



Denny Sumargo's Podcast As A Source Of Information Social Issues From The Audience's Perspective

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Abstract: The development of new media has driven changes in how people access information, including their understanding of social issues. The emergence of new media in the form of podcasts broadcast via YouTube has become a widely used medium, including Denny Sumargo's podcast. This study aims to describe listeners' perspectives on Denny Sumargo's podcast as a medium for social issues, explain the motives behind their choice of this podcast, and analyze their post-listening experiences based on the Uses and Gratifications theory. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using in-depth interviews with five informants and observations of YouTube viewer comments. The results indicate that the Denny Sumargo Podcast is viewed as an information medium that presents social issues in depth. Listeners' motivations include cognitive, affective, personal integration, social integration, and tension relief needs. Listeners' experiences are informative, emotional, and reflective, and they foster social awareness and discussion. This study affirms the role of podcasts as a new medium in shaping understanding of social issues in the digital space.

Keywords: Podcast, New Media, Social Issues, Uses and Gratifications, YouTube

Introduction

Advances in information and communication technology have now brought about many significant changes in the way people access and interact with media and information (Kusnanto et al., 2023). These advances in information technology have played a role in facilitating the dissemination of information to the general public (Fajarianto et al., 2021). The rise of increasingly popular new media has highlighted current developments in technology and information. New media is used to communicate in ways that differ from the past. New media relies on the internet, as mentioned by (Mondry in Zellatifanny, 2020). With the advent of computer networks and the internet, which can distribute information quickly and easily, people's patterns of behavior in using information media have also changed (Imarshan, 2021).

People's primary choice for accessing information and entertainment today is no longer television, as there are now many streaming services available through new media and the internet. Social media platforms, as part of online media, are one form of new media in mass communication that has had a significant impact on society. Social media is a tool

frequently used by everyone because of its effectiveness in spreading messages. One of the most popular social media platforms is YouTube (Tinambunan et al., 2022).

According to a survey by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) conducted from April 10 to July 16, 2025, YouTube ranked second as the most frequently accessed social media platform by Indonesians, accounting for 23.76% of all internet users (APJII, 2025). These developments have transformed the way people access information and entertainment. YouTube offers a wide variety of content, such as videos as a medium for creative expression, films, and podcasts to convey messages and educate viewers. Podcasts, a streaming service in the form of audio broadcasts, are one of the most widely used digital media platforms today. This is an exciting development in media technology because it allows people to engage, converse, and exchange ideas.

Podcasts are a very convenient medium to enjoy because they can be listened to anywhere and anytime. In other words, podcasts have the advantage of being a source of information where the public can very easily find the various types of information they need (Tosepu, 2018). One of the most popular podcasts in Indonesia right now is “Curhat Bang,” owned and hosted by Denny Sumargo. His YouTube channel, launched on August 30, 2020, now has approximately 8.66 million subscribers and has amassed nearly 1.6 billion views across more than 450 published videos. Denny Sumargo’s podcast has a unique style that makes it a favorite among many listeners; it features in-depth conversations on a variety of topics, ranging from social issues, the life journeys of celebrities, and business, to the personal stories of the invited guests.

According to tangselpos.id, the case of alleged rape of a 15-year-old girl in South Tangerang City by her stepfather has officially entered the investigation phase following a report filed by the victim’s biological mother on April 17, 2025. The legal process includes a medical examination and psychological evaluation of the victim. There has been media coverage regarding this social issue that has drawn public attention after the victim and her mother’s story was publicly revealed through Denny Sumargo’s podcast in the episode titled “MY CHILD WAS RAPED BY MY OWN HUSBAND!! I REPORTED IT TO THE POLICE BUT WAS TOLD TO STAY WITH THE PERPETRATOR!!” on October 9, 2025. In the podcast, the mother and her child recounted this traumatic experience. This phenomenon demonstrates how podcasts serve not only as a form of entertainment but also as a medium for addressing social issues. According to Kompasiana, social issues are problems that arise in community life and affect social order, norms, and the well-being of individuals and groups. These social issues encompass various phenomena such as abuse, social conflict, and social inequality.

