertisements (Meyers, 2020; Nielsen, 2017; Freidman, 2017). The most effective podcast ads are those incorporated within the shows by the hosts themselves, leading to a greater intention to buy on the part of the listener (Meyers, 2020). Host-read podcast ads feel more personal than online videos or banner ads because podcast hosts have a unique relationship with their listeners (Why listeners respond to podcast ads, 2017). Many people

listen through headphones in a one-to-one setting, which contributes to the feeling of being involved in a conversation with the podcaster (Berry, 2016). This strengthens the impression that the listener and host have a relationship. Because the host of a show may adopt the role of a facilitator between the audience and advertisers (Vilceanu, Johnson, & Burns, 2021), host-read advertisements encourage listeners to feel connected with the host.

To perceive the host as favorably disposed toward the advertised product. Listeners trust their favorite hosts and respond to associated perceptions of intimacy and authenticity while listening to the podcasts (Regan, 2017). Listeners view hosts as authentic, feel as if they have a personal relationship with them, and trust recommendations made by the host as they would a friend's (Meyers, 2020). Consequently, an endorsement from a host makes an ad powerful (Freidman, 2017); (Mancusi, 2017a), resulting in 71% brand recall (Nielsen, 2020). For these reasons, listeners are likely to believe that recommendations by the hosts of their favorite podcasts come from personal experience (Meyers, 2020); (Why listeners respond to podcast ads, 2017). As people build an affinity with podcasts and host the sense of personal connection and trust increases. A 2020 study emphasized the trust placed in podcast hosts by listeners: "For them, a podcast host is not just a personality, but a dependable influencer" ((Riismandel, 2020, p. 1). Thus, in many respects, podcast hosts are influencers who build trust among their listeners and give valuable endorsements (Mancusi, 2017b).

Consumer Advertising Attitudes and Consumer Actions: Attitudinal advertising research offers a constructivist perspective (Heath, 2008) seeking to measure how people think or feel about – and act in response to – advertising (Aaker, 2011); (Solomon, 2013). Attitudes toward advertising (A_{adv}) are defined by lasting, general predispositions to respond positively or negatively to ads consistently. Advertising attitudes develop through cognition about advertising that leads to valence discrimination and ultimately, to conation (Aaker, 2011). "Liking" (a positive attitude toward advertising), or "disliking" (a negative attitude toward advertising), can be assessed by Likert-scale responses. Advertising attitudinal research is important as those who like advertising are more likely to be persuaded by it (Mehta & Purvis, 1995; Ha, 1996) and tend to demonstrate greater purchase intent (Solomon, 2013). Consumer action is direct or indirect behavior surrounding the acquisition or use of a product or service (Bagozzi, 2006), and can also be assessed in terms of intended action because the intention is a strong predictor of future behavior (Solomon, 2013). Consumers are driven to act upon advertising messages by a range of motivations, including functional motivations such as a desire for the advertised product or service, socio-emotional motivations such as the pleasure that shopping brings, and identity motivations such as a desire to purchase a product that helps consumers symbolize who they (Dittmar, Long, & Meek, 2004).

A_{adv} and consumer action research have examined how audiences react to the advertising in a medium (A_{am}) such as television (Mittal, 1994; Lynch & Stipp, 1999); print media (Mehta & Purvis, 1995) digital media (Wolin & Korgaonkar, 2003; Lim, Ri, Donnelly Egan, & Biocca, 2015) and various other media within a comparative setting (Moore & Rodgers, 2005; Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Anckaert, 2002; Dijkstra, Buijtsels, & Van Raaij, 2005). How consumers view a given medium relates to how they perceive its advertising (Bronner & Neijens, 2006) Each medium needs to be examined discretely, as attitudes toward advertising are tied to how ads are experienced within the medium under consideration (Tan & Chia, 2007). There is scant academic A_{adv} research on podcast advertising. A qualitative study revealed that host-read ads provide narrative transport, and access to listeners' perception of a friendship with the host and their desire to be a part of the podcast team (Moe, 2021). Another preliminary study of podcast audiences included a set of questions about advertising and determined that podcast listeners have positive attitudes toward advertising because they perceive that listening to ads provides support to hosts (Vilceanu, Johnson, & Burns, 2021). While promising, this study had a small sample size, with less than 300 participants and limited attitudinal prompts.

There is a link between consumer actions and advertising attitudes as buying interest is influenced by advertising beliefs; those who approve of advertising in general, or advertising within a particular medium, engage in increased consumer behavior (Mehta & Purvis, 1995; Ha, 1996; Ha & McCann, 2008). The purchase of a product or service may be driven by functional or socio-emotional motivations (Dittmar, Long, & Meek, 2004), and it is possible to examine the success of advertising campaigns in terms of responses from buyers and non-buyers (Chaney & Dolli, 2001). Since consumers who like advertising have increased consumer

intent, the positive attitude of podcast listeners as measured by market research suggests that they are more likely to engage in consumer behavior. Market research has indicated that podcast listeners tend to demonstrate a willingness to purchase products; 22% of general podcast listeners reported making purchases based on podcast ads, and this figure is higher (30%) among general podcast listeners who listened to podcasts daily (Acklin, 2019). Nielsen (2021) reported increased consumer action on the part of high-consumption podcast listeners in response to podcast advertising such as visiting a website either for additional information (62%), or to make a purchase (40%), compared with light users (of whom 37% visited a website for information, and 17% to make a purchase).

Demographic Effects in Advertising: Research in other media establishes differing demographic-based responses to marketing messages related to age (Loroz & Helgeson, 2013; Smith, 2019); and gender (Brunel & Nelson, 2003; Dittmar & Drury, 2000; Phillip & Suri, 2004; Rialti, Zollo, Pellegrini, & Ciappei, 2017; Wolin & Korgaonkar, 2003). Segmentation increases profitability; as such, advertisers tend to tailor messages to specific demographics. Appealing to specific age and gender groups has traditionally been one of the easiest ways for advertisers to target their ads (Darley & Smith, 1995). Age influences responses to advertising because of generational value differences (Loroz & Helgeson, 2013), technological comfort levels (Smith, 2019), tendencies to engage in consumer action (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021) and media preferences (van der Goot, Rozendaal, Oprea, Ketelaar, & Smit, 2018). Gender-based advertising research has posited the existence of differing message-processing strategies for men and women (Brunel & Nelson, 2003).

Gender-based preferences for visual cues (Phillip & Suri, 2004). Gender-based differences have been found in cognitive and behavioral responses to marketing within particular media, such as social media (Rialti, Zollo, Pellegrini, & Ciappei, 2017) or online advertising (Smith, 2019). Gender has been correlated with consumer buying behavior (Wolin & Korgaonkar, 2003); some studies suggest that women are more influenced by socio-emotional and identity motivations, while men are more influenced by functional motivations (Dittmar, Long, & Meek, 2004; Dittmar & Drury, 2000). Podcast research indicates that demographics account for some of the variance in statistical studies on the motivations of general podcast listeners (Chadha, Avila, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2012; Boling & Hull, 2018; Chan-Olmsted & Wang, 2020). However, there is no evidence to indicate that demographics affect the actions or podcast advertising attitudes of podcast listeners.

