

**FROM RADIO WAVES TO PODCASTS STREAMS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
OF AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT IN TRADITIONAL RADIO AND PODCASTS**

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY.**

SEPTEMBER, 2025.

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS
COMMUNICATION, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY
EDO STATE, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A) DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION**

SEPTEMBER, 2025.

DECLARATION

This Project work is based on a study undertaken by me, in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, under the supervision of Prof. Marcellus Okhakhu. All ideas, views, findings and analyses in this study are the product of my research and where the views of others have been used and expressed, they have been duly acknowledged.

ESTHER OZIOMA OGBODO

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research was carried out by Esther Ozioma Ogbodo, in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin. It is approved by the undersigned on behalf of the department, having met the requirements in partial fulfilment for the award of a Bachelor of Arts Degree (B.A) in Mass Communication.

PROF. MARCELLUS OKHAKHU
Project Supervisor

DATE

Dr. DANIEL O. EKHAREAFO
Head of Department

DATE

STUDENT'S THESIS
AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to God Almighty the source of all wisdom and knowledge and to my wonderful parents, Hon. Emmanuel and Mrs. Patience Ogbodo and my lovely siblings for their unconditional love, relentless support and encouragement both financially and morally especially during the period of this study.

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ABSTRACT

The growth of digital audio platforms has redefined audience behavior and reshaped the landscape of audio communication. This study explores how audiences engage with traditional radio and podcasts, comparing their listening habits, preferred content, demographic trends, and approaches to advertising. The study used the survey research method. It drew a sample size of 341 respondents from a population of 2300 based on stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The findings show that although radio continues to enjoy widespread recognition and accessibility, listening is increasingly occasional and often limited in duration. Podcasts, by contrast, are attracting younger audiences who value the flexibility of on-demand listening, longer and more immersive sessions, and opportunities for interactivity. With entertainment and educational programming identified as the most favored content types, interactive features such as social media comments and live discussions played a key role in fostering loyalty and a sense of connection. The study further reveals a generational divide, with podcasts strongly appealing to younger, digitally literate audiences, while radio remains significant among older listeners. Overall, the research concluded that radio and podcasts are not in direct competition but serve complementary functions: radio retains strength in immediacy and mass communication, whereas podcasts thrive in personalization, participation, and niche targeting. The study recommends that broadcasters, advertisers, and policymakers embrace the strengths of both platforms and adopt strategies that align with evolving audience needs in the digital era.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Today, radios are a common feature in homes, vehicles, and even mobile phones. In modern society, it is rare to find anyone who hasn't used, seen, or at least heard of radio. However, this widespread presence wasn't always the case. Before the 19th century, wireless radio communication as we know it did not exist.

The evolution of audio media presents a narrative of technological innovation and cultural adaptation. Radio emerged in the early twentieth century as wireless communication moved from telegraphy to audio broadcasting. Reginald Fessenden's 1906 broadcast of music and speech is widely recognized as the first voice transmission, ushering in an era where sound could transcend geographic boundaries. By the 1920s, stations like KDKA in Pittsburgh pioneered scheduled news and entertainment broadcasts, inaugurating the "Golden Age of Radio" when families gathered to experience shared cultural narratives through music, dramas, and storytelling (Hilmes & Loviglio, 2002).

Radio continued to evolve through technological milestones. Edwin Armstrong's invention of frequency modulation (FM) in 1933 improved audio fidelity, leading to a gradual shift from AM

to FM for music programming by the 1970s. The invention of the transistor radio in the 1950s further democratized access by offering portable and affordable receivers, particularly popular among younger audiences (Gazi, Starkey, & Jedrzejewski, 2011). Despite the later dominance of television and the internet, radio demonstrated resilience by embracing digitization, streaming services, and audience interactivity (Bottomley, 2020).

Radio's cultural influence extended beyond technology. Beaty Rubens (2025), in *Listen In: How Radio Changed the Home*, shows how domestic life in Britain was reshaped by the wireless, as listeners developed personal attachments to presenters and used radio as a source of comfort and connection. Similarly, *The Times* (2025) highlights how radio provided collective experiences and serendipity, elements that remain distinctive even in an era of personalized, on-demand digital media.

The emergence of podcasts in the early 2000s represents a continuation of this auditory tradition. With the development of RSS-enabled feeds and platforms such as iPodder, podcasting began as a grassroots form of distribution before gaining mainstream recognition when Apple integrated podcasts into iTunes in 2005. The release of *Serial* in 2014 marked a turning point, demonstrating the narrative power of on-demand audio and attracting global audiences (Descript, 2023). Scholars argue that podcasts inherit radio's intimacy and creativity while also facing challenges around discoverability, metadata, and audience measurement (Berry, 2016; Llinares,

Fox, & Berry, 2018; Bonini, 2015). The rise of digital media has revolutionized how audiences consume audio content. The evolution of technology and increased internet accessibility have led to the emergence of new platforms and listening habits. Among these changes is the growing popularity of podcasts, a digital audio format that allows users to access content on-demand. This shift has introduced a new dimension to audio broadcasting, challenging the dominance of traditional radio and reshaping audience preferences. As a result, the way listeners engage with audio content has become more selective, personalized, and flexible.

In Africa, radio quickly became the most widespread medium due to its affordability, accessibility, and ability to reach audiences regardless of literacy levels. In Nigeria, radio broadcasting began in 1933 with the British colonial government's Radio Diffusion Service, which evolved into the Nigerian Broadcasting Service in 1950 and later the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) in 1978 (Uche, 1989). Radio has historically played a crucial role in education and governance, serving as a tool for literacy campaigns, civic participation, and national integration (Salawu, 2001; Adegbiya, 2013). The deregulation of broadcasting in 1992 enabled private and community stations to flourish, giving rise to diverse voices and participatory platforms (Ojebode, 2003).

In recent years, podcasts have begun to rise in Nigeria, particularly among young, urban, tech-savvy audiences with smartphone and internet access. Studies suggest that while the Nigerian

podcast industry is still developing, its growth reflects broader shifts in digital media adoption across Africa (Ndlovu, 2020; Adegbola, 2022). Thus, both radio and podcasts continue to coexist, with radio maintaining its mass reach while podcasts offer personalized, on-demand alternatives for emerging audiences.

This study investigated the shift in audience engagement from traditional radio to podcasts, aiming to understand the underlying factors that influence this transition and the implications it holds for the future of audio media. It is against this background that this study examines the changing patterns of audience engagement between the two media: radio and podcasts.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Radio has, for over a century, stood as one of the most powerful mass media platforms globally, serving as a tool for information dissemination, education, entertainment, and cultural preservation.

The development of podcasts poses critical questions for the traditional role of radio. While radio continues to dominate in terms of reach and cultural significance, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, the increasing popularity of podcasts suggests a reconfiguration of audience loyalties and listening habits. For instance, the communal and serendipitous listening culture associated with radio, where families and communities gather around broadcasts, is increasingly

being replaced by the individualized and portable listening experience that podcasts provide. This creates a tension between radio's traditional strengths of immediacy and inclusivity, and podcasting's appeal of interactivity, personalization, and global connectivity.

