The Role of Podcasts in Public Opinion Formation in Jordan and the Arab World

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Abstract

Podcasts have become a key medium for information dissemination and public discourse. This study explores their role in shaping public opinion in Jordan and the Arab world, an area less studied compared to traditional media. Using surveys and interviews, the research examines podcasts' impact on political engagement, media trust, and discourse. Findings suggest that podcasts are viewed as more engaging and reliable than traditional media, fostering critical thinking. However, concerns about misinformation persist. The study provides insights for policymakers and media professionals, highlighting podcast for.

Keywords: *Podcasts, Public Opinion, Digital Media, Jordan, Arab World, Political Discourse, Media Trust, Misinformation, Civic Engagement, Podcast Content Strategies.*

Introduction

Podcasts have quickly emerged as a vibrant platform for the circulation of information, discussion, and propaganda throughout the Middle East (Scripps, 2020). In contrast to mainstream broadcast media, podcasts offer an interactive platform where thoughtful discussions can take root, sometimes beyond the parameters of mainstream stories (Robson, 2023).

This phase has facilitated journalists, political analysts, and social commentators within Jordan and across the broader Arab community to cover significant political, social, economic and related topics (Zaid et al., 2024). As digital media and increasing access to mobile internet spread, the Arab world has discovered podcasts as a source of news, politics, and public discourse (Askar & Mellor, 2024).

In spite of their increased influence, the role of podcasts in shaping public opinion in Jordan and the Arab world is not an extensively studied phenomenon. Whereas conventional media channels, like television and newspapers, have been exhaustively studied in their impact on political opinions and citizen engagement, very little empirical research is available about podcast's roles in these activities (Shunnar & Altweissi, 2022). The format of podcasting can support more nuanced and personalistic discussions, but to what extent it impacts a listener's attitudes, political engagement, and opinion formation remains unexamined (Khattak et al., 2024). Moreover, the impact of content models such as interview-type, documentary-format, and opinion-based podcasts on public debate is not well studied. Another significant area to be examined is the role of misinformation and propaganda narratives on podcasting content and

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their potential effects on public opinion.

This study is significant since it seeks to bridge this research gap by exploring how podcasts influence political discourse, audience attitudes, and participation in political issues in Jordan and the Arab world. As digital political communication becomes a growing trend, it is essential to understand the implications of podcasts on public opinion for media scholars, policymakers, and producers (O'Connell, 2020). Further, the study will document how news media, political agents, and government agencies are involved in creating podcast-mediated narratives. Through such an understanding, this research aspires to increase general knowledge in relation to digital media in today's Arab world.

The overall objectives of this study are to quantify how podcasts build political discourse, examine the effectiveness of different strategies in framing audience sentiment, and investigate the presence and impact of propaganda and rumour in podcasting. The study also aims to research the impact of political influencers and media on podcast-based communication and provide strategic recommendations for optimizing podcast content for sharing correct information and civic awareness. Through these objectives, this research will yield meaningful information about the evolving interface between public opinion formation and digital media across Jordan and the Arab world. The research also aims to examine the demographic factors that influence podcast listening and its impact on public opinion. By analysing how different age groups, educational attainment, and socioeconomic statuses interact with podcast content, the research aims to identify trends in audience behaviour and preference. This will provide useful insight into how podcasts can be structured to reach out to various segments of the population, such that their message resonates with a broad audience. Understanding these demographic factors is crucial to creating inclusive and effective communication strategies that are able to reach out to diverse groups of people, thereby enhancing the overall impact of podcasts on opinion-making among the population.

Besides this, the study will contribute to the broad discussion on the role of digital media in framing political and social narratives in the Arab world. Through the identification of podcasting's particular strengths as a platform, the research will offer a comparison of the relative effectiveness of podcasts as a means of digital communication compared to social media and traditional broadcasting. This will not only add to academic understanding of the evolving media landscape but also offer valuable suggestions to content producers, policymakers, and media companies. Ultimately, this study will bridge the gap between practice and theory, offering practical strategies in making podcasts effective to facilitate informed public discourse, combat disinformation, and foster civic engagement in Jordan and more widely.

Literature Review

Analyzing previously done studies showcases a significant gap in research on the use of podcasts in Jordanian and Arab public opinion development. Even though some studies examine social media's effect on the development of public opinion (AlKhudari et al., 2024; Ausat, 2023), other works investigate political and religious polarity owing to social media (Kazkaz, 2020). But these research do not aim to target specifically podcasts as a catalyst of influence, rather, they have turned their eyes on the broader topic of social media without considering the fact that podcast is different from the other internet communications.

