

The Uses and Gratification Theory Applied to Podcasts
How Age and Cultural Background Impact a Person's Podcast Consumption

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ABSTRACT

Over the last two decades, podcasts turned into an on-demand audio medium that is now indispensable within the audio media landscape. With its increasing presence and importance, researchers started to assess the listening behavior of podcast consumers. While analyzing podcasts and the consumers, researchers found similarities to traditional media outlets. In the late 2000s, studies arose about the motivations behind people's podcast consumption, which applied the uses and gratification theory that was already applied to various mass media outlets for around a hundred years. However, not only the amount of those prior studies are limited, but also their scope and approach. Most of those studies referred to North-American podcast consumers and the creation of podcast uses and gratification typologies. Little to no research was done about how personal motivations arise and how they are influenced by personal traits if people from the same age groups share the same motivations, or how those could be influenced through other personal traits. Therefore, this study aimed at finding out to which extent people's age and cultural background can influence people's podcast consumption behavior. Additionally, the connection between sought uses and gratifications and podcast genres was assessed.

For this research, the approach of a quantitative survey research was chosen, including the conduction of an online survey, which approached 293 participants, who were active podcast listeners. Each participant was recruited online and sampled according to non-probability convenience and quota sampling. After questions about their actual podcast consumption, participants had to state which genres they prefer, indicate why they are listening to podcasts and which uses and gratifications they seek to fulfill, and finally provide insights about their personal profile and cultural background. The analysis of the results showed that both a person's age and cultural background are only partly predictors for people's podcast consumption. Age was able to predict five out of nine tested preferences of podcast genres and predicted three out of eleven tested motivations. A person's cultural background was able to predict five out of ten podcast genre preferences, and two out of eight tested motivations. The findings of those study support, challenge, and extend existing theory on media consumption behavior and provide approaches that can be tied up with future research.

KEYWORDS: *Podcast(s), uses and gratification theory, age, cultural background*

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1. Introduction

“Podcasting is going mainstream” (Adgate, 2019) – at least that is what the Forbes magazine states 15 years after podcasts were born. Within this one and a half decades, not only the number of podcasts increased to over 800,000, but also the forms and shapes it’s coming in (Adgate, 2019). Besides private people finding a new hobby in sharing their knowledge or their tips and tricks, businesses saw the potential and invested. Solely advertising, one of the main incomes that podcasts book, reached a turnover of around \$679 million this year (Adgate, 2019; PwC, 2019a). Besides steady growth in listeners and the number of podcasts, also the number of businesses, investors, and streaming platforms is increasing (Adgate, 2019; Pew Research Centre, 2019; PwC, 2019b; Pew Research Centre, 2016). Up until today, podcasts developed into an indispensable division within the ever-increasing \$2.6 trillion big marketplace of the global entertainment and media environment (Pew Research Centre, 2016; PwC, 2019b).

The term ‘podcast’ was first coined in an article by The Guardian, and introduced through a video jockey and software developer, downloading radio broadcasts on their iPods (Hammersley, 2004; Bhaskar, 2018). Various sources and dictionaries define the term podcast differently, but share the idea of being an audio media product, released mostly episodically as part of a series, being available online for on-demand streaming on different platforms or the direct download on the consumer’s device (Merriam Webster, n.d.; Tech Terms, n.d.; Potter, 2006; Harris & Park, 2008). Based on independent sources, podcasts combine online radio features with the regularity of periodicals and share traits of other traditional media types (Harris & Park, 2008; McClung & Johnson, 2010). Whenever a certain media outlet increased in importance and grew steadily, researchers aimed at finding out, why and how people are using it. Throughout decades, the uses and gratifications theory (in the following also referred to as UGT), created a solid basis for analyzing which gratifications attract people to specific media, and which social and psychological needs are fulfilled by doing so (Cantril, 1942; Laswell, 1948). This theory stresses that people use certain media outlets because of surveillance of current discourses, a connection between the consumed media and a certain transmitted lifestyle, and societal interaction (Laswell, 1984). With the rise of technology, the Internet, and new media, the UGT broadened its scope and developed into a tool to further understand the value of that media outlet for a person and the relation between sought gratifications and the choice of media (Ruggiero, 2000).

Whereas many researchers studied both traditional media, as well as new emerging media outlets, the Internet, and on-demand media, podcasts are still a media type that is yet

understudied. Within the twenty years, after the term 'podcast' was coined and recognized as a form of audio media, various statistics arose about peoples' podcast consumption. Independent institutes and research centers regularly collect insights about people's podcast preferences and consumption patterns (e.g. Edison Research, 2019; Online-Audio-Monitor, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2019). Those institutes and their data collection mainly focus on podcast consumers from the U.S. However, prior research has shown that podcasts are an internationally used audio media outlet that both organizations and end-users value from all over the world (Apple, 2018; Bottomley, 2015; Spotify, 2019). Thereby, prior research created a geographical gap that is yet to cover. Those regularly created statistics about people's podcast consumption quantify their consumption behavior and serves as a broad overview, but does not provide deeper insights about the 'why' behind it.

Prior research shows that the 'why' behind people's media consumption has been studied already for decades. One way of doing so is by applying the proven uses and gratification theory that serves as an analysis tool of people's media consumption behavior since the early 1920s (Lowery & DeFleur, 1983). Throughout the last 100 years and the emergence of both traditional and new media, this theory was tested and applied to various mass media outlets (e.g. Berelson, 1949; Greenberg, 1974; Herzog, 1940; Liu, Cheung, & Lee, 2010; Lucas & Sherry, 2004). Therefore, researchers were able to gain insights about why people are choosing certain media types and their motivations behind their consumption behavior. To assess people's uses and gratifications, scales and categorizations, namely typologies, were created to test those on certain media types and their consumers (e.g. Rubin, 1984; Sundar & Limperos, 2013).

Nevertheless, this theory was not often brought in connection with podcasts. Only a few studies were found that not only assessed who is listening to what, but also taking the 'why' into account (Chung, 2008; Perks & Turner, 2018). In the late 2000s, researchers started to apply this theory to podcasts and their consumers (Chung, 2008). Prior research on the combination of the UGT and podcasts followed two main approaches: applying existing UGT scales on podcasts while extending those and applying the UGT on podcasts in educational environments (Chung, 2008; Farshi & Mohammadi, 2013; McClung & Johnson, 2010; Perks, Turner & Perks, 2019; Turner & Tollison, 2019). Those two analyzed the consumption behavior of different focus groups and college students. Both studies stress that different groups of people fulfill different motivations with their podcast consumption, that podcasts can be consumed in many different ways, and can especially create enjoyment through connecting with both the podcast creator/host and other listeners (Chung, 2008;

Perks & Turner, 2018). This shows that there is only a little research done on the application of the UGT on podcasts, which was also limited to certain approaches. However, it was not studied further how those sought uses and gratifications arose based on people's individual traits and characteristics.

Whereas the age of the listeners can be found in various statistics, mentioned earlier, there is little research on how age might influence the podcast consumption of the listeners. Additionally, most of the data about the characteristics of podcast listeners were collected in the U.S. At the same time, mostly the age and motivation behind the person's listening behavior was assessed, rather than the person's personal and cultural background. Therefore, prior research not only created a geographical gap of their findings but also created an application gap that further studies could cover. Additionally, it is yet mainly unknown what might influence those sought uses and gratifications. Do people from the same age group listen to the same podcasts, for the same reasons? Or do people living in the same country listen to the same podcasts, for the same reasons? Therefore, the interest arose if there are differences in age groups and a nation's majorities and minorities in their podcast use, in their uses and gratifications and motivations behind their podcast consumption. The more research is done on the UGT approach in connection to podcasts with different consumer characteristics, the more it will help to compare users' behavior with other traditional and other new media outlets.

In general, this thesis is aiming at digging deeper into the existing theory behind people's uses and gratifications, to gain insights about people's podcast consumption and to find out more about how people's socio-demographic profile and cultural background might influence their podcast consumption. Additionally, this research aims at drawing conclusions about certain age groups of podcast consumers and their choices, as well as statements about minority and majority members. The findings of this research can, therefore, not only benefit media researchers but also businesses and investors at the same time. Both researchers and organizations are able to use those findings to understand their consumers better, to improve their statistics and research, as well as their way of profit-making through podcasts. It also provides findings for social sciences and insights of human nature, in order to understand why people prefer certain media types or genres to fulfill certain uses and gratifications, how those motivations differ from person to person, and how these motivations might be influenced by personality traits.

1.1 Thesis Outline

The thesis starts with the assessment of the current discourse around the topic podcast, the current status quo in research, and the introduction of the main research question. More specifically, the theoretical framework starts with a thorough assessment of the podcast landscape and developments in and around the podcast marketplace. Afterwards, the uses and gratification theory is introduced. To create a theoretical background on how to apply it to podcasts, this thesis elaborates on how the UGT evolved over time and adapted itself according to the emergence of new media outlets. Chapter two also includes more current research on the UGT in connection to podcasts, in order to identify the already mentioned application gap and to find out where to pick up prior research. Later in this chapter, the variables of age and cultural background are introduced, conceptualized, and connected to the uses and gratification theory. It is explained how those variables were chosen and how it might affect a person's podcast consumption. Prior research was assessed to create certain expectations that resulted in fitting hypotheses. In total seven hypotheses were created – one about the influence of the uses and gratifications on the podcast consumption, three about the influence of age on a person's podcast consumption and sought uses and gratifications, and three about the influence of cultural background.

Chapter three of this thesis provides an overview of the chosen research method of a cross-sectional, quantitative survey research and elaborates on the sampling and data collection procedure. To be able to analyze and test the created hypotheses, the used measurements and scales for each included variable are introduced and discussed. Afterwards it is explained how the data was processed.

After processing the collected data, the seven hypotheses were tested. Those results are discussed in chapter four, which includes extensive explanations of all the conducted regression analyses and their results. Chapter five is dedicated to the discussion and interpretation of those results. All results were analyzed, critically assessed, and bundled together in a thorough discussion. This chapter additionally includes practical and theoretical implications, and the research's limitations and implications for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

The following will include both the theoretical background of the research, as well as the derived hypotheses that are to be tested. As mentioned before, this research aims at finding out to what extent age and cultural background relates to a person's podcast consumption. More specifically, it is about finding out if the uses and gratifications sought by a person's podcast consumption differ with people from different age groups and cultural backgrounds. The research is, therefore, of deductive nature, as the uses and gratification theory (for example Laswell, 1948), serves as a guideline (Babbie, 2014). The following will introduce podcasts, in general, as the main field of research, followed by introducing the uses and gratification theory and how it evolved over time. Afterwards, age and cultural background will be defined and connected to media use in general, and people's uses and gratifications. Based on prior research and literature and the introduced concepts, hypotheses were derived that are later tested within this research.

2.1 Podcasts and Their Roots

Firstly, the term 'podcast' has to be defined, as various sources and dictionaries define the term differently. However, they share the idea of being an audio media product, released mostly episodically as part of a series, being available online for on-demand streaming on different platforms or the direct download on the consumer's device (Merriam Webster, n.d.; Tech Terms, n.d.; Potter, 2006; Harris & Park, 2008). One key characteristic of podcasts is that people can subscribe to podcasts and can listen to them whenever and wherever they want, free from any broadcasting schedule (Bottomley, 2015). Based on its nature and characteristics, podcasts are comparable with traditional media and its theories. Different independent sources state that podcasts combine online radio features with the regularity of periodicals (Harris & Park, 2008; McClung & Johnson, 2010).

Earlier in 2000, the software developer and creator of Really Simple Syndication (RSS), one of the nowadays most popular web syndication formats, enabled transferring audio content to RSS feeds (Bhaskar, 2018; Bottomley, 2015). Together with former MTV video jockey Adam Curry, Winer promoted the RSS-to-iPod transfer of audio files (Bottomley, 2015). Through the iPod as a key listening device and the nature of audio files being used, the term podcast derived from iPod and broadcast (Notess, 2005). The Guardian then first coined the term 'podcast' in an article in 2004 (Hammersley, 2004). Soon after in 2005, 'podcast' was crowned as "the *New Oxford American Dictionary's* Word of the Year"

(“Wordsmiths hail podcast success”, 2005). With introducing its own podcast application and iTunes rubric in 2015, Apple made podcasts a mainstream on-demand medium (Bottomley, 2015). Throughout the years, podcasts are today a fixed contender within the ever-increasing \$2.6 trillion big marketplace of the global entertainment and media environment (PwC, 2019b).

2.1.1 The Podcast Landscape

As already mentioned earlier, most of the statistics about the actual number of podcast listeners, the number of podcasts available, and the popularity of podcasts were done in the U.S. However, these numbers give rough indications about the podcast landscape. Therefore, the following description of the podcast market will be mostly based on U.S statistics.

To firstly clarify in which market space podcasts are operating, the market of podcasts themselves has to be assessed. Apple, for instance, stated in 2018 that yet alone on iTunes, there are more than 550,000 individual podcast shows, a total of 18.5 million episodes, in 155 countries, and on 100 different languages (Apple, 2018). Spotify, as one of the other main podcast platforms, counts in 2019 more than 500,000 podcasts that were made available in over 75 countries (Spotify, 2019). Different independent studies show, that more than a third of all people asked from various nationalities listen to podcasts (Edison Research, 2019; Reuters Institute, 2019). Regarding its popularity, a survey in 2018 stated that more than 70%, accounting for around 197 million people, are familiar with podcasts (Edison Research, 2019). However, around 90 million people stated that they listen to podcasts at least once a month (Edison Research, 2019). The amount of male and female listeners is almost similar, while the age groups of podcast listeners between 18 and 44 are the biggest (Edison Research, 2019; Reuters Institute, 2019). Due to a large number of podcasts being available online and the number of users, podcasts serve a broad portfolio of different genres. Similar to online web-radio shows, podcast genres include general topics as music, news, and sport, but also genres that are hobby related, or the development of new skills (Online-Audio-Monitor, 2019; Edison Research, 2019). The podcast market space is, therefore, offering a versatile range of on-demand audio content for people of all age groups, serving different purposes.