Research Model Development: The literature review revealed four salient domains that are potentially important in developing a podcast advertising model: host-read ads, perceived relationship with the podcaster, attitude toward advertising in the podcast medium (A_{am}), and the consumer actions of podcast listeners. Overall, market research indicates that podcast listeners are engaged by ads delivered by trusted hosts, which may be influenced by a relational component. This explains the positive attitude toward podcast advertising on the part of these listeners, which leads to increased consumer action. No existing scales target the four identified domains in podcast advertising, although some can be adapted for the podcast medium. Extending past research on A_{am} , consumer action, and listener preference for host-read podcast advertisements, this study proposes a theoretical framework that seeks to contribute to a fundamental understanding of how listeners interact with and process podcast advertising. Accordingly, the hypotheses and research questions are presented below:

H1: Podcast listeners prefer host-read ads over supplied ads.

H2: The preference for host-read ads is predicted by the perception of a relationship with a favorite host.

H3: The preference for host-read ads is predicted by a listener interpreting host-read ads as authentic.

RQ1: Will the gender, age, or podcast consumption of podcast listeners predict a preference for host-read ads?

H4: Podcast listeners have positive attitudes toward podcast advertising.

H5: A preference for host-read ads positively relates to the podcast advertising attitudes of listeners.

RQ2: Will the gender, age, or podcast consumption of podcast listeners predict the podcast advertising attitudes of these listeners?

H6: Podcast listeners demonstrate consumer actions in response to podcast advertising.

H7: Podcast advertising attitudes positively relate to consumer actions.

H8: A preference for host-read ads positively relates to consumer action on the part of a listener.

RQ3: Will the gender, age, or podcast consumption of podcast listeners predict the advertising-based

consumer actions of podcast listeners?

3. Method

Use of Facebook to Recruit Survey Participants: Recruiting an appropriate sample of participants was challenging. Although the size of the podcast audience continues to increase, podcast listeners constitute a hard-to-reach audience (Balter & Brunet, 2012) as the majority of adults do not listen to podcasts regularly (Edison Research, 2021a). Previous research has explored the use of closed Facebook discussion groups, which many podcasts use to engage with listeners as a means of reaching target populations for quantitative research. For example, Balter and Brunet (2012) explored the use of snowball sampling through Facebook for research on hard-to-reach populations. Brief et al. (2013) and Pedersen, Naranjo, and Marshall (2017) studied problems such as alcohol abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder among military veterans by recruiting survey participants from Facebook groups. Numerous studies have used social networking platforms, especially Facebook, to access specific target populations (Chu & Snider, 2013; Morgan, Jorm, & Mackinnon, 2013; Kaysen, Cue Davis, & Kilmer, 2011). Because this study also focused on a population that would be difficult to reach without the help of social networking sites, the researcher posted survey links within specialized podcast Facebook groups to gain access to the target population.

Survey Design: Once the four domains were identified through the literature review, survey items were generated both inductively and deductively. Using logical partitioning prompts from existing A_{am} advertising attitude and consumer action scales were modified to frame appropriate podcast advertising questions (Mittal, 1994; Wolin & Korgaonkar, 2003; Dittmar, Long, & Meek, 2004). The Instrument Development and Construct Validation (IDCV) framework were also used to generate items. IDCV allows a researcher to conceptualize the constructs of interest through qualitative research to develop the quantitative instrument, followed by a pilot that informs revision of the instrument and finally, a quantitative validation (Onwuegbuzie, Bustamante, & Nelson, 2010). After receiving approval from Lee University's Human Subjects Committee, interview subjects were recruited at a podcast convention to answer open-ended questions about podcast advertising. Interviews were between 4 to 21 minutes, with most lasting 10 minutes. Using guidelines from Creswell and Poth (2016), who recommend the recruitment of 20 to 30 participants, 30 valid interviews were obtained. The sample was large enough to allow pertinent themes to emerge (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), reaching saturation with the twelfth respondent.

The data were analyzed using constructivist grounded theory, which allows researchers to prioritize participants' realities and uncover experiences among networks or relationships (Charmaz, 2008). In the first step, senior communication students engaged in open coding under the mentorship of the researcher, and independently identified themes from the interviews (using codes such as "prefers ads that are personalized by the podcaster" and "interprets host-read ads as credible"). Second, the coders met to discuss collectively the codes from their independent analysis, noting identical codes and themes identified in the literature review. Third, the researcher synthesized the preliminary themes into second-level codes (Tracy, 2019), defined them, and established a coding guide. Fourth, after training and practice, intercoder reliability was tested, and a raw percent agreement of 80% was deemed an acceptable level. While there are various standards for intercoder reliability, many respected sources have determined a general criterion: Frey, Botton, and Kreps (2000) agree that 70% is reliable; Ellis (1994) posits that 75% to 80% is reliable; Krippendorff (1980) accepts 80%, and Riffe, Lacey, and Fico (1988) specify a range of 80% to 90%.

Finally, the remaining discrepancies were resolved through discussion and agreement, and the researcher constructed survey items using the themes and word choices identified from the responses of participants. The survey was approved by the Human Subjects Committee, and the questions were preceded by an informed consent statement on the first page. The survey included 34 quantitative Likert-scale prompts falling into 5 categories: demographics (3), general podcast questions (6), podcast advertising attitudes (12), and podcast advertising consumer actions (7). The fifth category probed listeners' perceived relationships with podcast hosts, including four Likert scale prompts developed from the preliminary qualitative interviews and open-ended questions that were elicited for a qualitative study (Moe, 2021). Participants were asked to identify their favorite podcast(s) and complete the survey with them in mind. The pilot was administered to the target populations with feedback solicited. The pilot identified weaknesses, resulting in

the revision of prompts for clarity or elimination as well as streamlining the distribution of the survey. In the pilot survey, podcast hosts participated by recruiting listeners in their Facebook group to participate, an intervention that was discontinued once the pilot was completed.

Participants: The study is based on 1,714 valid survey responses from podcast listeners recruited via closed Facebook groups (general podcast fan groups as well as groups dedicated to particular podcasts). Posts with links to the survey were shared in these discussion groups with the permission of the administrators. Only those participants with unique IP addresses were allowed to access the survey. Once the survey was completed, a closing message offered each participant the option of entering an email address in a separate field to win a \$25 gift card by random drawing. Initially, 1,810 surveys were received; however, 86 of these were removed because the respondents had not answered all of the required questions.

The age category with the most respondents was 30–44 years (51.6% of all respondents); next, was 18–29 years (26.8%), followed by 45–59 years (18.6%) and 60+ years (3%). The majority of participants were from the United States (60.9%), followed by Oceania (16.5%), the United Kingdom (11.4%), Canada (6%), and various countries in the European Union (3%), Asia (1.2%), and Latin America (1.1%). Of the total respondents, 79% (1,354) self-identified as female and 21% (360) as male. Those identifying as nonbinary were excluded, as the number of respondents in this group did not meet the minimum sample size of 1%. Participants identified their favorite podcast titles as well as their favorite content genres: true crime (70.3%), comedy (13.1%), history (7.8%), other (4.7%), and personal enrichment (4.1%; Apple's reconfiguration of podcast categories/subcategories in 2019 created a discrepancy between a subcategory that was removed by the company [*Self-help* subcategory in Health] and one that was newly introduced [*Self-improvement* subcategory in Education]).