A study conducted by (Imarshan, 2021), The growing popularity of podcasts as a source of information for the public since the COVID-19 pandemic indicates that podcasts have emerged as an easily accessible medium for entertainment and information. This is consistent with research conducted by Syafrina (2022) and (Kusnanto et al., 2023) which states that podcasts can serve as a means of obtaining information, particularly regarding social issues. Based on previous research, there is a research gap: prior studies have tended

to focus on podcast content and technology in general without delving into the motivations, perspectives, and experiences of listeners, particularly in the context of social issues.

There is one main theory that serves as the foundation for research on media use: the Uses and Gratifications theory. This theory emphasizes how audiences use media, portraying individuals as active participants in the process of consuming it (Imarshan, 2021).

Based on this background, the research question in this study focuses on how listeners view Denny Sumargo's podcast as a medium for conveying social issues. Additionally, this study examines the motivations behind listeners' choice of Denny Sumargo's podcast as a source of information on social issues. This study also examines the experiences listeners have after listening to Denny Sumargo's podcast, particularly regarding their understanding of the social issues discussed in the podcast.

Therefore, this study aims to understand how listeners perceive Denny Sumargo's podcast as a medium for social issues. This study also seeks to understand listeners' motivations for choosing this podcast as well as their experiences after listening. By understanding the role of YouTube podcasts, particularly Denny Sumargo's podcast, as a medium for conveying social issues, this study is expected to provide valuable insights for content creators, researchers, and the general public. Through this study, content creators can understand listeners' motivations and experiences in consuming podcasts, thereby enabling them to produce content that is more relevant, empathetic, and meaningful. The public can also gain a broader understanding of how podcast consumption can shape awareness, empathy, and perspectives on social issues currently evolving in the digital space.

In addition to its practical benefits, this study also makes a theoretical contribution to the field of communication and digital media studies. The study aims to describe listeners' perceptions of Denny Sumargo's podcast as a source of information on social issues, explain why listeners choose Denny Sumargo's podcast, and analyze listeners' experiences after listening to Denny Sumargo's podcast.

Several previous studies have extensively examined podcasts as a rapidly growing medium for information, entertainment, and education in the digital age. Imarshan (2021) demonstrates that podcasts have become a preferred source of information for the public due to their ease of access and ability to meet information needs, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. Syafrina's (2022) study also found that podcasts are utilized by students as a means of obtaining information, although users still need to be selective about the content they consume.

Furthermore, Farhan A'kasa and Wijayani (2025) assert that podcasts can play a role in amplifying news coverage through more in-depth discussions and analysis compared to print media, while Marlina (2025) considers podcasts effective as a medium for education and public information due to their flexible and communicative nature. Research by Nur Rahman et al. (2025) also indicates that podcasts have a positive impact as a medium for information and entertainment that can broaden the audience's knowledge.

Based on the previous studies cited above, it can be concluded that prior research has tended to focus on podcast content and technology in general without delving into listeners'

motives, perspectives, and experiences, particularly in the context of social issues. These studies also did not examine Denny Sumargo's podcast as a subject of study, but rather other topics such as the LensaSN podcast, which focuses on political issues, or YouTube media more broadly. Therefore, this study is important to fill this gap by specifically describing listeners' perspectives on Denny Sumargo's podcast as a medium for social issues, explaining their motivations for choosing this podcast, and analyzing the experiences they felt after listening, thereby enriching our understanding of the role of podcasts as a social medium from the listeners' perspective.

New media is defined as communication technology that integrates the use of computers (including mainframes, PCs, and laptops), enabling users to interact both with one another and with the information they seek (Syafrina et al., 2021). New media is a space where communication channels are decentralized; the distribution of messages via satellite has increased the use of cable networks and computers; audience involvement in the communication process has grown; two-way interactive communication has become more common; and the flexibility in determining the form and content of messages has increased thanks to the digitization of those messages (Syafrina, 2022).

Terry Flew in his research (Damayanti, 2016) states that new media is the result of the combination of three elements: Computers, Communication, and Content. According to McQuail (2010), something is considered new because of the elements it contains. These elements include digitization, the convergence of various aspects of media such as interactivity and ever-evolving network connectivity, mobility and delocalization in delivery and reception, changes in publishing practices and the role of the audience, as well as the emergence of various forms of media gateways (Suherman et al., 2024).