The steady growth in listeners and the number of podcasts created a marketplace that attracted both businesses and investors (Adgate, 2019; Pew Research Centre, 2016; Pew Research Centre, 2019; PwC, 2019b). Solely advertising, one of the main incomes that

podcasts book, reached a turnover of around \$679 million in 2019 (Adgate, 2019; PwC, 2019a). Podcasts are nowadays not only a mature player in the on-demand media landscape but offer serious business opportunities for various corporations and investors. Also other media fields got attracted through podcasts and their increasing importance for the audience. News outlets for instance as print newspapers or TV/radio news shows adapted to changes in the media industry and embraced podcasts as a new media channel (Reuters Institute, 2019). The number of news podcasts, for instance, grew alone in 2019 globally by around 12,000, which accounts for an increase of more than 30% (Reuters Institute, 2019). Also, the educational sector was attracted by the potential of podcasts. Already in 2005 and 2006 the Boston University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Stanford started to use podcasts to support their lectures and to provide their students with educational material (Chung, 2008).

The evolution of podcasts, the increase in shows and episodes, the development in the audio media industry, as well as the interest of other businesses or business fields and investors in podcasts, show its importance and its current state.

2.1.2 Podcast Consumption

At first, the term podcast consumption itself has to be clarified, as it will be mentioned more often in this part. Consumption is defined as the action of consuming something and the amount of the consumed goods ("Consumption", n.d). For this research, the term consumption is based on two main pillars, the frequency, and intensity of the podcast consumption and the podcasts' genres. The frequency of a person's podcast consumption is measured both on the number of times a person is listening to podcasts weekly/monthly, and how much time is spent on listening to podcasts. Therefore, both the frequency and intensity are measured. Parts of this approach were already applied in prior research (e.g. Chung, 2008).

Prior research has shown that different people have different consumption patterns regarding audio media content (Edison Research, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2019). For example, according to Edison Research (2019) and the Pew Research Center (2019), younger people listen more to podcasts than elderly people. Already earlier it was stated that it is to be assumed that people from different people have different motivations behind their podcast consumption. Therefore, it is to be expected that different motivations could be reflected by a person's podcast consumption. For instance, information/news podcasts can

be shorter than comedy or entertainment podcasts. It could, therefore, be possible that different motivations influence the frequency of a person's podcast consumption.

Regarding preferences based on the podcast genre, it can be stated that age groups or different cultural groups consume media based on different motivations (Hsu, Tien & Chang, 2015; Statista, 2019; Westcott, et. al., 2018). Prior research also showed that different gratifications are connected to different media outlets (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Hence, specific gratifications can be satisfied with specific media outlets. It is, therefore, to be assumed that this cannot only be reflected on types of media outlets, but also genres within one media field. Several statistics show that also within the podcast environment, certain genres are preferred over others (Edison Research, 2019; Online-Audio-Monitor, 2019). It would, therefore, be interesting to see, which people seek which gratifications in which podcast genre. The list of genres chosen for this method was derived from two independent studies from Germany and the US that were focused on people's most consumed podcast genres (Edison Research, 2019; Online-Audio-Monitor, 2019). By combining the findings of those two studies, a list of the top-ten podcast genres was created. The ten genres chosen for this question were: Music, news, comedy, regional/local, education/science, sports, audiobooks, business, society/culture, and religion/spirituality.

Now after setting the frame of who is listening to what, it would be interesting to know why people are listening to podcasts. This research is, thereby, focusing on the uses and gratification theory as the key approach of this study (for example, Laswell 1948) that will be introduced in the following abstract.

2.2 Uses and Gratification Theory – Past and Present

The uses and gratification theory (UGT), is a theory that researchers apply already for a century while studying people's media consumption. People's gratifications can be conceptualized as the satisfaction of needs that are fulfilled when a person is consuming specific media, which meets the person's expectations and needs (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Researchers argue that the theory has its roots already in the late 1920s when sociologists and psychologists assessed how the American youth was affected by watching certain movies (Lowery & DeFleur, 1983). However, this study and Cantril's (1942) study in the early 1940s were solely focused on sociological and psychological effects on the audience, rather than finding out how mass media, in general, affects the audience (Lowery & DeFleur). In the 1940s several other studies were conducted with a focus on the

engagement of the audience in certain media, as newspapers and radio shows (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). Therefore, it can be stated that the UGT has its roots in the 1920s-40s, when various independent researchers began to find out how media is attracting consumers and which societal and psychological needs those media fulfill (Ruggiero, 2000). In other words, it is an approach to find out about the motives of people's media use (Palmgreen, 1984; Perks & Turner, 2019).

After its beginnings in the 1920s and 40s, several other researchers applied this theory to several different mass media outlets, for instance radio daytime serials, quiz shows (Herzog, 1940; 1944), newspapers (Berelson, 1949), television shows (Greenberg, 1974), and many other media outlets (Lazarsfeld & Stanton, 1942, 1944, 1949). With the emergence of the Internet and new media outlets around and after the turn of the century, the UGT was then applied and adapted to, for instance, video games, social media and dating applications (Lucas & Sherry, 2004; Liu, Cheung, & Lee, 2010; Timmermans & De Caluwé, 2017).

The history of the UGT and prior research has shown that people seek to fulfill different needs and gratifications through the use of various media types. The development of the UGT and its ongoing application to more and more new media outlets, it shows how important and adaptable this theory is up until today. To further support the conceptual importance of the UGT for this study it should be pointed out that different from other media theories, the UGT is based on the assumption of an active, rather than a passive audience (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973; Ruggiero, 2000; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). It entails that the audience is self-aware, actively choosing its media, based on motivation and intention to fulfill needs that they identified themselves (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973; Perks, Turner & Tollison, 2019; Ruggiero, 2000; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Mostly earlier media research, stated that media was based on an active sender and passive receiver transmission of information (Croteau & Hoynes, 2014). That ideological information was solely transmitted by dominant majority groups of society, as a way of indoctrinating the passive audience. However, the active audience theory stresses the intelligence and autonomy of the receivers (Croteau & Hoynes, 2014).

As podcast users are characterized with "active decision making", while "actively search[ing] content" (Berry, 2016, p.666), the assumption of an active audience and the UGT in connection to people's podcast consumption stresses the theoretical importance of the UGT for this research. The UGT approach additionally helps to understand users' behavior as it stresses the recursive patterns of the users' expectations and behavior (Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973; Katz, Blumer, & Gurevitch, 1974). In other words, it highlights that media fulfill

people's gratifications, which in turn create needs that people then again seek to fulfill through the use of media. Therefore, this theory builds the basis for this research to understand why people listen to podcasts, what they try to fulfill, their general consumption behavior, and differences in different audience groups.

2.2.1 The Development of Media Gratification Typologies

As mentioned earlier, different researchers followed different approaches, focusing on different aspects of the UGT. However, they all categorize the audience's needs and gratifications in certain typologies (Palmgreen, 1984; Ruggiero, 2000; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). But also in the assessment and categorization of gratification typologies, researchers followed different approaches. Especially the first analyses were based on a two-step research approach that combined focus groups with surveys (Greenberg, 1974; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Later researchers then started to move away from this approach, while altering and adapting research methods that were suitable for the certain media type (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). One of the first approaches of creating typologies was by Laswell (1948), who came up with the three-function typology for media, stating that people use media to inform themselves about things happening in the world, the connection to lifestyle and behavior, and the created meaning through interaction with others. Throughout the last decades, with the increasing number of new media outlets and the emergence of the Internet, researchers adopted this method accordingly (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Rayburn, 1996). Rubin (1984) came up with another approach of categorizing media typologies, as he divided the gratifications in overarching characteristics as instrumental or ritualized. However, with new emerging media types, new approaches had to be found that could also be applied to new media outlets.

Researchers state that especially through the rise of telecommunication technologies, the UGT experienced another advent, as consumers were then exposed to an increasing number of media outlets (Finn, 1997; Ruggiero, 2000). Through the increasing number of media options and channels, the connected changes in motivation, and needs, the existing theory had to be altered (Ruggiero, 2000). Papacharissi and Rubin (2000), thereby, believed in the "hybrid approach" (Ruggiero, 2000), combining traditional, tried and proven measures of gratifications with new measures, to adapt to new media types. Sundar and Limperos (2013) assessed 15 different (emerging) media types between 1940 and 2011. Throughout the assessment of those media types from different genres, they identified the following ten overarching gratifications that at least two or more media types shared: Social,

information, emotional, escape, competition, connection, entertainment, social status, time-related, and convenience (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Nevertheless, different media types served various 'unique gratifications'. Twitter, for instance, served the gratifications for self-documentation and self-expression (Chen, 2011; Liu, Cheung, & Lee, 2010), reality TV shows served besides others the gratification of voyeurism (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007), and video games, for example, served the gratification of fantasy (Lucas & Sherry, 2004). For instance, the use of the Internet or online services/products, serve the gratifications of: "finding information, interpersonal use, for entertainment, for convenience, and to pass time" (McClung & Johnson, 2010, p. 86). However, while analyzing people's motivation behind watching YouTube videos online, it was pointed out that the fulfilled gratifications are similar to the gratifications of listening to the radio and watching television (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). For example, entertainment is a gratification that is associated with media outlets from television (Greenberg, 1974), over social media (Liu, Cheung, & Lee, 2010), to MP3 players (Zeng, 2011), and video games (Lucas & Sherry, 2004). It again supports the fact that new media outlets might have to be assessed differently, but their gratifications are very similar to the one of traditional, already studied media types. This phenomenon is called "overlap in gratification typologies" (Sundar & Limperos, 2013).

Regarding new media, it can be stated that most of them are based on traditional media gratifications, with nuanced, unique gratifications that arose through the new media's nature (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). The emergence of new media is mainly based on developments in technology (McClung & Johnson, 2010; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Through the introduction of mobile devices as the smartphone and tablet, new gratifications emerged, based on the nature of the device (McClung & Johnson, 2010; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Gratifications as mobility, multitasking, interactivity, and customizable experiences, especially arose through the media consumption on mobile devices (McClung & Johnson, 2010; Perks & Turner, 2019; Ruggiero, 2000; Sundar & Limperos 2013). Already in 1983 Lichtenstein and Rosenfeld proposed that certain media types predict certain gratifications. Therefore, it can be stressed that through the emergence of new media types, new media gratifications arose accordingly. However, it is noteworthy that gratifications based on the media content (content gratifications) should be distinguished from gratifications that arise through the actual use of particular media (process gratifications) (Rubin, 2009).

2.2.2 UGT Typologies and Podcasts

Prior research shows that only a few researchers assessed the UGT approach in connection to podcasts. However, those studies delivered valuable information about the motivations behind people's podcast consumption. Generally speaking, prior research followed approaches that differ from this study's perspective. Research by Perks, Turner, and Tollison (2019), Turner and Perks (2019), or McClung and Johnson (2010), focused on assessing people's podcast consumption while extending existing traditional gratifications and exploring new emergent gratifications. Chung (2008) and Farshi and Mohammadi (2013) took a different approach, as they assessed the uses and gratifications of people's podcast consumption in connection to education. While Chung (2008) assessed the UGT applied to college students and how podcasts could help within the educational segment, Farshi and Mohammadi (2013) analyzed the UGT in connection to studying techniques of vocabulary. It shows that researchers started only recently in 2008 with the adaption of the UGT on podcasts and their audience (Chung, 2008). This underlines again the topicality of the UGT, podcasts, and the combination of the latter. Additionally, the application gap of this combination has to be stressed, underlining once more the importance of this study.

Based on insights from prior research on UGT, prior research on podcasts in general and the combination of both theory and media outlets show that podcasts combine existing traditional media gratifications with new emerging gratifications. It also shows that there is only little complexity in research about gratifications sought through podcasts. Hereby, the relevance of this study and the opportunity to close the application gap is highlighted.

As mentioned earlier, podcasts combine characteristics of various media types. Based on their nature, podcasts are a new media type that is mostly consumed through mobile devices (Edison Research, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2019). Fitting to podcasts with its online nature, with being accessible at any time and place, gratifications of for instance the use of the Internet, the radio, and MP3 players would fit (Berry, 2016). Through its roots in traditional media, podcasts, therefore, are also rooted in the UGT research (Perks & Turner, 2019). However, Berry (2016) stresses that podcasts are based on the audience's choices, active listening, and possible interaction, rather than receiving messages solely from the sender as in listening to traditional radio. Thereby, podcasts combine the approach of an active audience, with 'new' process gratifications, through being available on mobile devices, and traditional media gratifications (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973; Rubin, 2009; Ruggiero, 2000; Sundar & Limperos, 2013).

Due to different research designs, different focus topics, and different approaches, a number of different gratifications arose. By comparing podcasts' characteristics and their roots in other traditional media outlets, gratifications as boredom, stimulation, entertainment, relaxation/escape, and loneliness were mentioned (McClung & Johnson, 2010). Chung (2008) also combined different motivations of different media motivation studies and came up with the following list of twelve motivations: entertainment, arousal, relaxation, information, voyeurism, education, convenience, habit, companionship, social interaction, pastime, and escape. Perks, Turner, and Tollison (2019) followed an approach that stressed the connection with other gratifications. They highlighted again that podcast listening itself is a rather individual and personalized experience for the listeners. However, they state that the gratifications through the use of podcasts are as much based on the social aspect of exchanging information and interaction in general. This research pointed out four overarching gratifications: controlling edutainment, storytelling transportation, social engagement, and multitasking. Another study by Perks and Turner (2019) split these gratifications into extensions of already existing typologies as companionship and interaction, and new emerging typologies as customizable experience and multitasking. Additionally, they split the gratification of multitasking into two parts: making boring tasks more enjoyable through listening to podcasts while doing it and turning a simple-minded task into something more complex.