Moreover, even though podcasts have been analyzed in the Arab world on their influence on feminist self-presentation (Kedwany, 2024) and as a rich medium that differs from conventional

radio (Abdelhamid, 2025). These analyses neglect their contribution to the creation of public opinion. They essentially focus on the listener's interaction and consumer behavior of the media instead of the impact of podcasts on a certain belief system, attitude, or discussions in society. In addition, the research on feminist podcasting and media richness does not deal exclusively with Jordan, hence is not fully applicable to the socio-political and cultural context of the country.

One of the key limitations of the current research is the absence of empirical examination of the role played by podcasts in framing public discourse, especially in politically charged and culturally diverse settings like Jordan. The examined studies also fail to examine the interaction between podcast narratives and other sources of media in shaping public opinion. In addition, little research has been conducted on audience demographics, specifically how various age groups, levels of education, and exposure to podcasts affect opinion formation in the Arab world.

The present research tries to fills these gaps directly by investigating the influence of podcasts on public opinion in Jordan and the wider Arab world. In contrast to existing studies that mainly deal with social media (AlKhudari et al., 2024; Ausat, 2023), this research separates podcasts as a specific medium and explores their specific contribution to the political landscape of Jordan, and the public discourse. As a result, it provides a subtler view of the role of digital media in influencing opinions outside social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter

Furthermore, whereas prior research examines podcast listening and content production, this research takes it even further by investigating how podcasting content actually affects the attitudes and opinions of listeners. It looks for evidence of whether podcasts are an alternative channel of information that provides counter hegemonic stories, promotes independent thinking, or corroborates prevailing ideological outlooks. This study also includes demographic variables, giving us an idea of how various segments of the population listen to podcasts and whether their impact differs by age, gender, or socioeconomic status (Abdelhamid, 2025; Kedwany, 2024).

Unlike other research that focuses on media richness and story (Abdelhamid, 2025; Kedwany, 2024), the current research applies a mixed-methods design that combines content analysis, surveys of audience, and interviews with experts. This approach ensures a complete understanding of the role played by podcasts in shaping public opinion.

In spite of the earlier studies of Jordanian and Arab world social media and public opinion providing helpful analysis but do not delve into the power and influence of podcasts. Social media, as found by the studies of AlKhudari (2024) and Almaududi Ausat (2023), affects beliefs and plays a role in shaping political ideologies, but further study is needed on the role played by podcasts. Past research has established the impact of social media on polarization (Kazkaz, 2020), but podcasts are different because they offer long, rich discussions. Media richness research also hints at the way the audience interacts with podcasts (Abdelhamid, 2025), but not its influence on public discourse. The current study bridges these gaps by specifically examining how podcasts influence public opinion in Jordan, offering a clearer understanding of their impact and role in the evolving digital media landscape.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design adopted both quantitative and qualitative data collections where a survey was completed alongside interviews to understand the impact of podcasts on the public in Jordan

and the rest of the Arab world (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020). The study was done in three sections, which were survey with 100 participants, interviews with key stakeholders, and data visualization with Python.

Survey Methodology

This was done in order to collect quantitative data about the participants' attitudes towards the podcasts and their impact on the public. The participants were recruited to have 50 males and 50 females with a mean age of 32 years, having an education level of at least a diploma, and have prior experience in listening to podcasts. The survey comprised of six questions answered on a Likert scale 1-5 and the questions were, the trust people have in podcasts, the extent to which podcasts shape people's opinions, comparison of debates in podcasts to those on social media, extent to which people engage in discussions as a result of podcasts, exposure to different opinions as a result of podcasts and the extent to which the information obtained from podcasts is confirmed. All the data that was collected was compiled in an excel work book and then cleaned before being analyzed.

Visualization of Data using Python

Since surveys involve collection of data, two main graphical analyses were developed using python to facilitate the interpretation of the results. An average bar graph was created to show the responses to all six survey questions to give the general idea of participants' perceptions about podcasts. A heatmap was then created to show the correlation between the survey responses in terms of trust, participation, exposure to new ideas and views, and validation. All these visualizations were done using Python libraries such as matplotlib, seaborn and so on. The heatmap was generated through the use of the survey responses correlation matrix and the use of color gradient to represent the strength of the relationship.