New media has an infrastructure consisting of three main components: the tools used for communication; activities involving interpersonal interaction in communication or the dissemination of information; and the social norms or organizational structures that evolve alongside the use of these tools and media activities (Salsabillah et al., 2023). With the variety of new media formats, one of them is online media. This medium is participatory because everyone can interact with it while searching for information. Online media allows individuals to act as both recipients of information (consumers) and creators of information (producers). Unlike television, which relies on audiovisual content; radio, which is audio-based; and print media, which consists of text, online media is capable of combining various formats ranging from audiovisual, audio, text, to graphics all within a single platform (Imawan, 2018).

Social media gives users the freedom to share information and communicate. These platforms are very easy for beginners to use and learn. Using social media generally doesn't require a large investment and can even be enjoyed for free. In addition, social media provides users with easy access to interact and share information (Feroza et al., 2021). Social media refers to the technologies and online activities that individuals use to share opinions, knowledge, experiences, and perspectives with others (Pamungkas et al., 2025). The positive impacts of social media on daily life include its role as a means to strengthen social bonds, broaden horizons and knowledge, provide timely and accurate information, and serve as a

tool for building social networks. However, in addition to these positive impacts, social media also has negative effects, such as a decline in real-world communication, selfish behavior, a lack of understanding of Indonesian spelling, the spread of pornography, criminal activity, and the dissemination of false information or hoaxes (Salsabillah et al., 2023)

YouTube is a platform that allows users to upload and watch videos from various sources (Herminingsih et al., 2022). YouTube serves as a platform that enables content creators to produce and distribute informative, educational, and engaging content, making it accessible to a wide audience (Suharsono et al., 2024). As a mass media platform, YouTube provides a wide range of information and news that people need, making it easier for them to stay informed without having to leave home to buy a newspaper. In addition to being a source of information, YouTube also serves as a form of entertainment by offering a variety of engaging and entertaining video content (Tinambunan et al., 2022). YouTube serves not only as a source of entertainment but also as a platform for a wide variety of content, ranging from tutorials and product reviews to academic discussions. This makes YouTube one of the most influential platforms in shaping culture and public opinion in today's digital age. Through YouTube, individuals and organizations gain broader access to disseminate information, convey messages, and influence public perceptions on various issues and topics (Saifulloh et al., 2024).

According to Apple.com, a podcast is an episode of a program that can be accessed via the Internet. Podcasts are typically original audio or video recordings, but they can also be recordings of television broadcasts, radio programs, lectures, performances, or other events. Each podcast episode is generally available in a consistent file format, such as audio or video, so listeners can enjoy the program in a uniform way. Some podcasts, such as language courses, use various file formats, including video and documents, to support the learning process more effectively (Syafrina, 2022).

Podcasts are currently a highly effective source of information in the digital information landscape. Leveraging social media platforms with millions of users, podcasts are able to effectively and efficiently reach the public information market. In today's digital media context, content is strategically packaged and made engaging to increase audience interest in accessing the social media channels of podcast content providers. The variety of content presented includes information, entertainment, viral topics, facts and opinions, health, and other topics trending in society. The most commonly consumed form of podcast content generally takes the form of a conversation between two or more people involving a host and a guest aimed at exploring information and current issues (Renisyifa et al., 2022).

Brown & Green, as cited in Martianto and Toni (2021), explain that a podcast is audio or video content published on a website so that it can be accessed by the public, either for free or through a subscription service (Qura et al., 2022). Martianto and Toni (2021) describing various communication styles that emerge in podcasts, such as impression-leaving, argumentative, open, dramatic, dominant, precise, relaxed, friendly, attentive, and animated and expressive (lively and enthusiastic). These communication styles are

employed by the speakers in the podcast according to the context of the situations they face (Martianto et al., 2024).

For listeners, podcasts offer a way to enjoy engaging content from around the world for free. For podcast creators, they provide an effective method for reaching a wide audience. Today, there are various types of podcast content ranging from news and interviews to features and documentaries with creativity constantly evolving. One example is an audio blog, where the blogger presents stories in audio format on their blog, which may include personal experiences, food, travel, and more (Rusdi dalam Syafrina, 2022).