Thus, both categories were incorporated into a single genre called "personal enrichment"). Given that a large number of respondents were listeners of true crime podcasts, it is unsurprising that the sample included more respondents who self-identified as female (84.5%). PCA is a valuable starting point because it is a tool for investigating particular features of the structure of multivariate observations. The expected gender disparity confirms other research findings that women make up a larger portion of true crime podcast audiences (Boling & Hull, 2018; Joyce, 2018; Maffeo, 2019; Acklin, 2019; Niche podcasts, 2020) as well as other true crime media (Vicary & Fraley, 2010). This imbalance in terms of gender is notable because general podcast audiences tend to break down fairly equally by gender, with 51% of listeners self-identifying as male and 49% as female (Edison Research, 2019) Similarly, a joint study by Future Media and the University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications identified 52% of podcast listeners as male and 48% as female (Anstandig & Wright, 2019).

Analysis: Descriptive statistics were used to determine percentages and frequencies of the Likert-scale responses. The analysis also involved the use of IBM SPSS 28 software for statistical analysis with principal component analysis for validity, Cronbach's coefficient alpha for internal consistency of scales, Pearson's chi-square test (χ^2) to ascertain independence between variables using Cramer's V for the effect size for categorical data or η^2 for scale data, and regression analysis to learn more about the relationship between variables with adjusted R-squared (R^{2adj}) scores. Although many prompts used the Likert scale, the data may be assessed using parametric tests with unbiased results (Norman, 2010); (Sullivan & Artino Jr, 2013); (Carifio & Perla, 2008). Statistical tests were interpreted at a significance level of $p \leq 0.05$, and effect sizes were described using parameters from Cohen (Cohen, 1992). For the principal component analysis (PCA), quartimax rotation was used to maximize the variance of the squared factor loadings in each variable (Jackson, 2014), with a minimum factor loading criteria of .40 (Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1988). For the regression analysis, categorical values were coded with dummy independent variables. To check that no influential cases affected the model, Cook's distance was measured with no values exceeding 0.047 (Cook & Weisberg, 1982). Multicollinearity was tested using variance inflation factors (VIF), in which a VIF of 1 indicates that the model terms are not linearly related, and a VIF value over 10 signals a harmful correlation among the predictor variables (Neter, Wasserman, & Kutner, 1983). With a maximum VIF of 1.32, multicollinearity was not indicated.

4. Findings

All dimensions were tested for validity and reliability. An exploratory analysis was performed to assess validity using PCA as the primary purpose was to identify factors and compute composite scores. The communality of the scale, which indicates the amount of variance in each dimension and shows that all communalities were over 0.50, was also assessed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) was .880; data with MSA values above .800 were considered appropriate for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant, indicating the statistical probability that some of the components in the correlation matrix had significant correlations and were suitable for further analysis, $\chi^2 (105, N=1714) = 17403.267, p < .001$. Finally, the solution derived from this analysis yielded three components that explained 44.4%, 13.5%, and 9.8% of the variance; accounting for 67.7% of data variation (see Table 1). Component 1 included prompts to discover attitudes toward podcast advertising (A_{am}); component 2 contained items exploring participants' perceived relationship with a podcast host; and component 3 captured consumer buying actions. Prompts that did not load $>.40$ on one dimension were removed from the equation. To test reliability, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each dimension, and all exceeded the minimum score of .7 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The three components were analyzed as latent variables. While it was hypothesized that a fourth component, host-read ads, might be measurable, the pertinent prompts did not load significantly together; therefore, these were analyzed as univariates using linear regression.

Table 1: PCA Results

Items	1 (44.4%)	2 (13.5%)	3 (9.8%)
Podcast Advertising Attitude (Cronbach's $\alpha = .909$)			
Overall, I consider podcast advertising a good thing	.935		
Overall, I like podcast advertising	.910		
I consider podcast advertising essential	.745		
I usually listen to the ads when they occur in my favorite podcast(s)	.938		
I am more likely to listen to podcast advertising featuring someone who is regularly on the podcast (such as a host, producer or contributor)	.698		
I am more open to podcast advertising than TV advertising	.576		
I am more open to podcast advertising than radio advertising	.540		
It is important to buy products or services advertised on my favorite podcast(s)	.484		
Host-Relationship (Cronbach's $\alpha = .854$)			
I feel like I know my favorite podcaster		.780	
I feel as if I have an emotional connection with my favorite podcaster		.750	
I feel like I know my favorite podcaster more than I know my favorite TV host		.807	
I feel like I know my favorite podcaster more than I know my favorite radio host		.838	
Podcast Advertising Consumer Buying Action (Cronbach's $\alpha = .816$)			
I have bought a product or service because of a podcast advertisement			.827
I have bought a product or service featured on a podcast because I wanted it [functional motivation]			.830
I have bought a product or service featured on a podcast because I wanted to help out the podcaster [socio-emotional motivation]			.625

Podcast Listeners: Of the 1,714 respondents surveyed, most respondents (65.8%) reported that they listened to six or more podcast episodes per week (hereinafter PPW). Regarding the choice to listen to ads rather than skip them, 27.1% reported always listening to ads; 30% reported usually listening to ads, and 26.7% reported listening to ads half of the time or more. The level of podcast consumption correlated with the age and gender of listeners, although effect sizes were determined to be small. Male listeners were found to consume more podcasts per week (see Table 2); 76.7% of the male and 63% of the female listeners surveyed reported listening to six or more podcasts per week. Male listeners were more likely to be high-frequency podcast consumers and listened to podcasts with a higher frequency than expected (11 or more PPW), while female respondents tended to be low-frequency podcast consumers (1-5 PPW); $\chi^2(2, N=1714) = 29.953, p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .132$. The four age groups of listeners in the study also reported distinct podcast listening habits (as shown in Table 2). Age correlated with weekly podcast consumption, $\chi^2(6, N=1714) = 37.582, p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .0213$. The youngest (18-29 years of age) and oldest audiences (60+) reported lower podcast consumption than expected, and the mid-range age groups (30-44 and 45-59 years of age) reported a higher podcast consumption (11+ PPW) than expected. Overall, the youngest audience members reported listening to fewer podcast episodes than listeners in the other three age ranges, while those in the 45-59 age group reported listening to the most.

Table 2: Podcast Consumption by Gender and Age

Categories	Female 79.5% (n=1354)	Male 20.5% (n=360)	18-29 26.8% (n=460)	30-44 51.6% (n=885)	45-59 18.6% (n=318)	60+ 3.0% (n=51)
1-5 PPW 34.1% (n=585)	37%*	23.3%	42.6%*	32.1%	26.1%	43.1%*
6-10 PPW 35.1% (n=602)	34.9%	36.1%	33.9%	36.3%*	33.6%	35.3%
11+ PPW 30.7% (n=527)	28.1%	40.6%*	23.5%	31.6%*	40.3%*	21.6%
Size Effect	Cramer's $V=.132$		$\eta^2=.02$			

* = Significant correlation (more than expected, $p < .001$)

Host-Read Advertisements: Although the host-read advertising prompts did not load as a component, the responses for individual prompts supported the strong affinity of survey participants for host-read ads (hypothesis 1): 77.6% strongly agreed that they listen to ads featuring podcast hosts, not rather than to skip them. This affinity for host-read ads correlated significantly with particular podcast genres; however, the effect size was small. More true crime and comedy podcast listeners than expected strongly agreed that they preferred ads featuring someone who is regularly on the podcast, while history podcast listeners disagreed, $\chi^2(16, N=1713) = 145.936, p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .146$. When asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement that they were more likely to listen to supplied ads, such as those created by advertising agencies, and not skip these ads, only 6.7% strongly agreed or agreed. More than expected, those aged between 30-44 years disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that they were likely to listen to supplied ads $\chi^2(12, N=1714) = 114.709, p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .149$; the same is true of high PPW listeners, $\chi^2(8, N=1714) = 43.128, p < .001$; Cramer's $V=.112$ as well as those identifying as female $\chi^2(4, N=1714) = 22.565, p < .001$; Cramer's $V=.115$.

