



Visual Podcasting in Digital Era: Unleashing the Power of Sound and Immersive Communication

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Abstract

The research presents the initiative to research on the power of sound; the widely emerging podcasts in this era of digital media has the mass audience. The podcasts are a new form of delivering the message through means of voice. Video podcasting is getting a lot of popularity due its immersive nature, thus creating a huge podcasting community including creators and audience. The today's new generation is completely under its influence and have shown great liking towards it. As it has given them a way to enjoy the audio entertainment era of radio, podcasts have really revived that technology digitally. The present research assess the motives of podcast creators through the video podcasting. Now podcasting not only surrounds the story telling and talk shows but it has enhanced its format and style. Podcasts are now transformed into interviews, focus group discussions, monologues and many other formats while covering the topics of daily life, politics, motivational, technology, women issues and much more. As the podcasting is interpreted in social cultural context through interviews, discussion by podcaster creators. Every communication that occurs must had to have a meaning and reason and these certain meanings and motives are the driving force of the podcasts. The podcast creators are interviewed from each category of podcasting that includes daily life, politics, motivational, technology, entrepreneur and women issues podcasting. The results are formulated by deriving themes, compare and contrast between and among the groups. For creating codes, themes and examining the interview data N-vivo is used. The results indicates that visual appeal to the audience due to its uniqueness, individuality and being a new form of communication and information sharing format. The present research implies that the visual podcasting is the new area for producers to explore and has bright future due to its innovative and immersive nature.

Keywords

Podcasts, Visual Podcasting, Immersive Podcasting, Motivations, Interviews

Introduction

Podcasting

It is evident that people generally like to have interpersonal communication to learn, understand, enjoy and share thoughts with others. In the modern digital scholarship, podcasts provide a form of interpersonal communication digitally. Podcasts brings up the feeling of intimacy through the audio talk shows. The podcast could be done on demand topics and issues. (Altman, 2015). Podcasting is a way of sharing in depth knowledge, entertainment, praising and promotion of corporate brands. Podcasts usually bring about the feeling of intimacy and authenticity by connecting with the audience due to the story attraction and the power of voice. Most people listen; watch podcasts to enjoy a sense of being connected to the host, creating para social relationships with them. Some people are producing podcasts with visuals watched on online social media platforms like YouTube and has attracted vast number of audiences. There are variety of genres of podcasts and categorized by the listening platforms. Within the context of content, the podcasts can be about news, culture, real

crimes, comedy, educational, technological, lifestyle and health. Some try to classify podcasts by format like interviews, panel discussion, solo commentary, nonfiction narrative storytelling, talk shows. According to an association of audio experts, Bello Collective, the top 100 podcasts in 2020 are from the categories of narrative nonfiction, fiction, conversation and experiential. The key motive behind podcasts is being heard (McHugh, 2022).

Podcasting is not constrained by its technologies or characterized by them. Instead, it is a particular set of behaviors and cultural connotations that are intimately linked to the technologies used for the production, management and consumption. Still a niche industry, podcasting, on one hand, it is compared to a profusion of early 2000s technologies and activities like blog writing, social networking and file sharing that are ageing and becoming less noteworthy. Furthermore, podcasting appears to be reviving once more, as the language of the modern golden age suggests (Morris & Patterson, 2015).

At first, the podcasts were created on the topics of technology. Podcasts can be a better platform for those eager to express themselves freely without any intervention from authorities and due to its ease in recording and disseminating. Podcasts are for sure the finest means to share knowledge and information around different regions of the world. There are podcasts available on a wide range of subjects; the production of podcasts generally mirrors the demographics of the technology sector, which is dominated by older, well-educated, white, expert males (Markman, 2012)

The present research focused on the importance and rapid growth of visual podcasts in the digital media. It also assesses the elements making podcasts immersive, the motivations of podcasters. The part video podcasts are playing in producing diverse content format is getting popularity now a days. Podcasts are referred as the advancement of self-served audio medium (Markman & Sawyer, 2014). Arbitron and Edison Research (2012) found that, overall podcasts listenership mounted to 29% for aural podcasts and 26% for audio-visual podcasts in 2012 from 11% of the audience in 2006. Today, many podcasters are shifting from audio podcasts to video podcasts as the video podcasts are getting popularity, as podcasts are a new type of content on digital platforms. That type of podcasting is getting huge popularity, engaging number of audiences and bringing a variety in digital content. Video podcast technology is one of the electronic media forms that can be utilized to withstand the culture with communication and interactions (Özdenera & Güngör, 2010).