Analysis of Interviews

The data collected through in-depth interviews were analyzed thematically to provide responses in relation to the research objectives. The study established that podcasts are considered as a suitable medium for detailed political discourse, especially in areas where the media is limited by censorship or is highly polarized (Dessouki et al., 2023). The interviews also indicated that there are various content types including interview and documentary to reach out to the different audience segments (Mahoney & Tang, 2024). One of the issues that arose from interviews was the existence of fake news in the podcasting platform, therefore the website should incorporate both opinion and fact-based content. The second significant discovery was that the cooperation with other institutions such as governments and academic institutions is another way of increasing the credibility and authority of podcast producers (Shearer et al., 2023).

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

This study offers a rich picture of how podcasts influence public opinion in Jordan and the rest of the Arab world by combining survey data with information gathered through interviews (Haque & Zdravkovska, 2023). The visualizations made with the help of Python increase the effectiveness of the results and make patterns and relationships in the data easier to notice. This approach of the study makes it both quantitative and qualitative and enables the study to make relevant contributions to the existing literature on the topic of the role played by digital media in shaping public opinion.

Results

Interview Results

Theme	Description	Codes (From Transcripts)	Research Objectives Addressed
1. Trust and Credibility	Podcasts are perceived as trustworthy due to their depth, transparency, and ability to bypass traditional media constraints.	- High trust in podcasts - Rigorous fact-checking protocols - Transparency in sourcing - Nuanced coverage	1 (Role in discourse) 3 (Misinformation) 5 (Promote accuracy)
2. Content Strategies	Formats like interviews, documentaries, and opinion-driven content shape audience perceptions and political engagement.	- Long-form discussions - Documentary-style contextualization - Opinion-driven critiques - Hybrid content models	1 (Shaping discourse) 2 (Audience perception) 5 (Optimize strategies)
3. Audience Engagement	Podcasts empower listeners through reflective dialogue, diverse perspectives, and multi-platform interactivity.	- Exposure to new viewpoints - Live Q&A sessions - Youth engagement via TikTok/YouTube - Civic petitions	2 (Engagement) 5 (Civic awareness)
4. Misinformation Challenges	Risks of unverified content persist, requiring improved media literacy and collaborative fact-checking efforts.	- Moderate fact-checking habits - Labeling opinion segments - "Verify This" tools - Partnerships with NGOs/unis	3 (Misinformation impact) 5 (Recommendations)

5. Institutional Collaboration	Governments, media outlets, and influencers can amplify podcast credibility through engagement, certification, and cross-platform integration.	- Government interviews - Media repurposing content - Academic-podcaster partnerships - Regulating partisan ads	4 (Roles of influencers/governments) 5 (Strategic recommendations)

Table 1 Extracted Codes and Themes

Table 1 shows that trust and credibility stood as cornerstones to podcasts' power, given their capacity for presenting in-depth, nuanced analysis boosts listener engagement. Content strategies, including documentary storytelling and hybrid formats blending opinion with fact-checking, hold potential in impacting political dialogue and creating compelling conversations. Furthermore, audience empowerment is fuelled by podcasts' potential for boosting marginalized voices and spurring civic engagement, including petitioning for societal change. Yet, false information is an essential challenge that can be addressed by incorporated verification clips and campaigns for media literacy. Institutional response may also highlight the need for cross-sector partnerships such as universities and government institutions in order to build the credibility and audience for podcasts in public life.
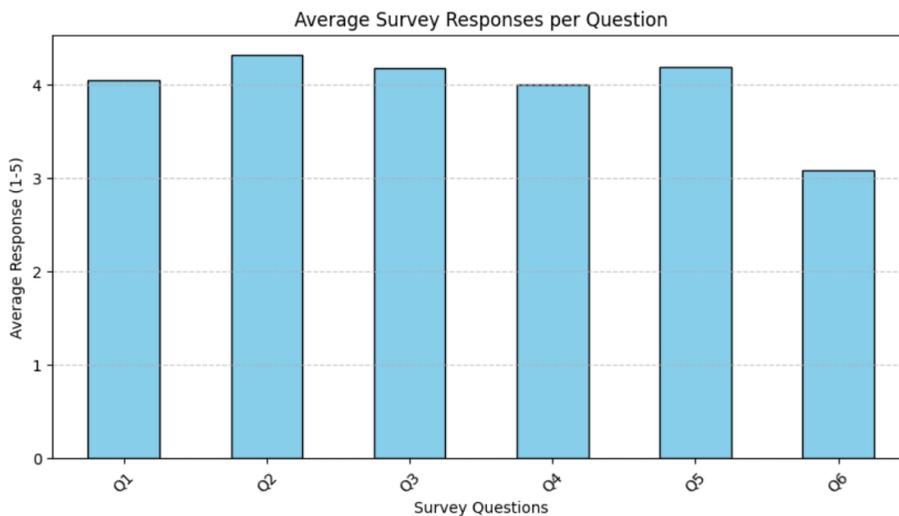
Survey Results