Members of niche comedy podcast audiences disagreed more than expected with the statement, while history podcast listeners disagreed less than expected $\chi^2(16, N=1714) = 124.030, p < .001$; Cramer's $V=.135$. Examining the perception that podcast hosts are authentic when pitching ads, many respondents (56.3%) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that their favorite host was being authentic while pitching a product, and an additional 29.3% perceived them as being authentic some of the time. These perceptions varied across listeners of different genres; comedy and true crime listeners were more likely than expected to agree that their favorite hosts were being authentic, while history listeners were more likely to disagree than expected, $\chi^2(16, N=1705) = 121.249, p < .001$; Cramer's $V=.133$. Consistent with the theoretical proposition

of the research, the PCA identified four host-relationship prompts as Factor 2, allowing them to be grouped into a host relationship scale that shows good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha coefficient: four items; $\alpha = .854$). A total score was calculated and used for further analyses with a mean score of 4.11 (SD = .74).

A significant model was found when analyzing which prompts predicted the respondents reporting that they prefer a host-read advertisement. Three items predict 42.5% of the movement in the variable $R^{2adj} = .425$, $F(3, 1679) = 417.254$, $p < .001$. Hypothesis 2 was confirmed, as the host relationship scale score of a listener predicted a preference for host-read ads ($\beta = .175$, $p < .001$). Hypothesis 3 was confirmed, as a listener's perception of a host's authenticity when delivering an ad predicted a preference for host-read ads ($\beta = .182$, $p < .001$). Finally, listeners who reported that they were more likely to listen to, rather than skip, podcast ads predicted the preference for host-read ads ($\beta = .473$, $p < .001$). The data hint at a parasocial (i.e., asymmetrical) relationship between the listener and host, but this conclusion requires a more nuanced analysis, which has been undertaken in a qualitative study (Moe, 2021). The instrument did not include parasocial scales but sought to test the relationship themes identified in the qualitative interviews.

Podcast Advertising Attitudes: Eight Likert-scale prompts identified as Factor 1 were grouped into a podcast advertising attitude scale that shows good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha coefficient; eight items; $\alpha = .909$). A total score was calculated and used for further analyses with a mean score of 3.7 (SD = .83). Items 1-3 of the podcast advertising attitude scale were adapted from Mittal's General Opinion on TV Advertising scale (1994) and Wolin and Korgaonkar's web advertising scale (2003) while items 4-8 were developed from the preliminary interviews. Consistent with hypothesis 4, listeners reported positive attitudes toward podcast advertising (see Table 3). Those surveyed reported listening to podcast advertising at high rates, with 83.7% playing the ads half the time or more, and 57% usually listening to ads. Only 6.8% reported always skipping the ads. With a small effect size, true crime and comedy listeners reported listening to ads, while history and personal enrichment listeners did not, $\chi^2(16, N=1712) = 193.764$, $p < .001$; Cramer's $V=.168$.

Table 3: Podcast Advertising Attitudes Scale by Gender and Age

Cronbach's $\alpha = .909$		Female	Male	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	1-5 PPW	6-10 PPW	11+ PPW
Answers = Likert-scale										
I consider podcast advertising essential	M	3.93*	3.89*	3.95	3.87	3.98	4.02	3.71	4.0*	4.06*
	SD	.948	(V=.119) 1.13	.959	.986	1.04	.969	1.03	.961	($\eta^2=.028$) .937
Overall, I consider podcast advertising a good thing	M	3.8	3.74	3.81	3.76	3.85	3.80	3.63	3.91+	3.84+
	SD	1.05	1.05	1.10	1.05	1.12	1.14	1.09	1.04	($\eta^2=.012$) 1.09
Overall, I like podcast advertising	M	3.7	3.70	3.70	3.64	3.71	3.71	3.53	3.77+	3.72+
	SD	1.11	1.11	1.12	1.13	1.17	1.23	1.13	1.10	($\eta^2=.010$) 1.18
I usually listen to the advertisements when they occur in my favorite podcast(s)	M	3.63	3.55	3.59	3.59	3.69	3.75	3.45	3.72*	3.66*
	SD	1.15	1.2	1.2	1.15	1.16	1.13	1.17	1.14	($\eta^2=.010$) 1.19
I am more likely to listen to podcast advertising featuring someone who is regularly on the podcast (such as a host, producer	M	4.05	3.96	4.16	3.96	4.04	3.94	3.9	4.1*	4.09*
	SD	1.04	1.14	1.04	1.08	1.04	1.12	1.10	1.07	($\eta^2=.011$) 1.08

or contributor)										
It is important to buy products or services advertised on my favorite podcast(s)	M	3.29	3.33	3.27*	3.27	3.35	3.7*	3.11	3.4*	3.38*
	SD	.947	1.03	.995	.939	.949	(V=120) 1.16	.932	.966	($\eta^2=.018$) .973
I am more open to podcast advertising than radio advertising	M	3.76	3.84*	3.89	3.77	3.65	3.76	3.57	3.89*	3.88*
	SD	.980	(V=.169) 1.19	1.02	.995	1.10	1.14	1.03	1.00	($\eta^2=.020$) 1.02
I am more open to podcast advertising than TV advertising	M	3.7	3.77*	3.78	3.72	3.60	3.84	3.51	3.78*	3.87*
	SD	.992	(V=.176) 1.22	1.05	1.01	1.09	1.12	1.08	1.00	($\eta^2=.020$) 1.02

Note: Likert Scale: 5=Strongly Agree – 1=Strongly Disagree; M = mean (higher means = stronger agreement); SD = Standard Deviation.

* = Significant correlation ($p < .001$)

+ = Significant correlation ($p = .002$).

In response to the prompts adapted from Mittal's General Opinion on TV Advertising scale (1994) more than two-thirds of the listeners (72.9%) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that podcast advertising is essential; 64.2% strongly agreed or agreed that advertising is good, and 61.2% strongly agreed or agreed that they like podcast advertising. Podcast consumption correlated with the belief that podcast advertising is essential; more than expected, moderate- and high-frequency podcast listeners strongly agreed that podcast advertising is essential, although the effect size was small $\chi^2(8, N=1714) = 53.577, p = <.001; \eta^2=.028$. Recent comparison percentages of attitudes toward advertising in other media are not available; however, Wolin and Korgaonkar (2003) included a summary finding that 53% to 56% (mean = 2.67–2.69) reported positive attitudes in relation to web advertising, and Mittal (1994) found that 12% to 43% were positively disposed toward TV advertising. To test hypothesis 5, a linear regression was calculated to determine what elements predict podcast advertising attitude scale results.