For this study, a list of the following fifteen uses and gratifications was created: entertainment, arousal, relaxation, information, voyeurism, education, convenience, habit, social interaction/companionship, pastime, escape, personal development, control, multitasking/productivity, and storytelling. The first gratification 'entertainment' refers to emotions like happiness and fun while consuming a certain media outlet (McClung & Johnson, 2010). The next gratification of 'arousal' expresses the need for general stimulation in various ways, while 'relaxation' entails the need to unwind and to calm down (Greenberg, 1974; Leung & Zhang, 2016). 'Information' is rather self-explanatory, entailing the need to gain, collect, and access certain information, and to be informed about something (Ruggiero, 2000). The gratification of 'voyeurism' should not be interpreted in a sexual way but rather as the curiosity and the information collection of other people's personal lives as for instance on the Internet and social media (Mäntymäki & Islam, 2014). The need for 'education' refers to the people's need to educate them, to learn something new, or to learn a new skill (Perks, Turner, & Tollison, 2019). 'Convenience' refers to the individual use and the on-demand nature of podcasts and the gratification 'habit' expresses the habitual media

use and a rather in-active attitude of the audience (Ruggiero, 2000; Chung, 2008). Different from the already mentioned gratifications, the gratification 'social interaction/companionship' represents the social use of media, connecting the individual use with interactive actions with other people (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). This gratification stresses that people feel connected through sharing experiences of consuming the same content and getting to connect with each other, rather than consuming it together. The gratification 'pastime' represents the need to fill a person's free-time, whereas the gratification 'escape' explains how people seek to fulfill the need of escaping their everyday lives and getting their minds off of other things (Greenberg, 1974; Katz & Foulkes, 1962). 'Personal development' refers to the need for balance, health, and personality development. The gratification of 'control' concerns the audience's need to personalize and control certain media content, referring especially to on-demand content (Zeng, 2011). The second last gratification included in this study is 'multitasking' that concerns especially audio media content and the audiences need to do other activities while consuming media (Perks, Turner & Tollison, 2019). The last gratification of this research is 'storytelling', which refers to the stimulation of the audience's fantasy and emotions, while a certain experience is created through consuming a certain media outlet (Perks, Turner & Tollison, 2019).

The last four gratifications were added, due to current events and changes in society and the media industry, and the emergence of new media and connected uses and gratifications. The number of apps for and mental health is increasing drastically throughout the last years (Bakker, Kazantzis, Rickwood & Rickard, 2016). As those two topics are getting increasingly important, especially throughout younger generations, the motivation 'personal development' was included in the list of motivations (Petersen, 2019; Lee, 2019). Two additional motivations were added to this list, namely control and multitasking (Perks, Turner, & Tollison, 2019). These motivations arose in prior research about the UGT and podcasts, stressing that having control over whenever, wherever, and whatever content is listened to are key factors in the motivation behind the people's podcast consumption (Perks, Turner, & Tollison, 2019). The motivation of 'multitasking' was added as people enjoy doing several things while listening to podcasts, as it does not restrain people in only doing one thing at a time or being bound to one place to consume podcasts (Perks, Turner, & Tollison, 2019). The last motivation that was added to the list is 'storytelling', which stresses the audio-nature of podcasts, the stimulated fantasy through books, and in this case audiobooks or stories (Perks, Turner, & Tollison, 2019). Therefore, this list of fifteen various

motivations behind listening to podcasts, combines uses and gratifications of traditional media with newer motivations, based on the emergence of newer media types. For this research, slight changes were made regarding the wording of the statements.

As mentioned earlier, this study aims at finding out how a person's age and cultural background is influencing the motivations behind listening to podcasts. Therefore, this research aims at examining possible influences on uses and gratifications a person is seeking through listening to podcasts. To understand possible influences of age and cultural background on a person's general media consumption, the variables will be more thoroughly assessed in the following.

2.3 The Influence of Uses and Gratifications on Genres

The first hypothesis refers to a general connection between sought uses and gratifications and consumed media/podcast genres. This assumption is supported by the recursive nature of media uses and gratifications, that are created and sought by media, leading back to consuming certain media types/genres (Katz, Blumer, & Gurevitch, 1974; Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973). This stresses a connection between uses and gratifications and media genres and types. Therefore, it is to be expected that adapted to podcasts, certain uses and gratifications are naturally correlating to certain podcast genres. As mentioned earlier, a list of ten highly frequented podcast genres was created. Prior research led to the following assumptions about some of these genres, as for instance: people seeking to fulfill certain gratifications are more likely to listen to correlating genres. In the case of information seekers, they are usually more likely to listen to the podcast genre of news. Taking prior research about podcasts and other media outlets into account, the following hypotheses were created:

H1: People with different motivations listen to different genres of podcasts.

H1a: Information seeking is positively related to the genres of news, sports, and regional/local.

H1b: Entertainment seeking is positively related to music, comedy, sports, and audiobooks.

H1c: Personal development is positively related to religion/spirituality, audiobooks, and business.

H1d: Education is positively related to business, education/science, and society/culture.

2.4 The Influence of Demographics on Media Use and UGT

People's Demographics Influence Their Media Use

General statistics about the media consumption of different age groups show differences in which media are consumed in comparison to other media (Westcott, et. al., 2018; Watson, 2019a). Prior research on people's media consumption, as by Van Rees and Van Eijck (2003) found out that a person's choice of media is based on a number of factors as for instance status, gender, and age. Their study focuses on the 'media repertoire of selective audiences', which also supports the approach of an active audience having to choose from a wide range of media outlets. Van Rees and Van Eijck (2003) pointed out that people sharing the same socio-demographic profile share similar motivations and choices regarding media. For instance, elderly, pensioned people, living in a two-person household, seek to find information through print newspapers. At the same time, they stated that more women than men look for information online. Younger people, for example, seek more the gratification of entertainment through commercial and online media types. Therefore, it depends partly on a person's demographics what kind of media the person is consuming, and why (Van Rees & Van Eijck, 2003). The other part is based on a person's individual taste (Bourdieu, 2010). This assumption states that even if conclusions can be drawn on certain age groups, groups based on status or level of education that are rather homogeneous based on demographic facts, people can still choose certain different media types out of different motivations (Van Rees & Van Eijck, 2003).

Another rather current research by Voorveld and Van der Goot (2013) focused especially on people's age and motivations behind media multitasking. This study was chosen as a basis for the following abstract as it stresses that people from different age groups have different preferences in media combinations, but simultaneously share certain motivations. They state that age is a strong predictor in terms of people's media use. However, Voorveld and Van der Goot (2013) followed a different approach in making their statements. For people's media choices, media use in general, and their motivations, various researchers suggest splitting statements into "life-span explanations" and "general explanations" (Mares & Woodard, 2006; Van der Goot & Beentjes, 2008). Life-span explanations entail that people having a certain age and being in certain situations in their lives consume certain kinds of media (Voorveld & Van der Goot, 2013). Elderly people, being probably pensioned, less active, and possibly limited through health issues use television more often than younger people (Mares & Woodard, 2006). Younger people, for instance, use the Internet more, as both self-expression on social networks and self-display play an

increasingly important role in young adolescents' lives (for example Hunt, Atkin, & Krishnan, 2012). General explanations, in turn, hold that the differences are based on the generation a person belongs to (Voorveld & Van der Goot, 2013). Those explanations assume that people who were born after 1980 belong to the Net Generation and, therefore, have a different connection to online sources of media and the Internet in general (Tapscott, 1998; Voorveld & Van der Goot, 2013). At the same time, people who were born after 1949 are labeled as the television generation, who were mainly stimulated by television while growing up (Peiser, 1999). Prior research, therefore, shows that different demographics and different age groups differ in their media use and motivations behind it.

People's Demographics Influence People's Podcast Consumption

Certain assumptions can be undermined with statistics about people's podcast consumption (Edison Research, 2019; Pew Research Center, 2019). They show that especially younger people between 18 and 34 are consuming new media outlets as podcasts. Additionally, prior research shows that different media outlets, and especially new media outlets fulfill different gratifications (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). As different age groups prefer different media outlets, it can be expected that different age groups seek to fulfill different gratifications through different types of media. As mentioned earlier, people from an earlier generation, therefore, elderly people, tend to consume more traditional media for certain reasons (Van Rees & Van Eijck, 2003). Hence, it can be expected that elderly people consume podcasts of similar genres than traditional media genres, as: news, regional/local, and religion/spirituality. An independent survey of US podcast listeners in 2017 supports this approach by stating that younger people listen preferably to podcast genres like comedy, music, sports, whereas elderly people like to listen to educative/science podcasts, or about religion/spirituality (Kunst, 2017). Fitting to those assumptions regarding the interests of younger people in personal development, it is to be expected that younger people seek for development also in terms of their career or interest in entrepreneurship. Hence, it lets assume that younger people tune in more into business podcasts than elderly people. Both studies by Van Rees & Van Eijck (2003) and studies about media/TV preferences by age show that especially elderly people consume informative media (Mares & Sun, 2010).

People's Demographics Influence Their Sought Uses and Gratifications

Preferences in media/podcast genres can again be adapted to audiences motivations, assuming that people from earlier generations seek to fulfill traditional media gratifications, whereas younger people seek to fulfill gratifications that are mainly connected to newer, emerging media types (Van Rees & Van Eijck, 2003; Voorveld & Van der Goot, 2013). In general, it can be stated that younger people tend to seek for light content, whereas elderly people tend to seek for serious content (Mares & Sun, 2010; Van Rees & Van Eijck, 2003). Also, due to the assumed preference in the genre of comedy, it is to be expected that younger people seek 'entertainment' more than elderly people. Adopted results by studies referring to uses and gratifications of social media, which are mainly used by younger people, state main uses and gratifications as being part of a community (social interaction/companionship) and being part of other/famous people's lives (voyeurism) (Chen, 2011; Liu, Chung & Lee, 2010). Fitting to the assumptions about younger people's social media use, also in terms of lifestyle and society, it is to be expected that younger people listen more to podcasts regarding society/culture than elderly people. Personal development, for instance, got increasingly important in the lives of younger people, which led to the assumption that this gratification might be sought through consuming podcasts (Lee, 2019; Petersen, 2019). The gratification of 'escape' would fit the assumption regarding personal development, in terms of escaping the busy, stressful life. It is also to be expected that younger people consume podcasts more than elderly people due to its on-demand nature, as younger people consume, in general, more on-demand media than elderly people (Matrix, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, more elderly people than younger people tend to consume media for informative/educative reasons, while looking for more serious content (Mares & Sun, 2010; Van Rees & Van Eijck, 2003). Therefore, it is to be expected that elderly people listen to podcasts for information and education. Another study regarding elderly people's uses and gratifications while using tablets (including on-demand media) support this assumption of elderly people being information-seekers (Magsamen-Conrad, Dowd, Abuljadail, Alsulaiman, Shareefi, 2015). They also state that elderly people seek to fulfill gratifications as 'pastime' and 'relaxation' (Magsamen-Conrad et al., 2015). Additionally, it is to be assumed that elderly people seek to fulfill the gratification of 'storytelling' as prior research has shown that especially audiobooks are consumed more by elderly people than younger people (Watson, 2019b).

This research will mainly focus on the relation of age on the person's uses and gratifications. However, also other socio-demographic factors will be assessed throughout the research, to come up with additional statements. Based on reviewing and analyzing prior research, and the expectations that arose accordingly, the following hypotheses were created referring to the possible influence of age on a person's media consumption and the uses and gratifications:

H2: Age is negatively related to the overall podcast consumption.

H3a: Age is negatively related to the likelihood of listening to the genres music, sports, comedy, business, and society/culture.

H3b: Age is positively related to the likelihood of listening to the genres news, regional/local, education/science, and religion/spirituality.

H4a: Age is negatively related to the gratifications of entertainment, voyeurism, personal development, social interaction/companionship, escape, and control than elderly people.

H4b: Age is positively related to the gratifications of information, education, pastime, relaxation, and storytelling than younger people.

2.5 The Influence of Cultural Background on Media Use and UGT

The uses and gratification a person is seeking to fulfill are not only connected to the person's age or preferences. Prior research has shown that also characteristics, as the person's cultural background can influence a person's media consumption (Hsu, Tien & Chang, 2015). Additionally, Hsu, Tien, and Chang (2015) state, that the cultural background can influence the motivations of a person, therefore, their sought uses and gratifications.

A person's cultural background can be defined in various ways. For this research, the participants' background is conceptualized based on personal characteristics, as well as characteristics of the participant's parents. The participant should give information on his/her place of living and place of birth, while also saying where both of his/her parents were born. This gives holistic insights into the person's true cultural and geographical origin.

This research especially focuses on how people's individual backgrounds influence their media consumption behavior, rather than comparing entire countries or nations with each other. Therefore, this study takes an approach that is derived from the acculturation theory, which entails that a nation contains people from different cultural backgrounds,

rather than being homogeneous (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936). Acculturation can be defined as “the process of cultural change that occurs when individuals from different cultural backgrounds come into prolonged, continuous, first-hand contact with each other” (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936, p. 146). This process happens when people migrate to other countries, resulting in merging cultural facets. It also stresses that cultural change is based on two main groups living together in one nation, namely majorities and minorities. Prior research shows that there is no black and white answer on how to define majorities and minorities (Seyranian, Atuel & Crano, 2008). However, it is stressed that the concept is based on several dimensions and characteristics as, power and status, social categories, size, distinctiveness, dispositions, and group context (Seyranian, Atuel & Crano, 2008). According to the nature of the survey, this conceptualization was adapted accordingly. For this study, majorities and minorities will be conceptualized in connection to the person’s socio-demographic profile with a focus on their migration background.