Despite these shifts, scholarly research in Nigeria has not adequately explored how audiences engage with both radio and podcasts within the same comparative framework. Existing studies often focus on either the resilience of radio in the digital age or the growth of podcasting as a new form of media, but few examine the intersection between the two. This gap in knowledge makes it difficult to determine whether these platforms function as competitors for audience attention and advertising revenue, or whether they can coexist as complementary channels serving different audience needs. Furthermore, questions remain about how demographic factors such as age, education, socioeconomic status, and geography shape patterns of engagement with these platforms.

The problem, therefore, is that without a deeper understanding of how Nigerian audiences engage with both radio and podcasts, media scholars, practitioners, and policymakers may be unable to anticipate the future trajectory of audio media in the country. As digital technologies continue to reshape communication practices, addressing this gap is vital in order to understand the evolving relationship between traditional and digital audio platforms. This study thus seeks to provide a comparative analysis of audience engagement with radio and podcasts in Nigeria,

offering insights into their coexistence, competition, and implications for the future of audio communication.

1.3 Research Objectives

The following research objectives guided the study;

1. To examine the shift in audience consumption patterns from radio to podcasts.
2. To compare listener engagement strategies in both media.
3. To analyze the role of digital technology in shaping the future of audio content.
4. To assess how digital distribution affects listenership trends.
5. To identify factors influencing audience preferences for podcasts over radio.

1.4 Research Questions

In line with the research objectives, the following research questions guided the study;

1. How do audience engagement levels differ between traditional radio and podcasts?
2. What factors influence audience preference for one medium over the other
3. How do content format, accessibility, and interactivity impact listener loyalty?
4. How do audience demographics differ between podcast listeners and traditional radio listeners?

5. How do advertising and sponsorship strategies compare between podcasts and traditional radio?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study offers valuable insights into the evolving behavior of audiences in the digital era, highlighting how shifts in technology and media consumption are influencing listener preferences and engagement patterns. By examining these changes, the research can help both radio stations and podcasters develop more effective strategies to connect with their audiences. It also contributes meaningfully to the broader discourse on the future of audio media within the field of media and communication studies. Furthermore, the findings have practical implications for broadcasters, advertisers, and content creators by providing guidance on how to tailor content and marketing approaches in a rapidly changing digital landscape to suit growing trends. Importantly, the study can also serve as a resource for traditional radio platforms seeking to adapt and remain relevant in the face of growing digital competition.

1.6 Scope of the study

In the course of this study the researcher gathered valid data for research purposes from two radio stations: Super 88.1 FM and KU FM 92.7 as well as two podcasts; "I Said what I said" and "Tea with Tay". The scope of the study also involves individuals who listen to traditional radio

and podcasts in order to measure audience engagement in these two media and its changing patterns.

1.7 Limitations of the study

One of the key challenges in this research is gaining access to reliable and comprehensive audience data, which is essential for accurately analyzing listening patterns and engagement levels. Additionally, there is the risk of bias in self-reported data, as participants may not always accurately recall or report their listening habits. Another significant limitation is the difficulty in reaching a truly representative sample of both radio listeners and podcast audiences, given the diversity in age, location, and media preferences. These challenges may affect the generalizability of the findings and highlight the need for careful data collection and analysis methods.

To address these limitations, the study ensured data reliability by designing clear and straightforward survey questions to reduce misunderstanding and recall bias. Anonymity was maintained to encourage honest responses. Furthermore, efforts were made to distribute the survey across diverse demographic groups and platforms to reach a more representative sample of both radio and podcast audiences, thereby enhancing the credibility of the findings.

1.8 Contextual Definition of Terms

1. Radio Waves:

In the context of broadcasting, radio waves are a type of electromagnetic wave used to transmit audio signals over long distances. Traditional radio stations use radio waves to broadcast music, news, and talk shows in real-time to the public via AM or FM frequencies.

2. Podcast Streams:

Podcast streams refer to digital audio files that are distributed over the internet and can be played instantly (streamed) or downloaded for later listening. Unlike radio waves, podcast streams rely on internet connectivity and allow for on-demand access to content based on the listener's preferences.

3. Comparative Analysis:

Comparative analysis is a research method that involves examining two or more variables or subjects to identify their similarities and differences. In this study, it refers to the systematic comparison of traditional radio and podcast formats to assess how each engages audiences and meets their listening needs.

4. Audience Engagement:

Audience engagement refers to the level of attention, interest, and interaction that listeners exhibit toward audio content. It includes factors such as listening duration, frequency of use, emotional connection, feedback, and the extent to which content influences or involves the audience.

5. Traditional Radio:

Traditional radio refers to the conventional form of audio broadcasting that uses radio waves to deliver scheduled programming such as news, music, advertisements, and discussions. It typically requires listeners to tune in at specific times to access content and is commonly broadcast through AM/FM stations.

6. Podcast:

A podcast is a digital audio program made available on the internet for streaming or downloading. Podcasts are often released in episodes and can cover a wide range of topics. They offer users flexibility, personalization, and the ability to listen at any time, making them a popular alternative to traditional radio.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW.

This chapter examines a review of related literature to the research topic, review of empirical studies and the theoretical framework of the study. The subheadings of this chapter are as follows

The Evolution of Audio Media: Brief history of radio and the rise of podcasts.

The rise of digital audio platforms.

The increasing popularity of podcasts and their impact on traditional radio.

Review of Empirical studies: Existing research on Audience engagement in radio and podcasts.

Theoretical review

2.1 THE EVOLUTION OF AUDIO MEDIA; BRIEF HISTORY OF RADIO AND THE RISE OF PODCASTS.

In 1920, the first commercial radio station—KDKA in Pittsburgh—delivered live coverage of the U.S. presidential election, marking the start of public radio transmission (Sterling & Kittross, 2002). Radio quickly developed from an experimental technology to a household staple and a

common feature in homes, cars and in general, modern society. With its ability to inform and entertain across wide geographic areas without the need for physical infrastructure, the evolution of radio technology was rapid.

The Golden Age of Radio, typically defined in the 1920s through the 1950s, was characterized by the emergence of diverse programming: music, serialized dramas, comedy shows, news bulletins, and educational content. Networks such as CBS and NBC dominated American airwaves, providing shared cultural experiences and national cohesion, particularly during crises like the Great Depression and World War II (Hilmes, 1997). Scholars like Hilmes (1997) continued to see radio as both a technological innovation and a social institution, thus becoming the most dominant form of home entertainment at the time with various shows for both information and a sense of connection during the war and the Great Depression.

By the mid-20th century, television began to eclipse radio as the dominant medium for home entertainment. In response to this, radio adapted its content and dissemination strategies by becoming more localized and music-driven, especially with the rise of FM(The Frequency Modulation Band) in the 1960s and 1970s. Still, its role in news, talk shows, and cultural programming persisted. Radio continued to take giant steps, both in its infrastructural design (as it became more miniaturized) and in its sheer content with greater appeal to a large demographic population.

However, the late 20th and early 21st centuries witnessed the digitization of audio content. The advent of the internet, MP3 players, and smartphones laid the groundwork for digital audio's expansion. The features of this age led to several developments, including producing and packaging radio content, whether as news, drama, sports, features etc in various forms and algorithmic templates.

2.1.2 THE RISE OF DIGITAL AUDIO PLATFORMS

Digital audio platforms have reshaped how audiences access and engage with audio content. This transformation began in the late 1980s with the development of the MP3 format by the Fraunhofer Institute, which allowed audio files to be compressed and shared efficiently online (Witt, 2015).