A significant regression equation was found $R^{2adj} = .622, F(3, 1651) = 906.697, p <.001$ in which attitude scale results were predicted by the preference for host-read ads ($\beta = .571, p <.001$), a belief in the authenticity of host-read ads ($\beta = .263, p <.001$) and the host relationship scale ($\beta = .128, p <.001$). The respondents reported preferring podcast advertising to advertise in other broadcast media. When asked if they preferred radio to podcast advertising, only 9.9% selected radio advertising. When asked if they preferred TV advertising to podcast advertising, only 10.9% selected TV advertising. Research question 2 asked whether independent variables such as the level of podcast consumption, gender, and age of podcast listeners correlate with podcast advertising attitudes. While a few significant correlations were found for age and gender, only weak relationships were established; however, PPW correlated with all eight advertising attitude prompts (as shown in Table 3). Although PPW was not found to be a major predictor because the effect size was small, it is still notable that moderate and high podcast consumption levels correlated with higher positive attitudes in all scale items.

Consumer Action: Consumer action was measured through buying behavior, intent to purchase, and donations. A scale of three questions measured consumer behavior using already-developed buyer status prompts (Dittmar, Long, & Meek, 2004; Chaney & Dolli, 2001) these prompts were modified, however, from "have bought/have not bought" to include an additional option of "No, but I seriously considered it," as qualitative interviews revealed that many participants referred to the thought process of considering a purchase as an in-between step as opposed to a negative answer. The three prompts probed whether respondents had purchased because of a podcast advertisement and if their motivation for the purchase was functional (desire for the product/service) or social/emotional (desire to help the podcaster; (Dittmar, Long, & Meek, 2004). While identity is potentially a third motivation for consumer action (Dittmar, Long, & Meek, 2004), it was not tested quantitatively as it did not emerge as a theme from the preliminary interviews. Cronbach's alpha showed a good internal consistency ($\alpha = .816$) of the three-item consumer buying action

scale (see Table 4). A total score was calculated and used for further analyses, arriving at a mean score of 1.91 (SD = .67); “Yes I have bought a product because of a podcast ad” was coded as 1, “No, but I seriously considered it” was coded as 2, and “No, I have not bought a product because of a podcast ad” was coded as 3. Questions about alternate consumer actions, such as donations made and intent to purchase in the future were not worded similarly enough to allow for inclusion in the scale.

Table 4: Podcast Advertising Consumer Buying Actions by Gender and Age

Cronbach's $\alpha =$.817		Female	Male	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	1-5 PPW	6-10 PPW	11+ PPW
Answers = Yes/Considered it/No										
I have bought a product or service because of a podcast advertisement	Yes	39.5%	49.2%	39.3%	41.8%	43.1%	45.1%	32.7%	47.5%*	44.4%*
	Considered it	(n=534)	(n=176)	(n=181)	(n=369)	(n=137)	(n=23)	(n=191)	(n=286)	($\eta^2=.017$)
	No	34.1%	24.9%	35.7%	32.2%	28.9%	19.6%	35.1%*	29.9%	(n=233)
I have bought a product or service featured on a podcast because I wanted it	Yes	(n=461)	(n=89)	(n=164)	(n=284)	(n=92)	(n=10)	(n=205)	(n=180)	31.4%
	Considered it	26.5%	26%	25%	26%	28%	35.3%	32.2%*	22.6%	(n=165)
	No	(n=358)	(n=93)	(n=115)	(n=229)	(n=89)	(n=18)	(n=188)	(n=136)	24.2%
I have bought a product or service featured on a podcast because I wanted it	Yes	40.2%	44.7%	38.1%	41%	45%	47.1%	33.2%	46.4%*	43.8%*
	Considered it	(n=543)	(n=161)	(n=175)	(n=362)	(n=143)	(n=24)	(n=194)	(n=279)	($\eta^2=.012$)
	No	38.5%	33.3%	42.9%	37.9%	31.1%	17.6%	41.4%*	34.4%	(n=231)
I have bought a product or service featured on a podcast because I wanted to help out the podcaster	Yes	(n=520)	(n=120)	(n=197)	(n=335)	(n=99)	(n=9)	(n=242)	(n=207)	36.2%
	Considered it	21.4%	21.9%	19%	21.2%	23.9%	35.3%	25.3%*	19.1%	(n=191)
	No	(n=289)	(n=79)	(n=87)	(n=187)	(n=76)	(n=18)	(n=148)	(n=115)	19.9%
I have bought a product or service featured on a podcast because I wanted to help out the podcaster	Yes	23.4%	33.3%*	24.4%	26.4%	23.6%	31.4%	18.8%	26.4%*	31.9%*
	Considered it	(n=316)	($V=.121$)	(n=112)	(n=233)	(n=75)	(n=16)	(n=109)	(n=159)	($\eta^2=.017$)
	No	41.9%*	(n=120)	40.3%	38.9%	43.1%	17.6%	42%*	37%	(n=168)
I have bought a product or service featured on a podcast because I wanted to help out the podcaster	Yes	(n=566)	30%	(n=185)	(n=343)	(n=137)	(n=9)	(n=244)	(n=223)	39.3%
	Considered it	34.7%	(n=108)	35.3%	34.6%	33.3%	51%	39.2%*	36.5%	(n=207)
	No	(n=468)	36.4%	(n=162)	(n=305)	(n=106)	(n=26)	(n=228)	(n=220)	28.7%
		(n=131)								(n=151)

* = Significant correlation (more than expected, $p < .001$)
 PPW = podcast episodes listened to per week; percentages rounded.

As hypothesized in hypothesis 6, podcast listeners demonstrated consumer buying actions in response to podcast advertising. Among the sample of listeners, 41.4% said that they had already bought a product or service because of a podcast advertisement; comedy and personal enrichment listeners agreed with this statement more than expected, while true crime listeners said that they had considered such a purchase but had not followed through, and history listeners reported buying less than expected $\chi^2(8, N=1711) = 44.229, p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .114$. It was predicted in Hypothesis 7 that podcast advertising attitudes would positively relate to consumer action, which was confirmed. The main effect was found, in which the eight-item podcast advertising scale predicted the three-item consumer buying action scale at a significant level with a medium size effect $R^{2adj} = .311, F(1, 1664) = 753.440, p < .001$. When prompted to explain their motivations for making these purchases, 41.1% of the podcast listeners reported functional motivation, while 25.4% reported socio-emotional motivation.

The motivation of a podcast listener to purchase a product because it is desired is statistically associated with the motivation to purchase a product to help a podcaster. The effect size is large: respondents motivated by functional concerns are more likely than expected to be motivated by socio-emotional concerns as well, $\chi^2(6, N=1709) = 970.949, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .533$. Hypothesis 8 postulated that there was a correlation between a preference for host-read ads and consumer buying actions, but this was only partially confirmed. While the respondents' belief that a host was being authentic when pitching a product in a host-read ad acted as a predictor for the consumer action scale score, $R^{2adj} = .171, F(1, 1684) = 347.388, p < .001$, a higher score on the host-relationship scale did not predict the purchase of a product in the past. Intent to purchase is another part of consumer action because the intention is a strong predictor of behavior (Solomon, 2013). The

survey asked respondents whether they would like to buy a product or service advertised on one of the podcasts they regularly consumed; 79.9% responded in the affirmative.