The Uses and Gratifications Theory was introduced in 1974 by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in their book **The Uses of Mass Communication: Current Perspectives on Gratification Research**. It posits that individuals actively seek out specific media and content to obtain certain satisfactions or outcomes. This theory assumes that people are active because they have the ability to learn about and evaluate various types of media in order to achieve their communication goals. This theory also predicts that audiences rely on media to fulfill specific needs, and through this process, they become increasingly dependent on that media. The greater a person's dependence on a particular medium, the more important that medium becomes to that individual (Wakas & Wulage, 2022).

Based on the Uses and Gratifications theory, which assumes that audiences actively use media to fulfill various needs such as obtaining information, gaining education, and seeking entertainment this theory views individuals as having freedom and autonomy in their interactions with media. Blumer and Katz argue that audiences choose to use certain media for a variety of reasons, not just a single one (Karunia et al., 2021)

According to Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (1973), as cited in West and Turner (2008), the needs satisfied by the media are as follows.

- a. Cognitive Needs: Acquiring information, knowledge, and understanding.
- b. Affective Needs: Emotional experiences, enjoyment.
- c. Personal Integrative Needs: Enhancing credibility and self-confidence.
- d. Social Integrative Needs: Strengthening relationships with family, friends, and others.
- e. Escapist Needs: Escape and Distraction

These five types of needs in Katz and colleagues' Uses and Gratifications theory will serve as the foundational elements for examining the motivations behind viewing Pastor Brian Siawarta's content on the social media platform TikTok (Wakas & Wulage, 2022).

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. In qualitative research, the design and concepts are developed to help researchers explore the issue under study in depth, thereby enabling them to explain the roles and dynamics that emerge within the research context (Creswell et al., 2018). This approach is used to analyze Denny Sumargo's podcast as a medium for conveying information on social issues, particularly in revealing the perspectives, motivations, and experiences of the audience. The research subjects are selected informants who are listeners of Denny Sumargo's podcast; they were chosen

through a purposive sampling technique based on their direct experience of watching the specified episodes. The research object is the podcast content itself, specifically the episodes that address these issues.

Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with selected informants. Secondary data was obtained from observations of interactions in the comment section of Denny Sumargo's YouTube podcast, as well as supporting literature such as scientific journals, academic articles, books, and survey reports relevant to social issues and digital media. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured guide to facilitate a broad and in-depth exploration of information. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that informants were selected based on criteria relevant to the research objectives, so that the data obtained focused on real-life experiences related to the use of podcasts as a source of information on social issues. The interviews were then recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically by identifying and grouping the main themes that emerged.

To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, this study employed data source triangulation, a technique that involves comparing and cross-referencing various data sources. Triangulation was conducted by combining primary data from interviews and observations of YouTube comments with secondary data from the literature review. The aim was to strengthen the validity of the interpretations and prevent researcher bias. Through this triangulation, consistent information found across different sources enhances confidence in the findings, while discrepancies are analyzed further to achieve a more comprehensive understanding. The application of triangulation also enables the researcher to engage in critical reflection to ensure data consistency and transparency, thereby making the research results credible and accountable

Result and Discussion

The findings of this study were obtained through the collection of primary data in the form of in-depth interviews with informants who are listeners of Denny Sumargo's podcast, as well as secondary data in the form of observations of the podcast content and listener comments on episodes addressing social issues, specifically the episode titled "MY CHILD WAS R@PED BY MY OWN HUSBAND," "I REPORTED IT TO THE POLICE BUT WAS TOLD TO STAY WITH THE PERPETRATOR!!".



Figure 1. Episodes Addressing Selected Social Issues
Source: CURHAT BANG Denny Sumargo, October 9, 2025

Based on the interview results, the informants view Denny Sumargo's podcast as a source of information that differs from conventional media. This aligns with the opinion of (TOA) "I watch Denny Sumargo's Podcast more often than other media, because the information is delivered directly by the source". This podcast does not merely convey information in a one-way manner, but presents firsthand accounts from sources directly involved in an event. The informants noted that the in-depth and unhurried presentation of stories makes it easier for them to understand the background and context of the social issues discussed. Some informants mentioned that this podcast provides a clearer picture of social issues, particularly regarding cases of abuse, family conflicts, and legal problems that are often only briefly covered in other media.