In the late 1990s, platforms like Napster introduced peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing, enabling users to freely exchange music. Although Napster faced legal challenges and was eventually shut down, it marked a major shift toward digital distribution (Pitchfork, 2014). This push in the early 90s paved the way for musical exchanges and downloads, even in the emerging economies of Africa. Early legal alternatives, such as MusicNet and Pressplay, in spite of the quick embrace, struggled due to limited access and strict controls of content.

The launch of Apple's iTunes Store in 2003 offered a legal, easy-to-use platform where users could buy and download music. This model, combined with portable devices like the iPod, made digital music more accessible to a mainstream audience (Bemuso, 2021).

By the mid-2000s, services like Pandora and Last.fm introduced algorithm-driven music recommendations, personalizing the listening experience and influencing how users discovered new content (Medium, 2023).

A major breakthrough came with Spotify in 2008, offering free and premium on-demand streaming. This model was later adopted by services like Apple Music, Tidal, and Amazon Music, helping shift the industry toward subscription-based access (Castr, 2023). In Nigeria, this is largely the same. However, perhaps because of the poor economic index of the country, not a substantial amount was spent here.

The evolution of digital audio platforms is vital to understanding the shift from traditional radio to podcasts, as it provides the technological and cultural foundation for changes in audience engagement. The study and review of the history of digital audio platforms also provides a necessary background for analyzing how audience engagement has evolved.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

2.2.1 THE RISE OF PODCASTS: A NEW PARADIGM

According to Berry (2016), the term "podcast" is a blend or fusion of the words, "iPod" and "broadcast," first coined in 2004 by journalist Ben Hammersley. Podcasts are digital audio files distributed via RSS feeds, allowing users to subscribe and listen at their convenience. The format gained traction in 2005 when Apple integrated podcasts into iTunes, significantly expanding public access and visibility (Berry, 2016).

The 2014 debut of the podcast “Serial”, produced by Sarah Koenig and her team at This American Life, a popular American weekly radio program and podcast, marked a watershed moment. It brought podcasting into the mainstream, attracting millions of listeners globally and demonstrating the medium’s potential for narrative journalism and long-form storytelling (McHugh, 2016). Since then, podcasts have expanded across genres—from news and education to true crime and comedy.

Today, podcasting is a multi-billion dollar industry, with over 5 million active shows worldwide and audiences growing steadily year over year (Edison Research, 2024). Platforms such as Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, and niche networks have taken advantage of this growth, shaping their services to satisfy listener behavior and advertiser demands. Even in the

African environment, this growth is very noticeable. Nigeria, perhaps, tops this bracket amongst African countries.

2.3 OPINION REVIEW

In the course of gathering information and materials, the researcher engaged with a variety of perspectives on the coexistence of radio and podcast platforms, as well as on patterns of audience engagement shaped by demographic differences. From this standpoint, the researcher is of the opinion that, although both radio and podcasts are audio-based platforms, they are not only capable of coexisting but also of thriving within the Nigerian media landscape. While audience engagement has shifted to some extent from radio to podcasts, traditional radio continues to command significant attention, particularly among older demographics who have limited exposure to and awareness of digital alternatives. Conversely, podcasts have become increasingly appealing to younger audiences, whose consumption habits align more closely with digital innovations. Thus, rather than being positioned as competitors, radio and podcasts can be regarded as complementary platforms that collectively enrich the audio media environment and expand opportunities for audience engagement. This perspective provides a useful framework for the present study, which seeks to comparatively analyze how audiences interact with and remain engaged across these two platforms.

2.3.1 THE INCREASING POPULARITY OF PODCASTS AND THEIR IMPACTS ON TRADITIONAL RADIO.

The podcasting boom of the 2010s and early 2020s represents one of the most significant shifts in audio media consumption since the advent of radio broadcasting. Podcast listening has developed into a global phenomenon, which has led to the change in audience habits, content creation and production patterns and overall, the traditional radio industry. This section examines the factors that cause and contribute to podcast popularity and analyzes the impact podcasts are having on conventional radio broadcasting.

Podcasts have experienced exponential growth over the past decade. According to Edison Research (2024), 64% of Americans aged 12 and above have listened to a podcast, while 36% of same American population have not completely embraced this new form. Although this is the situation, the weekly podcast listenership has increased steadily since 2013. The Infinite Dial report notes that over 104 million Americans (approximately 37% of the population) listen to podcasts monthly, a number echoed in several countries across Europe, Latin America, and Africa (Edison Research, 2024).

In Nigeria and other African markets, podcasts are increasingly popular among urban youth and university students. Platforms such as Spotify, Boomplay, and Audiomack have tapped into regional interests—music, religion, culture, comedy—and localized content in multiple

languages (Ojebuyi & Salawu, 2022). This growth is driven by rising smartphone ownership, mobile data affordability, and increased digital literacy. This shows just how the popularity of podcasts is not just confined to any geographical area but is a global growth trend.

Some of the factors that contribute to podcast popularity include:

- **Convenience and Portability:** Podcasts can be accessed at any time and downloaded for offline listening, making them ideal for multitasking and commuting.
- **Niche Content Appeal:** Unlike traditional radio's broad-format structure, podcasts offer highly specific, interest-driven content—allowing listeners to find material tailored to their tastes (Berry, 2016).
- **Intimacy and Authenticity:** Many podcasts feature conversational formats and personal storytelling, creating a sense of intimacy and connection between hosts and listeners (Spinelli & Dann, 2019).

2.3.2 Relationship Between Radio Broadcasts and Podcasts

Radio and podcasts are both audio-based media that serve the purpose of informing, educating, and entertaining audiences, but they are connected in how they influence and complement each other.

Firstly, podcasts evolved from radio traditions. Many early podcasts were extensions of radio shows that were recorded and made available online for listeners who missed the live broadcast (Berry, 2016). In this sense, podcasts borrowed the storytelling style, interview formats, and news reporting techniques from radio.

Radio and podcasts coexist in the digital age. While radio is often live and tied to a schedule, podcasts extend that content by making it on-demand, allowing listeners to revisit shows at their convenience (Spinelli & Dann, 2019). Many radio stations now repurpose their programs as podcasts, blurring the boundary between the two media (Bonini, 2015).

Radio maintains strength in immediacy—covering breaking news, traffic updates, and live events (Hendy, 2013)—while podcasts excel in niche, personalized content and long-form discussions (Markman, 2012). Together, they expand the audio landscape by offering audiences both real-time engagement and flexible, in-depth listening experiences.

Finally, both formats are adapting to digital convergence. Streaming, mobile apps, and online platforms have allowed radio broadcasts to reach global audiences just like podcasts (McClung & Johnson, 2010). This convergence shows that radio and podcasts are not isolated but rather parts of a continuum of modern audio media.

Key Differences Between Radio and Podcasts

Radio and podcasts share similarities as audio media, but they differ in several important ways.

1. Live vs. Recorded

Radio is usually broadcast live, meaning presenters interact in real time with little editing (Seven Million Bikes, 2023). Podcasts, however, are mostly pre-recorded and edited, allowing creators to polish the content before release (McDougall Interactive, 2023).

2. Scheduled vs. On-Demand

Radio follows a fixed schedule, and listeners must tune in at specific times (Talks.co, 2023). In contrast, podcasts are available on-demand, so audiences can listen whenever they choose (The Mohua Show, 2023).