Already in prior media research, the audience’s cultural background played a role while assessing people’s media consumption behavior and their motivations behind it. For instance, independent survey research of a US-audio company showed that different cultural groups within the US, as e.g. Hispanics or people of color prefer different media outlets, due to different motivations (NielsenAudio, 2019). Additionally, research by Hsu, Tien, and Chang (2015) shows that people from different cultures seek different gratifications in the use of (social) media. Rather current studies about the media use of refugees and their motivations behind it show that they use certain media for different reasons than the majority groups (Alencar, Kondova & Ribbens, 2018). Two other independent studies assessed the (mass) media uses and gratifications of Asian immigrants in the US in combination with the acculturation theory (Hwang & He, 1999; Moon & Ha, 2005). This study especially stresses that during the acculturation process, while people are migrating, migrants/minorities consume certain media out of certain reasons to support this process. They state that migrants actively choose media that educate and inform them, that triggers social interaction and supports personal development. Especially media with information about the country where they are currently living in is consumed, to accelerate and support the migration process. It is, therefore, to be assumed that people from minority groups listen to media genres news, regional/local, education/science, and society/culture. Derived from prior research, their motivations are mainly information, education, social interaction, and personal development. Conversely to the choice of podcast genres and uses and gratifications of minority members, it is to be expected that majority members are more

likely to listen to podcasts for entertainment-reasons and relaxation. After assessing prior research on minority groups, their media consumption, and motivations behind it, it is to be stated that there is little to no research about minority groups and podcasts (Alencar, Kondova & Ribbens, 2018; Hwang & He, 1999; Moon & Ha, 2005). However, gathering that information of prior research and other media types, with the background knowledge of podcasts sharing traits and gratifications other media outlets, the following hypotheses were created:

H5: Majorities listen more to podcasts than minorities.

H6a: Majorities listen more to podcasts of the genres music, comedy, sports, religion/spirituality, audiobooks, and business.

H6b: Minorities listen more to podcasts of the genres news, regional/local, education/science, and society/culture.

H7a: Podcast users from majorities are more likely to listen to podcasts for, entertainment, arousal, relaxation, and voyeurism.

H7b: Podcast users from minorities are more likely to listen to podcasts for information, education, social interaction/companionship, and personal development.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The following figure of the conceptual framework is based on the introduced and elaborated concepts and the created hypotheses that were derived from it. The framework refers to the four main factors of demographics, cultural background, uses and gratifications, and podcast consumption.

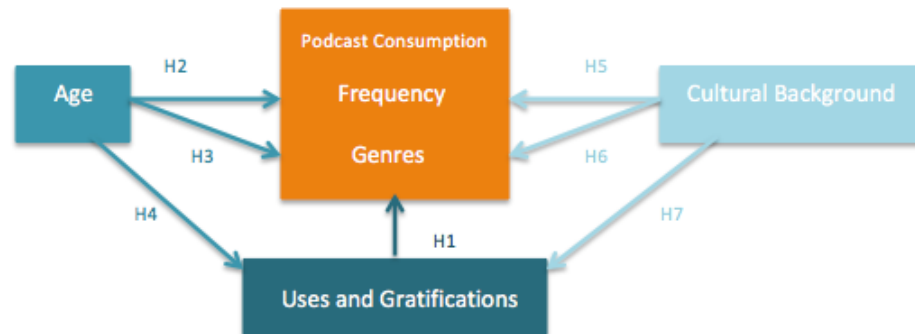


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Method

The research question to be answered is: To which extent does a person's age and cultural background influences the person's podcast consumption. As research is done on the uses and gratification theory, this study is of deductive nature. Prior research evolving around the uses and gratification theory was traditionally based on a mixed-methods approach by combining focus groups with surveys (Greenberg, 1974; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). However, these studies were mainly focused on gaining deeper insights into the uses, and gratifications that people are seeking through media use, learning more about why people are using certain media. This research follows a different approach, as it is aimed at finding out how certain characteristics/variables might influence people's uses and gratifications and the person's podcast consumption. Based on prior research and independent statistics, it is to be expected that a person's age and cultural background (independent variables) can be related to a person's podcast consumption (dependent variable). Therefore, this study follows a quantitative approach. Data on these variables are collected through an online survey, serving the purpose of quantitative survey research (Babbie, 2014). As mentioned earlier, the podcast consumption consists of the frequency, chosen genres, and motivation behind the consumption. Due to aiming at explaining an effect on several classes or key factors, this research serves the purpose of a nomothetic analysis (Babbie, 2014). The data collection is limited to a period of one to three weeks. Hence, the research can be classified as a cross-sectional study, as data is collected at one specific point in time (Babbie, 2014; Matthews & Ross, 2010).

Both the two independent variables of a person's age and cultural background, and the podcast consumption and the person's uses and gratifications as the dependent variables concern personal characteristics and consumer behavior. As the research question is aimed at finding out more about people's choices on listening to podcasts, the population that the research is aiming at drawing conclusions about are people that actively listen to podcasts (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Therefore, a sample of individuals/podcast consumers of different age groups, with different cultural backgrounds represents the research units. Consumers are considered as "end-users" (Business dictionary, n.d), as podcasts are a digital, downloadable product, rather than a physical product.

The conduction of the survey was chosen, as it is useful for gathering information about the characteristics of individuals and their consumption behavior (Babbie, 2014).

Additionally, answers can be collected systematically and objectively, the results can be quantified and, therefore, more easily compared (Babbie, 2014; Matthews & Ross, 2010). For the scope of this research and the given time, a standardized questionnaire was created (Babbie, 2014).

3.2 Participants and Procedure

As mentioned earlier, the survey is aimed at podcast consumers from different age groups and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, a sample is drawn from the population of (diverse) podcast consumers (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The selection of participants is, based on nonprobability sampling, as participants will be approached purposively (Babbie, 2014; Matthews & Ross, 2010). Additionally, no source of data is available that lists all active podcast users, where a sample could be randomly drawn. Criteria for the selection of participants are the fact that they are consuming podcasts, being at least 18 years old, and their cultural background. People of different cultural backgrounds are in this case defined as members of both a nation's majorities and minorities. For this study, minorities are defined based on their heritage/cultural background (Seyranian, Atuel & Crano, 2008). Thereby, minorities are in this case direct immigrants or second-generation immigrants. They were approached through specified social media groups, as well as religious or local institutions. As people who are listening to podcasts, being older than 18, and coming from different cultural backgrounds, the approach of quota sampling was applied (Matthews & Matthews, 2010). To ensure that participants would fulfill these criteria, a text mentioning these variables, aiming at those specific people was shared with the actual survey link. Additionally, the recruitment of participants was initially geographically limited to The Netherlands and Germany. Therefore, the sample can be classified as clustered (Matthews & Ross, 2010). However, throughout the study, the operationalization of the survey was adapted to current circumstances, which will later be elaborated on more thoroughly. In general, the recruiting process was done solely online. To ensure the representativeness of the sample and to prevent sampling bias, the survey was shared outside of the researcher's personal network (Babbie, 2014). Due to the scope of the research, the number of participants should range between 200 and 300.

Based on prior research and the consideration of secondary data, a standardized questionnaire was created to conduct a quantitative online survey (Matthews & Ross, 2010; Babbie, 2014). To reach people from different cultural backgrounds and heritages, it was

planned to collect data both online and offline. The survey was planned to be printed and made available in several religious and cultural institutes and clubs. However, due to current circumstances and the global presence of the coronavirus, the data collection was limited to online only. The online survey was created through Qualtrics and the link that results from it was shared in different ways. Before sharing it publicly, the survey was pilot-tested on around 10 people, from different age groups, who answered the survey both in English and German. Afterwards, minor things were adapted as for instance the wording of several items, to make the survey as intuitive as possible. Questions about the person's cultural background and heritage can be interpreted as sensitive (De Leeuw, Hox & Dillman, 2008). To prevent people from not answering correctly, or bringing people in an unpleasant situation, the topic and the questioning process will be introduced already at the beginning of the questionnaire (De Leeuw, Hox & Dillman, 2008). Additionally, questions regarding the person's cultural background do not have to be answered. The participants were able to continue the survey without filling in this information, in case they did not feel comfortable with it. After the conduction of the survey, the mentioned hypotheses are tested. Different analyses will be applied that will be more thoroughly elaborated on later in the methodology part.

For the actual data collection, the link was shared on social media, mainly Facebook, in various, diverse, independent social media groups outside the researcher's private network. Due to the current circumstance and to ensure the diversity of the sample and the given criteria as for instance the person's cultural background, the survey was then also shared on Amazon Mechanical Turk. According to the Pew Research Center, Amazon Mechanical Turk counts more than 500,000 registered and active users (Hitlin, 2016). The only criteria set in advance was that the participants had to be older than 18 years old. Additionally, all other criteria as listening to podcasts and possibly coming from different cultural backgrounds were explicitly stated in the description of the survey.

All in all, the questionnaire was planned to be available between one and three weeks. However, after two weeks, the aimed number of answers was reached, and, therefore, the data collection was ceased. To keep the time effort as small as possible and to be able to collect as much data as possible, the completion time was planned to be around ten minutes. To reach people from different nations and backgrounds, the survey was available both in English and German, as the researcher was in Germany at the time of the data collection.

In the end, the questionnaire consisted of 15 main questions, including 82 items. All

questions had to be answered in order to submit the survey, except the ones regarding the person's cultural background, as elaborated on earlier. This helped with both data collection methods to increase the probability that people have read the questions and statements carefully and answer them thoughtfully. Before answering the survey, people that were approached on social media read a small introduction to the survey and its focus. In this text, the criteria about the minimum age, listening to podcasts, and preferably coming from different cultural backgrounds were mentioned. Also, the approximate time of completing the survey was included. Participants who were approached through Amazon Mechanical Turk read a similar description and introduction of the survey before starting it. When clicking on the survey link, people first had to read and accept an informed consent form that included the researcher's contact details, a thorough description of the study, possible risks and benefits, the time of involvement, the participant's rights, including the fact that participants will stay anonymous throughout the entire data collection and processing process. After accepting the terms of the survey, participants were asked about their podcast consumption, including the frequency, the duration of the actual use, the used device, and the chosen genres. Questions about the person's use of other types of media followed. Afterwards, questions about the motivation/uses and gratifications sought through listening to podcasts were posed. This question included 60 items that will be more thoroughly explained in the measurements part. All of the questions described were to be answered with the help of a seven-point Likert scale. The last part of the survey consisted of questions, regarding the participant's demographics and cultural background. How the questions were posed, based on which scales and how variables were measured will be elaborated on further in the following abstract.

3.2.1 Sample

In total, 317 answers were collected. After finishing the data collection, the data set was cleaned by eliminating all incomplete answers. Additionally, to make sure that participants recruited over Amazon Mechanical Turk provide complete and reliable answers, every participant had to fill in a code at the end of the survey. This code was only provided at the end of the survey. If people did not fill in this code, or filled in a wrong code, those answers were deleted and not counted for the further steps. In the end, a sample of 293 answers was left for further analysis ($N = 293$; $SD = 9.77$). All of the 293 respondents accepted the informed consent form and stated that they are listening to podcasts. 71 participants answered the survey in German (24.23%) and 222 (75.77%) answered it in

English. Of the 293 participants, 154 (52.6%) were male and 139 (47.4%) were female. The participants' age ranged from 18 to 74, the most mentioned age was 25 ($M_{O_{age}} = 25$) and the average age was 32 ($M_{age} = 32.05$). The educational level of the participants was high, as the majority had a bachelor's degree or higher (77.8%). Most of the participants were either currently employed (67.9%) or enrolled as a student (21.2%). Regarding the participants' nationalities, it can be said that most of the people were German (22.9%), Indian (22.5%), or American (21.8%). However, this survey reached people from many other European countries as Spain, Italy the UK, and The Netherlands, but also countries as Kenya, Canada, or Venezuela. In total, 84 people had a migration background (28.7%) and were, therefore, classified as minority members. Accordingly, 209 of the participants (71.3%) were majority members.

3.2.2 Measurements

To measure the independent variables, as well as the dependent, fitting scales and measurements were to be found. Except for the age and cultural background, the variables were measured with suitable statements and a seven-point Likert scale.

3.2.2.1 Measurements Media and Podcast Consumption (Frequency / Genres)

The first part of the survey consists of questions regarding the person's podcast and other media consumption. After a yes or no question regarding listening to podcasts, the media consumption besides podcasts is measured. The consumption is, hereby, focused on the daily consumption, of eight different media types (items), which then had to be classified based on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 'not at all' to 'more than five hours'. Afterwards, the podcast consumption had to be measured, again based on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'once a year' to 'daily'. The question about the device(s) that are used to listen to podcasts included four items, as for instance smartphone and Laptop, and a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'never' to 'on this device only'. Lastly, a question regarding the podcast genres was posed. The items/genres were chosen based on two independent studies from Germany and the US that were focused on people's most consumed podcast genres (Online-Audio-Monitor, 2019; Edison Research, 2019). By combining the findings of those two studies, a list of the top-ten podcast genres was created. The ten genres chosen for this question were: Music, news, comedy, regional/local, education/science, sports, audiobooks, business, society/culture, and religion/spirituality.

