

It's the platform, stupid (-; the elitist nature of sport podcast listeners

Yair Galily

*School of Communications, Reichman University (IDC) Herzliya,
Herzliya, Israel*

Tal Laor

Department of Media, Ariel University, Ariel, Israel, and

Tal Samuel-Azran

*School of Communications, Reichman University (IDC) Herzliya,
Herzliya, Israel*

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Abstract

Purpose – Despite the ability of podcasts to bring free quality content to the masses, studies found that podcast consumption have been identified mostly with the elite class, thus increasing knowledge gaps and digital divides. This study aims to examine whether this trend extends to non-elitist podcast genres by providing the first analysis of sport podcast demographics and uses and gratifications.

Design/methodology/approach – A survey was conducted among Israel's three most popular sport podcast listeners ($N = 503$), examining the listeners' demographics, consumption patterns and uses and gratifications driving them to listen to the podcast.

Findings – The analysis reveals that most listeners are secular millennials males with above average income, highlighting the elitist nature of sport podcast consumers. The analysis further revealed that information-rich groups were more likely to tune in for information acquisition whereas other groups used it more for entertainment and escapist purposes.

Practical implications – For policy makers and educators who wish to promote podcast-based initiatives to narrow social gaps, the analysis strengthens the notion that the podcast platform mostly attracts those who are already information rich and thus increase knowledge gaps and digital divides. For sport broadcasters, the analysis illuminates sport podcasts audiences' demographics and their uses of the platform.

Social implications – The study reflects that the podcast platform is identified with elitist listening even in non-elitist genres; thus it further increases the already wide knowledge gap and digital divides promoted by the advent of the podcast platform.

Originality/value – The study is the first to highlight the elitist nature of sport podcast listeners' demographics, indicating that the podcast platform increases the knowledge gap also even across non-elitist content genres such as sport content.

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Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Podcasts, digital recordings files available for download at any time (audio-on-demand), are becoming increasingly popular, with a June 2021 survey revealing that 78% of US citizens are familiar with the term “podcasting” and that more than half the population have listened to a podcast at least once (Insider Intelligence, 2021). Studies which examine the motivations to listen to podcasts often reveal that the main demographics are privileged groups, such as high earning highly educated male (Samuel-Azran *et al.*, 2019) whose main motivation is knowledge acquisition, both in order to network with colleagues on intellectual issues based on podcast content and for deepening existing knowledge (McClung and Johnson, 2010).



Further, studies reveal that podcasts are consumed regularly mostly by the elite, as they often deepen knowledge in a form that strengthens those already more prone to knowledge acquisition (Ibid). Combined, these studies highlight the extent that podcasts contribute to further increase knowledge gaps (Tichenor *et al.*, 1970) and digital divides (Hargittai, 2021). In line with Tichenor *et al.*'s (1970) knowledge gap theory, the findings regarding podcast consumers' elitist nature support the notion that every new medium or media platform increases the gap between the privileged and less privileged, since the privileged utilize it to further increase their existing advantage. In line with Hargittai's digital divide theory (2021), the advent of the online world aggravates matter tenfold because the platforms become more sophisticated to access and consume, and the content is customized to specific audiences, trends which are vividly illustrated in the case of podcasts' consumption and elitist groups (Samuel-Azran *et al.*, 2019; McClung and Johnson, 2010). Simultaneously, studies indicate that with the rising popularity of podcasts more genres are being added, from lighter content such as comedy and sport to health and politics (Antunes and Salaverría, 2020). Thus, with the growing popularity of the podcast platform and its expansion to various genres (including lighter genres) and demographics, it is important to continue to examine and map the consumption patterns of different podcast genres across various demographics to understand whether the trends of increased knowledge gaps and digital divides persist or whether these trends are narrowing.

To contribute to these questions, our study provides the first analysis of the demographics as well as the uses and gratifications of *sport* podcasts' consumers. Sport podcasting is an interesting, nontrivial and relevant podcast genre to explore because on one hand, sport content potentially appeals to the masses (Kim and Trail, 2011), as the sports genre attracts all population groups and thus reflects the microcosmos of society (Yim *et al.*, 2021), and on the other hand, the knowledge-based delivery of sport content via podcast might still attract elitist demographics due to the potentially elitist nature of the platform. Accordingly, the analysis examines to what extent the podcast consumption patterns depend on the platform or, alternatively, on the *genre* of the podcast. The analysis will make a unique contribution to the ongoing mapping of podcast societal effects, specifically with respect to the knowledge gap and digital divide theories.