In addition to providing cognitive insights, the interview results also indicate a strong emotional engagement among viewers. Informants reported that when watching episodes addressing social issues, they often felt empathy and concern for the victims, accompanied by feelings of sadness or anger. This aligns with the opinion (MS) "My feelings when watching are usually mixed, sometimes it's sad to see the source telling the story." The stories, told in a deep and moving way, draw viewers into the atmosphere, making the viewing experience not only informative but also emotional. Stories told directly by the victims or those who experienced the events make viewers feel more emotionally connected to the issues being discussed. Some informants stated that after listening to the podcast, they continued to reflect on the content and used it as material for reflection on their own lives and the social conditions around them.

The interview results indicate that Denny Sumargo's podcast frequently serves as a topic of conversation and social discussion among listeners. This aligns with the opinion (PSQ) "In my opinion, many of the social issues in this podcast are relevant to life and can be a topic for discussion". Informants stated that the podcast's content is often revisited in conversations with family and friends, particularly when the social issues addressed are considered relevant to their local circumstances. These discussions facilitate the exchange of perspectives and deepen understanding of the social issues discussed in the podcast.

From a personal perspective, some informants view Denny Sumargo's podcast as an initial reference point for understanding social issues. This aligns with the opinion of (LS) "This podcast gave me an understanding of the state of social issues in Indonesia". The information presented is considered quite reliable because it comes from the speakers' firsthand experiences, although some informants still noted the need to cross-reference it with other sources. Listening to this podcast was also cited as influencing how informants behave in social settings, such as becoming more sensitive, more cautious when evaluating an issue, and more open to listening to others' opinions.

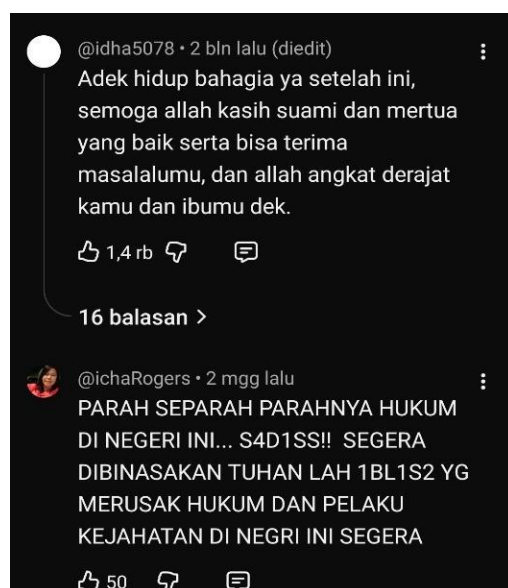


Figure 2. Comment Section for Episodes Addressing Social Issues

Source: CURHAT BANG Denny Sumargo, October 9, 2025.

Secondary data obtained from an analysis of YouTube comments reinforces the findings of the interviews. Viewers' comments reveal strong emotional responses, such as empathy, sympathy, anger, and concern for the victims' well-being. Additionally, many comments reflect a critical awareness of legal and institutional issues, as well as strong moral judgments regarding the perpetrators. There were also quite a few comments calling for the case to be monitored, offering support to the victims, or urging legal and psychological assistance, which indicates a collective sense of concern among viewers.

Listeners' Perceptions of Denny Sumargo's Podcast as a Source of Information on Social Issues

The interview results indicate that listeners view Denny Sumargo's podcast not only as a form of entertainment but also as an informational medium capable of addressing social issues in depth. Informants noted that having the stories told directly by those involved in the social events makes the information received clearer, more contextual, and enhances listeners' understanding of the social issues discussed. This aligns with the opinion of (MS), who stated, "This podcast helps me gain a deeper understanding of social issues because the stories are told directly by the people involved."

This perspective stems from the way podcasts present narratives directly from sources involved in the events, so that the information received by listeners consists not only of facts, but also of the experiences and social context underlying a particular case. The presentation of social issues through natural, flowing conversations and relatively long episodes allows listeners to gain a more comprehensive understanding compared to mainstream media, which tends to convey information in a brief and formal manner.

These findings indicate that listeners view Denny Sumargo's podcast as a new medium for accessing information on social issues. The podcast is seen as capable of

presenting perspectives rarely found in conventional media, particularly the voices of victims or those directly affected by social events. This aligns with the characteristics of new media, which are interactive, flexible, and provide greater space for the audience to engage in the process of interpreting the message. In this context, listeners are no longer in a passive position but actively interpret and evaluate the information conveyed through the podcast.

