Podcast Functionality in the Digital Age as an Information Media in Indonesia

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Abstract— Podcasts have become a platform used by many people, one of which is as a means of disseminating and receiving information on various topics according to the needs of the audience who are looking for it. This study aims to determine the role and popularity of podcasts in the digital era as an information medium. This research uses a qualitative approach, which is carried out to understand a phenomenon through description using a variety of scientific methods. The research method used is a literature study. The data collection techniques used include a series of reading, selecting, and analyzing articles from several scientific journals and news related to research topics, podcasts, and reference books. Based on the results of the discussion in this study, the podcast with the broadcaster's relaxed story style using language that is easily understood by listeners makes the messages contained in the topic easy to convey. The popularity of podcasts that are growing and widely chosen by listeners, is influenced by Indonesian people who mostly prefer to watch rather than read. This activity becomes interesting with the function of podcasts increasing as part of a new profession and supporting old businesses.

Keywords— Information, Popularity, Podcast, Role

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, new media continue to emerge as a means of communication and information. One medium that has become increasingly popular lately is podcasts. Podcasts have become a platform used by many people, one of which is as a means of disseminating and receiving information on various topics according to the needs of the audience who is looking for it [1].

Podcasts have become an increasingly popular medium in recent years, and as they grow in popularity, more and more people are starting to produce and consume podcasts. According to a study conducted by Edison Research in 2020, about 75% of the population of the United States has listened to a podcast at least once in their lives. In addition, the study also showed that time spent listening to podcasts increased year over year [2].

Podcasts in Indonesia are starting to get considerable attention from the public. The number of podcast platforms available such as Spotify, Pod-bean, and Sound-cloud makes it easier for podcast creators to spread their work. Not only that, several well-known radio stations and mass media in Indonesia have also started producing and airing podcasts as part of their marketing [1] [3].

Podcasts themselves are a form of digital media consisting of audio or video files that can be downloaded and played on various devices such as mobile phones, tablets, or computers. Today, many people choose to listen to podcasts instead of reading or watching the news. In addition, it can reach a wider audience than traditional media, such as radio or television, especially since podcasts can be played anytime and anywhere [4]. In addition, podcasts are able to provide opportunities to justify the chaos that occurs in communication and become a form of interaction that justifies every communication event [5]. The purpose of this paper is to explain the function of podcasts in digital media in Indonesia.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach, where the research conducted intends to understand a phenomenon through descriptions in the form of words about a natural context. The method used in research is a literature review. A literature review is a systematic way that aims to collect and synthesize previous research [6] [7]. Through the integration of various empirical evidence, both findings and empirical, the literature review is believed to be able to answer research questions with strengths that no single has study [8]. In addition, a literature review can be applied to identify important attributes of articles that have been reviewed by researchers. The data collection techniques used in this study include a series of activities from reading, selecting, and selecting and analyzing articles from several scientific journals and news related to research topics, namely podcasts and reference books [9]. In addition, researchers also observed several popular podcast platforms such as Spotify, and the content contained in it.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The beginning of presence of podcasts in Indonesia in 2018, grew quite rapidly. At that time, podcasts began to be known for their appearance on the Spotify application. In just 2 years, when it was May 2020, the development of podcasts in Indonesia began to appear. A fact states that Indonesia is the country with the highest number of podcast listeners in Southeast Asia. In 2020, Spotify, which is one of the platforms that present a variety of podcast content, experienced a threefold increase in listeners. So, 2020 is known as an interesting year for the podcast world in Indonesia because of the number of podcast actors who continue to grow and the number of listeners who always increase significantly [9]. Podcasts have become popular in 2020 since the Covid-19 pandemic, due to the impact of the pandemic through policies launched by the government that limits activities outside the home and require activities at home such as work, school, college, and others. If it is associated with the theory of Uses and Gratifications which emphasizes what audiences do with the media, then Indonesian people use technology more to obtain information about Covid-19 which is hotly discussed, one of which is through podcasts [9].

Podcasts in the Digital Age as Modern Broadcast Media

In the new media era that utilizes digitalization as a means to obtain information, podcasts have a role as an alternative media that presents content in the form of episodes programs both presented in the form of audio and video recordings through internet channels. Podcast as an audio medium, also has a radio media character [10, 4, 11]. The difference with radio, is podcasts present more diverse content, for example presenting information that is of scientific value, and content that is entertaining So it is not surprising that any audiences prefer podcasts as an alternative medium to get the information needed. Currently, podcasts can not only be enjoyed audio, but audio-and-visual just like many podcasts' contents uploaded to the YouTube platform.