Importantly, the study follows up on a former analysis conducted in Israel which examined the demographics listening to Israel's most popular podcasts that deals with history and the uses of gratifications of the podcast listeners (Samuel-Azran *et al.*, 2019). The study reported the highly elitist nature of podcasts listeners from the education, income and other variables and also found that users were disproportionately from the Israeli high-tech industry, listening to the podcast as a way to raise conversations with their office friends. The study serves as a frame of reference and comparison to our follow-up analysis, examining the issue of sport podcasting in Israel to understand whether the same trend persists in the case of sport podcast or whether the listeners' demographics and uses and gratifications of sport podcasts indicate that non-elitist demographics' use sport podcasts in a similar manner to elitist demographics. Accordingly, we conducted a survey among Israel's three most popular sport podcast listeners ($N = 503$), who discuss sport events from a historical and scientific perspective, examining the listeners' demographics, consumption patterns and uses and gratification gained from listening to the podcasts.

The knowledge gap and the digital divide theories

In 1970, Tichenor *et al.* posited that every new media platform widens the gap in knowledge between privileged and less privileged groups as the privileged learn how to utilize it to their needs faster and better. Specifically, the authors note that the upper classes usually use the new medium or platform for the purpose of acquiring information since they have higher

motivation than others to learn about issues such as the economy and politics via any means to use it to their benefit. Finally, they explain that information-rich populations also possess the right tools to process information due to their prior knowledge and better education (Gaziano, 1984; Viswanath and Finnegan, 1996; Jerit *et al.*, 2006). In light of the above, the theory asserts that the gaps between information rich and information poor forever increase.

The knowledge gap hypothesis was examined across different media platforms, and was mostly supported (see Hwang and Jeong, 2009's meta-analysis), although at times studies yielded mixed results and even contradicted the theory in line with the unique characteristics of the platform examined. Thus, for example, whereas newspaper readership was mostly linked to increasing the knowledge gap (Berkowitz and Pritchard, 1989), some studies of television (TV) news found that since TV present content in a palatable manner it usually serves to either level the knowledge playground or even decrease knowledge gaps (Eveland and Scheufele, 2000; Jerit *et al.*, 2006).

With the advent of the commercial Internet in the mid 1990s, studies began to examine its effect on the knowledge gap, mostly from the prism of the concept of a digital divide. Thus, early studies argued that the advent of the web increases knowledge gaps between privileged groups connected online and those who do not have access and who remained web illiterate (Hargittai, 2021; Laor and Galily, 2022). Whereas the gaps in access narrowed dramatically in the early 21st century, scholars updated the theory to examine the impact of gaps in skills of operating the web applications between users across demographics, namely second wave digital divide (Reinhart *et al.*, 2011). More recently, scholars argued for a third wave digital divide, whereas different demographics gain better outcomes from web usage (Van Deursen and Helsper, 2015).

Research focusing on the global digital divide indicates an association between various online uses and demographic factors such as education, age, religiosity, place of residence, income and gender (Mariscal *et al.*, 2019; Malisuwan *et al.*, 2016; Hargittai, 2021; Correa, 2016; Kupriyanova *et al.*, 2019; Lissitsa and Laor, 2021). Furthermore, a recent study has found that among young respondents, secular individuals consume more digital content than religious individuals (Laor and Galily, 2022).

Within the ongoing inquiry of the knowledge gap and the digital divides theories, one of the main goals of researchers is to map the impact of new application and platforms to better understand the contemporary relevance of the knowledge gap theory and in the context of the online realm, the depth of the digital divide. This is indeed also the main goal of this study. To examine the issue of the knowledge gap and digital divide in the context of sport podcasting, we not only examined the profile of listeners' demographics but also followed the approach of many of the studies examining the profile of listeners and the motivation and purposes of podcast listening: the uses and gratification approach (Katz, 1959). The next section will review the relevance of this approach in more detail.

Uses and gratifications in podcast consumption

Uses and gratifications is a theory in social psychology and in communication studies that approaches communication consumption as an active act where users proactively use the media to fulfill psychological needs such as escapism, knowledge building, relaxation, companionship, etc. (Katz, 1959). The theory was born as an answer to the long-standing media effects approach that saw media consumers as passive consumers whose exposure to context necessarily affects their worldview and behavior (Valkenburg *et al.*, 2016). Katz *et al.*'s (1973) studies revealed that optimistically, the media audiences are active and goal oriented and choose which contents to consume. Thus, rather than absorbing values from media shows, they often choose and use media content, for example, to escape reality or simply because a show assists them in falling asleep, thus negating any notion of them being

manipulated by the media. Whereas the classic studies of uses and gratifications dealt mostly with TV, newspapers and radio, used for purposes such as escapism, entertainment and information (Katz, 1980), more recent studies examine the uses and gratifications of new media and reveal new and surprising uses. For example, studies of mobile phone usage reveal that people use it as a fashion accessory and use it for psychological reassurance in a similar manner to cigarettes (Chua *et al.*, 2012). In the same fashion, text messaging was used as a relaxation method and a way to achieve higher social status by following the recent trends in texting/emojis (Grellhesl and Punyanunt-Carter, 2012; Leung, 2001). More relevant in the context of podcasts Ferguson *et al.* (2008) examined gratifications associated with MP3 players listening and identifying boredom, escapism and loneliness along with entertainment and stimulation as major motivations to listen to MP3 players' content.