3. General vs. Niche Audiences

Radio stations usually target a broad audience, aiming to appeal to many people at once (Broadcast Revolution, 2022). Podcasts focus on niche topics—like true crime, sports, or business—attracting more specialized and loyal listeners (LDBK, 2021).

4. Temporary vs. Evergreen Content

Radio programs are often tied to the moment, such as news or live events, and once missed, they are gone (Seven Million Bikes, 2023). Podcasts, on the other hand, remain available online and can be listened to long after they are released, making them “evergreen” (McDougall Interactive, 2023).

5. Cost and Production

Radio requires professional studios, transmitters, and licenses, which can be expensive (The Podcast Host, 2023). Podcasts are easier and cheaper to make—even a smartphone can be enough to start (The Podcast Host, 2023).

6. Audience Engagement

Radio engagement is often passive, with listeners tuning in casually, though call-ins may occur (Broadcast Revolution, 2022). Podcasts allow deeper engagement since listeners subscribe, follow, and interact with creators through digital platforms (Beverly Boy Productions, 2023).

7. Regulation and Freedom

Radio content is heavily regulated, depending on national broadcasting laws (Broadcast Revolution, 2022). Podcasts face fewer restrictions, giving creators more freedom to experiment with topics and styles (McDougall Interactive, 2023).

8. Accessibility and Reach

Traditional radio signals are usually limited by geography unless streamed online (Wikipedia, 2024). Podcasts are globally available via the internet, making them accessible from almost anywhere (The Mohua Show, 2023).

2.3.3 THE IMPACT ON TRADITIONAL RADIO: CHALLENGES AND CHANGES

The increasing popularity of podcasts has created competition to traditional radio, challenging its leading status in the audio space. While radio still maintains high reach, especially for breaking news, traffic updates, and live broadcasts, its audience share and advertising revenue have increasingly been worn away by other digital alternatives.

Shift in Audience Behavior

Listeners, especially younger demographics (ages 18–34), are moving toward personalized and time-shifted content. According to Ofcom (2023), podcast usage in the UK among 15–24-year-olds grew by over 45% between 2017 and 2022, while AM/FM radio consumption declined by 25% during the same period.

In Nigeria, younger listeners are driving the growth of podcasts. Spotify reports that podcast consumption in the country grew by 222% between 2021 and 2022, making Nigeria the second-largest podcast market in Africa after South Africa (Nairametrics, 2023; Punch, 2023). Listeners between the ages of 18 to 24 now account for 50% of all streams, while those aged 25–29 contribute another 21% (BrandCrunch, 2023).

Despite this surge, radio still maintains broad reach. Across Africa, radio listenership ranges between 60% and 80% of the continent’s 1.4 billion population, showing that traditional radio continues to thrive, especially in rural and less connected areas (Reddit, 2023).

Advertising and Monetization

Podcasts offer a more targeted form of advertising, with dynamic ad insertion and audience analytics that allow sponsors to tailor their messages to specific listener segments. Traditional radio, while still viable for mass-market campaigns, lacks this granularity (Bonini, 2021). In fact,

podcast ad revenue surpassed \$2 billion in the U.S. in 2023, up from \$842 million in 2020 (IAB, 2023). Podcasts ensure specific ads are presented to the right target audience.

The Nigerian podcast market is also becoming economically significant. A recent report estimates that it generated US\$98.6 million in 2023 and could grow to US\$788.3 million by 2030—a compound annual growth rate of 34.6% (Grand View Research, 2023). This growth highlights why advertisers are turning to podcasts, where they can reach younger, targeted audiences. Traditional radio still attracts mass-market advertising, but it lacks the analytics and personalization that digital platforms provide.

Content Innovation and Hybrid Models

Facing declining listenership among key segments, many radio stations have embraced podcasting themselves. Stations like BBC Radio, NPR, and WNYC have created digital-first podcast divisions to repurpose live broadcasts into on-demand formats or develop original podcast series. This hybrid model represents radio's adaptive strategy—blending its legacy strengths (e.g., credibility, journalistic standards) with the accessibility and personalization of digital audio (Sullivan, 2018).

Radio stations and media companies in Africa are beginning to embrace digital strategies to remain relevant. In Nigeria, popular podcasts such as The HonestBunch, I Said What I Said, and Tea with Tay reflect the trend of relatable, youth-focused, and culturally driven audio content (Inspiration Sound, 2023).

Spotify's tools—such as auto-transcripts, analytics, and interactive features—are also empowering local creators, while podcasts amplify voices on issues like culture, mental health, gender, and politics (Nairametrics, 2023). This mirrors trends in the U.S. and Europe, where traditional radio is adapting by building podcast divisions, but with the added African context of bridging limited internet access with widespread radio use.

2.4 REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

This section focuses on the empirical review of related studies to this work. The empirical studies appraised are:

Ojebuyi and Salawu (2022) Exploring podcast reception in Nigeria: Prospects and challenges for the audio industry.

This study examined the rising adoption of podcasting as an emerging audio media platform within the Nigerian context. Conducted in major urban areas across Nigeria, the study sought to

investigate the level of awareness, user motivations and patterns of engagement with podcast content among Nigerian audiences. Using a survey research design, the researchers generated quantitative data from listeners to assess how technological access, demographic characteristics and media habits influence podcast reception. Findings from the study indicate that although podcasting is still relatively nascent in the country, there is a steadily growing interest, particularly among young, educated, digitally savvy urban dwellers who value the convenience, flexibility and personalised nature of on-demand audio content. Despite this positive outlook, factors such as low general awareness, insufficient broadband infrastructure and high internet data costs continue to pose major challenges to widespread adoption. The authors conclude that podcasts represent a promising future direction for Nigeria's audio industry, especially as audiences increasingly seek more interactive, niche-focused and time-shifting listening experiences outside the rigid programming of traditional radio.

In relation to this study, the work by Ojebuyi and Salawu provides valuable context regarding audience interaction with podcasts in Nigeria. Both studies are united by their interest in digital disruption of the audio broadcasting space and the ways in which audience engagement is being reshaped by emerging technologies. However, while the reviewed study focuses solely on measuring podcast reception and identifying its challenges and prospects, this work adopts a broader comparative stance by evaluating audience engagement in traditional radio versus

podcasts. This comparative approach not only examines the attractiveness of podcasting as a standalone medium, but also evaluates how engagement with it differs from or competes with traditional radio platforms. Therefore, this work differs from Ojebuyi and Salawu's single-platform analysis by interrogating how audience preferences are shifting between platforms, thereby offering a richer insight into the changing dynamics of audience behaviour within the Nigerian audio ecosystem.

Miller T.(2020) Radio Resilience in the Digital Age: A Study of Audience Behavior in Rural Nigeria.

Another empirical study which is related to this work is a research conducted by Miller(2020) which investigated the enduring relevance of traditional radio among rural Nigerian audiences despite the global shift toward digital and on-demand platforms. The research was situated in rural communities across Nigeria, where infrastructural limitations, low digital literacy, and limited internet access make radio the most dominant and accessible mass communication medium. Employing a mixed-methods design, the author combined surveys with focus group discussions to generate both statistical evidence and in-depth audience perspectives on their media consumption habits. Findings revealed that radio retains strong loyalty in rural Nigeria due to its low cost, accessibility without internet connectivity, and provision of content in local

languages that resonate with community needs. Moreover, radio's portability and its ability to serve as a source of information, education, and entertainment reinforce its significance as a trusted medium. In contrast, digital platforms such as podcasts and streaming services, while gaining ground in urban contexts, have yet to penetrate rural areas substantially, largely because of infrastructural barriers and the high costs associated with internet data. Miller concluded that radio demonstrates remarkable resilience in Nigeria's rural context, continuing to thrive and maintain audience trust even in the face of global digital disruption.