Participants were then asked to rate the genres, based on how much they listen to it with the help of a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 'never' to 'always'.

3.2.2.2 Measurements Motivations / Uses and Gratifications

As already mentioned above, insights should be gained by asking questions about the participants' motivations behind listening to podcasts. Based on prior research, an initial list of eleven different motivations was created. This preliminary list of motivations arose on basis of the Updated Uses and Gratifications Scale by Perks, Turner & Tollison (2019) and was added by items of prior research on the UGT regarding television (Greenberg, 1974; Rubin, 1979), the use of Internet (Papacharassi & Rubin, 2000), and prior research on UGT and podcasts (Chung, 2008). Therefore, this list of motivations combines findings from different media studies, and underlines also the nature of podcasts, having similarities to different media outlets. The scale included the following eleven motivations: entertainment, arousal, relaxation, information, voyeurism, education, convenience, habit, companionship, social interaction, pastime, and escape.

Entertainment was measured using four items, as for instance "Because it's enjoyable" ($\alpha = .79$); *Arousal* was measured using four items, such as "Because it's thrilling" ($\alpha = .84$); *Relaxation* was measured using another four items including "Because it distracts me" ($\alpha = .73$); *Information* was measured using four items, such as "To get free information" ($\alpha = .87$); *Voyeurism* was measured using four items, as for instance "Because it makes 'famous' people more accessible" ($\alpha = .85$); *Education* was measured using four items including "Because I can educate myself about a certain topic/field" ($\alpha = .79$); *Convenience* was measured using four items, such as "Because it is free" ($\alpha = .73$); *Habit* was measured using four items, as for instance "Because it is there" ($\alpha = .77$); *Social Interaction/Companionship* was measured using four items such as "It makes me feel less lonely, when there is no one else to listen/talk to" ($\alpha = .84$); *Pastime* was measure using four items including "When I have nothing better to do" ($\alpha = .88$); And *Escape* was measure using four items, as for instance "So I can have some 'me-time'" ($\alpha = .79$). As mentioned earlier, another four motivations were added to the list, namely: personal development, control, multitasking, and storytelling. *Personal development* was measured using four items, such as "To work on my mental health" ($\alpha = .88$); *Control* was measured using four items including "Because they provide entertainment at times that are convenient for me" ($\alpha = .75$); *Multitasking* was measured using four items, as for instance "Because I can move around

while consuming media" ($\alpha = .77$); And *Storytelling* was measured using four items such as "Because time passes quickly when I listen to podcasts that feature storytelling" ($\alpha = .77$).

Therefore, the list included 15 motivations with four items each, resulting in a list of 60 items. Every item had to be answered through self-reporting, choosing to rate the best-fitting answer about their motivations behind their podcast consumption from 'not agreeing at all' (=1) to 'totally agree' (=7) on a seven-point Likert scale.

3.2.2.3 Measurements Demographics and Cultural Background

The demographics included in this study are the participant's age, gender, educational level, employment, and the cultural background, as prior research has shown that those factors can cause differences in people's media use and motivations behind it (McClung & Johnson, 2010). The participants' age was measured with the help of an open question. The answer is continuous, as people were able to answer freely, without any answering options or restrictions. Insights about gender, educational level, and current employment were gained through simple multiple-choice questions.

The cultural background was assessed with the help of four open questions. As already mentioned in part 2, people from minorities are in this case immigrants or second-generation immigrants. To get insights about the person's origin, nationality, and, therefore, cultural background, a rather holistic approach was chosen. First, questions about the participant itself were asked. The person had to name the place of birth, as well as the place where he or she is currently living. To gain more insights about the participant's roots, the person was asked to name the place of birth of both of the parents. For this study, people of minority groups are migrants or second-generation migrants. Definitions of those two groups were adapted based on an article by Hofhuis, Van der Zee, and Otten (2014). A migrant is defined as a person who is currently residing in a country other than his or her country of birth. This group of people is also called first-generation migrants. Second-generation migrants are defined as a person where at least one parent was born in another country than the actual country of residence. Majorities are in this case people who were born in the country that they are currently living in, and at least one parent is born in this country as well. For further analysis and hypothesis testing, a dummy variable was created, in order to conduct regression analyses. The variable included two categories, 0 representing the majority, and 1 representing the minority. People were clustered into these two categories based on the above-mentioned definition of majority and minority members.

Additionally, the demographic questions will also include one question regarding the person's educational level, serving as a control variable.

3.3 Data Processing / Data Analysis

Regardless, if the data was collected through approaching people on social media or Amazon Mechanical Turk, all data was collected through Qualtrics, and then exported to SPSS. After exporting the data, the data was cleaned, eliminating all incomplete answers to create a data set that is suitable for further analyses. Before any analyses, the items were checked on normality. This test ensured the normality of all items included in the scale. As mentioned earlier, also before the actual hypothesis testing, the items of each motivation were tested on their reliability. This ensures that only those items chosen for the motivations are used for the analysis, which are reliable for the motivation.

The first hypothesis includes a person's motivations as the independent variable and podcast genres as the dependent variable. For the hypotheses included in H7 multiple regression analyses were conducted. The following three hypotheses include the variable age, as a continuous, independent variable (IV). In several linear simple regression analyses, the possible effect of age on the podcast consumption, including frequency and genre is tested, as well as on the person's motivations. The hypotheses five to seven test the relationship between the person's cultural background (IV) and again the podcast consumption regarding frequency and genres, as well as the person's motivations. Also for these three hypotheses, linear simple regression analyses were conducted.

In table 1 and 2, descriptive statistics and correlations between the variables are displayed. Age and gender are included as control variables.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations (Uses and Gratifications)

Variables	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Entertainment	5.40	1.06	.79	-	.46***	.54***	.24***	.20**	.16**	.41***	.45***	.34***	.37***	.48***	.30***	.49***	.42***	.42***
2. Arousal	4.69	1.26	.84		-	.50***	.32***	.35***	.39***	.29***	.50***	.54***	.26***	.53***	.59***	.41***	.35***	.59***
3. Relaxation	5.12	1.10	.73			-	.31***	.27***	.18**	.44***	.46***	.35***	.43***	.56***	.41***	.37***	.43***	.47***
4. Information	5.16	1.31	.87				-	.21***	.66***	.52***	.30***	.28***	.16**	.25***	.34***	.50***	.34***	.35***
5. Voyeurism	4.13	1.48	.85					-	.31***	.14*	.47***	.59***	.39***	.49***	.55***	.20***	.31***	.45***
6. Education	4.91	1.28	.79						-	.38***	.32***	.29***	.06	.25***	.45***	.46***	.39***	.43***
7. Convenience	5.37	1.10	.73							-	.43***	.20***	.23***	.35***	.30***	.58***	.48***	.43***
8. Habit	4.77	1.20	.77								-	.55***	.44***	.51***	.53***	.42***	.55***	.52***
9. Social Int.	3.90	1.51	.84									-	.49***	.57***	.68***	.25***	.35***	.54***
10. Pastime	4.56	1.45	.88										-	.59***	.32***	.29***	.36***	.41***
11. Escape	4.61	1.29	.79											-	.62***	.42***	.45***	.55***
12. Personal Dev.	4.17	1.55	.88												-	.35***	.39***	.55***
13. Control	5.21	1.11	.75													-	.51***	.54***
14. Multitasking	5.16	1.16	.77														-	.53***
15. Storytelling	4.85	1.22	.77															-
Genre Music	3.32	2.01		.10	.34***	.17**	.14*	.36**	.18**	-.04	.24**	.47***	.17**	.26***	.42***	.01	.10	.22***
Genre News	3.79	1.73		.01	.11*	.04	.31***	.22***	.24***	.01	.12*	.26***	.13*	.18**	.26***	.09	.09	.12*
Genre Comedy	3.81	1.91		.37***	.24***	.18**	-.08	.31***	-.04	.04	.32***	.34***	.31***	.30***	.23***	.12*	.22***	.22***
Genre Reg./Local	2.68	1.79		.07	.28***	.08	.10	.33***	.17**	.01	.20**	.47***	.21***	.27***	.38***	.03	.14*	.23***
Genre Education	4.06	1.69		.02	.20**	.06	.31***	.09	.35***	.13*	.13*	.21***	.04	.11	.20**	.21***	.14*	.20**
Genre Sports	2.80	1.92		.07	.28***	.10	.06	.33***	.09	-.08	.15*	.44***	.18**	.21***	.32***	-.05	.07	.18**
Genre Audiobooks	3.27	1.84		.07	.33***	.12*	.03	.24***	.19**	.04	.20***	.32***	.15**	.22***	.29***	.08	.15*	.30***
Genre Business	3.41	1.89		-.01	.31***	-.01	.17**	.23***	.38***	.08	.23***	.26***	-.08	.11	.34***	.12*	.17**	.18**
Genre Soc./Cult.	3.84	1.75		.13*	.21***	.18**	.12*	.11	.20**	.13*	.23***	.28***	.17**	.25***	.20***	.17**	.17**	.33***
Genre Rel./Sp.	2.79	2.01		.02	.32***	.11	.14*	.32***	.24***	.00	.22***	.38***	.07	.18**	.48***	.06	.13*	.24***
Cons. Freq.	5.12	1.45		.26***	.09	.16**	.17**	-.03	.16**	.30***	.32***	.05	.02	.04	.10	.27***	.25***	.16**
Duration	2.84	1.35		.80	.20***	.11	.08	.21***	.08	-.02	.19***	.30***	.17**	.15**	.23***	-.03	.06	.16**
Laptop	3.03	1.88		.02	.23***	.17**	.05	.30***	.07	-.02	.21***	.36***	.16**	.13*	.31***	-.11	.03	.11

Tablet	2.11	1.58															
Smartphone	4.84	1.70															
TV	2.08	1.72															
Age	32.05	9.77															
Gender																	

Significance levels: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations (Podcast Genres)

Variables	M	SD	Genre Music	Genre News	Genre Comedy	Genre Regional/Local	Genre Education	Genre Sports	Genre Audio.	Genre Business	Genre Society	Genre Religion
Cons. Freq.	5.12	1.45	.01	.10	.19***	.02	.14*	.06	.09	.05	.20***	.11
Cons. Duration	2.84	1.35	.32***	.30***	.33***	.43***	.27***	.37***	.34***	.28***	.31***	.40***
Laptop	3.03	1.88	.40***	.31***	.28***	.35***	.13*	.44***	.16**	.23***	.13*	.42***
Tablet	2.11	1.58	.38***	.38***	.26***	.49***	.22***	.45***	.47***	.44***	.26***	.46***
Smartphone	4.84	1.70	-.01	-.02	.10	.04	.11	.01	.09	.08	.09	.11
TV	2.08	1.72	.44***	.39***	.35***	.62***	.26***	.52***	.39***	.40***	.30***	.51***
Age	32.05	9.77	.06	.12*	-.10	.13*	.14*	.07	.20***	.14*	.07	.22***
Gender			-.15**	-.08	-.07	-.12*	-.04	-.37***	-.07	-.11	.03	-.07

Significance levels: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

4. Results

The following part is dedicated to the results of the survey and the conduction of the mentioned analyses, in order to test the stated hypotheses. All described hypotheses were tested based on simple and multiple regression analyses. The result's analyses are to be found in the tables at the end of this chapter. All results in black were part of the tested hypotheses, whereas the ones in grey were tested but not explicitly mentioned in the written hypotheses.

4.1 Hypothesis Testing

4.1.1 Hypothesis 1 - The Effect of Uses and Gratifications on Podcast Genres

The first hypothesis aims at finding out to what extent people's sought uses and gratifications (independent variable) affect the likelihood/frequency of the consumption of certain podcast genres (dependent variable). In other words, is it possible to state that if a person is seeking a certain gratification, certain podcast genres are consumed accordingly? In order to test the following hypotheses, a multiple regression analysis was conducted for each genre (dependent variable). Prior research and literature, led to the following assumptions.

Hypothesis 1a states that the gratification of information is positively related to the genres of news, sports, and regional/local, due to their informative nature. The conduction of a multiple regression analysis showed that only one of the expected effects can be confirmed. Information has a significant, moderately positive effect on the consumption of news podcasts ($b^* = .36, t = 4.49, p < .001, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$). As only one of the tested effects was significant and positive, this hypothesis has to be rejected. Besides the hypothesis testing, the conduction of the regression analysis showed that the gratification of information also had a significant negative effect on the consumption of comedy ($b^* = -.17, t = -2.22, p = .027, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$) and audiobooks ($b^* = -.18, t = -2.18, p = .030, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$).

Hypothesis 1b aims at testing the possible effect of the gratification of entertainment on the podcast genres of music, comedy, sports, and audiobooks. While conducting a multiple regression analysis including all gratifications, only one effect was positive and significant. Entertainment has a positive and significant effect on listening to comedy podcasts ($b^* = .32, t = 4.70, p < .001, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$). Therefore, it can be said that the gratification of entertainment is positively and significantly related to differences in the

consumption of comedy podcasts. Additionally, the regression analysis showed that only the genre of comedy was influenced by the gratification of entertainment.

Hypothesis 1c is aiming at assessing the possible effect of the gratification of personal development and the consumption of religion/spirituality, audiobooks, and business podcasts. Through conducting a multiple regression analysis, one of the three tested effects was confirmed. The gratification of personal development has a significant, positive effect on listening to podcast of the genres religion ($b^* = .43, t = 5.10, p < .001, 95\%$ c.i.). It can be said that this hypothesis has to be rejected, as only one effect was confirmed. However, the multiple regression analysis showed that the gratification also had a significant, positive effect on the likelihood of listening to music podcasts ($b^* = .20, t = 2.36, p = .019, 95\%$ c.i.).