In the context of podcasting, several studies approached and examined the uses and gratifications or motivations of podcast listeners to download and listen to selected podcasts. An early study by McClung and Johnson (2010) conducted a survey among 354 podcast fans. The study started by examining the demographics of podcast users, highlighting the elitist nature (affluent and educated) of consumers. The study identified entertainment, time shifting (podcast recording, which allows listening to podcasts whenever and wherever they wish to), library building (collecting podcasts and building a library in line with relevant themes) and networking (talking to friends about relevant podcasts) as the main gratifications from podcast consumption. In 2012, another study (Swanson, 2012) revealed similar uses and gratification for podcast users, with fun and entertainment a major gratification, followed by the desire to share knowledge and discuss various information learnt with peers. Finally, the respondents reported the ability to listen to podcasts as a party of daily multitasking another major motivation to tune in to podcasts. In 2015, a survey of 636 college students highlighted that voyeurism also plays a role in podcast consumption, as students reported that they like being exposed to someone's secrets while listening to their podcasts. In the same study factors such as entertainment, information seeking, escapism and convenience again played a role in students' motivations to listen to podcasts (Chung and Kim, 2015).

More recently, Perks and Turner in 2018 examined the issue using a qualitative small-scale study, based on interviews. The study revealed that media displacement was a main gratification of podcast listeners, as they testified that podcast replaced the "boring" and "repetitive" radio with in-depth podcasts and replaced the immobile TV with a mobile platform (Perks and Turner, 2019). Other uses and gratifications revealed included "feeding the brain" and "customizable experience," as podcasts allow choosing what to listen to and when and how to listen to it. Another use and gratification found is multitasking, because podcasting allows users to listen while doing chores, while at work, while bathing or washing the dishes. Finally, the study found that listeners used podcasts for temptation bundling, defined as the ability to make an undesired chore more enjoyable; thanks to a simultaneous listening to podcasts. In 2019, one of the most comprehensive studies examined the demographic profiles of 960 podcast listeners of the most popular podcasts in Israel that deals with historical stories and their implications, revealing that most of the listeners of the podcast are highly educated, affluent and work in the high-tech sector. A follow-up analysis with 100 respondents revealed that their main uses and gratifications are to acquire new knowledge and then share it with peers, thus increasing their social status in the intellectual environment they were part of (Samuel-Azran *et al.*, 2019). In the same year, another large-scale study examined 737 podcast listeners, revealing that the main gratifications were controlling the usage of edutainment, the ability to listen to podcasts as part of multitasking, becoming part of an online community and storytelling transportation (Perks *et al.*, 2019), similar to how online radio and radio broadcasts on social networks enable the formation of a community (Laor, 2019, 2020).

In 2020, a study in Thailand revealed that Thai people also listen to podcasts as a form of edutainment, due to the convenience of listening at the time of their choice and due to the credibility of podcast presenters (Srimahalap, 2020). Also in 2020, a large-scale national survey in the USA found that entertainment, information and the convenience of the podcast platform were the main drivers behind podcast success. The authors also noted that podcasts are multidimensional and must be studied from various angles and aspects such as in accordance with genre, a call that this study decided to address.

Importantly, whereas many of the above studies reveal similar uses and gratifications and the elitist nature of listeners, a 2018 study examined the demographics of the true crime podcast serial, thus adding a new perspective of a particular podcast genre. The study used an online survey to understand the demographics and revealed that, in contrast to the male-dominant demographics in former studies (Samuel-Azran *et al.*, 2019), 73% of the podcasts' followers and listeners are female and that their three main motivations to listen were entertainment, convenience and boredom (Bolling and Hull, 2018). While the uses and gratifications of the listeners in the study resemble some of the gratifications revealed in the past, the demographics illustrate that studies need to explore further by genre to better understand whether the podcast listeners represent a different and more diverse audience than the elitist profiles revealed in past studies and equally important, whether the demographics also reveal new unexplored uses and gratifications for podcast consumption.

The uses and gratifications of sport consumption

Studies have long examined the reasons behind the popularity of sport content consumption. One of the main studies in the field is that of Rubin (1979) that identified "arousal" as a major factor in sport viewership, along with escapism, passing the time and relaxation. In 1981, Gantz identified that the excitement that viewers gain during sport viewership is a major motivation to tune in, especially when the team that they cheered for won the game. Relaxation was again revealed as a main motivation for sport viewing, along with a form to fight boredom. In 2008, Wann *et al.*'s study confirmed that escaping boredom is a major motivation for sport viewership. Gantz and Wenner (1995) separated between the uses and gratifications of avid fans versus nonfans, as avid fans were watching the game because they were thrilled about the game outcome whereas nonfans were watching in order to spend time with family and friends interested in the game, thus using it as a way to bond.