In relation to this study, Miller's work provides useful insights into the persistence of radio as a medium of mass communication in environments where digital alternatives are less viable. Both studies share a concern with audience behaviour and the ways in which engagement with audio media is being shaped by broader technological and cultural changes. However, while Miller's study focuses solely on traditional radio in rural Nigeria, this study goes further by comparing audience engagement between traditional radio and podcasts, thereby offering a dual perspective that captures both continuity and change within the audio landscape. Unlike Miller's rural-based emphasis, this study is likely to engage more with the urban and digitally connected population, where podcasts are becoming increasingly popular as a flexible, on-demand alternative to scheduled radio programming. Thus, while Miller highlights radio's resilience in the face of digital disruption, this study seeks to interrogate how that resilience compares with the growing

appeal of podcasts, thereby offering a more comprehensive view of audience engagement across platforms in Nigeria.

2.5 THEORETICAL REVIEW

To effectively analyze the shift in audience engagement from traditional radio to podcasts, several media and communication theories offer insightful frameworks. This section reviews three theories: Uses and Gratifications Theory, Diffusion of Innovations Theory, and Media Dependency Theory for their relevance to the subject matter.

2.5.1 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), developed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973), posits that media users are active participants who seek out content based on their individual needs—such as entertainment, information, personal identity, or social integration. Unlike older theories that viewed audiences as passive consumers, UGT recognizes that audiences make conscious choices based on what gratifies them most.

This theory is particularly relevant to podcast consumption. Studies like McClung and Johnson (2010) have shown that podcast listeners often choose content that aligns with their specific interests and values. The on-demand nature of podcasts allows for greater autonomy, as users can pause, rewind, or binge episodes according to their preferences. In contrast, traditional radio's

rigid schedule offers fewer choices, limiting user control and interactivity. Consequently, podcasts tend to generate higher engagement through customization and relevance.

In relation to this research, the theory provides a lens to compare the motivations behind engaging with radio versus podcasts. Radio often satisfies needs such as immediacy, companionship, and accessibility, especially through live broadcasts, call-in shows, or music programming. On the other hand, podcasts may gratify the desire for niche knowledge, flexibility, and deeper storytelling. By applying this framework, the study can uncover the different gratifications driving audience loyalty and preference, which in turn explains variations in engagement between the two media.

2.5.2 Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Everett Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovations Theory explains how new ideas and technologies spread within a society. The adoption of podcasts represents a media innovation, offering advantages such as time-shifting, niche targeting, and ease of access via digital devices.

Rogers identifies several factors influencing adoption: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Podcasts present a strong relative advantage over traditional radio by offering more control and customization. Their compatibility with mobile lifestyles and the digital habits of younger generations further accelerates their adoption. This

explains the generational and geographic disparities in engagement—urban youth may quickly embrace podcasting, while older or rural populations may remain reliant on traditional radio (Miller, 2020).

The application of this theory to this study is significant because podcasts represent a relatively new innovation within the audio landscape, while radio remains a traditional medium. Early adopters of podcasts tend to be tech-savvy individuals, younger audiences, or professionals seeking specialized knowledge, and their usage patterns influence wider adoption across society. Meanwhile, radio maintains dominance among late adopters or those with limited access to digital technologies, such as rural listeners. This theoretical perspective highlights the gradual shift of audience engagement from traditional to digital platforms and helps explain the uneven uptake of podcasts across demographics. Therefore, it provides a useful framework for analyzing the pace and process of audience migration from radio waves to podcast streams.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

PREAMBLE

This chapter examines the description of the research methods used in this study. It explores the research design, population of the study, sample size, sampling techniques and Instruments used for data collection. It also discusses the validity of the research instrument, method of data collection and the method of data analysis.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopted the survey research design to comparatively analyze audience engagement in traditional radio and podcasts. The survey method is suitable because it allows the collection of standardized data from a relatively large and diverse population, making it possible to identify trends, patterns, and variations in audience behavior. Through the use of questionnaire, the study gathered quantitative data on listening frequency, duration, preferred content, and levels of interactivity across the two platforms.

The survey design was considered appropriate for this research because it is cost-effective, flexible, and allows for generalization of findings to a wider audience. It provides the

opportunity to capture audience perceptions and behaviors in a systematic way, while enabling the researcher to make comparisons between the consumption of traditional radio and podcasts.

3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of this study consists of active listeners of both radio and podcasts within Benin city. This includes students, working professionals, and other individuals who regularly consume audio media content. Since the research focuses on audience engagement, the population is restricted to those who have experience with at least one of the two platforms.

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE

The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula (1967), ensuring that the number of respondents is sufficient to allow generalization of findings to the wider population.

The total sample size was 2300 persons. A sample size of 341 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula (1967) for finite populations:

$$n = N / [1 + N(e)^2]$$

Where:

- n = sample size

- N = population size
- e = margin of error (0.05)

3.4. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted:

In the first stage, stratified random sampling was used where the population is divided into specific subgroups like age, gender. This ensured that fans were selected from different parts of the state to capture diverse perspectives.

Within each stratum, simple random sampling was applied to select individual respondents. Simple random sampling is a technique used to create an unbiased representation of the population that is each individual in a population has an equal chance of being selected.

3.5 INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire will include both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions designed to capture information on: Demographic Information, Level of awareness of the media involved (Radio and Podcasts), Frequency and duration of listening, Preferred content types (e.g., news, entertainment,

education) and level of interactivity and participation, Perceived credibility and satisfaction with the medium.

3.6 VALIDITY OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The instrument was validated through the use of a pilot study which sought to test the understanding of the content by the respondents. This was done to ensure it measured the intended objectives accurately. To achieve this, the items in the instrument were reviewed by experts in the field of Mass Communication, including the research supervisor, for proper evaluation.

In addition, efforts were made to guarantee that most of the items in the instrument reflected the theoretical constructs of the study. This was achieved by refining and adjusting the questionnaire items so that they were suitable and aligned with the study's theoretical framework.

3.7 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaires were administered both in-person and online through Google Forms to accommodate respondents in different geographical locations. In order to collect the data filled by respondents the researcher retrieved the information from the filled copies of the questionnaire and Google forms. A total of one hundred and fifty copies were given through

printed in-person forms, while one hundred and ninety one questionnaires were filled through online Google forms.

3.8 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected through the use of the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages. This was done in order to summarize audience behaviors and preferences.

Inferential statistics was applied to examine differences in engagement between radio and podcast audiences and to test for significant relationships between demographic variables and media use. The results were presented in tables and charts for clarity and comprehensive interpretation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data derived through the questionnaire administered on the respondents in the study area. The analysis and interpretation were derived from the findings of the study. The data analysis depicts the simple frequency and percentage of the respondents as well as interpretation of the information gathered. A total of Three hundred and forty one (341) responses were validated.

4.2 Data Presentation

This section discusses and deals with the preparation and presentation of the questionnaire data.

4.2.1 Distribution of Questionnaire

A total of 341 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the target respondents. The data presented and analyzed in this study is therefore based on the valid responses received from the participants. Simple frequency counts and percentages are used in the analysis to present a clear understanding of the respondents' characteristics and opinions.