Hypothesis 1d is dedicated to finding out the possible effect of the gratification of education on the consumption of business, education/science, and society/culture podcasts. The conduction of a multiple regression analysis showed that the gratification of education has a significant, positive effect on two of the three mentioned podcast genres. In the cases of the podcast genres of business ($b^* = .28, t = 3.60, p < .001, 95\%$, c.i.), and education/science ($b^* = .22, t = 2.57, p = .011, 95\%$ c.i.), the gratification of education could predict differences in the consumption of those podcast genres. Based on the conducted analyses, hypothesis 1d can be partially accepted. All of the mentioned results can be found in table 3.

Summarizing it can be said that including the tested hypotheses, eight out of the fifteen tested uses and gratifications, were positively related to changes in the likelihood of listening to at least one of the ten listed podcast genres.

4.1.2 Hypothesis 2 - The Effect of Age on Podcast Listening Behavior

The test of hypothesis 2 aims at assessing the possible effect of age as the independent variable on a person's podcast consumption, especially it's frequency as the dependent variable. Prior research and statistics led to the assumption that age has a negative effect on the frequency of podcast consumption. In other words, younger people listen more to podcasts than elderly people, or the younger a person is, the more that person is listening to podcasts. The regression model of those two variables is not significant, $F(1, 291) = .56, p = .456$. The predictive power of the model is weak, as only 0.2 percent of the differences in the podcast consumption frequency can be predicted by a

person's age ($R^2 = .002$). Age ($b^* = .04$, $t = .75$, $p > .05$, 95% confidence interval (c.i.)), has no effect on the podcast consumption frequency.

To possibly get more valuable information about the person's listening behavior and a possible effect of the person's age on it, the variable of the podcast consumption per session was taken into account as the independent variable. Also this regression is insignificant, $F(1, 291) = .79$, $p = .376$. The predictive power of the model is very weak, as only 0.3 percent of the difference in the podcast consumption per session can be explained by the person's age ($R^2 = .003$). Age ($b^* = .05$, $t = .89$, $p = .376$, 95% c.i.), has no effect on the person's podcast consumption per session.

Based on the results of the regression analysis, the hypothesis has to be rejected, as age has no effect on the podcast consumption frequency. The results of hypothesis 1 can be found in table 4.

4.1.3 Hypothesis 3 - The Effect of Age on the Consumed Podcast Genres

The third analysis is about testing the effect of a person's age as the independent variable on the podcast genre a person is consuming as the dependent variable. Prior research led to the first assumption that younger people are more likely to listen to podcasts of the genres music, sports, comedy, business, and society/culture. Therefore, it is expected that age has a negative effect on the likelihood of listening to podcasts of the above-mentioned genres. Hypothesis 3a is based on age as the independent variable and the frequency of how much the person is listening to the podcast genres music, sports, comedy, business, and society/culture as the dependent variable. The conduction of five independent simple regression analyses showed that age had indeed an effect on the consumption of certain podcast genres, namely on business podcasts, $F(1, 291) = 5.86$, $p = .016$. As well as in all the other cases, the predictive power of the model is very weak, as 2 percent of the difference in the frequency of listening to business podcasts can be predicted by a person's age ($R^2 = .020$). However, in this case, age ($b^* = .14$, $t = 2.42$, $p = .016$, 95% c.i.), has a weak positive, significant effect on the frequency a person is listening to business podcasts. Additionally, age ($b^* = .20$, $t = 3.47$, $p = .001$, 95% c.i.) had a significant, positive effect on the frequency of listening to audiobook podcasts. As only two effects were significant, hypothesis 3a has to be rejected. However, as the tested effect was positive, it can be said that elderly people tend to listen more to business and audiobook podcasts than younger people.

Hypothesis 3b includes again age as the independent variable and its effect on the frequency of consumed podcast genres as the dependent variable. Prior research has led to the assumption that elderly people listen more to podcasts as news, regional/local, education, and religion/spirituality than younger people. Therefore, it is to be expected that age has a positive effect on the consumption frequency of the above-mentioned podcast genres. The conduction of four independent simple regression analyses showed, that on all of the cases, the tested effect was both significant and positive. The frequency of listening to podcasts of the genres news ($b^* = .12, t = 2.00, p = .046, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$), regional/local ($b^* = .13, t = 2.22, p = .027, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$), education ($b^* = .14, t = 2.42, p = .016, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$), and religion/spirituality ($b^* = .22, t = 3.77, p < .001, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$), was positively affected by a person's age. Therefore, hypothesis 3b can be accepted. All tested effects were significant and positive. Hence, it can be stated that elderly people tend to listen to more news, regional/local, educational, and religious/spiritual podcasts than younger podcast listeners. The most significant and biggest positive effect refers to elderly people and their consumption frequency of religious/spiritual podcasts. All of the tested effects can be seen in table 5.

4.1.4 Hypothesis 4 - The Effect of Age on Uses and Gratifications

The fourth hypothesis testing is aiming at examining the possible effect of a person's age on the sought uses and gratifications of their podcast consumption. Hereby, age represents again the independent variable, whereas specific uses and gratifications represent the independent variables.

Hypothesis 4a refers to prior research stating that younger people listen more to podcasts for entertainment, voyeurism, personal development, social/interaction, escape, and control than elderly people. Therefore, it is expected that age has a negative effect on the likelihood of each sought gratification. In one of the described cases, this effect can be confirmed. Age has a significant, negative effect on seeking to fulfill the gratification of escape ($b^* = -.14, t = -2.37, p = .019, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$) while listening to podcasts.

Overall, the hypothesis of younger people listen more to podcasts for entertainment, voyeurism, personal development, social interaction, escape, and control has to be rejected, as five out of six tested effects were insignificant. It can, therefore, be stated that younger people tend to listen more to podcasts to escape than elderly podcast listeners.

Hypothesis 4b refers to the gratification that elderly people tend to seek more in consuming podcasts than younger people, namely information, education, pastime, relaxation, and storytelling. Hence, it is expected that age (independent variable) has a positive effect on the mentioned gratifications (dependent variable). The conduction of five independent simple regression analyses confirmed this effect twice. Age has a significant positive effect on seeking to fulfill the gratifications of information ($b^* = .15, t = 2.54, p = .012, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$) and education ($b^* = .19, t = 3.28, p = .001, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$). All the other tests turned out as insignificant. Hence, also this hypothesis has to be rejected, as only two effects were measured as significant and positive. However, it can be stated that elderly podcast listeners tend to listen to podcasts more for information and education than younger podcast listeners. All the tested effects can be found in table 6.

4.1.5 Hypothesis 5 - The Effect of Cultural Background on Listening Frequency

The fifth hypothesis aims at finding out the possible effect of a person's cultural background (independent variable) on the frequency of listening to podcasts (dependent variable). Prior research and literature led to the assumption that majority members listen more to podcasts than minority members. With the chosen categories for majority members (=0) and minority members (=1), it is to be expected that the cultural background of a person has a negative effect on the podcast listening frequency. The regression of the two variables is insignificant, $F(1, 291) = .04, p = .841$. The predictive power of the model does not exist as $R^2 < .001$. The cultural background ($b^* = .01, t = .20, p = .841, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$), has no effect on the frequency of listening to podcasts.

To possibly get more information about the effect of a person's cultural background on the podcast consumption behavior the podcast consumption per session was taken into account as the dependent variable. However, the regression of these two variables is also insignificant, $F(1, 291) = 1.52, p = .219$. The predictive power is very weak, as only 0.5 percent of the differences in the podcast consumption per session can be explained by a person's cultural background ($R^2 = .005$). A person's cultural background ($b^* = -.07, t = -1.23, p = .219, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$) has no effect on the podcast consumption per session.

Therefore, the hypothesis stating that majority members listen more to podcasts than minority members can be rejected. Both regression analysis measured insignificant effects. The results of the conducted regression analyses can again be found in table 4.

4.1.6 Hypothesis 6 - The Effect of Cultural Background on Podcast Genres

Hypothesis 6 aims at finding out how a person's cultural background might influence the choice of podcast genres. Based on prior research it is to be expected that majority members listen more to podcasts of the genres music, comedy, sports, religion/spirituality, audiobooks, and business (H6a). In other words, a person's cultural background (independent variable) has a negative effect on the likelihood of listening to podcasts of the above-mentioned genres (dependent variable). The conduction of six independent regression analyses was able to confirm this effect in four out of six cases. A person's cultural background had a significant effect on the chosen podcast genres of music ($b^* = -.12, t = -2.08, p = .038, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$), sports ($b^* = -.14, t = -2.43, p = .016, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$), audiobooks ($b^* = -.10, t = 1.71, p < .001, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$), and business ($b^* = -.13, t = -2.25, p = .025, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$).

In general, this hypothesis has to be rejected, as two tested effects turned out insignificantly. However, it can be stated that majority members tend to listen more to music, sports, audiobook, and business podcasts than minority members.

Hypothesis 6b predicts that minority members listen more to news, regional/local, education/science, and society/culture than majority members. Therefore, a positive effect of a person's cultural background on the chosen podcast genres is expected. The conduction of four independent simple regression analyses was able to find one significant effect. The significant effect was found in connection to the consumption of regional/local podcasts ($b^* = -.18, t = -3.06, p = .002, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$). As this effect is negative, it can be stated that more majority members than minority members tend to listen to regional/local podcasts. Based on the analyses' results hypothesis 6b has to be rejected. Therefore, minority members are not more likely to listen to news, regional/local, education/science, and society/culture podcasts. The tested effects can be found in table 5.

4.1.7 Hypothesis 7 - The Effect of Cultural Background on Uses and Gratifications

Hypothesis 7 refers to the possible effect of a person's cultural background (independent variable) on uses and gratifications behind the person's podcast consumption (dependent variable). Hypothesis 6a predicts that majority members are more likely to listen to podcasts for entertainment, arousal, relaxation, and voyeurism. Therefore, it is to be expected that a person's cultural background has a negative effect on the measured uses and gratifications. The conduction of four independent simple regression analyses showed, that only one tested effect was both significant and negative. In the case of voyeurism, a

person's cultural background has a significant, negative effect on listening to podcast for voyeurism ($b^* = -.13, t = -2.29, p = .023, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$).

All in all, the hypothesis of majority members listening to podcasts for entertainment, arousal, relaxation, and voyeurism, more than minority members, has to be rejected. However, it can be stated that more majority members than minority members tend to listen to podcasts to fulfill the gratification of voyeurism.

Hypothesis 7b refers to minority members who are listening more to podcasts for information, education, social interaction/companionship, and personal development than majority members. Therefore, a positive effect of cultural background on the mentioned gratification is to be expected. In three out of the four conducted simple regression analyses, the effect is insignificant. Only in the case of social interaction/companionship, the effect is significant ($b^* = -.12, t = -2.0, p = .047, 95\% \text{ c.i.}$). As this effect is significant and negative, it can be stated that more majority members than minority members listen to podcasts for social interaction/companionship.

Considering the analyses' outcomes, the hypothesis of cultural background having a positive effect on the podcast consumption for information, education, social interaction, and personal development has to be rejected. The results of all of the conducted regression analyses can be found in table 6.

Table 3: Regression model for predicting podcast genres by uses and gratifications

H1		Likelihood of Listening to Certain Podcast Genres Based on Uses and Gratifications (N = 293)									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Entertainm.	<i>p</i>	.965	.460	.000***	.569	.129	.932	.186	.120	.319	.203
	<i>b*</i>	-.04	-.06	.32	-.04	-.11	.01	-.10	-.11	-.08	-.09
Arousal	<i>p</i>	.065	.386	.463	.177	.511	.036*	.005**	.004**	.452	.110
	<i>b*</i>	.14	-.07	.06	.11	.05	.16	.23	.22	-.06	.12
Relaxation	<i>p</i>	.621	.325	.112	.151	.740	.804	.671	.057	.518	.933
	<i>b*</i>	.26	-.08	-.12	-.11	-.03	-.02	-.03	-.14	.05	.01
Information	<i>p</i>	.256	.000***	.027*	.946	.089	.617	.030*	.206	.449	.754
	<i>b*</i>	.09	.36	-.17	-.01	.14	.04	-.18	-.10	-.06	.02
Voyeurism	<i>p</i>	.126	.523	.019*	.460	.130	.051	.855	.518	.011*	.201
	<i>b*</i>	.11	.05	.16	.05	-.11	.14	.01	.05	-.19	.09
Education	<i>p</i>	.916	.918	.210	.670	.011*	.781	.100	.000***	.059	.825
	<i>b*</i>	.01	.01	-.10	.03	.22	-.02	.14	.28	.16	.02
Convenience	<i>p</i>	.044	.015*	.300	.711	.441	.190	.909	.995	.507	.146
	<i>b*</i>	-.14	-.19	-.07	-.03	-.06	-.10	-.01	.00	-.05	-.10
Habit	<i>p</i>	.882	.871	.179	.226	.942	.113	.848	.104	.154	.902
	<i>b*</i>	-.01	-.01	.10	-.09	-.01	-.12	-.02	.12	.12	-.01
Social Int.	<i>p</i>	.001**	.175	.135	.000***	.036*	.000***	.092	.174	.013*	.111