RQ1: How visual podcasts are changing the audio storytelling format through immersiveness?

RQ2: What are the elements used to incorporate to enhance immersiveness in visual podcasting?

Literature Review

Podcasts generally stand out among the other content online due to the new way of digitally distributing and broadcasting through an Apple iPod during 2000s. At the moment, podcasting is a medium in its own, even though numerous podcasts have deep roots in radio culture, particularly national public radio. Podcasts as a digital medium combined the intimacy of radio with the flexibility and personalization of digital media to produce an innovative place for social interaction. Subsequently, podcasts have become major actors in the existing media landscape. Currently, the prominence of podcasting is one of qualified, marketed and have association of structural arrangements. Hence, podcasting in current era is regarded as profitmaking creative exercise, mass consumption and a new audio domain. The advancement has been enhanced by the pervasive accessibility of smartphones and podcasting apps as well as the modern style of digital marketplace. Podcasts as audio medium are proficient of constructing and sustaining para social relation as other mediums. Along with the host and listener connection, other podcasts have potential of the explicit niche content or the suitability of use may complement to the audience trustworthiness. (Schlütz & Hedder, 2021).

Researchers are analyzing podcasting with respect to its producers (Markman & Sawyer, 2014) podcasting's influence on the broadcasting marketplace (McHugh, 2016) and its users' motives (Perks & Turner, 2019). As soon as para-social relationship established, this connection has the potential to influence on audience's outlooks and actions.

Visual Podcasting

As video podcasts are getting popular so now a days some podcast creators are also uploading the video podcasts that has attracted huge audience. Like the American comedian Joe Rogan, in his interview show The Joe Rogan experience, attracted 47 million views on YouTube for a 2018 episode featuring Elon Musk while this show's audio only podcasts' monthly downloads are around 190

million (McHugh, 2022). A research showed that the video podcasts are more efficient as compared to the traditional modes of communication. The visual podcasts seemed to be clear, useful in getting knowledge about facts, easy to understand and useful way. Visual podcasts provide a way to get audience's feedback and opinion about the discussed topics, issues and events. Visual podcasts offer a great support in getting feedbacks than the traditional forms as the process of feedback establishment have basis in self-reasoning and affective behaviors (Flood, Hayden, Bourke, & Maher, 2017).

In a research study, it was formulated that the abundance of advanced technology is likely to revolutionize the podcasting format (Berry, 2016) and now podcasting is transformed from audio to video podcasting that is even more appealing to the audience. Video podcasts bring up the sense of being involved in the discussion as most of the podcasts are in the format of interviews and group discussions. Serial or episodic presentations of podcasts are becoming the prominent format in podcasting. This format is borrowed from television and radio shows as they keep the audience connected and bound to the shows, serials from the very beginning until the end, to know what will be revealed in the upcoming episodes (Sherrill, 2020; McHugh, 2016). Some of the serial-based podcasts with high popularity and most downloads includes *Limetown* (2015), *Up and vanished* (2016), *S-Town* (2017), *Faerie* (2020) and *Welcome to your fantasy* (2021). This exhibits the podcasting aspects developed to highlight certain characteristics of this digital medium. The reason behind the popularity of podcasts is that they offer a unique experience with universality of content while covering the similar genres. One of the popular podcast, *The Adam Corolla* shows breaks records by over 59 million downloads in 2011. Over 50 billion podcast downloads were recorded on iTunes. Spotify started podcasts streaming in 2015 and later that year Google Play also starts offering podcasts. With the passage of time and demand of the time, there is increase in the variety of presenting podcasts. Different formats of podcasts are interview or conversations, monologues, repurposed content, panel discussions, fictional and non-fictional storytelling (Rime, Pike, & Collins, 2022).

Conversations, narratives and fictional content are the three categories discussed by few researchers. Within these genres according to the Populus research, 57% content shared on web in 2019 is entertainment, 54% is comedy based, 53% is discussion, 49% is news and current affairs, 41% is sports based, 39% is political content and few others (Berry, 2020). The user-friendliness of podcast production and being widely appealing medium have opened the ways for diverse podcast landscape. This diversity in podcasting have well contributed in the growth of the digital medium and highly benefited the new members of the podcasting community either audience or creators. All these have brought the new experiences and backgrounds to podcasting. The newly produced podcasts by amateurs should be assessed to develop a detailed anatomy of podcasting. To outstand with the existing podcast creators, the independent, amateur podcasters have to know the importance of the diverse and heterogeneous content that develops the sense of uniqueness and also highlights the major characteristic of visual podcasting which the quality level of production (Rime, Pike, & Collins, 2022).