Figure 1. Bar Chart representation of Survey Response Analysis on Podcasts and Public Opinion Development in Jordan

The bar chart provides the mean response to six of the survey questions, each scored on a 1 to 5 scale, indicating public opinion about podcasts and their impact on opinion development. The findings show that respondents tend to have faith in the contents of podcasts as opposed to

mainstream media (Q1), and the average score is over 4. This is facilitated by the fact that most respondents feel that podcasts have swayed their views on social or political topics (Q2), and that podcasts offer a fairer and deeper debate than social media (Q3). The answers to these questions imply that podcasts are seen as reliable sources of information, perhaps supplementing a gap in mainstream media. The data also indicates that a large percentage of respondents engage actively in discussing things they listen to on podcasts with others (Q4), which implies that podcasts act as a stimulus for discussion and critical thinking. Likewise, most respondents believe podcasts introduce them to new ideas they would not otherwise think about (Q5), which supports their function in widening listeners' horizons. The lowest average response is, however, posted for question 6, where it is inquired whether listeners check podcast information from other sources before reaching an opinion. This implies that though podcasts are highly influential and very trusted, perhaps there is limited critical assessment and independent fact-checking by the listeners. The gap between verification and trust has implications for potential misinformation spread, highlighting the need for higher media literacy among listeners of podcasts.
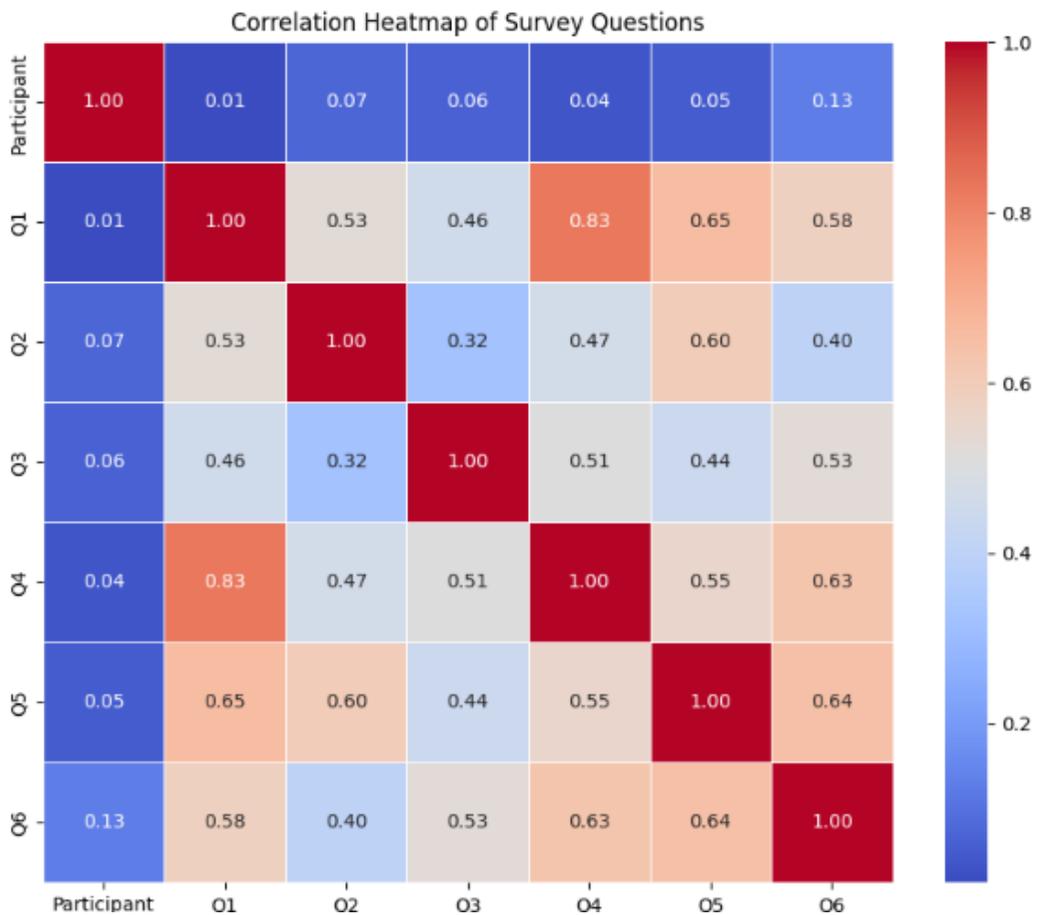