Listeners' views on the credibility of information in Denny Sumargo's podcast also reveal an interesting pattern. Most informants assessed that the information presented was quite reliable because it was drawn from the sources' firsthand experiences. However, listeners did not automatically regard the podcast as the sole authority on truth. Some informants stated that the podcast is positioned more as a reference for understanding a social issue, which can then be compared with other sources of information. This attitude reflects the audience's critical awareness in processing information in the digital media era, where a wide variety of information sources are widely available.

In addition, listeners view the host's communication style as a key factor in shaping their perception of podcasts as a source of information. The way the host unpacks stories with an empathetic approach and gives guests the space to openly share their experiences is seen as helping listeners understand social issues more clearly. This relaxed yet serious communication style makes sensitive and weighty issues more accessible to listeners from diverse backgrounds.

The findings of this study are consistent with the results of Imarshan's research (2021) and Syafrina (2022) which states that podcasts have emerged as an easily accessible and popular medium for information. However, this study reveals more specific findings, namely that listeners use podcasts not only to obtain general information but also to understand social issues through their own experiences. Thus, this study expands upon previous findings which tended to focus on the informative function of podcasts by emphasizing the role of podcasts as a medium that shapes listeners' perspectives on social issues.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that listeners' perceptions of Denny Sumargo's podcast as a source of information on social issues are shaped by a combination of narrative depth, the credibility of the sources, and an empathetic communication style. The podcast is viewed as an informational platform that enables listeners to gain a more comprehensive understanding of social issues, while also fostering awareness and reflection on the social issues occurring in society.

Reasons Why Listeners Choose Denny Sumargo's Podcasts That Address Social Issues

The motivations of listeners in choosing Denny Sumargo's podcast, which addresses social issues, indicate that the audience plays an active role in selecting and utilizing media according to their needs. Based on the research findings, listeners do not consume all podcast episodes randomly, but rather selectively choose episodes they consider relevant, important, or currently trending. This confirms that podcast selection is driven by specific needs the audience seeks to fulfill, rather than merely out of habit.

Cognitive motivation is one of the dominant factors driving listeners to choose Denny Sumargo's podcast. Listeners use this podcast as a means to gain information, knowledge, and a deeper understanding of social issues. This aligns with the opinion (PSQ) that states, "I'm interested in listening to Denny Sumargo's podcast because the topics feel more engaging compared to other media. This podcast doesn't just deliver the news, but also features firsthand accounts from the people involved, so I can better understand the background of the issues." This statement underscores that the detailed and in-depth discussion of the issues helps listeners gain a clearer picture of the context and the social problems being addressed.

Informants stated that this podcast offers a new perspective, particularly because the information is conveyed directly by sources who experienced the events firsthand. This motive aligns with the cognitive needs outlined in Uses and Gratifications theory, namely the individual's desire to gain understanding and knowledge through the media they consume.

In addition to cognitive motivations, affective motivations also play a significant role in podcast consumption. Listeners report that they are drawn to episodes addressing social issues because they want to understand the emotional aspects of an event and feel empathy for the victims or those involved. Emotional engagement such as feelings of sadness, concern, anger, and even being moved becomes part of the podcast listening experience. These affective motivations indicate that listeners are not merely seeking factual information, but also an emotional experience that makes social issues feel more real and relevant to their lives.

The theme of social integration also emerged in this study, as listeners use podcasts as a topic of discussion with family and friends. The social issues raised in podcasts are often considered relevant to daily life, encouraging listeners to discuss them within their social circles. Through these discussions, listeners can share perspectives, exchange opinions, and strengthen social bonds. This motif indicates that podcast consumption does not remain confined to the personal sphere but extends to social interactions beyond the medium.

In addition, the desire to relieve stress is another reason why listeners tune in to Denny Sumargo's podcast. Listeners typically tune in during their free time or when they want to take a break from their daily routines. Although the topics covered are often serious, the listening experience still provides space for listeners to reflect and engage in self-reflection. Thus, the podcast serves not only as light entertainment but also as a means of distraction and reinterpretation of social experiences.