Immersive Podcasting

The podcasting structure has improved its traits and the evolution in these traits is leading in podcasting's innovation. Immersion is one of goal in innovating podcasts. Immersion is usually connected with virtual reality or artificial reality but immersion is not something created with VR, CGI effects, animation or 360-degree videos. They all are just the visual tools for creating immersion for the user or viewer in the given media content. Immersion, as a concept is not a new or limited to be used within multiple technology-enabled devices. Basically, immersion is a psychological concept, indicating the experience of a person to be completely engrossed in something. An age-old storyteller can thus produce immersive experiences, so can any visual media format i.e. movie, books or visual podcasts. In past, an English author was famous for his fantasy works like *The Lord of the Rings* and is recognized for writing one of the immersive stories (Mehendale, 2019). Some researchers are of the view that immersion is a result of involvement in something. The more a person is engaged with the elements of media content, the more immersed that person will feel (Brown & Cairns, 2004).

Immersion is termed as the psychological state in which a person is perceived to be involved and interacting within the environment that gives the stream of motivations and experiences (Witmer & Singer, 1998). That is why the visual podcasts provides the feeling of para-social relationship between audience and the podcasters. Visual podcasts offer themselves to form para social relations among podcasts hosts and their audience and that these relationships raise persuasive effects. Due to

this immersive nature, podcasts are powerful tool to interest the audience (Drew, 2017). There is need to use the modern technology efficiently to enhance immersiveness in various formats of podcasting, so that it can bridge the gap between the research and new digital media.

In visual podcasting, individuals interact with each other for discussion while communicate meant to share with, to share out and to discuss together (Glare, 1968). It gives a sense of interpersonal communication that is taken up to the bigger level where the interpersonal communication, communication between two or more individuals, is shared with the audiences in podcasting.

Para-social Relationship in Immersive Podcasting

Research conducted by Rime and others (2022) shows that people listen or watch podcasts for these purposes which includes entertainment, inspiration, motivation, escapism, relaxation, social activity support, news, learning, para-social relationship and convenience. According to the Edison research (2019), 53% of new podcasts audience were women in 2019, before that the ratio of men and women were 63:37. In broad-spectrum, the video podcasts offer themselves to form para social relations among podcasts hosts and their audience and that these relationships foster persuasive effects. This makes podcasts a powerful tool to inform and educate users (Drew, 2017) and to assume a community service role.

In order to comprehend podcasting more clearly, a research study takes the theoretical basis of para-social interaction and relationships (Hartman, 2016; Cohen, 2014). According to Lindgren (2016), who views podcasts as personal audio narratives, the presenter's personalities develop during the program to create the perception that the listener recognizes them and might even be acquainted with them. Listening to a podcast presenter would be ideally categorized as an initial experience as it contends that para-social interactions are diverse and should be regarded as a continuum, being distant but still in contact (Giles, 2002). Para-social relationship are illusory connections because they are one-sided, governed by the media personality and incapable of developing in a mutually beneficial way. The good news is that media personalities are frequently steady, cordial and non-demanding companions. As a result, para-social relationships can be an easy approach to meet social demands. Para-social relations encourages media consumption, especially the usage of auditory media (Perks & Turner, 2019).

It is argued that media presenters can elicit para-social relationships using participatory techniques such as utilizing a casual conversational tone and foreseeing audience emotions. These conversational strategies promote intimacy, proximity and a sense of inner close circle membership in the audience. Additionally, technical tools are employed to create intimacy and create an immersive environment (McHugh, 2016; McArthur, Stewart, & Sandler, 2017). Theoretical arguments point to podcasts as being particularly suitable for para-social interactions and para social relationships. The presenter's genuineness and likeability are enhanced by their grassroots origins. Most podcasts are serialized, which motivates frequent listening and strengthens para-social relationships. The para-social relationship is more intense, the more podcast presenter exhibited para-social interaction behavior; expressing an interest in the audience and giving specifics about his or her personal life and the more unexpected, genuine and effective an individual seemed to be (MacDougall, 2011). Podcasts build micro-communities by focusing on particular niche, subjects (Murray, 2009). Podcasts are said to represent a new form of para-sociality. The characteristics of the format fostering its effect, which include the emphasis on serial storytelling and engrossing aural narratives, audience's concentrated attention, personalized environment and conventional distribution strategy (Schlütz & Hedder, 2021). The podcasts are highly appealing due to the ease in accessibility. Most of the podcasts produced, distributed over the web free of cost for the audience. The platforms providing access to podcasts are Spotify, Apple podcasts, Google podcast, YouTube and personal web pages of podcasters.