	<i>b</i> *	.29	.12	.13	.37	.19	.36	.152	.12	.23	.134
Pastime	<i>p</i>	.704	.602	.261	.497	.729	.731	.562	.012*	.703	.468
	<i>b</i> *	-.03	.04	.08	.05	.03	.03	.04	-.18	-.03	-.05
Escape	<i>p</i>	.685	.352	.967	.797	.982	.571	.779	.751	.074	.042*
	<i>b</i> *	-.41	.08	.00	.02	-.00	-.05	-.03	-.03	.16	-.17
Personal D.	<i>p</i>	.019*	.131	.955	.115	.862	.392	.735	.099	.175	.000***
	<i>b</i> *	.20	.14	.01	.14	-.02	.07	.03	.14	-.13	.43
Control	<i>p</i>	.090	.931	.908	.188	.239	.067	.480	.923	.926	.628
	<i>b</i> *	-.13	-.01	-.01	-.10	.10	-.14	-.06	-.01	.01	-.04
Multitasking	<i>p</i>	.849	.910	.212	.437	.954	.736	.842	.271	.492	.677
	<i>b</i> *	-.01	.01	.09	.06	-.00	.02	.02	.08	-.05	.12
Storytelling	<i>p</i>	.466	.568	.690	.801	.723	.723	.063	.195	.002**	.940
	<i>b</i> *	-.06	-.05	-.03	-.02	.03	-.03	.16	-.10	.27	.01

Significance levels: **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001

Table 4: Regression model for predicting the frequency of a person's podcast consumption by age and cultural background

H2 & H5	Frequency and Duration of Podcast Consumption (N = 293)		
		Age	Cultural Background
Frequency	<i>p</i>	.456	.841
	<i>b</i> *	.04	.01
Duration	<i>p</i>	.376	.219
	<i>b</i> *	.052	-.07

Significance levels: **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001

Table 5: Regression model for predicting podcast genres by age and cultural background

H3 & H6	Likelihood of listening to a certain podcast genre (N = 293)		
		Age	Cultural Background
Music	<i>p</i>	.280	.038*
	<i>b</i> *	.06	-.12
Sports	<i>p</i>	.268	.016*
	<i>b</i> *	.07	-.14
Comedy	<i>p</i>	.101	.880
	<i>b</i> *	-.10	-.01
Business	<i>p</i>	.016*	.025*
	<i>b</i> *	.14	-.13
Society/Culture	<i>p</i>	.208	.779
	<i>b</i> *	.07	-.02
News	<i>p</i>	.046*	.070
	<i>b</i> *	.12	-.11

Regional/Local	<i>p</i>	.027*	.002**
	<i>b</i> *	.13	-.18
Education/Science	<i>p</i>	.016*	.289
	<i>b</i> *	.14	-.06
Religion/Spirituality	<i>p</i>	.000***	.089
	<i>b</i> *	.22	-.10
Audiobooks	<i>p</i>	.001**	.000***
	<i>b</i> *	.20	-.23

Significance levels: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 6: Regression model for predicting uses and gratifications by age and cultural background

H4 & H7	Uses and Gratifications Sought Through Consuming Podcasts (N = 293)		
		Age	Cultural Background
Entertainment	<i>p</i>	.442	.631
	<i>b</i> *	-.05	.03
Voyeurism	<i>p</i>	.805	.023*
	<i>b</i> *	.01	-.13
Personal Development	<i>p</i>	.322	.213
	<i>b</i> *	.06	-.07
Social Interaction	<i>p</i>	.125	.047*
	<i>b</i> *	.09	-.12
Escape	<i>p</i>	.019*	.529
	<i>b</i> *	-.14	.04
Control	<i>p</i>	.330	.635
	<i>b</i> *	.06	.03
Information	<i>p</i>	.012*	.776
	<i>b</i> *	.15	.02
Education	<i>p</i>	.001**	.762
	<i>b</i> *	.19	-.02
Pastime	<i>p</i>	.131	.296
	<i>b</i> *	-.09	-.06
Relaxation	<i>p</i>	.052	.091
	<i>b</i> *	-.11	.10
Storytelling	<i>p</i>	.945	.950
	<i>b</i> *	.00	-.00
Arousal	<i>p</i>	.396	.419
	<i>b</i> *	.05	-.05

Significance levels: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This research aimed at finding out to which extent a person's age and cultural background can influence the person's podcast consumption, regarding the frequency, sought uses and gratifications, and podcast genres. The following is dedicated to providing an overview of the analyses' findings, stating theoretical and practical implications, as well as limitations and approaches for future research.

5.1 Overview of Findings

Already throughout the data collection process, it stood out that podcasts are a current topic that many people listen to, as in a short amount of time, around 300 podcast listeners were found to take part in the survey. These participants were not occasional podcast listeners, but the majority of them listen to podcasts several times a week. However, the absence of prior research on podcasts, in general, and the combination of the podcasts and the UGT has shown that those are topics that are yet understudied. The roots of podcasts were to be found in traditional media that were studied more thoroughly. As podcasts are combining new media traits with ones from traditional media, this study copied that approach by combining podcasts as the new media outlet with the uses and gratification theory that is for almost a decade present in various media studies. Only a handful of researchers followed this approach, but with a different focus. In this case, two of the listeners' personal characteristics as age and cultural background were taken into account as predictors for their podcast consumption. Additionally, the variable of the people's sought uses and gratifications was taken into account, while assessing people's podcast preferences. Hence, this research aimed at closing the application gap between podcasts and the uses and gratifications theory, while exploring possible effects on a person's podcast consumption, to gain knowledge about choices active audience members make.

The first tested, possible predictor of a person's podcast consumption was the sought uses and gratifications through listening to podcasts. It was to be expected that if a person seeks to fulfill certain uses and gratification, certain podcast genres are chosen accordingly. In the case of the four tested hypotheses, they could partly be accepted. In the case of the gratification of information, only the effect on news podcasts was significant and positive. The gratification of entertainment only had a significant, positive effect on listening to comedy podcasts. The assessment of the gratification of personal development showed a

significant and positive effect on the podcast genre of religion/spirituality. Lastly, the gratification of education showed positive and significant effects on both the genres of business and education. Besides the analyses of the actual hypotheses, additional conclusions could be drawn. Eight of the fifteen gratifications had a significant and positive effect on at least one of the ten genres. This means, that in more of half of the cases, people's sought uses and gratifications could clearly predict people's preferences in podcast genres. Only the following four gratifications had no significant effect on the preference of podcast genres: relaxation, habit, control, and multitasking. It leads to the assumption, that people might define those gratifications differently, that people might relax in different ways, listening to different podcast genres. In other words, those gratifications could not be clearly connected to certain podcast genres.

The second predictor for assessing people's podcast consumption was age. Against preliminary expectations and earlier independent studies, age did not have a direct, measurable influence on either the podcast consumption frequency or the duration of each podcast session. Hence, no significant difference was found in the podcast consumption with differences in people's age. The second effect to be tested was a person's age on the chosen podcast genres. Already the analyses of descriptive statistics showed that age has an effect on only several of the mentioned podcast genres. All measured significant effects of age were positive, and on the genres of business, news, regional/local, education, and religion/spirituality. Therefore, it can be stated that with an increase in age, people tend to listen to certain podcast genres that can differ from the ones that people listened to in younger years. Hence, the analyses found out that with an increase in age, people tend to listen to more podcasts of the genres business, news, regional/local, education, and religion/spirituality. The third possible effect that age could have was tested on people's uses and gratifications sought through consuming podcasts. In three of the eleven cases, this effect could be confirmed. The conduction of regression analyses showed that younger people are more likely to listen to podcasts to escape, than elderly people, whereas elderly people are more likely to listen to podcasts for education and information than younger people.

The analyses of age as a predictor for people's podcast consumption provides new information that helps to understand why people are listening to podcasts and for which reasons. It shows that there are both differences in the consumed podcast genres and the motivations behind it, solely based on a person's age. However, age did not have an influence on the actual podcast consumption in terms of frequency of duration.

The third predictor that was chosen to assess people's podcast consumption was the person's cultural background. Also in the case of cultural background, the conduction of regression analyses was able to provide new insights in understanding how and why people are listening to podcasts. Against preliminary assumptions, the person's cultural background did not have a significant effect on either the podcast consumption frequency or the duration of the consumption. However, regarding the choice of podcast genres five out of ten tested effects were significant. Majority members were more likely to listen to music, sports, audiobooks, business, and regional/local podcasts than minority members. While assessing the possible effect of a person's cultural background on sought uses and gratifications through podcasts, two out of eight tested effects were significant. According to the analyses' results, majority members are more likely to listen to podcasts for voyeuristic reasons and social interaction/companionship, than minority members.

The assessment of all the analyses' results shows that it is possible to draw consumption patterns of majority members, in terms of their choices of podcasts and their sought uses and gratifications. As all the measured, significant effects were rather low, it seems that minority members and majority members are not as different in their podcast consumption as priory expected. Compared to age as a predictor, the cultural background of a person was more likely to give an indication about the person's podcast consumption behavior. The predictor with the most significant effects was the sought uses and gratifications of people while listening to podcasts.

5.2 Validity & Reliability

Both the value of this research and its general quality can be assessed by taking both the factors of validity and reliability into account (Babbie, 2014; Fallon, 2016; Matthews & Ross, 2010). The research validity can be generally defined as "the extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration" (Babbie, 2014, p. 154-155). Whereas the understanding of validity can differ per research design and method, common ground is the two overarching pillars of validity, namely internal and external validity (Fallon, 2016). The internal validity especially refers to choices that the researcher made, regarding the chosen measurements, the complexity of the concepts and items, and how well the variables are aligned with the actual concepts and definitions (construct validity) (Fallon, 2016). Firstly, in order to increase internal validity, all concepts and items were derived from prior research that has already proven the validity. The concepts of age and cultural background, as well as the developments in the UGT, arose

through prior research and current discourses, as the emergence of new media types. Regarding the complexity of concepts, for instance within the uses and gratifications, the research included four items per motivation, to measure them accordingly. All measurements of the variables are based on scales that were used successfully in prior research, to increase the internal validity. The external validity and the research's ability to generalize findings to the larger population were ensured through the collection of more than 250 answers to the survey, and the sampling method (Fallon, 2016). By recruiting participants based on different criteria (e.g. age groups and cultural backgrounds) the sample aimed at representing the diversity of the larger population. Also due to the adaption of the sampling and data collection method, the diversity of the sample was increased.

The second aspect of research quality is reliability, which "is a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, yields the same result each time (Babbie, 2014; p. 152). In other words, the reliability of research entails that if another researcher would do the exact same study all over again, he or she would expect the same findings (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The reliability of this study was ensured through the standardization of the survey-questionnaire. As mentioned earlier, the items included in the used scales were derived from prior research. Additionally, a reliability analysis was conducted per motivation, to analyze the values of the four items that each motivation included. This increases the reliability of the scales and measurements used. Apart from that, all choices about the research method and design were elaborated on in a transparent manner. Regarding the sample, it can be said that in order to be representative, the minority members should make up for around one-third of the sample. 28.7% of the respondents were first- or second-generation migrants. Therefore, the representation of minority members in this sample is taken into account. Besides the choices regarding the sampling method, this research is expected to be highly reliable and replicable on different samples, at different points in time.

5.3 Theoretical and Practical Implications

As there were only a handful of prior theories about podcasts and/or the combination with the uses and gratification theory, most of the hypotheses were derivations and assumptions, rather than proven theories. Therefore, it was even more interesting to find out if the created expectations could be confirmed, and if the tested effects turn out significantly. However, before conducting actual analyses, all items were checked on their

reliability, and variables were tested on their normality. Therefore, it can be stated that the chosen items and variables were suitable for the chosen analyses and led to the assumption that the issue lays on the side of the predictions/hypotheses.

Theories regarding the effect of a person's age on media consumption by Van Rees & Van Eijck (2003) could partly be confirmed. As this theory consists as much of the person's taste as of age, it is to be expected that especially regarding the choice of podcast genres, Bordieu's (2010) theory behind people's taste plays a more significant role than the person's age. The survey was able to measure certain effects that were especially related to an increase in age and an increase of choice of rather "serious" podcast genres and was, therefore, able to confirm that theory by Van Rees and Van Eijck (2003), and Mares and Sun (2010). This cannot be fully but partly be led back to theories by Voorveld and Van der Goot (2013) and the mentioned theories of "life-span explanations" and "general explanations" (Mares & Woodard, 2006; Van der Goot & Beentjes, 2008). It appears that elderly people show certain patterns in their consumption behavior, due to their age and the situation they are currently in. As especially in the comparison of people's uses and gratifications there are no clear differences based on people's age and, therefore, the generation they are belonging to, "general explanations" can be mostly set aside. The results let assume that they are more likely based on the person's situation around their actual age and can, therefore, more likely to be explained by "life-span explanations". Summarizing it can be said that age as a predictor of people's podcast consumption could only partly confirm the existing theory. However, it challenges prior findings, which were mainly based on traditional media. It shows again that podcasts have roots in traditional media, but also include traits of new media, which are less studied.

Regarding theories around a person's cultural background and its possible effect on a person's podcast consumption, it can be stated that again theories were confirmed and challenged. As the participants were clustered into two categories of majority members and minority members, solely based on their origin, a major part of the definition of majorities/minorities was left out of the equation. For this study, especially the person's migration background was taken into account. Theories about people from minorities and majorities and their differences in using media were only partly confirmed (Alencar, Kondova & Ribbens, 2018; Hsu, Tien & Chang, 2015). It could not be confirmed that one of the groups is listening more to podcasts than the other group, but analyses showed that majority members prefer different podcasts than minority members. In this case, it was harder to draw conclusions about minority members in connection to the acculturation

theory (Hwang & He, 1999; Moon & Ha, 2005). This research could not confirm that minority members use podcasts as support for their acculturation process. It leads to the assumption that other media outlets are more likely to be used throughout people's acculturation. Neither the hypotheses regarding the chosen podcast genres nor the motivations behind the podcast consumption could confirm this theory.