Figure 2. Heatmap Representation of the Correlation Analysis of Survey Questions on Podcasts and Public Opinion Formation in Jordan

The heatmap shows the correlation between responses to the survey, giving us an idea of how

various facets of podcast influence correlate with one another. A high correlation (0.83) is found between trusting podcasts more than traditional media (Q1) and actively discussing topics of podcasts (Q4), indicating that those who trust podcasts more are likely to discuss them as well. Conversely, a very strong correlation (0.65) between Q1 and Q5 shows that people who trust podcasts also believe they open their eyes to new things. The connection between whether podcasts affect attitudes on social or political matters (Q2) and the ability to offer balanced debates (Q3) is moderate (0.32), suggesting many do think podcasts add depth but this does not necessarily translate into opinion shifts. The relationship between fact-checking podcast information via other sources (Q6) and discussing it (Q4) is fairly high (0.63), indicating that people who fact-check are also apt to discuss podcast content with others. The highest overall relationship is between exposure to new ideas (Q5) and fact-checking podcast content (Q6) at 0.64, indicating that those who are interested in new ideas are also more likely to check facts. They all point to the interrelated ways in which trust, conversation, and verification determine public opinion from podcasts, highlighting a possible role for critical appraisal and fact checking among listeners.

Discussions

Thematic analysis of the table provided in the results section reveals some key themes that emerge from the interview data and each of which addresses a specific aspect of the role played by podcasts in shaping public opinion in Jordan and the Arab world. These themes are interconnected and provide a general sense of how podcasts function as a source of political discourse, audience engagement, and the problems they face with credibility and disinformation.

The Trust and Credibility topic prioritizes the feeling of podcasts as credible information (Aufderheide et al., 2020). Podcasts are trusted because of the honesty and candour of the material and that they can breach conventional media obstacles (Meden et al., 2024). The codes from the transcripts indicate that listeners have great trust in podcasts due to rigorous fact-checking protocols, transparency in sourcing, and advanced reporting of matters (Brinson & Lemon, 2023). The subject directly addresses the research aim of investigating the influence of podcasts on political debate as it identifies credibility as an essential factor in establishing podcasts as a credible platform for political and social debate. Faith in podcasts also refers to the broader objective of evaluating the effectiveness of misinformation as the perceived credibility in podcasts will either discourage or enhance the spreading of disinformation

The second of these themes, Content Strategies, discusses the various content types of the podcast, such as interviews, documentaries, and opinion pieces, and how these content types shape audience views and political engagement. It is suggested that long discussions, documentary contextualization, and opinion criticism are best in engaging the audience and shaping their opinions (García-Marín, 2020). This aligns with the research objective of establishing the effect of different content strategies on public perception and political participation. It reveals that the presentation style of podcast content plays an important role in influencing public opinion, with hybrid content models that blend factual reporting with opinion-based analysis being particularly effective (Bratcher, 2022)/

The third is Audience Engagement and how podcasts enfranchise the listener through provocative conversation, multidisciplinary inputs, and multiplicity of media platforms. It is demonstrated that the listener is challenged with new visions, given the live Q&A experience, and spoken to by their youth through platforms like YouTube and TikTok (Sajid & Butt, 2022). This is the theme that appeals to the research objective of gauging the impact of political

influencers and news sources in podcast-based communication as it alludes to the interactivity of podcasts and their capacity for civic action. The topic is also related to the general objective of providing strategic guidance on how to optimize the content of podcasts because it points out audience engagement as an essential element in optimizing the impact of podcasts.