Theoretical Framework

Communication Theory

Theories are created from systematic reflection and evaluation to explain a particular action along with describing the group of actions or relative phenomena (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). While some describe theory as a set of correlated concepts, meanings and explanations that project an organized understanding of the phenomena through identifying relationships between variables, having a determination to explain and predict the phenomena studied (Kerlinger & Lee, 1999).

The communication theory refers to the body of theories that establish the understanding of the communication process (Littlejohn, 1983). The communication theory helps to explain the phenomena of podcasting being studied in this research. The theory explains the motives of doing podcasts, to interact with audience and the main driving force behind podcasting. Podcasting is a way of communication between two or more groups or individuals (Srnicek, 2016), with massive audience through use of sound. Now podcasting is changing slightly from traditional audio podcasting to video podcasting (Lucking, Purcell, & Christmann, 2006) and it is attracting huge viewership along with the listenership on digital platforms of Apple and Google podcasts, Spotify and YouTube (Sullivan, 2019).

The present study is focused on the usage and reasons of importance of podcasting and communication helps to identify the reasons of podcasting and the elements that made podcasting important. In podcasting, individuals interact with each other for discussion while communicate meant to share with, to share out and to discuss together (Glare, 1968). It gives a sense of interpersonal communication that is taken up to the bigger level where the interpersonal communication, communication between two or more individuals, is shared with the audiences in podcasting. To know what makes the podcasting so important, it is necessary to know its process, meaning behind podcasts' creation. Rosengren (2000) suggests that communication relates to the process of creating meanings. Through countering questions how individuals create meanings in social, cultural and psychological way, how communication messages are comprehended intellectually and how ambiguity ascends and through which ways it is resolved. To understand the meaning of podcasting, which indicates the reasons of podcasting, the podcasting is interpreted in social cultural context through interviews of podcasters. Every communication that occurs must had to have a meaning and reason and these certain meanings and motives are the driving force of the podcasts. Through this way, communication theory helps the researcher to understand the podcasts' phenomena. According to Marx, Mirbababie, Brendel and Zander (2021), podcasting is progressively taking a firm position in learning, entertaining and commercial communication. The podcast audience defined the overview of relatable special content as an individually perceived motivation for building a para social relation centered on podcasts.

Methodology

The present research is qualitative in nature and the data is collected through interviews with open-ended questions. The interviews of various podcasters conducted to study the usage and reasons of importance of podcasting. The present research conduct interviews of podcasters to assess the vital reasons and the core outcomes of visual podcasting to know the strategies used by podcasters to make their visual podcasts immersive. For this purpose, semi structured interviews conducted with podcasters majorly living in twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The sample is chosen according to the requirements of the study, as the objective is to get to know the importance of podcasting, its major motivations and immersive nature in recent time. The personal interviews conducted for getting views of podcasters and podcast producers along with the zoom interviews, as per the availability of the podcasters.

Data Collection Method

The present research follows the quantitative method through interviews to gather data in order to analyze the vital reasons and the core outcomes of visual podcasting. As in quantitative data collection method, through close-ended interviews the stated research questions can be answered in a comprehensive way (Kabir, 2016).

Purposive sampling is used, as the research requires views of video podcasters. Purposive sampling involves an iterative method of choosing research subjects (Robinson, 2014). In the present research, podcasters are interviewed during research to get to know their views on podcasting. Podcasters asked about the major motives behind their video podcasting and its significance. The criterion for identifying the sample for this research was that the participants are hosts and producers of podcasts. For interviews, the podcasters are divided into 5 to 6 categories and from each category at least one interview is conducted. The podcasters are divided into categories of political, social, women issues, entrepreneurial and motivational podcasters. The sample consists of podcasters from Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Karachi who were doing podcasts for at least one year. The criteria for selection of podcasters are based upon the time period they have been doing podcasts and their followers on their podcasting channels. The interviews are conducted with the podcasters and

producers in this field for more than a year and associated with podcasts named Ghum Hour, TPR Pod, Happy Chirp, Thought Behind Things, Behind The Grind, the Hamza Shoaib show and Junaid Akram podcasts.