However, the acculturation theory stressed the connection between chosen media outlets and specific genres, and the people's sought uses and gratifications. This again leads back to theories about podcasts' recursive nature (Katz, Blumer, & Gurevitch, 1974; Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973). Throughout this study, the predictive power of sought uses and gratifications in connection to podcast genres was partially confirmed. It can be stated that sought gratifications are connected to the chosen podcast genres in the majority of cases. It lets assume that people define certain gratifications very similarly, whereas others can be interpreted or defined differently. In the cases of education and information, it seems that the majority of people define those gratifications similarly and are likely to connect them to certain podcast genres.

Another implication refers to the research design and the frame around the data analysis. As mentioned earlier, prior research on the UGT used a two-step research approach that combined focus groups with surveys (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Whereas more current research left the first step aside, the results of this research show that there are no clear in-depth insights about people sought uses and gratifications. This research implies that a two-step approach or a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative methods with quantitative research methods would still make sense, in order to gain insights about the UGT. How this could be done in future research will be discussed in the following abstract.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

The following abstract is focusing on the limitation this study has and provides ideas as possible guidelines for future research. It is to be assumed that with every research there is room for improvement, also in this case. The first limitation of this study refers to the actual research frame. This study is classified as a cross-sectional study, collecting answers at only one point in time. As discussed, motivation and the actual choice of podcasts seems to be very personal and individual, rather than generalizable. The complexity of each person's motivations could be better studied over a longer period of time to see how each person's demographics or socio-demographic profile changes over time, and how motivations might

change accordingly. Therefore, future research could conduct longitudinal studies to gain even deeper insights into the possible effects of age on people's motivations.

Referring once more to the research design, the last abstract mentioned the two-step approach for working further on the UGT. Again, this research only partly gained deep insights about why people seek to fulfill certain uses and gratifications, based on personal characteristics and the conduction of a survey. For future research, it is, therefore, imaginable to revive the two-step approach by combining qualitative and quantitative methods. However, slight changes could improve this approach. Instead of starting with focus groups followed by surveys, the survey could be done first to collect general data about the participants and their podcast consumption behavior. Afterwards, personal in-depth interviews could follow, to collect in-depth information about the people's motivations behind listening to podcasts. Thereby, generalizable, comparable data about the people's socio-demographic profile could be collected, while gaining in-depth insights about their sought uses and gratifications of their podcast consumption.

Also regarding the sampling method, a few things could have been done differently to possibly collect different kinds of data and insights. Firstly, solely active podcast listeners were asked to participate. However, a more holistic set of data could have been created, if also people would participate that are not (yet) listening to podcasts. It would be interesting to see what would motivate them to listen to podcasts or why are they are currently not listening to podcasts. This could give insights about people's motivations an extra facet.

Secondly, by combining quota sampling and convenience sampling through using Amazon Mechanical Turk, people from around the world with different cultural backgrounds were approached. To enhance the quality of the survey and to increase the comparability of the results it would have been interesting to only approach participants from one country. For instance, only people living in Germany would have been asked to participate. Then it would be easier to compare results coming from people with different cultural backgrounds, but who are living in the same country. By conducting the survey as it was conducted, it is harder to eliminate possible moderating influences, rather than the actual influence of the participants' backgrounds. Additionally, the use of Amazon Mechanical Turk could have influenced the quality of the given answers. Therefore, it is important to force people to answer certain questions, to make sure that all questions are answered. Thereby, also the answering time per questionnaire was increased, which can positively impact the reliability of the given answers.

Thirdly, the sample could have included more elderly people. Whereas the age of participants ranged from 18 to 74, only 25 percent of all participants were older than 37. The answers elderly people gave were of high importance and very valuable for the study, however, for future studies it would be recommendable to make sure to have at least one-third of the answers given by elderly people, to be able to better compare different age groups.

The last limitations refer mainly to the complexity of the chosen topics and variables. The current research showed that motivations in general and people's sought uses and gratifications while consuming media are maybe more complex than expected. While assessing the analyses' results it stood out that the sole assessment of age as an independent variable on both the genres and motivations might have been too simple. Before analyzing age as the independent variable, other variables as the educational level or the current employment were assessed but consciously not taken into account. For future research, it is, therefore, imaginable to assess the socio-demographic profile of each participant consists including more variables besides age. It would be recommendable to focus on only one dependent variable as the socio-demographic profile, but then with all of its factors. Thereby, also possible mediating effects of certain factors could be taken into account while assessing the effect of age.

The same critique can be applied regarding the participants' cultural background as an independent variable. Prior research has shown that it is fairly hard to define people's backgrounds based on categories as majority and minority (Seyranian, Atuel & Crano, 2008). As well as a person's socio-demographic profile, the concept of a person's cultural background is rather complex, consisting of several different factors. The results show that it is difficult to come up with generalizable conclusions about the effect of a person's cultural background, solely based on the categorization of minority and majority members. However, for future research, it would be advisable to focus on a person's cultural background only, but including more of its facets. Regarding the podcast consumption behavior of minority members, prior research showed that several kinds of media are used to support the acculturation process (Alencar, Kondova & Ribbens, 2018; Hwang & He, 1999; Moon & Ha, 2005). While referring back to possible research based on two approaches, it would be interesting to find out why or why not podcasts could be used to support this process. Hereby, personal in-depth interviews could help to gain insights.

A final note concludes the critique of the chosen research method. The research aimed at comparing different personal characteristics and their influences on people's

podcast consumption behavior. However, against prior expectations, the simplification of both the independent variables, made it harder to draw clear conclusions, to find significant patterns, or gain in-depth insights about people's podcast consumption. But still, even with the simplification of rather complex variables, this study was able to test certain effects. Therefore, it is imaginable that more in-depth research could find even more connections and could give additional insights. Hence, future research should consider a mixed-methods approach to join forces on gaining in-depth information and being able to compare certain behavior or consumption patterns.

5.5 Conclusion

To start the conclusion it has to be mentioned that this study provided insights that were never tested earlier. The assessment of how people's motivations and intentions behind their podcast consumption can be influenced by personal traits, based on the uses and gratification theory is a unique approach that enriched prior research with new information. All in all, this study provided an elaborate description of the possible effects of both a person's age and cultural background on the person's podcast consumption behavior and the motivations behind it. Additionally, it showed that people's sought uses and gratifications are indeed connected to the choice of consumed podcast genres. The study's main findings were that all three of the independent variables had some significant effects on the podcast consumption behavior. Compared to the person's cultural background, age was a slightly better predictor of the podcast consumption behavior. However, in all of the cases, the predictive power was rather low. The best prediction power and the highest hypothesis-acceptance rate had the sought uses and gratifications in regards to the chosen podcast genres. In general, both of the chosen independent variables and their analyses provide future media research a breeding ground for more in-depth research. The results were mostly against prior expectations, but there is room for improvement, and simultaneously gives valuable insights to proceed with. Complex variables as a person's socio-demographic profile and cultural background can be partially quantified, but could be assessed individually with all of its facets in separate studies. Recommendations were provided in order to use these insights derived from this study, to dig deeper into the motivations of people regarding their podcast consumption behavior. This study stressed again the importance of podcasts in general and the importance to understand people's motivations behind their podcast consumption. The findings of this research also had theoretical implications as it partly supported certain prior theories, and partly challenged

them. For instance, it was confirmed that seeking to fulfill certain uses and gratifications is connected to the choice of podcast genres, whereas it was challenged that different age groups have different preferences in their podcast consumption.

As a final note, it can be stated that the conduction of this research, with the chosen simplified variables, the small sample size, and the chosen research method, provided valuable insights regarding existing studies and theories, as well as for future research. The drawn statements created valuable loose ends that further research could perfectly tie together. Already in the introduction, it was stated that the findings of this research are valuable for social science research, research in the field of media, but also benefit businesses and investors at the same time. Podcast makers/initiators, as well as businesses, have the opportunity to improve their profit-making through podcasts. Advertising mechanisms and strategies can be altered, as new insights were provided about people's intentions behind consuming podcasts. It might be that certain advertisements fit certain genres, advertisements could be personalized, based on people's motivations and marketing strategies could be re-evaluated based on new findings of the target group.

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Appendix A

Survey Layout

Informed Consent

Description

You are invited to participate in a research about people's podcast consumption. The purpose of the study is to understand if and how people's age, education and cultural background are related to each person's podcast consumption.

Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to participate in this online survey. In general terms, the questions included in this survey will be related to your podcast consumption, the consumption of other media outlets, your age and your cultural background.

You are always free to not answer any particular question or stop participating in this survey at any point.

Risk and Benefits

As far as I can tell, there are no risks associated with participating in this research. You will stay anonymous throughout the entire process. However, the questions will be personal, about your age, your education level and cultural background. Yet, you are free to decide if you want to answer those questions or stop participating throughout the survey process.

I will use the material from the survey exclusively for academic work, such as further research, academic meetings and publications.

Time Involvement

Your participation in this study will take around 10 minutes. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

Participant's Rights

If you have decided to accept to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

Contacts and Questions

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact –anonymously, if you wish– Dr. Joep Hofhuis, in the department of Media and Communication within Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communications.

Signing the Consent Form

By clicking on the 'accept' button, you state that you have read the information above and give the consent about participating voluntarily in this research.

1. Podcast consumption

- Do you listen to podcasts?

- Yes
- No

2. Questions regarding actual podcast consumption

- How much time do you spend on the following media types daily? (Scale 1-7, not at all → more than 5 hours)
 - TV
 - Radio
 - Offline Music (CD, records, EP, MP3 etc.)
 - Online Audio Content (Streaming as spotify, etc.)
 - Online Video Content (YouTube, Amazon Prime, Netflix etc.)
 - Print media (newspapers, magazines, books)
 - Others
- How often do you listen to podcasts?
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Several times per month
 - Monthly
 - Once every few months
- How much time do you spend on listening to podcasts per session?
 - Less than 30 minutes
 - Between 30 minutes and 1 hour
 - Between 1 and 2 hours
 - Between 2 and 3 hours
 - Between 4 and 5 hours
 - More than 5 hours
- On which device(s) do you often listen to podcasts? (Scale 1-7, never → on this device only)
 - Laptop/Computer
 - Tablet
 - Smartphone
 - TV
- How often do you listen to the following genres (Scale 1-7, never → always)
 - Music
 - News
 - Comedy
 - Regional/Local
 - Education/Science
 - Sports
 - Audiobooks
 - Business
 - Society/Culture
 - Religion/Spirituality

3. Questions regarding motivations behind podcast consumption (UGT)

I use podcasts: (Scale 1-7, strongly disagree → strongly agree)

- Entertainment
 - Because it's enjoyable.
 - Because it entertains me.
 - Because it amuses me.
 - Because it gives me a good laugh or cry.

- Arousal
 - Because it's thrilling.
 - Because it peps me up.
 - Because it's exciting.
 - Because it stimulates my emotions.

- Relaxation
 - Because it's pleasant.
 - Because it relaxes me.
 - It allows me to unwind.
 - It distracts me.

- Information
 - To get free information.
 - To know what is going on.
 - Because it provides quick and easy access to information.
 - Because I obtain a wide range of information.

- Voyeurism
 - Because it has someone's personal content.
 - Because it shows someone's daily activities.
 - Because I get "behind the scenes" content of "famous" people.
 - Because it makes "famous" people more accessible.

- Education
 - Because it is helpful for my schoolwork/work for uni/my work.
 - Because I can educate myself about a certain topic/field.
 - Because it helps me to learn a new skill.
 - Because I can expand my mind from podcasts.

- Convenience
 - Because I can use it anywhere.
 - Because it is free.
 - Because I can use it anytime.
 - Because I can listen to it on various devices.

- Habit
 - Because I just like to listen to podcasts.
 - Because it's a habit, just something to do.
 - Because it's there.
 - Because it is integrated in my daily/weekly routine.
- Social Interaction /Companionship
 - Because I am part of a community of listeners.
 - Because I can talk with other people about it.
 - It makes me feel less lonely, when there is no one else to listen to.
 - Because I can share my thoughts about podcast on social media.
- Pastime
 - Because it passes time, particularly when I'm bored.
 - When I have nothing better to do.
 - Because it gives me something to do to occupy my time.
 - Because they make the time go by quicker.
- Escape
 - So I can have some "me time".
 - So I get my mind off my work/school/uni.
 - So I can get away from what I'm doing.
 - It helps me when to cheer up.
- Personal development
 - So I can learn about myself.
 - To work on my mental health.
 - To balance my busy every day life.
 - Because it gives me structure.
- Control
 - Because they allow me to consume fresh or novel content not otherwise available in the media.
 - Because they provide entertainment at times that are convenient for me.
 - Because I can listen to just the podcast episodes that interest me.
 - Because I can listen to podcast I want when I want.
- Multitasking/productivity
 - Because I can get other work done while consuming media.
 - Because I can move around while consuming media.
 - Because they help me get through a busy activity.
 - Because podcasts allow me to be more productive with my time.
- Storytelling
 - Because I can picture the stories told through podcasts in my mind as I listen.
 - Because it stimulates my fantasy different than other media.

- Because time passes quickly when I listen to podcasts that feature storytelling.
- Because I like to hear about experiences of people who are different than me.

4. Demographic questions (Age and educational level)

- How old are you?
- What's your gender?
 - Female
 - Male
 - Prefer not to say
- What is your achieved education level?
 - Less than high school diploma
 - High school diploma or equivalent
 - Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)
 - Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MEd)
 - Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD)
 - Other
- What is your current employment?
 - Employed
 - Unemployed
 - Student
 - Retired

5. Questions regarding the cultural background

- In which country are you currently living?
- What is your country of birth?
- What is the country of birth of your mother?
- What is the country of birth of your father?

You've made it to the end! Thank you for your participation and your time. If you have any questions about the survey or any additional comments, please use the text box below, or email me directly: 510909jw@student.eur.nl.