The trend of podcasts also continues to increase as an alternative medium for broadcasting in this digital era. One reason is that podcasts are flexible. Audiences out there can enjoy podcast content while doing various activities. In addition, podcasts can also be a medium that can provide information to open new insights and thoughts, more personalized content production, can be used as an alternative media to disseminate audio content, complement conventional radio as well as video-based platforms, and can be accessed easily, safely and comfortably. In addition, the content presented by podcasts is usually content that has novelty value and is widely discussed by the public, such as political, social, educational, opinion, and so on content, and is equipped with audio-visual that can be accessed at any time simply using a device connected to the internet network. So it is not surprising that the audience switches more to listening to podcasts than conventional radio broadcasting media [12].

Podcasts are becoming a modern broadcast medium in this digital era, considered a social communication technology of society. Podcasts as a communication channel are replacing anti-mainstream media. In fact, not a few anti-mainstream media have podcast platforms as broadcast media filled with the hottest topics. Like well-known podcasters in the country, DEDDY CORBUZIER, who presents diverse and hotly discussed content, is presented in the form of audio-visuals uploaded through his YouTube channel [12].

It can be assumed that digital technology has changed media communication patterns from conventional media to digital media, one of which is broadcast media which is replaced by podcasts. The popularity of podcasts today indicates that podcasts are considered effective as modern broadcasting media. Although the content presented is almost the same as radio, the difference lies in the flexibility that podcasts have. Podcasts are often referred to as modern broadcasting media, but there is no law that officially regulates that podcasts are part of broadcasting media, unlike radio as one of the broadcast media that is legally regulated in Article 1 Number 2 of the Broadcasting Law [13].

Podcasts as a medium of information

There are many factors that influence why a person searches, accesses, obtains, and uses information. Nicholas in his book outlines several factors including, occupational factors, cultural culture, personality, education level, age, time availability, gender, sources of information, and the amount of information available [14]. If it is associated with the theory of use and gratifications which emphasizes what audiences do to the media, people seek and obtain information by utilizing technology, especially around topics that are currently being discussed. In addition, podcasts are now an alternative to conveying messages in terms of long-distance meetings [15, 16]. Information usually refers to perspectives on an issue, providing education, to presenting entertainment. For example, several podcasts in Indonesia such as PODKESMAS, RAPOT, ASUMSI BERSUARA, and KEJAR PAKET PINTAR are available on the Spotify application. The podcasts in the YouTube application include podcasts Najwa Shihab, RADITY DIKA, DEDDY CORBUZIER, and many more [9].

The content is in the form of presenting information in simple language that is easier for everyone who hears it to understand. So as to obtain new knowledge that was previously unknown, the information conveyed was directly from the source without an intermediary so that it could be said to be more valid. For example, the way "Man Behind The's Gun" meets people's information needs is by building a question-and-answer atmosphere with listeners through social media beforehand, to accommodate and reference questions that will later be more significantly discussed with guest stars who are present in the episode [17].

Podcasts become used for the community and also produce satisfaction when we have found the information sought. In the context of society, podcasts also have a role as a forum to convey information. Having a nature that can be repeated when needed, is the advantage of podcasts because they can provide clear repetition of information, and are easy to listen to anywhere regardless of distance and time, which makes podcasts one of the easy and practical media to use to obtain information.

Podcasts as a Messaging Media

Podcasts, which are audio-based media with stories presented in audio form, can now also be presented in the form of audio visuals as an attraction for listeners if they see the podcaster's visuals. Podcasts with the broadcaster's relaxed story style use language that is easy for listeners to understand, making the messages contained in the topic easy to convey. For example, one of the well-known podcasts, the MALAM KLIWON Podcast, in the podcasting world tells the experience of the community as podcast listeners sent via e-mail and Instagram Direct Message, as well as good communication with podcast listeners, followed by good audio-visual processing so that what is conveyed on the podcast, is conveyed to listeners well [18]. With the use of media that is closer to the community such as Spotify, YouTube, and Instagram platforms in delivering their messages, making podcasts easily reach their listeners.

According to [18], one of the roles of podcasts as a medium for delivering messages certainly causes mass communication effects. The theory of Grant and Wilkinson [19] says the effect of mass communication caused by podcasters in distributing podcast content, reviewed through the theory of LILIWERI [20] among others:

1. Cognitive effects. The podcast content presented and received by the audience affects the views and knowledge of the audience who begins to switch. For example, podcasts with horror themes that are always packed with a tense atmosphere and different story packaging by the podcast announcer, certainly affect the views and knowledge of the audience who listen to it.

2. Affective effects. Mass communication messages result in changes in the feelings of the audience. This is because of the emotions given by the podcast announcer such as pleasure, comfort, tense feelings, and others.

3. Conative effect. This effect leads to behaviors such as actions that the audience takes, and habits of behavior that are affected after watching and listening to the podcast of one of the podcasters after several episodes. In addition, behavioral habits can also be reflected by the audience's obligation to watch and listen to content from one of the podcasters every episode both on YouTube and Spotify, actively comment, and post and share the podcast on their social media accounts.