Semi structured interviews are conducted as there is a chance of getting to know the discussion matter in detail. Such kind of interviews generates further more areas to discuss on the subject matter. For present research, the interviews were semi-structured with open-ended question that elicit detailed responses. As the sample comprised of podcasters and podcast producers, responses were sufficient to fulfil the purpose of research. The aim was to gather information on visual podcasting’s importance, its formats, appealing nature and its sense of connectivity, immersive nature due to popularity in present time. Semi-structured interviews are useful when there is a need to collect in-depth information in a systematic manner from a number of individuals. The research further examines the podcasting as a medium with the potential of having elements of para-sociality and immersiveness.

The interview guide of present research comprises of questions that focus on the usage and motives of visual podcasting and its immersive nature. The podcasters being interviewed asked about how they came into the field of podcasting, what are the major motivations behind doing visual podcasts. Furthermore, the respondents were asked about which format or style can be best for your podcast’s popularity, why many individuals are tending towards podcasting, how video podcasting changing the podcasting arena, the way visual podcasting is creating immersiveness and with the use of podcasts, what kind of productivity can be brought.

Data Analysis and Results

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis of interview data is done and data of interviews analyzed through NVivo. The coding sheet developed to identify the variety of opinions and views under multiple themes. The thematic analysis intends to find common patterns in the collected data set. The thematic analysis refers to an iterative process that provides a road map to how to search the most important key elements in the collected data from the cluster of whole, messy data (Braun, Clarke, & Mortensen, 2019). The thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews consists of few steps. First, it is required to get familiar with the data collected by reviewing it multiple times. Coding or labeling the whole interview text, then themes are searched within data with the wider patterns of meanings. After finding themes, the themes are reviewed to assess its conformity with the interview data collected. Every theme is named and the content of interviews is divided into each theme observed within the data. The interviews were conducted through audio, written format and through zoom, in end of November and early December 2022.

Data Coding and Themes

On NVivo, the data is analyzed by generating codes. The codes derived for present research are motives behind podcasting, ideal and successful podcasting, format, audio and video podcasts, challenges, platforms and the future of podcasting. The codes are derived in accordance with their relevance to the research questions. The data coding followed by deriving themes with a focus on identifying patterns of meanings. After the coding, the next consideration was identifying themes in the collected interview data. Theme is something that captures the key idea of the data in relation to the research question, represents some sort of pattern in the responses and create meanings of the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RQs	Coding	Themes
RQ1: How visual podcasts are changing the audio format through immersiveness?	Ideal and successful podcast	Conversation and ideas sharing
	Audio vs video	Consistency
	Platforms	Video
	Future of podcasting	Content quality
RQ2: What are the elements used to incorporate to enhance immersiveness in visual podcasting?	Format	Emerging medium
	Content selection	Relatability to content

Table 4.1 Research questions and coding

The themes identified from the data included conversation, sharing thoughts consistency, content, video and emerging medium. NVivo automatically counts the number of times these subjects appear in the data. The most repeated themes given in Figure 4.1 were video (24), content quality

(19), conversation (17), emerging medium (10), YouTube (10), ideas (7), consistency (6), meaningful content (5), relatability (4), connectivity (4), new content format (3) and Google Podcasts (3).