The fourth theme, Misinformation Challenges, addresses the dangers of unverified content on podcasts and the possibility of promoting media literacy and mass fact-checking campaigns (Pathiyan Cherumanal et al., 2024). The codes reveal that although there are moderate fact-checking behaviors amongst certain listeners, there is a need for more robust verification tools and cooperation with NGOs and universities in order to combat misinformation. This issue is related to the research objective of exploring the effect of misinformation and biased narrative in podcasting. It focuses on the challenges posed by misinformation in podcasting and suggests potential steps towards tackling these threats, such as labeling opinion articles and developing verification mechanisms (Caramancion, 2022).

The fifth theme, Institutional Collaboration, examines the work of governments, media outlets, and influencers in aiding the verification of podcast authenticity through interaction, authentication, and multimodal convergence. The codes reveal that media reconfiguration of the content, government interviewing, and collaboration with academics and pod-casters turn out to be a sound method towards enhancing the authenticity and exposure of podcasts. The discussion belongs to the research objective of evaluating the political influencer's, government organizations', and mass media's impacts on podcast-mediated communication. The discussion also fits into the grand objective of making strategic suggestions concerning how to achieve the most through podcast content due to the extent to which it places emphasis on institutional coordination as a means to build the credibility and followership of podcasts.

Overall, thematic analysis of the interview data indicates that trust and credibility, content tactics, audience engagement, misinformation challenges, and institutional collaboration are the main factors that determine the role of podcasts in public opinion construction in Jordan and the Arab region. These themes offer a differentiated understanding of the way in which podcasts operate as a political discourse medium, the difficulties that they present, and the ways in which their impact can be maximized. The research highlights the significance of credibility, varied format content, audience engagement, and institutional collaboration in maximizing the use of podcasts as an instrument for the shaping of public opinion and the promotion of awareness.

The bar chart titled "Bar Chart representation of Survey Response Analysis on Podcasts and Public Opinion Development in Jordan" provides a graphical representation of the average response to six questions posed in the survey, each scored on a scale of 1 to 5. The chart provides meaningful information about how the respondents perceive podcasts and their contribution to the development of public opinion in Jordan (Shunnar & Altweissi, 2022). A detailed interpretation of the results according to the bar chart is provided below.

The first question, "I trust the information in podcasts more than in traditional media," recorded a mean response of over 4, which was high relative to traditional media (Johnson & McCall, 2025). This suggests that the respondents regard podcasts as a credible and trustworthy source of information, potentially filling a gap left by mainstream media. This high level of trust could be because podcasts are capable of staging complex, sophisticated discussions that are not typically seen in other sources of mass media. This finding supports the overall research objective of investigating the role of podcasts in shaping political debate since it indicates the growing authority of podcasts as an information source based on trust.

The second question, "Listening to podcasts has had an impact on my views on social or political matters," also showed a high average score, indicating that the respondents' perceptions are greatly influenced by podcasts. This indicates that podcasts are not only a means of information dissemination but also an extremely powerful mechanism for influencing the perception of public opinion on issues of a social and political nature. The ability of podcasts to affect opinion is the extent to which they are important as a platform for cultivating critical thinking and political consciousness, representative of the goal of research evaluating the impact podcasts have on opinion among audiences and political engagement (Bratcher, 2022).

The third question, "Podcasts provide a more balanced and in-depth discussion compared to social media," recorded an average score that reflects a positive sentiment towards podcasts as a source of in-depth and balanced discussions. This indicates that the respondents view podcasts as a more detailed and credible source of information compared to social media, which is condemned for being shallow and brief (Haines, 2021). This conclusion aligns with the research objective of determining the capacity of podcasts to provide sound and equitable information since it discusses how the quality of podcasts was thought to be superior to that of social media.

The fourth question, "I engage actively in talking about things that I hear in podcasts with people," recorded a high average, which suggests that podcasts serve as a catalyst for social and political conversation. It is, therefore, not just shaping individual perspectives but also catalyzing collective conversation and argument (Ifedayo et al., 2021). Active discussion of podcast issues among the participants emphasizes the involvement of podcasts in encouraging civic duty and public discourse, which resonates with the research objective to explore how podcasts shape political debate and audience engagement.

The fifth one, "Podcasts introduce me to new ideas that I would not otherwise entertain," was also highly scored, indicating that the respondents value podcasts for introducing them to new ideas (Ifedayo et al., 2021). This is a sign that podcasts play a crucial role in opening the horizons of listeners and challenging them to embrace other perspectives. The exposure to new ideas through podcasts appeals to the research objective of measuring the influence of podcasts on public opinion because it highlights the medium to challenge general assumptions and promote critical thinking.