The findings of this study align with the Uses and Gratifications theory, which states that audiences use media to fulfill various needs cognitive, affective, personal, social, and stress relief. However, compared to previous studies that emphasized podcasts as mere sources of information or entertainment, this study shows that the motives for choosing social-issue podcasts are more complex and multidimensional. Listeners are not only seeking information but also emotional experiences, personal reflection, and a space for

social discussion. This underscores the role of podcasts as a new medium capable of fulfilling the diverse needs of audiences when selecting social issues in the digital space.

Listener Experiences After Listening to Denny Sumargo's Podcast on Social Issues

Listeners' experiences after listening to Denny Sumargo's podcast, which addresses social issues, indicate that podcasting goes beyond the mere reception of information; it extends to a process of reflection, emotional engagement, and social response. According to the research findings, listeners experience a variety of responses that reflect the personal and social impacts of exposure to social issue content presented in a narrative and empathetic manner.

Emotionally, listeners feel a strong connection to the social issues discussed. Informants expressed feelings of empathy, concern, sadness, anger, and even being swept up in the moment after watching a particular episode. This aligns with the opinion of (RNI), who stated, "My feelings while listening to this podcast usually lean more toward empathy and concern." This statement indicates that these emotional experiences arise because the narrative is conveyed directly by sources who experienced the events themselves, making the audience feel closer to the victims' reality. This deep emotional engagement is also reflected in audience comments on YouTube, which express sympathy, moral support, and anger toward the perpetrators and systems perceived as unjust.

In addition to emotional experiences, viewers also have cognitive experiences in the form of reflection and increased social awareness. After listening to the podcast, some participants stated that they gained a better understanding of the context of a social issue, including the underlying structural factors, such as legal issues and victim protection. The podcast encourages listeners to think more critically about social realities and not simply accept information at face value. This indicates that the experience of listening to the podcast contributes to a deeper process of interpreting social issues.

The listeners' experience is also reflected in the social sphere. Podcasts are not only consumed individually but also spark discussions and interactions within the listeners' social circles. Informants noted that podcast content is often revisited in conversations with family and friends, serving as both casual chat topics and subjects for more serious discussions. Additionally, the collective experience of listeners is evident in YouTube comments that call for monitoring cases, offering support to victims, and encouraging specific social actions. These responses indicate that podcasts serve as catalysts for social awareness and participation in the digital space.

On a personal level, the experience of listening to podcasts influences listeners' attitudes and perspectives on social issues. Some informants stated that they have become more cautious in assessing an issue, more open to others' perspectives, and more attuned to the social conditions around them. Podcasts also give listeners a sense of the story's foundation and context when engaging in discussions, thereby boosting their confidence in expressing their opinions. This experience demonstrates a process of internalizing values and self-reflection following the consumption of social issue podcast content.

The findings of this study reinforce the results of Imarshan's (2021) previous research, which states that podcasts not only serve as a medium for entertainment or information but also have the potential to foster emotional connection and social awareness among the audience. However, this study confirms that listeners' experiences with social-issue podcasts are more reflective and sustained, as the content consumed encourages listeners to think, discuss, and reevaluate their attitudes toward social realities. Listening to Denny Sumargo's podcast, which addresses social issues, does not merely produce a fleeting impact but also shapes how listeners interpret and respond to social issues in the digital public sphere.

Discussion

This study aims to interpret and analyze the research findings by relating them to the Uses and Gratifications theoretical framework and relevant prior research on the use of digital media, particularly podcasts, as a source of information on social issues. This discussion is not intended to reiterate the presentation of research results, but rather to place these findings within a conceptual framework to explain how audiences interpret the research results based on the theoretical perspective employed.

Based on the Uses and Gratifications theory by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch (1974), audiences are viewed as active participants in selecting and utilizing media to fulfill various needs, such as cognitive and affective needs, personal and social integration, and stress relief. Findings in this study indicate that listeners of Denny Sumargo's podcast perceive the podcast as a medium capable of presenting information on social issues in a more in-depth and open manner compared to other media.

This view is consistent with the central assumption of the Uses and Gratifications theory, which asserts that audiences use the media consciously to satisfy their informational needs, rather than as passive recipients of messages (Azizah dan Banowo, 2019). The research findings indicate that the motives for media use serve as a driving factor for listeners in choosing Denny Sumargo's podcast, particularly to satisfy cognitive needs such as gaining a deeper understanding of social issues. This understanding is gained through the direct narration of sources involved in the events being discussed.