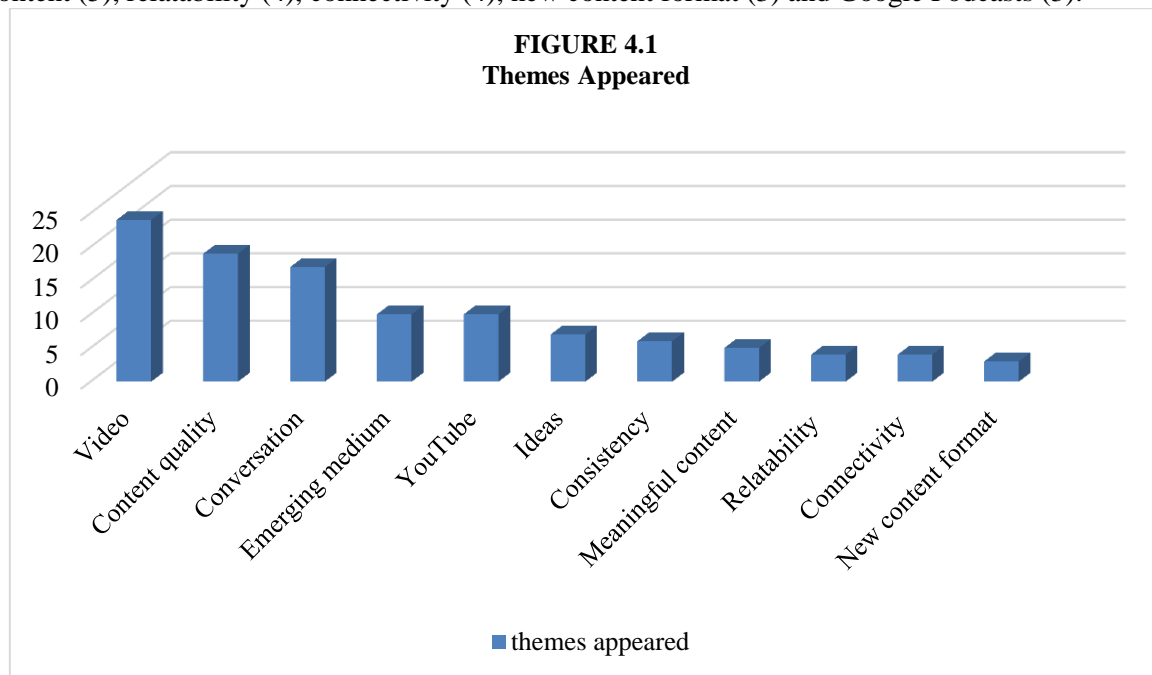


Figure 4.1 Themes appeared in data

Results

Through the set of interviews, some compelling points emerged in the present research. The podcasters were of the view that visual podcasting provide an edge for those who want to present themselves in front of public and have desire to share their ideas with wide range of audience. The visual podcasting is an innovative way to spread their voices along with the element of video, which makes the podcasts more effective and appealing to the audience. The visual podcasting has created a sense of connectivity as its immersive nature allows the audience to have a feeling of relatability and being a part of their conversations.

RQ1: How visual podcasts are changing the audio format through immersiveness?

One of the interviewees when asked about how video podcasting is changing the audio podcasting responded that visual podcasts provide the digital space for people to have intellectual conversation in an audio-video format. There were a lot of podcasts happening internationally but not in Pakistan. People want to learn and listen to conversations but there was not any platform for this particular thing in Pakistan. To describe the immersive element of visual podcasts, all of the view that visuals are the essential part as the audience can see the person they are listening to and their expressions. Currently, video podcasting has more appeal being the emerging medium in Pakistan. Another podcaster said that in present time people tends towards new content and new mediums due to the lack of content on mainstream media, TV. The major audience video podcasts are majorly youth and they are moving towards digital media content consumption as it caters their interests. The reason of sprung up of podcasting in Pakistan is that now our audience is now mature due to social media and have access to so many things and used to view podcasts being a new versatile medium. The future of video podcasts is bright in Pakistan as there is audience that want to consume that kind of content. A lot of podcasts have sprung up in Pakistan, so clearly there is a market available for this medium. Podcasting itself formed a separate industry in the digital media. Digital media industry is the future now.

The respondents agreed to the point that video podcasting is gaining moderate attention in the digital platforms and maintaining the high audio quality is the key to success in visual podcasts. Video podcaster from Behind The Grind podcasts had a view that visual podcasts are basically one of the best ways of storytelling in the current digital media age as people get attracted towards it due to its diversity and format that people connect with and feels them to be that podcasting setup. Audience wants to view the topics that interests them motivates them thus it is podcasters duty to bring diversity in content that can cater variety of audience. Podcasters are of the view that if the audience is giving

them their time so it should be valued through creating educational, entertaining content having relatability. The video podcasts should not be too lengthy that they can be boring or be too short to cover the key purpose of discussion. Another podcaster Junaid Akram is of the view that there is demand for this long format, as people also like to watch lengthy conversations to get the productive ideas and can consume meaningful content. Hamza Shoaib on video podcasting and its immersive nature is of the view that it is about the podcast's meaningful, positive content and giving value to the audience time so it is required to produce a meaningful, productive content.

One of the interviewees viewed the immersive appeal of visual podcasts as now people also have access to international content and they used to watch foreign podcasters and want to see that content in local way. The visual podcasting in Pakistan is catering that need and that content being produced locally in many formats like news podcasts, inspirational podcasts, gaming podcasts, political podcasts, tech podcasts, educational podcasts and religious podcasts. Therefore, people can relate themselves with the storytelling in the video podcasts and have immersive appeal. To add the immersive element in video podcasts, Usra from Ghum Hour said that content will always be the crucial key and in podcasts, storytelling is very important that is true essence of this format. Arooj Abrar from Happy Chirp podcast explained that Ghum Hour podcasts are mostly guest based and general conversations from which people can learn new things.