The sixth question, "I compare the information from podcasts with other sources before forming an opinion," received the lowest mean score among the six questions. This indicates that while respondents trust podcasts and think they are influential; they are less likely to cross-check the information they consume on their own. This dissociates the relation between trust and verification, leading to concerns of spreading misinformation by podcasts as the listeners, sometimes, may not think critically about what they are hearing (Pathiyan Cherumanal et al., 2024). This finding complements the research study's purpose in analyzing the effect of misinformation and skewed narratives among podcast content because of the focus on the need for enhanced media literacy and critical consciousness among podcast audiences.

Finally, the bar chart shows that podcasts are highly trusted and influential in shaping public opinion in Jordan. The respondents perceive podcasts as a balanced and trustworthy source of information that encourages critical thinking, civic participation, and exposure to various viewpoints. However, the lower score on the verification question reflects some danger of misinformation, and there is a need for initiatives to promote media literacy and critical examination of podcast content. These findings are significant to grasping the effect of podcasts on public opinion and charting the possible areas for research and intervention to ensure that

podcasts realize their full positive potential and do not cause harm.

The heatmap "Heatmap representation of the Correlation Analysis of Survey Questions on Podcasts and Public Opinion Formation in Jordan" provides a graphic representation of the correlations among the answers to the survey questions. The heatmap uses color gradients to indicate the strength of relationships among variables, with higher values of correlation represented by darker shades. Following is a close reading of the heatmap and what it can reveal about the role of podcasts in shaping public opinion in Jordan.

The heatmap reveals that there is a high positive relationship (0.83) between trusting podcasts more than mainstream media (Q1) and having discussions with others on the content one hears from podcasts (Q4). The heatmap reveals that people who highly trust podcasts tend to discuss what they hear too. This strong relationship underscores the significance of trust in facilitating audience engagement and emphasizes the potential of podcasts to serve as a public debate catalyst. The finding aligns with the research objective of investigating the role of podcasts in the construction of political debate as it indicates that trust in podcasts enhances active participation in debate, which is an integral component of public opinion formation.

There is a strong correlation here as well of the high positive relationship (0.65) between trusting podcasts more than regular media (Q1) and agreeing that podcasting brings varied views (Q5). What it reflects here is that such respondents, those who trust podcasting, would be most appreciative of this medium for getting exposed to variety and alternate thinking. This finding supports the research objective of assessing how podcasts affect audience perception because it underscores the role of trust in creating listeners' openness to new perspectives and ideas. The connection also emphasizes the ability of podcasts to broaden listeners' horizons and disprove assumptions, which is critical for developing critical thinking and civic engagement.

The heatmap also shows a positive but low correlation (0.32) between podcasts having an impact on opinions about social or political issues (Q2) and podcasts providing balanced and in-depth discussion compared to social media (Q3). This implies that while the respondents enjoy the depth and balance of podcast content, it does not necessarily translate into influencing their opinions. This moderate correlation shows that while podcasts are considered to be a high-quality source of information, their potential influence on opinion making might be limited by other factors, such as previous belief or influence of other media sources. This finding aligns with the research objective of determining the impact of content strategies on audience perception because it shows the quality of content as a strong determinant of opinions.

A moderately strong positive correlation (0.63) exists between fact-checking podcast details from other sources (Q6) and debating about podcast subjects with others (Q4). This suggests that people who are likely to fact-check also tend to debate about podcast content with others. The correlation highlights the impact of critical thinking on active discussion and the role of media literacy in promoting educated public discussion. The outcome is in accordance with the research objective of examining the influence of misinformation in that it demonstrates active fact-checking behavior to be strongly associated with active exposure to podcast content.

The highest correlation in general (0.64) is between exposure to new things through podcasts (Q5) and verification of information from podcasts through other sources (Q6). This indicates that individuals who respect podcasts for exposing them to new things are also most likely to verify the information they are listening to. This strong correlation suggests that exposure to various perspectives encourages critical examination of content, which is required for combating

misinformation and informing well-informed public opinion. The outcome aligns with the research objective of providing strategic recommendations for optimizing podcast content, as it highlights the need for developing both exposure to new ideas and critical thinking among listeners.