Table 1: Showing gender distribution of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Male	155	45.5%
Female	181	53%
Prefer not to say	5	1.5%
Total	341	100%

Table 1 presents the gender distribution of the respondents. Out of 241 respondents, (45.5%) were male, while (53%) were female with 1.5% of the population who preferred not to state their gender.

Table 2: Showing age distribution of respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
16-20 years	77	22.7%
21-25 years	186	54.5%
26-30 years	52	15.2%
31 years and above	26	7.6%
Total	341	100%

Data revealed that the highest proportion of respondents fall within the 21–25 years age bracket, accounting for 54.5% of the sample population while 7.6% of the respondents are from 31 years and above.

Table 3: Showing highest level of education

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
100 level	20	6%
200 level	17	5%
300 level	10	3%
400 level	143	42%
Postgraduate	89	26%

Not a student	61	18%
Total	341	100%

Table 3 reveals that the highest proportion of the respondents 42% are in 400 level, while 3% are in 300 level.

Table 4: Showing respondents awareness of the Radio as a medium

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	341	100%
No	0	0%
Total	341	100%

Table 4 indicates that 100% of respondents are aware of radio as a source of information and entertainment. This means that all respondents have listened to the radio before.

Table 5: Showing respondents awareness of Podcasts as a medium

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	321	94%
No	21	6%
Total	341	100%

Table 5 reveals that 94% of the respondents were aware of podcasts being used as a medium of information and entertainment while 6% were not aware of podcasts as a medium

Table 6: Showing respondents awareness of podcasts compared to radio.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Much higher	140	41%
About the same	19	35%
Much lower	82	24%
Total	341	100%

Table 6 reveals that 41% of the respondents rate their awareness of podcasts being much higher compared to radio, 35% of the respondents' rate them about the same level of awareness while 24% rate their awareness of podcasts compared to radio as much lower. This implies that majority of the respondents are more aware of radio than podcasts.

Table 7: How often do respondents listen to the radio

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	27	8%
A few times a week	61	18%
Once a week	7	2%
Rarely	232	68%
Never	14	4%
Total	341	100%

Table 7 represents how often the respondents listen to the radio. 68% of the respondents rarely listen to the radio, 18% listen to the radio a few times a week, 8% listen to the radio daily, 4% do not listen to the radio, while 2% of respondents listen to the radio once a week.

Table 8: How much time do respondents spend listening to the radio per session?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 30 minutes	225	66%
30 minutes - 1 hour	95	28%
1 - 2 hours	14	4%
More than 2 hours	2	2%

Total	341	100%
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Table 8 represent the duration of time spent listening to the radio by respondents. The table shows that a higher number of respondents do not listen to the radio for more than 30minutes.

Table 9: How often do respondents listen to podcasts

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	20	6%
A few times a week	102	30%
Once a week	38	11%
Rarely	160	47%
Never	20	6%
Total	341	100%

Table 9 represents how often the respondents listen to podcasts. This table shows that the majority of the respondents which is 47% rarely listen to the radio, 6% listen to podcasts daily, 6% don't listen to podcasts at all.

Table 10: How much time do respondents spend listening to podcasts per session?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 30 minutes	184	54%
30 minutes - 1 hour	130	38%
1-2 hours	20	6%
More than 2 hours	7	2%

Total	341	100%
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Table 10 represent the duration of time spent listening to podcasts by respondents. 54% of the respondents spend less than 30 minutes on a podcast per session, while 2% of respondents listen to podcasts for more than 2 hours

Table 11: Showing respondents preferred content types

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
News and Current Affairs	12	3.5%
Entertainment (Music, Talk, Comedy)	155	45.5%
Educational/Informative Programs	88	25.8%
Religious/Inspirational messages	14	4%
Lifestyle and Health	46	13.6%
Sports	26	7.6%
Total	341	100%

Table 11 shows the preferred content types of the respondents with the highest proportion (45.5%) of the respondents prefer entertainment programs, while, 3.5% prefer News and Current Affairs.

Table 12: Respondents preferred medium for chosen content

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	171	50%
Podcasts	92	27%
Both equally	78	23%
Total	341	100%

Table 12 represents the respondents preferred medium for their chosen content. 50% of respondents prefer radio for their chosen content type, 27% prefer podcasts.

Table 13: Do you like participating in interactive segments (e.g., call-ins, comments, polls, live chats?)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, very much	38	11%
Sometimes	133	39%
Not really	123	36%
Never	48	14%
Total	341	100%

Table 13 shows how much the respondents participate in interactive segments. The table shows that 39% of the respondents only participate sometimes, 14% of the respondents have never participated in interactive segment while 11% actively like to participate in interactive segments. This means that majority of the respondents only participate in interactive segments sometimes and all the time.

Table 14: If yes, why do you participate in interactive segments?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
They allow you to express your thoughts fully	218	64%
They make you feel a sense of satisfaction that you're heard	72	21%
They promote conviviality	34	10%
They make you feel important	17	5%
Total	341	100%

Table 14 reveals why respondents participate in interactive segments. 64% of the respondents which is the majority participate because it allows them fully express their thoughts while just 5% participate because it makes them feel important.

Table 15: What form of participation do respondents prefer?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Phone-in calls	72	21%
Text/WhatsApp messages	89	26%
Social media comments	123	36%
Live discussions or Q and A	58	17%
Total	341	100%

Table 15 represents the respondents preferred form of participation. 36% of respondents prefer to participate through social media comments, while 17% of respondents prefer to participate through live discussions or Q and A.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

This section discusses the results presented in section 4.2, providing interpretation of the data in relation to the study's research questions. It aims to explore patterns, insights and implications from the responses gathered from the audience on the engagement of the audience in radio and podcasts. The discussion also attempts to link the empirical findings with existing knowledge,

literature and theoretical assumptions regarding audience engagement in traditional radio and podcasts.

RQ 1: How do audience engagement levels differ between traditional radio and podcasts?

The findings reveal that audience engagement levels differ significantly between traditional radio and podcasts. While radio still enjoys universal awareness, with 100% of respondents acknowledging it as a source of information and entertainment, the level of active engagement with the medium appears to be relatively low. A majority of respondents (68%) reported that they rarely listen to the radio, and only 8% engage with it daily. In terms of listening duration, most respondents (66%) spend less than 30 minutes per session, with only a small minority dedicating more than an hour. This pattern suggests that, although radio remains a familiar and accessible medium, it is not actively consumed for long periods.

In contrast, podcasts demonstrate deeper engagement among listeners. Although awareness is slightly lower at 94%, a significant portion of respondents (30%) reported listening to podcasts a few times per week. Importantly, podcast listening sessions tend to be longer, with 38% of respondents listening for 30 minutes to 1 hour per session, compared to only 28% for radio. These findings indicate that while radio maintains broad awareness and reach, podcasts are associated with more frequent, sustained, and attentive listening, signaling higher levels of engagement overall.

These results resonate with broader research showing that younger audiences tend to engage with podcasts more frequently and for longer durations than with traditional broadcast media. Pew Research Center (2023) reports that adults under 30 are much more likely than older age groups to listen to podcasts often, with frequency dropping as age increases. Similarly, Skjuve and Brandtzæg (2022) found that younger podcast listeners consume podcasts “widely, deeply, and routinely” compared with older listeners. Together, these findings suggest that while radio remains widely known, podcasts achieve deeper and more sustained engagement.