The responses were wide ranging and formed the basis for the understanding of visual immersive podcasting and its significance. The common theme that appeared from all the responses was that the podcasters mainly viewed visual podcasting as a tool to have information and conversation. The responses are relative to McHugh's (2022) statement that the new, engaging content is the major reason that audience more tends towards podcast. The diversity in ideas, quality content and consistency in podcasts production is the key to successful podcasts as discussed by the podcasters.

RQ2: What are the elements used to incorporate to enhance immersiveness in visual podcasting?

Immersion is generally linked with certain devices but it can be narrative as well (Mehendale, 2019), similar is that case with visual podcasting. The present research used the concept of immersiveness in a way that the visual podcasts provides a sense of involvement in the podcast's conversation and storytelling. The video podcaster of Hamza Shoaib show is of the view that the visual podcasts gives the sense of relatability and informal yet formal conversations really connects the podcasts' content with the audience as audience likes and shares their podcasts and content on social media. The value of time is really important in this fast world and in all the daily hustle people are giving their time the visual podcasts and enjoying the content so it is podcaster's responsibility to give value to the viewer's time and efforts. All this allows and helps the podcasters to make better and meaningful productive content that helps the audience in many ways either educate, entertain, inform, inspire or guide them in their career and everyday lives. As explained earlier, another video podcaster Junaid Akram said that audience could feel related to the content when they see the localized content that they previously used to watch on foreign podcasters' channels like Joe Rogan etc. The desire to create meaningful content as it is getting very rare and it is beneficial and helpful if someone gets inspiration and hope from the conversations in the visual podcasts with the variety of people. Asad Hasham doing visual podcasting with the name Behind the Grind is of the view that its podcaster's job to provide productive yet inspiring content to the viewers that help them in their entrepreneurship and in their careers. Asad Hasham also said that storytelling is a strong form of podcasting and sharing stories of someone's career create effect on viewers as they learn and assume themselves as being in the conversation as get inspiration. Arooj Abrar from Happy Chirp podcast said that to create relativity and connectivity with the audience through clear production of sound and visuals of podcasts so they can pay attention the podcasting content, thus enhancing immersion.

Thus, the relatability in podcast's content enhances the immersiveness in video podcasts through relatedness in content of podcasts. Giving value to the audience as they are giving their time to their podcasts and like it; all that increases the value of visual podcasts and its immersiveness. Connectivity, relatedness to the content and conversations in the informal manner in video podcasting enhances the immersive element. The ways to enhance immersiveness in visual podcasting is through creating content that has relatedness with the audience to give proper value to their time giving to the podcasts.

Discussion

A boom in the podcasting industry especially visual podcasting has vitally shifted the course of media usage. Visual podcasting emerged as a digital innovation in Pakistan in recent time. Visuals have more power than sound. Visual podcasting can create more value for the audience and help them to develop deeper connectivity and relativity with the content of podcasts by adding the video element. Among a lot of video content over the internet, visual podcasting stands out due to its immersive nature. In this digital age, the audience wants to view content that can satisfy their need of connectivity and the video podcasts are fulfilling this purpose.

Multiple platforms available for video podcasting and YouTube as identified as the major platform in Pakistan by the respondents of the present research due to its easy accessibility. A recent report by Cumulus Media (2022) found that 33% of podcasting audience prefer watching video podcasts. The report also highlighted that YouTube appeared to be used most commonly to access video podcasts consumption as compared to the Apple Podcasts and Spotify. Podcasters in Pakistan are covering a wide range of topics from politics to business, information to entertainment, life stories to motivational, inspirational subjects to cater every niche of the society. Through interviews, the present research found that the podcaster also using different video formats like short form videos like YouTube shorts and reels for diverse audience.

The rapid use of podcasting is considered as the revival of the power of sound in Pakistan as it is gaining huge attention. The visual podcasts also emerged that helps the podcasters to better interact through audience as audio along with video would create better impact and popularity. As explored by Özdenera and Güngör (2010), video podcasting is one of the digital media platforms that can be utilized to withstand the culture with communication and interactions.