As a whole, the heatmap illustrates certain significant relationships between the survey questions that provide wonderful insights into how trust, discussion, fact-checking, and exposure to contrary views are determinants of the formation of public opinion through podcasts. The realization that there are high correlations between active discussion and trust in podcasts and fact-checking and listening to new points of view solidifies the idea that these are all highly related variables as agents of audience activity. The moderate correlation level between opinion influence and content quality suggests that even though podcasts are considered to be high-quality information sources, the influence on opinion formation can be explained by other factors. The findings highlight the importance of credibility, critical thought, and diversified content in maximizing the positive impact of podcasts on public opinion and preventing the danger of misinformation.

Significance of the Study

This study's contribution is that it can help policymakers, the media, and online planners know how they can advance the comprehension and use of the pod cast in the shaping of political discourses in Jordan and the rest of the Arab world. Despite the fact that podcasts are quickly becoming an engaging way of disseminating information and engaging the public, this study is useful in the following ways concerning the impact of podcasts on public opinion, political participation, and civic awareness. As for the role that podcasts play toward ensuring that there is a balanced and detailed discussion, this study establishes how podcasts complement traditional media by filling the gaps that are common in some parts of the world where political discussion is suppressed. This is especially relevant to Jordan and the Arab region, as podcasting is a platform for the voices that are often ignored and critical thinking that is missing from mainstream media. From the result of this study, the policymakers can understand the potentiality of podcasts as a platform in enhancing transparency, accountability and democratic discourses and in tackling with the issues of fake news and tilted news that have eroded the trust of the public.

The study is useful for media outlets to provide relevant information on what kind of content would be engaging to the audiences and which content would build the much-needed trust. By comparing the strengths of interview-based, documentary, and opinion podcasts, the research identifies which of the mentioned strategies works best and activates the audience to act politically. It can be used by the media outlets in order to fulfill the needs and demands of the various segments of the society and in that way, obtain the greatest impact possible. The study also puts emphasis on the necessity of mix of the opinion articles with the articles containing facts and figures, together with the check on the information's reliability. This is more so in the present age and era where the online media has been criticized for sharing fake or bias information. By integrating both fictional and factual stories into podcasts, media organizations can improve the persuasiveness and authority of the podcasts.

Digital strategists can also learn from the findings of the research, namely how they can utilize podcasts as part of broader digital communications campaigns. The research highlights the potential of podcasts to be utilized as the anchor for multi-platform strategies that complement social media, live discussions, and visual content to maximize their reach and engagement. For

example, pairing podcast episodes with infographics, live Q&A, or interactive polls will enhance the experience and make it more engaging for listeners. Secondly, the research emphasizes the importance of creating media literacy among the listeners so that they can critically evaluate the content of podcasts and verify information. This is to build a more-educated and critical public that can disregard the power of disinformation and engaging in healthy political conversation.

Finally, this research furthers the greater goal of promoting digital communication practices in the Arab world and Jordan. Through an identification of the strength and weaknesses of podcasts as a medium of public opinion construction, the study presents pragmatic recommendations for optimizing content approaches, boosting audience engagement, and developing civic awareness. In doing so, it not only adds to academic understanding of the role of digital media in political discourse but also offers practical resources for practitioners to access the potential of podcasts in creating informed and open public discussion. This is particularly vital in a part of the world where digital media increasingly shapes political narratives and public opinion, and thus needs to be understood and used responsibly and effectively.

Conclusion

Podcasts in political debate in Jordan and the rest of the Arab world is a very active area and even growing. This research has been informative on how podcasts are a platform of polite talk, as a substitute to mass media and engaging the public on political and social issues. Thus, the impact of various content strategies on trust in podcasts and the problem of fake news in podcasts show that podcasts have a potential to make politics more accessible and amplify the voices of minorities It further establishes credibility and fair reporting as the key forces in establishing trust and formats that meet the need of multiple audiences conveniently. Besides, the research also indicates that there is need to fight disinformation hence making sure that podcasts can still be a source of quality information.

The study also provides a number of managerial implications to policy makers, media outlets, and online marketers on how to effectively leverage on podcasts. When the producers combine opinion-based narratives with factual information, they are likely to increase the credibility and viewership of their productions. Moreover, including podcasts into other types of digital communication initiatives, for example, multi-channel communication and discussion, can expand the podcasts' reach. Podcast producers, governments, and universities should work together to enhance the recognition of the general public and promote ethical storytelling. Finally, this research adds to the understanding of the changes that has occurred in the relationship between digital media and the formation of public opinion in the Arab region. By adopting the suggestions presented in this paper, stakeholders are able to harness the possibilities of podcasting to promote deliberative, fair and participative politics as well as create a pathway to an empowered civil society for the region.

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