RQ 2: What factors influence audience preference for one medium over the other?

Several factors influence whether audiences prefer radio or podcasts as their medium of choice. Content type emerges as one of the strongest determinants of preference. The data reveals that entertainment programs are the most preferred content type (45.5%), followed by educational and informative programs (25.8%). Since podcasts often provide niche, on-demand content in these categories, this likely explains why 27% of respondents preferred podcasts for their chosen content. Radio, by contrast, is often consumed passively and offers a broader, less personalized range of content.

Another factor influencing preference is interactivity. The findings show that 39% of respondents sometimes participate in interactive segments, while 14% actively engage, often through social media comment sections (36%). This suggests that audiences value opportunities

for dialogue and expression, which podcasts increasingly enable through digital platforms such as comments, live sessions, and social media extensions. Flexibility and time commitment also play a role. Radio is more frequently consumed in short bursts of less than 30 minutes, while podcasts encourage longer and more deliberate listening sessions of 30 minutes to 1 hour. Moreover, awareness levels also influence preference: although radio is universally known, 41% of respondents reported being more aware of podcasts compared to radio, suggesting that novelty and digital accessibility also contribute to their preference.

These findings align with prior studies demonstrating that the on-demand nature of podcasts, their content specificity, and their opportunities for interactivity make them more appealing to audiences seeking control and relevance (Cramer and Schaedig, 2023). In addition, Pew Research Center (2023) notes that younger listeners are drawn to entertainment and educational content in podcasts and that greater awareness correlates with more frequent use.

RQ 3: How do content format, accessibility, and interactivity impact listener loyalty?

The analysis indicates that content format, accessibility, and interactivity all have strong implications for listener loyalty. With regard to content format, the data shows that entertainment is the most popular choice among respondents, followed by educational and informative content. These preferences demonstrate that audiences are more likely to remain loyal to platforms that consistently deliver engaging and relevant programming. In this sense, podcasts appear to have

an advantage, as they are able to specialize in particular subject areas, thereby catering to specific audience interests. Radio, while versatile, often struggles to provide the same level of targeted content.

Accessibility also plays a crucial role in shaping loyalty. Radio operates on fixed schedules, meaning that listeners must tune in at specific times to access desired content. This rigidity contributes to short listening spans, with most respondents reporting sessions of less than 30 minutes. Podcasts, however, offer greater flexibility through on-demand access, allowing listeners to consume content at their convenience. The result is longer and more consistent listening sessions, with 38% of respondents listening for 30 minutes to 1 hour. This suggests that accessibility strongly contributes to sustained loyalty among podcast audiences.

Interactivity further reinforces listener loyalty. The findings reveal that participation is most frequently achieved through digital channels such as social media comments (36%) and messaging platforms (26%), which align more closely with podcast ecosystems than traditional radio. While some respondents still engage through phone-ins (21%) or live discussions (17%), the digital nature of podcast interactivity strengthens bonds between audiences and content producers. This higher degree of participation, combined with flexible access and targeted content, contributes to stronger loyalty toward podcasts compared to traditional radio.

Published research supports these findings. Lal and Ponnusamy (2022) show that listeners' motivations for choosing podcasts—learning, entertainment, and social connection—directly contribute to loyalty. MacDougall and De Zúñiga (2025) also argue that “social podcasting,” where listeners actively participate, fosters stronger community ties and more enduring engagement. Thus, the combination of specialized content, flexible accessibility, and digital interactivity increases listener loyalty to podcasts compared with traditional radio.

RQ 4: How do audience demographics differ between podcast listeners and traditional radio listeners?

The demographic distribution of respondents provides insights into audience differences between podcast listeners and traditional radio listeners. Gender representation within the sample shows a relatively balanced audience, with females (53%) slightly outnumbering males (45.5%). However, age emerges as the most significant demographic factor. The data shows that the largest proportion of respondents fall within the 21–25 years age group (54.5%), while just 7.6% are 31 years and above.

Although the dataset does not provide a direct breakdown of radio and podcast consumption by demographic categories, the strong representation of younger respondents suggests that podcasts are more closely associated with younger, digitally literate audiences. These groups are more inclined toward on-demand, flexible, and interactive media consumption, aligning with podcast

usage patterns observed in the study. Conversely, older respondents, though fewer in number, are more likely to maintain stronger ties to traditional radio, which historically served as the dominant audio platform. This distinction highlights that podcasts attract a younger, tech-savvy audience, while radio continues to serve as a medium for broader but more traditional demographic groups.

This is consistent with Pew Research Center (2023), which reports that podcast listening is highest among adults under 30, with usage declining in older age groups. Similarly, AdTonos (2023) notes that podcast audiences are not only younger but also more likely to be highly educated and digitally connected. Skjuve and Brandtzæg (2022) further demonstrate that podcast listening frequency declines significantly with age, reinforcing the view that podcasts are a youth-driven medium, while radio maintains more traction among older demographic groups.

RQ 5: How do advertising and sponsorship strategies compare between podcasts and traditional radio?

Although the study's dataset does not directly measure advertising and sponsorship strategies, the findings provide useful inferences based on audience engagement patterns. Traditional radio has long served as a major platform for advertisers, offering broad reach and integration into entertainment and news programming. However, the declining engagement levels revealed in this study—where 68% of respondents rarely listen and the majority tune in for less than 30

minutes—suggest diminishing effectiveness of traditional radio advertising in capturing sustained audience attention. Radio’s one-to-many broadcasting style emphasizes mass exposure but limits personalization.

Podcasts, by contrast, present a different advertising model rooted in niche targeting and deeper audience engagement. Respondents demonstrated longer listening sessions with podcasts compared to radio, and their preferences for specific content types, such as entertainment and education, suggest opportunities for advertisers to align with particular audience segments. Furthermore, podcasts often employ sponsorship strategies such as host-read promotions, brand partnerships, or embedded advertisements that feel more organic to the listening experience. Given that podcast audiences are younger and more digitally connected, these strategies may foster stronger brand engagement than traditional radio ads. Thus, while radio continues to offer wide reach for advertisers, podcasts provide highly engaged, niche audiences that enable more personalized and interactive advertising strategies. Industry research supports these inferences. Amplifi Media (2022) highlights how advertisers increasingly turn to podcasts to reach younger, harder-to-reach audiences. Riverside (2025) also reports that podcast advertising revenue continues to grow due to the medium’s ability to integrate sponsorships through host-read promotions and targeted placements. Collectively, these findings suggest that while radio retains

broad reach, podcasts offer more interactive and personalized sponsorship strategies that may be more effective for contemporary advertisers.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY

This research project, titled “From Radio Waves to Podcast Streams: A Comparative Analysis of Audience Engagement in Traditional Radio and Podcasts”, examined the evolving patterns of audio media consumption in the digital age. The study was motivated by the increasing popularity of podcasts as a flexible, on-demand medium and the enduring relevance of traditional radio as a widespread source of information and entertainment. While both platforms operate in the audio communication space, they differ in format, accessibility, and interactivity, which in turn shape how audiences engage with them.

The study was guided by five research questions: (1) How do audience engagement levels differ between traditional radio and podcasts? (2) What factors influence audience preference for one medium over the other? (3) How do content format, accessibility, and interactivity impact listener loyalty? (4) How do audience demographics differ between podcast listeners and

traditional radio listeners? and (5) How do advertising and sponsorship strategies compare between podcasts and traditional radio?