The focus of present research was on visual immersive podcasting and through interview responses; it is observed that the visual podcasting is a combination of audio-video content with audio as the key element. Another research on immersiveness of podcasts concluded that the immersiveness depends on better audio elements, as one of the most crucial things defining the podcasts' ability to be immersive (Mehendale, 2019). All this develop the element of immersiveness in the visual podcasts. The podcasters interviewed in present research have the opinion that to create and visualize a world of his own, the audio and content elements should be of high quality and have consistency. The researcher analyzed through interviews that visual podcasters have to make sure the audience connects with the content at some level while working on the podcast content. It had to have a useful content, story, set in a way that anyone could relate in their lives. Tobin and Guadagno (2022) found that people with higher openness to understand subjects, having curiosity and cognitive skills have more tendency to be podcast audience. Tobin linked social interactions with hosts and podcasts to socially relevant personality traits. Furthermore, a stronger sense of relatedness is also associated to developing parasocial interactions with hosts and socially interacting with podcasts, as well as to viewing and listening to them. As Carey (2009) elaborates the Thayer's (1987) evolving perspective of communication, which specifies that message meaning interaction is valued as a developing and multifaceted process to learn the developed meanings in the communications. Visual podcasts are incorporating the interpersonal communication of podcast creators and its audience as the podcasts' viewers have keen interest in being a part of such conversations to relate and to learn something. Through interviewing podcasters, it is explored that the relatability and connectivity developed through visual podcasting, all these tools made the visual podcasting immersive as the audience feels them as a part of the podcast's conversation.

The shift to video podcasting can be exceptionally powerful when it creates sense for the viewers and when podcast producers and podcasters can execute it without compromising their main idea (Ghausi, 2022). Communication can be a multi-dimensional process that has emphasis on the shared actions of conversation participants and audience in podcasting. The immersiveness means the sense of being present in the shown atmosphere, visual podcasting represents the same, as the meanings in the podcast's conversation along with the visuals the audience considers them to be related to the current discussion, and their matters are also a part of it. Podcasts are incorporating the phenomena of immersiveness through the sense of interpersonal communication that takes place in visual podcasts. Immersion associated with certain devices, can be narrative as well (Mehendale, 2019), similar is discussed in present research, immersive visual podcasting. The concept of

immersiveness in a way that the visual podcasts provide a sense of involvement in the podcast's conversation and storytelling.

Podcasts are rapidly becoming the best platform for storytelling and sharing interesting aspects through storytelling with the audience around the world (Daren, 2019). During the present research through interviews of podcasters, it was assessed that people can relate themselves with the storytelling in the video podcasts and have immersive appeal. To add the immersive element in video podcasts, Ghum Hour podcaster thought that content will always be the crucial key and in podcasts, storytelling is very important that is true essence of this format. While another podcaster had view that the podcast explained that to help people learn new things and gain confidence and motivation, the storytelling format is a great format to engage with audience, to express your feelings in an attractive and creative way and audience can connect with the podcast motive. The present research also directed towards pointing out the immersive visual podcasts that brings about the sense of being a part of visual podcasts they are viewing as it develops the feeling of relatability and connectivity through the use of diverse discussion topics. Daren (2019) had a similar view that the podcasts are the attractive and rapidly growing platform for storytelling and the way to share a range of interesting stories in various ways with the audience. Apart from the conducted interviews, there are other podcasters who have done successful podcasts consisting of various genres; comedy (Podcastic), political commentary (The Pakistan Experience) and interviews (TCM Originals). Podcasts format is appealing and emerging in Pakistan due its style of presenting issues, subjects in unique way than the traditional media platforms.

Conclusion

The significance of podcasting can be seen through the fact that in present age, mainstream media is also acknowledging the importance of podcasting and many prominent news media have their own podcasts sections. As analyzed by Deseniss (2011), due to the efficiency of podcasts, multiple organizations are also adapting this format for their own commercial communications. Some of the research respondents were of the view that video podcasting is the best way to blend the audio storytelling with the new content formats in this digital age. Like Al-Jazeera, Hum news, Radio Pakistan and many others have their podcasts, as it is a new and appealing way to reach out the vast audience. As a picture can speak thousand words, this approves the fact that visual podcasting has more impact and create an immersive environment that audience can find more connection and it provides the sense of para-social relationship and being a part of the current conversation in video podcasts. The content and consistency in podcasts production is the key to successful podcasts. The key idea, thought and quality content along with the visuals acts the icing on the cake and make the visual podcasts immersive.

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