The delivery of messages in podcasts needs to be a matter of concern in order to better see the perceptions and preferences of listeners before raising the title or theme to be discussed and the range of technology used [21]. Podcasts provide ample information enrichment for information-hungry informants.

Podcasts Opportunities and Challenges in Indonesia

The popularity of podcasts that are growing and chosen by many listeners, is influenced by several things such as the potential of podcasts that not only provide information to listeners but also facilitate dialogue between lay listeners and those who have a lot of expertise. In addition, its development is also influenced by the quality of podcast content created by its broadcasters, good or not will be reflected in the large number of listeners. Apart from this, of course, there are opportunities and challenges for podcasts that are skyrocketing in Indonesia [22]. The next challenge is to create para-social interaction (PSI) in podcasts, providing a challenge for listeners by presenting similarities with idols or adjusting to trends that are currently developing. In addition, this is also able to leverage the attractiveness of doing business and offering products to be traded [23].

The first opportunity, the presence of podcasts can provide information and knowledge from competent sources in their fields, so that the audience who listen gain new insights and thoughts. This is in line with the characteristics of new media, one of which is networking, which means ease in obtaining and searching for information [24, 25].

The second opportunity is to create more personalized content production so that the audience can choose which content is in accordance with the topic he wants to hear. In addition, the podcast storytelling style makes listeners feel closer and have friends telling stories [10].

The third opportunity, podcasting can be used as an alternative media to make audio content more wide-reaching. Because the majority of Indonesian people prefer to watch rather than read, many companies have launched podcasting as a medium for disseminating information such as what Go-Jek did with Go-Figure podcasts, NARASI TV, Kompas, KUMPARAN, and others [22, 26].

The fourth opportunity is monetization. Currently, podcasts are in the second era, where in this phase podcasts have transformed into commercial production practices and are used as a medium of mass communication. It is possible, in the next few periods, there will be endorsement opportunities such as Instagram and YouTube [27].

The fifth opportunity, podcasts are thought to be able to complement radio as well as video-based platforms such as YouTube. Just like well-known podcasters DEDDY CORBUZIER and RADITYA Dika who succeeded in collaborating with these two media [22].

The last opportunity is the need for bandwidth to access podcast audio which is relatively small, making the audience feel comfortable if listening to several episodes on one topic for hours [22]. In addition to opportunities, the development of podcasts is also inseparable from the various challenges that exist. The first challenge is competition with video-based content that has already been popular among millennials, such as YouTube. YouTube is still the main choice of people in consuming video-based media [28].

The second challenge is the method of implementing monetization. In Indonesia itself, there is no calculation of advertising payments on podcasts. As for listeners, the presence of advertisements on podcasts is annoying compared to advertisements found at the beginning or from sponsors in the opening video [29] [30].

The third challenge is the aspect of content production that should prioritize quality over quality. Because podcast content should not only be entertaining but also can educate the audience out there. Podcasters do not need to focus on producing a lot of content but need to produce good and maximum content [22, 31].

The fourth challenge is the quality of the audio. The sound quality of the audio, whether you realize it or not, is one of the important points that must be considered. Podcast listeners, both at home and on the sidelines of their activities, certainly want to listen to good and qualified sound quality in order to obtain the information obtained. Therefore, podcasters are required to create audio content with good quality, which is by choosing and using a qualified microphone and minimizing noise around them [22, 31].

The fifth challenge is optimizing the duration of audio content. In order to create more high-quality audio content, it is necessary to switch to micro-casts which are short podcasts of about 5-10 minutes. To start a podcast with a short duration, research is needed on the needs of topics that are widely discussed by the audience. Audiences will definitely look for podcast preferences that don't take them days. However, if the content is interesting, then it is likely that the audience will listen to the next episodes [22].

The final challenge lies in audience recognition. Recognition may not always be the initial driver for podcasters in creating their content. However, the growing fame will be a factor for podcasters to continue producing their podcast content. If there is no feedback from the audience, it is likely that the podcaster will not continue to produce their content. For this reason, forums or podcast activists are needed to increase the motivation of podcasters in producing content [32] [22]. Podcast opportunities always come with new findings by building innovations that are different from previous challenges. This provides a new method as part of the research instrument. As the Enterprise Social Media (ESM) method provides challenges that fill the activities of the community to be involved in each event [33].

IV. Conclusions

Podcasts have become an increasingly popular medium and podcasts have a role as an alternative media that presents content in the form of episodes and programs presented in the form of audio and video recordings through internet channels. Podcasts with the broadcaster's relaxed story style use language that is easy for listeners to understand, making the messages contained in the topic easy to convey. The popularity of podcasts is growing and is widely chosen by listeners in Indonesia. This is influenced by Indonesian people who mostly prefer to watch rather than read.

V. Acknowledgment

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