The survey method of research was adopted with the aforementioned as instrument. The key findings of this study are as follows

1. Awareness levels for audio media platforms are high. 100% respondents were aware of radio, while a slightly smaller proportion were aware of podcasts (94%).
2. Radio was mostly listened to rarely (68%) and for short durations, with 66% of respondents listening for less than 30 minutes, while podcasts were used more frequently (53%) and for longer periods with 54% of the respondents listening for more than 30 minutes.
3. Entertainment and educational or informative programs were the most preferred content types (45.5%), with podcasts offering more personalized options.
4. Podcasts provided greater opportunities for participation with 36% of the respondents making use of the social media comment sections, making audiences feel more involved than with radio.
5. Podcast listeners were mostly young adults aged 21–25 (54.5%), while radio appealed more to older audiences of 31 years and above (7.6%).

5.2 CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine audience engagement with traditional radio and podcasts in an era of rapid technological advancement and media convergence. The findings clearly demonstrate a shift in audience listening behavior, with digital audio platforms increasingly reshaping how people access, consume, and interact with content. While both media occupy significant positions in the audio communication space, their patterns of engagement, audience composition, and levels of interactivity differ considerably.

The results showed that radio continues to enjoy universal awareness and credibility, but its usage is declining, as a large proportion of respondents reported listening infrequently and for short periods. This suggests that radio's dominance as the primary source of information and entertainment is gradually being challenged. In contrast, podcasts have gained substantial traction, especially among young adults, who are drawn to their flexible, on-demand nature, longer listening sessions, and interactive features. The data further revealed that entertainment and educational content are the most preferred program types, indicating that audiences value both relaxation and learning opportunities in their audio consumption.

The study also established that interactivity plays a crucial role in sustaining audience interest and loyalty. Respondents who engage through social media, live discussions, or feedback channels reported a stronger sense of satisfaction and connection with content creators. This pattern was more pronounced among podcast listeners than radio audiences, showing that the participatory nature of digital audio fosters deeper engagement. In terms of advertising, the research revealed that while radio remains effective for reaching broad audiences, podcasts provide more targeted advertising opportunities suited to specific listener groups, reflecting an evolution toward more personalized marketing approaches.

In essence, this research underscores the reality that audience behavior is evolving in line with technological change. The findings reveal that while radio remains widely recognized and trusted, audience engagement with it has declined, as many listeners now tune in less frequently and for shorter durations. Conversely, podcasts are gaining popularity, especially among younger audiences who value flexibility, personalization, and opportunities for interaction through digital platforms. Entertainment and educational programs emerged as the most preferred content types, and interactivity was found to play a major role in sustaining listener interest and loyalty. The study also shows that advertising is shifting toward more targeted and personalized approaches, with podcasts offering new spaces for creative sponsorships while radio maintains its mass reach. For broadcasters, advertisers, and policymakers, the challenge is not to choose one medium over the other, but to recognize the unique strengths of each and adapt strategies accordingly. By

doing so, both radio and podcasts can coexist and thrive, ensuring that audio communication remains relevant and impactful in a rapidly changing digital world.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. For Broadcasters: Traditional radio stations should integrate digital strategies to remain competitive. This includes creating hybrid platforms where radio programs are also made available as podcasts or through streaming services to increase accessibility and audience retention.
2. For Podcasters: Content creators should continue to explore personalized and niche content that appeals to younger, digitally savvy audiences. Consistency in production and promotion through social media can further strengthen audience loyalty.
3. For Advertisers and Sponsors: While radio remains a valuable tool for reaching mass audiences, advertisers should take advantage of the targeted advertising opportunities available on podcasts. Host-read ads and community-focused sponsorships should be prioritized to build trust and relevance with listeners.

4. For Audience Engagement: Both radio and podcast producers should prioritize interactivity by creating more opportunities for audience participation through call-ins, live QandA sessions, social media discussions, and feedback platforms. This will help foster a stronger connection with listeners.

5. For Policymakers and Regulators: There is a need to create policies that support the growth of digital audio platforms while ensuring fair competition and ethical advertising practices. Training and capacity-building programs can also be encouraged to help traditional broadcasters adapt to the digital shift.

6. For Future Research: Further studies can focus on exploring the economic impact of podcasting in Nigeria, examining rural versus urban listening patterns, or conducting longitudinal research to track how audience behavior evolves over time.

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APPENDIX I

Department of Mass Communication,
Faculty of Arts,
University of Benin,
Edo State,
Nigeria.

2nd September, 2025

Dear Respondent,

REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a final-year student in the Department of Mass Communication, University of Benin. As part of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communication, I am conducting a research study titled: From Radio waves to podcasts streams: A Comparative Analysis of Audience Engagement in traditional Radio and Podcasts.

Your participation in this study will be highly appreciated. I kindly request your assistance in providing accurate and relevant responses to the attached questionnaire. Please be assured that all information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used solely for academic purposes.

Thank you for your time, cooperation, and valuable contribution to this research.

Yours Faithfully,

Esther Ogbodo

Researcher

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is your gender?
 - () Male
 - () Female
 - () Prefer not to say
2. What is your age range?
 - () 16–20 years
 - () 21–25 years
 - () 26–30 years
 - () 31 years and above
3. What is your current level of study?
 - () 100 Level

☐ 200 Level

☐ 300 Level

☐ 400 Level

☐ Postgraduate

☐ Not a student

SECTION B: LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF MEDIA (RADIO AND PODCASTS)

4. Are you aware of radio as a source of information and entertainment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

5. Are you aware of podcasts as a source of information and entertainment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. How would you rate your awareness of podcasts compared to radio?

☐ Much higher

☐ About the same

☐ Much lower

SECTION C: FREQUENCY AND DURATION OF LISTENING

7. How often do you listen to the radio?

☐ Daily

☐ A few times a week

☐ Once a week

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

8. On average, how much time do you spend listening to the radio per session?

☐ Less than 30 minutes

☐ 30 minutes – 1 hour

☐ 1–2 hours

☐ More than 2 hours

9. How often do you listen to podcasts?

☐ Daily

☐ A few times a week

☐ Once a week

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

10. On average, how much time do you spend listening to podcasts per session?

☐ Less than 30 minutes

☐ 30 minutes – 1 hour

☐ 1–2 hours

☐ More than 2 hours

SECTION D: PREFERRED CONTENT TYPES AND LEVEL OF INTERACTIVITY

11. What type of content do you mostly prefer? (You may tick more than one)

☐ News and Current Affairs

☐ Entertainment (Music, Talk shows, Comedy)

☐ Educational/Informative Programs

☐ Religious/Inspirational Messages

☐ Lifestyle and Health

☐ Sports

12. Between radio and podcasts, which do you prefer for your chosen content?

☐ Radio

☐ Podcasts

☐ Both equally

13. Do you like participating in interactive segments (e.g., call-ins, comments, polls, live chats)?

☐ Yes, very much

☐ Sometimes

☐ Not really

☐ Never

14. If yes, why do you?

☐ They allow you to express fully your thoughts

☐ They make you feel a sense of satisfaction that you're heard

☐ They promote conviviality

☐ They make you feel important.

15. What form of participation do you prefer?

☐ Phone-in calls

☐ Text/WhatsApp messages

☐ Social media comments

☐ Live discussions or Q&A