Linear regression revealed a significant model with medium effect size, as higher scores on the podcast attitude advertising scale predicted a listener's desire to purchase something in the future, $R^{2adj} .483$, $F(1, 1661) = 1553.522$, $p < .001$. With a moderate effect size, the podcast consumer buying scale was positively related to future purchase intent, $R^{2adj} .358$, $F(1, 1684) = 940.080$, $p < .001$. More than expected, high podcast consumers strongly agreed that they would like to purchase an advertised product or service in the future; moderate podcast consumers agreed, while low podcast consumers strongly disagreed or disagreed, $\chi^2(8, N=1706) = 37.084$, $p < .001$; Cramer's $V=.104$. Intended action was also examined by ascertaining how listeners chose podcast ads to respond. Respondents expressed a preference for buying products advertised on independent podcasts (59.6%) as opposed to products advertised on professional podcasts (.9%).

More than expected, when asked what type of podcast they preferred to patron, moderate- and high-frequency podcast consumers selected independent podcasts, although the effect size was small, $\chi^2(6, N=1695) = 56.534$, $p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .129$, as did those who preferred the comedy genre $\chi^2(12, N=1695) = 98.905$, $p < .001$; Cramer's $V = .139$. The third measure of consumer action was the extent of the financial contribution made by listeners to their favorite podcasts. Nearly half (45.2%) of survey participants donated to the podcasts of their choice; 29.2% of participants reported making a revolving monthly contribution (e.g., through the use of platforms such as Patreon); 8.5% contributed through a one-time donation (e.g., through PayPal), and 7.5% reported making donations in the form of both revolving and one-time contributions. True crime podcast audience members donated the most (45.9%), and personal enrichment podcast audience members donated the least (35.7%).

Donations did not correlate with the host relationship scale, the podcast advertising attitude scale, or the consumer buying action scale. Research question 3 asked whether variables such as the level of podcast consumption, gender, or the age of listeners correlate with podcast-advertising-based consumer action. There were no significant correlations with age. Similar to the correlations with advertising attitudes, the relationship between consumer buying action and gender was present but weak (see Table 4), with those identifying as a male having made more purchases motivated by socio-emotional concerns than expected. Podcast consumption levels correlated consistently with the three buyer actions, although a small effect size was observed. Those listening to more than six podcasts per week reported significant consumer buying action, both for functional and socio-emotional reasons.

Discussion

This study set out to investigate the perceptions, attitudes, and consumer actions of podcast listeners in response to general podcast advertising, and in particular, host-read advertising. The findings confirm the results of market research, which has noted a positive relationship between podcast listeners and their attitudes toward podcast advertising. This study also extends attitudinal advertising research to a new medium that has not been studied extensively. As expected, the results support that podcast listeners report positive attitudes toward advertising that is impacted by the podcast medium. Furthermore, attitudes toward podcast advertising and consumer actions are predicted by a preference for host-read ads. The advertising attitude of podcast audience members correlated with their consumer actions; listeners with a higher score on the podcast advertising attitude scale bought products for both functional and socio-emotional reasons and demonstrated increased future intent to buy. This finding has important implications for advertisers because it points not only to the importance of accessing consumers who express openness to podcast advertising.

But also, those consumers who have already bought podcast-advertised products and intend to purchase more in the future. While not specifically researched, the correlation between podcast listeners' positive attitudes and consumer action suggests that advertisers might find success in retargeting podcast listeners who heard their podcast ad with an online display ad. Podcast consumption rates were also analyzed, and the level of podcast consumption per week was found to have an influence on listeners – the more podcasts the respondents listened to, the more they approved of podcast advertising. There was a consistent association

between PPW, or the frequency of the listener's interaction with the podcast medium, and podcast advertising attitudes, including a preference for host-read ads and a belief in the authenticity of a host. Listening to more than six podcasts per week, although not a significant predictor, was found to have a statistically significant correlation in all eight prompts for the podcast advertising attitude scale as well as all correlating with the three consumer buying action prompts, suggesting that podcast quantity influences purchases and positive opinions.

The most notable shift in attitudes toward podcast advertising was between low-frequency (1–5 PPW) and moderate-frequency listeners (6–10 PPW). High-frequency podcast consumers (11+ PPW) exhibited only slight additional increases in some advertising attitudes and consumer action prompts, indicating that targeting moderate listeners may be most effective for advertisers. Although previous A_{am} research established gender differences, there were few significant results with regard to podcast advertising, all of which had small effect sizes. Those identifying as male preferred podcast advertising to advertising in other broadcast media, and reported more purchases in response to podcast ads, identifying a socio-emotional motivation for purchasing, while females were more likely to have only considered making a purchase. This finding differs from previous research in which females were found to be more likely to purchase for socio-emotional reasons in the real world (Campbell, 2000; Dittmar & Drury, 2000).

However, gender-based differences were found to diminish in the case of online shopping (Dittmar, Long, & Meek, 2004), and a similar effect may occur with podcast advertising. Regarding age, the survey revealed limited generational patterns, all of which had small effect sizes. The two oldest age groups were found to be more likely than expected to listen to podcast ads, have the most positive attitudes toward podcast advertising, and report purchasing a product for a functional reason. While the older audience comprised the smallest age category, the study revealed that podcast listeners in this category were most likely to respond in the manner advertisers hope for. The youngest age group reported more positive podcast advertising attitudes but was the least likely to report having purchased a product in response to a podcast ad. It would be interesting to include income questions in future studies to determine if the lack of purchasing might have a stronger correlation to disposable income and younger listeners may simply have less money to spend.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study found that audiences prefer ads created by regular podcast contributors because they trust their favorite podcasters and consider them authentic. At the industry level, advertisers should prioritize and facilitate the involvement of show hosts in podcast advertising because podcast listeners prefer host-read ads over supplied commercials or ads in other media. Although the preference for host-read ads was supported by market research, it is now confirmed in academic research. Unfortunately, recent statistics signal that advertisers shifted away from host-read ads as they decreased in 2020 while supplied ads increased (IAB, 2021). The movement to supplied ads may be a response to the early frustrations experienced by advertisers when host- and announcer-read podcast ads were “baked-in” and “therefore live within the content for its lifetime” (IAB, 2017). According to one podcast hosting platform, these embedded host-read ads result in outdated messaging in back catalogs for about 50% of the podcasts available for download (Audioboom, 2021, p. 4). Advertisers should revisit the use of host-read ads as advances in streaming podcast ad placement allows host- or announcer-read ads to be digitally inserted, ensuring up-to-date messaging, thus eliminating the problems associated with older baked-in advertisements.

For podcasts that sell advertising within episodes, the results of this research indicate that they may be better served when their audiences listen to six or more other podcasts. Rather than assuming they are competing with other podcasts for listeners, it might be beneficial for podcasters to promote and support like-minded shows to build a stronger base with more involved listeners. Advertisers should investigate podcast genres in which the listeners build communities and share podcast recommendations with each other, thus encouraging additional podcast consumption. The exploratory nature of this study identified three domains through qualitative research that were analyzed to reveal significant correlations between perceived relationships with podcast hosts, advertising attitudes, and consumer buying actions on the part of podcast listeners. As podcast audiences continue to grow and the number of podcasts proliferates, advertisers have

excellent opportunities to reach engaged consumers who not only want to hear host-read ads but are also willing to purchase the advertised products and services.