In line with the views of Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, the need for information is one of the main reasons audiences use the media (Bratadiredja al., 2025). In addition, emotional factors also play a significant role, as evidenced by listeners' interest in podcasts that are delivered in an emotional and empathetic style. Thus, podcasts serve not only as a medium for conveying information but also provide a meaningful emotional experience for the audience.

Viewers' experiences after watching Denny Sumargo's podcast indicate a shift in their perspectives and level of understanding regarding social issues. Listening to the podcast also fosters social integration, as viewers feel they have gained broader knowledge and greater confidence to assess and discuss social issues in their local communities. This experience also reflects the fulfillment of personal integration needs, as viewers feel increasingly capable and confident in expressing their views on social issues; the viewing

experience also fosters social integration, evident in the tendency of viewers to share podcast content and discuss it with others, whether through social media or direct interaction.

Furthermore, the research findings indicate that Denny Sumargo's podcast continues to serve as a means of stress relief even when addressing serious issues. The conversational, conversational format creates a sense of comfort for listeners, allowing the podcast to be enjoyed thoughtfully amidst daily activities. This aligns with the Uses and Gratifications perspective, which asserts that media is not only used to meet informational needs but also to provide psychological comfort and help the audience escape from daily pressures and routines (Panji et al., 2021).

The findings of this study indicate that Denny Sumargo's podcast is perceived by listeners as a source of information on social issues that provides a deeper understanding through direct narratives from sources. This is consistent with the research (Imarshan, 2021) as well as (Syafrina, 2022) which states that podcasts serve as an easily accessible source of information that appeals to audiences. Unlike previous studies, this study on podcasts shows that listeners actively perceive podcasts as a medium that fosters understanding, empathy, and reflection on social issues.

This study found that listeners' motivations for choosing social-issue podcasts are multidimensional, encompassing cognitive, affective, social integration, and post-listening personal experience motivations. These findings expand upon previous research (Marlina, 2025) and (Nur Rahman et al., 2025) which highlights the positive impact of podcasts on expanding audiences' knowledge and providing entertainment. This study confirms that listeners' experiences do not end with the consumption of information, but extend to social discussions, emotional engagement, and shifts in perspectives on social issues.

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that Denny Sumargo's podcast serves as a medium for conveying social issues capable of simultaneously fulfilling various audience needs, as explained in the Uses and Gratifications theory. The audience is not positioned as passive recipients of messages, but rather as active individuals who select, interpret, and make sense of the experiences gained through media consumption. Thus, this study confirms that podcasts have the potential to be an effective medium for enhancing understanding, enriching experiences, and fostering social awareness among the audience through narrative and dialogic approaches. These findings also contribute to expanding the study of digital communication, particularly regarding the role of podcasts as a medium for social issues

Conclusion

This study shows that listeners view Denny Sumargo's podcast as a source of in-depth information on social issues that offers a more comprehensive perspective than mainstream media. Through direct narratives from sources and an open, empathetic communication style, the podcast is seen as both a source of information and a forum for discussion that helps listeners gain a more comprehensive understanding of social issues.

Listeners' motivations for choosing Denny Sumargo's podcast are driven by several needs: a dominant cognitive need to gain a broader and more detailed understanding of social issues; an affective need to feel empathy and emotional engagement with the interviewees' stories; and social and personal integration needs, such as forming attitudes, reinforcing values, and providing topics for discussion with those around them. This aligns with the concept in Uses and Gratifications theory, which positions the audience as active participants in selecting media according to their needs.

Listeners' experiences after listening to the podcast indicate a reflective impact and increased social awareness. Listeners become more critical, more attuned to social realities, and encouraged to view issues from various perspectives. Some listeners also report changes in their attitudes and ways of thinking regarding the issues discussed.

The findings of this study confirm that Denny Sumargo's podcast plays a significant role as a new medium for addressing social issues while shaping listeners' interpretations and social awareness. However, since this study is limited to a single podcast and a single episode, the results cannot yet be broadly generalized. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the scope of study and methodological approaches to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of podcasts in Communication Studies, particularly regarding new media.

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