Future Research: The limitations of this study suggest avenues for additional research on podcast advertising. To begin with, the scales used in the study should be tested for reproducible results. While participants were recruited from Facebook groups, using other means of reaching podcast audiences might uncover more representative listener samples. The respondent demographic should be expanded to include additional elements that might correlate with stronger effect sizes. Although preliminary, the results suggest that genre listeners exhibit some unique behaviors; comedy and true crime listeners demonstrated the most positive podcast advertising attitudes, while history podcast listeners were the least positive about ads. Comedy and personal enrichment podcast listeners reported the most consumer buying actions, and history podcast listeners the least. Finally, since podcast genre listeners were found to exhibit unique behaviors, additional research should analyze them more closely. Despite its limitations, this study underscores the importance of host-read ads in the podcast medium.

Acknowledgments: The author is grateful for the financial support of the Lee University Faculty Research Grant as well as research assistance from senior communication arts students: Chrislyn Coffey, Rachel Colitz, Jhenny Dorival, Jeffrey Greiner, Laura Nix, and Adam Schiller.

References

- Aaker, D. A. (2011). *Marketing Research*, 10th edition. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Acklin, M. (2019, September 30). Twenty-two percent of listeners made a purchase because of a podcast ad. Retrieved from CivicScience.
- Anstandig, D. & Wright, R. (2019). NAB podcast users national survey report 2019. National Association of Broadcasters Conference. Las Vegas.
- Audioboom. (2021). Audioboom launches Adrip: new ad tech tool for creators.
- Bagozzi, R. P. (2006). Consumer action. In N. K. Malhotra (Ed.), *Review of Marketing Research*, M. E. Sharpe.
- Balderston, M. (2020, December 7). Magna: National TV ad revenue to rebound in 2021. Retrieved from TV Tech: <https://www.tvtechnology.com/news/magna-national-tv-ad-revenue-to-rebound-in-2021>
- Balter, F. & Brunet, I. (2012). Social research 2.0: Virtual snowball sampling method using Facebook. *Internet Research*, 22(1), 57-74.
- Benes, R. (2020, September 16). Radio ad spending will decline by 25% this year. Retrieved from eMarketer: <https://www.emarketer.com/content/radio-ad-spending-will-decline-by-25-0-this-year>
- Berry, R. (2016). Podcasting: Considering the evolution of the medium and its association with the word 'radio'. *The Radio Journal International Studies in Broadcast and Audio Media*, 14(1), 7-22.
- Boling, K. S. & Hull, K. (2018). Undisclosed information—Serial is my favorite murder: examining motivations in the true crime podcast audience. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 25(1), 92-108.
- Brief, D. J., Rubin, A., Keane, T. M., Enggasser, J. L., Roy, M., Helmuth, E. & Rosenbloom, D. (2013). Web intervention for OEF/OIF veterans with problem drinking and PTSD symptoms: A randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 81(5).
- Bronner, F. & Neijens, P. (2006). Audience experiences of media context and embedded advertising: A comparison of eight media. *International Journal of Market Research*, 48(1), 81-100.
- Brunel, F. & Nelson, M. R. (2003). Message order effects and gender differences in advertising persuasion. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 43(3), 330-342.
- Campbell, C. (2000). Shopaholics, spendaholics, and the question of gender. In A. Benson (Ed.), *I shop, Therefore I am: Compulsive Buying and the Search for Self* (pp. 31-47). Aronson.
- Carifio, J. & Perla, R. (2008). Resolving the 50-year debate around using and misusing Likert scales. *Medical Education*, 42(12), 1150-1152.
- Chadha, M., Avila, A. & Gil de Zúñiga, H. (2012). Listening in: Building a profile of podcast users and analyzing their political participation. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 9(4), 388-401.
- Chaney, I. & Dolli, N. (2001). Cause related marketing in New Zealand. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 6(1), 156-163.
- Chan-Olmsted, S. & Wang, R. (2020, October). Understanding podcast users: Consumption motives and behaviors. *New Media & Society*, 1-21.

- Charmaz, K. (2008). Constructionism and the grounded theory method. In J. Holstein, & J. Gubrium (Eds.), *Handbook of constructionist research* (pp. 397–412). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Chu, J. L. & Snider, C. E. (2013). Use of a social networking website for recruiting Canadian youth for medical research. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 52*(6), 792–4.
- Claritas. (2020, September 20). Podcast campaign lift: A guide to accurately analyzing campaign conversion rates. Retrieved from Claritas: <https://www2.claritas.com/l/306121/2020-09-08/plysf>
- Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin, 112*(1), 155–159.
- Cook, R. D. & Weisberg, S. (1982). *Residuals and Influence in Regression*. New York: Chapman & Hall.
- Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C. (2016). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Darley, W. K. & Smith, R. E. (1995). Gender differences in information processing strategies: an empirical test of the selectivity model in advertising response. *Journal of Advertising, 24*(1), 41–56.
- Dijkstra, M., Buijtsels, H. & Van Raaij, W. (2005). Separate and joint effects of medium type on consumer responses: A comparison of television, print, and the internet. *Journal of Business Research, 58*(3), 377-386.
- Dittmar, H. & Drury, J. (2000). Self-image—is it in the bag? A qualitative comparison between “ordinary” and excessive’ consumers. *Journal of Economic Psychology, 21*(2), 109-142.
- Dittmar, H., Long, K. & Meek, R. (2004). Buying on the internet: Gender differences in online and conventional buying motivations. *Sex Roles, 50*(5), 423-444.
- Djafarova, E. & Bowes, T. (2021). Instagram made me buy it: Generation Z impulse purchases in fashion industry. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 59*.
- Edison Research. (2019). The infinite dial 2019. Marketplace-Edison Research Poll.
- Edison Research. (2020c). The top 50 most listened to U.S. podcasts of 2020.
- Edison Research. (2021a). The infinite dial.
- Edison Research. (2021b). Share of ear Q1 2021.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University.
- Freidman, H. (2017, May 30). The Comprehensive Guide to Podcast Advertising. Retrieved from Growth Marketing Pro: <https://www.growthmarketingpro.com/comprehensive-guide-podcast-advertising/>
- Frey, L., Botan, C. H. & Kreps, G. (2000). *Investigating communication*. New York: Allyn & Bacon.
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Guadagnoli, E. & Velicer, W. F. (1988). Relation of sample size to the stability of component patterns. *Psychological bulletin, 103*(2), 265.
- Ha, L. (1996). Observations of advertising clutter in consumer magazines: Dimension and effects. *Journal of Advertising Research, 36*(4), 76–84.
- Ha, L. & McCann, K. (2008). An integrated model of advertising clutter in offline and online media. *International Journal of Advertising, 27*(4), 569-592.
- Heath, R. (2008). Fifty years using the wrong model of advertising. *International Journal of Market Research, 50*(1), 29-59.
- IAB. (2017). *Podcast playbook: A guide for marketers*. (Interactive Advertising Bureau).
- IAB. (2018). *Podcast ad revenue study*. Interactive Advertising Bureau.
- IAB. (2020). *U.S. podcast advertising revenue study*. Interactive Advertising Bureau.
- IAB. (2021). *U.S. podcast advertising revenue study*. Interactive Advertising Bureau.
- Jackson, J. (2014). Quartimax rotation. In N. Balakrishnan, T. Colton, B. Everitt, W. Piegorisch, F. Ruggeri, & J. Teugels (Eds.), *Wiley StatsRef: Statistics Reference Online*. Wiley.
- Joyce, G. (2018, December 28). Podcast audiences: Why are women such big fans of true crime podcasts? Retrieved from Brandwatch: <https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/react-podcast-audiences/>
- Kaysen, D., Cue Davis, K. & Kilmer, J. R. (2011). Use of social networking sites to sample lesbian and bisexual women. *The Addictions Newsletter, 18*, 14–15.
- Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content analysis*. . Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lim, J. S., Ri, S. Y., Donnelly Egan, B. & Biocca, F. A. (2015). The cross-platform synergies of digital video advertising: Implications for cross-media campaigns in television, internet and mobile TV. *Computers in Human Behavior, 48*, 463-472.

- Loroz, P. S. & Helgeson, J. G. (2013). Boomers and their babies: An exploratory study comparing psychological profiles and advertising appeal effectiveness across two generations. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 21(3), 289-306.
- Lynch, K. & Stipp, H. (1999). Examination of qualitative viewing factors for optimal advertising strategies. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39, 7-19.
- Maffeo, T. (2019, March 19). What is the gender split in podcasting? Retrieved from Voxnest.
- Mancusi, T. (2017a, March 7). The power of podcast advertising: It's rising. Retrieved from ClickZ: <https://www.clickz.com/the-power-of-podcast-advertising-its-rising-popularity-and-how-to-avoid-ad-skipping-to-ensure-roi/109957/>
- Mancusi, T. (2017b, April 17). You can measure podcast downloads, but what about delivery? Retrieved from Mediashift.
- Mehta, A. & Purvis, S. (1995). When attitudes towards advertising in general influence advertising success. Conference of the American Academy of Advertising. Norfolk, VA.
- Meyers, A. (2020, November 9). From the host's lips to the audience's ears: the power of the host-read podcast ad. Retrieved from Morning Consult: <https://morningconsult.com/2020/11/09/podcast-hosts-advertising/>
- Midroll Media. (2018). Podcast ads build strong relationships with brands.
- Mittal, B. (1994). Public assessment of TV advertising: Faint praise and harsh criticism. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 34(1), 35-53.
- Moe, M. (2021). Podvertising II: "Just like My Best Friend"-Relationships in Host-read Podcast Advertisements. *Journal of Radio & Audio Media*, 1-25.
- Mohan, P. (2018, January 30). PRX is investing in podcasts for kids, just as podcast advertising proves its worth. Retrieved from Fast Company.: <https://www.fastcompany.com/40523979/prx-is-investing-in-podcasts-for-kids-just-as-podcast-advertising-proves-its-worth>
- Moore, J. J. & Rodgers, S. L. (2005). An examination of advertising credibility and skepticism in five different media using the persuasion knowledge model. American Academy of Advertising Conference Proceedings. Houston, TX.
- Morgan, A. J., Jorm, A. F. & Mackinnon, A. J. (2013). Internet-based recruitment to a depression prevention intervention: Lessons from the mood memos study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 15(2).
- Neter, J., Wasserman, W. & Kutner, M. H. (1983). *Applied Linear Statistical Models: Simultaneous Inferences and Other Topics in Regression Analysis* (2nd ed.). Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin.
- Niche podcasts have more listeners, indicating untapped advertising opportunities. (2020). Retrieved from Media Monitors: <https://www.mediamonitors.com/niche-podcasts-have-more-listeners-detailed/>
- Nielsen. (2017). Podcast sponsorship effectiveness. Nielsen.
- Nielsen. (2020). Podcast survey: Host-Read podcast ads drive higher brand lift metrics than non-host ads.
- Nielsen. (2021). Podcasting today: Insights for podcast advertisers.
- Norman, G. T. (2010). Likert scales, levels of measurement and the laws' of statistics. *Advances in Health Science Education*, 15(5), 625-632.
- Nunnally, J. C. & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric Theory* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Onwuegbuzie, A., Bustamante, R. M. & Nelson, J. A. (2010). Mixed research as a tool for developing quantitative instruments. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 4(1), 56-78.
- Pedersen, E., Naranjo, D. & Marshall, G. (2017). Recruitment and retention of young adult veteran drinkers using Facebook. *PLoS One*, 12(3).
- Pelsmacker, D., Geuens, P. M. & Anckaert, P. (2002). Media context and advertising effectiveness: The role of context appreciation and context/ad similarity. *Journal of Advertising*, 31(2), 49-61.
- Phillip, M. V. & Suri, R. (2004). Impact of gender differences on the evaluation of promotional emails. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 44(4), 360-368.
- RAB & Borrell Associates. (2020). Digital sales skyrocket, hitting \$1 billion.". 8th Annual Report.
- Regan, B. (2017, December 26). Podcasts took off this year: What will the new year bring? Newsweek.
- Rialti, R., Zollo, L., Pellegrini, M. M. & Ciappei, C. (2017). Exploring the antecedents of brand loyalty and electronic word of mouth in social-media-based brand communities: Do gender differences matter? *Journal of Global Marketing*, 30(3), 147-160.
- Riffe, D., Lacy, S. & Fico, F. G. (1988). *Analyzing media messages: Using quantitative content analysis in research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Riismandel, P. (2020). Report: Podcast ads perform, host reads outperform. Stitcher.

- Smith, K. T. (2019). Mobile advertising to digital natives: preferences on content, style, personalization, and functionality. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 27(1), 67-80.
- Solomon, M. R. (2013). *Consumer Behavior: Buying, Having, and Being*. 10th ed. Hoboken, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Sullivan, G. M. & Artino Jr, A. R. (2013). Analyzing and interpreting data from Likert-type scales. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, 5(4), 541.
- Swant, M. (2016, June 3). ComScore says people prefer ads in podcasts over any other digital medium. Retrieved from AdWeek.: <https://www.adweek.com/performance-marketing/comscore-says-people-prefer-ads-podcasts-over-any-other-digital-medium-171804/>
- Tan, S. J. & Chia, L. (2007). Are we measuring the same attitude? Understanding media effects on attitude towards advertising. *Marketing Theory*, 7(4), 353-377.
- Tracy, S. J. (2019). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Newark, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- van der Goot, M. J., Rozendaal, E., Oprea, S. J., Ketelaar, P. & Smit, E. (2018). Media generations and their advertising attitudes and avoidance: A six-country comparison. *International Journal of Advertising*, 37(2), 289-308.
- Vetrano, L. (2019). Case study: Podcast ad exposure generates strong brand impact for staffing firm. Westwood One Podcasts.
- Vicary, A. M. & Fraley, R. C. (2010). Captured by true crime: Why are women drawn to tales of rape, murder, and serial killers? *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 1, 81-86.
- Vilceanu, M. O., Johnson, K. & Burns, A. (2021). Consumer perceptions of podcast advertising: theater of the mind and story selling. Association of Marketing Theory & Practice Conference Proceedings. Westwood One Podcasts. (2019). Westwood One and Audience Insights Inc.'s podcast spring 2019 report.
- Why listeners respond to podcast ads. (2017, December 12). Retrieved from Backyard Media: <https://backyardmedia.us/blog/2017/12/8/how-listeners-respond-to-podcast-ads>
- Wolin, L. D. & Korgaonkar, P. (2003). Web advertising: Gender differences in beliefs, attitudes and behavior. *Internet Research*, 13(5), 375-385.