Whereas studies of sport consumption on mainstream (or traditional) media platforms show mostly similar uses and gratifications (Earnhardt and Haridakis, 2008), studies on sport consumption on new media platforms provide different results based on the nature of the platform or social networks used; thus, text-based platforms, for example, indicate different motivations than image-based platforms. A great illustration can be found in Billings *et al.*'s (2019) study, which compared US and Chinese sport following across four platforms and found that both platform and culture played a significant and sometimes a contrasting role in motivation and arousal while following sport.

Early studies examined motivations to participate in text-based sport message boards and found that interactivity, information gathering, diversion and argumentation played the main parts in motivation to take part in such boards (Clavio, 2008). Twitter is the most researched social media platform. Clavio and Kian (2010) who examined the following of a retired female athlete identified that the motivations are fandom and interactive, and that fandom was gender based with males mostly following due to them being attractive whereas females followed her due to affinity to her character and achievements. In 2014, Gibbs *et al.* identified that information, live updates, interaction and commercial promotion (where the team sells discount tickets, for example) were the main uses and gratifications in Twitter sport following. In 2018, Spinda and Puckette examined the uses and gratifications for

following sport on Snapchat, revealing that attachment to favorite sport teams or specific sport, social media preferences and different sports were the main uses and gratification behind Snapchat sport following. In the same year, Vale and Fernandes examined the uses and gratifications for consuming sport on Facebook and revealed that information seeing, empowerment via sport following and brand love were the main uses and gratification received on the Facebook platform.

Accordingly, our research questions (RQs) were as follows:

RQ1. What characterizes the demographics of sport podcasting listeners?

RQ2. What are the uses and gratifications of sport podcasting listening?

Methodology

Procedure

The study received a University Research Ethics Committee [Institutional Review Board (IRB)] approval by the first author's university, Israel. The data were collected via a web-based survey that was posted on the home pages of the three leading sports podcasts in Israel which hold the highest number of followers between June 2019 and June 2021. The survey was posted in April 2021 and was answered by a total of 503 people. After reaching the number of 503 participants the survey was taken off the up-mentioned home pages. The participants in the survey answered the questions of their own free will. It was clarified to them that the data collection is anonymous and is intended for statistical analysis as a part of an academic research. It was further clarified that answering or not answering all of the questions or answering partially, as well as the content of the answers has no implications whatsoever. It was clarified to the participants that no reward will be given for answering the survey questions and they were asked to state that they have read these terms and they agree to answer the survey questions that will form the basis of academic research. The name of the researchers, the details of the academic institution in which the research is conducted and contact details regarding the survey or the data collected were stated.

Measures

In order to understand their uses and gratifications of sport podcasts, the survey included items that referred to sociodemographic and consumption patterns.

The questionnaire included two main parts:

- (1) The demographics section – Based on the digital divide and knowledge gap theory, this section comprised closed questions that examined the following variables: gender, age, area of residence, religious affiliation, level of religiosity, marital status, the number of children, level of education and economic status (Hwang and Jeong, 2009)
- (2) Motives for the sport podcasts use – Usages and gratifications was measured by Katz *et al.*'s (1973) scale, by which each participant was asked two sets of questions:
 - How important to you is each of the needs presented in the list (29 needs: affective, cognitive and escapist), on a scale of 1 (*not important at all*) to 3 (*very important*)?
 - When a need is rated as even slightly important, participants will be asked to what extent podcasts helps them satisfy this need on a scale of 1 (*not at all helpful*) to 6 (*very helpful*).

Based on the uses and gratifications theory, this section included four questions that include 29 statements that dealt with sport podcast users' consumption and motives. For example,

listeners were asked how often do they listen to sport media at various platforms (podcast, radio, TV, web, etc.), how often do they listen to sport podcast (every day, several times a week, several times a month, seldom or not at all), what gratifications do sport podcasts answer (knowledge, escapism, deals with issues not covered in the traditional media and gives added value and social motives) and how they consume sport podcasts in certain places (while driving, during training, before bed, while surfing the web, etc.).

All questions were rated on the Likert scale (1–6), while 1 representing “not at all” and 6 representing “very large measure” regarding the level of consumption of sport podcasts. No subscales or psychometric indices were used.

To examine whether there are average differences in the different needs that listening to podcasts satisfies between different sociodemographic parameters (like gender, age, area of residence, etc.), a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and a follow-up Scheffe analysis was conducted.

Results

Demographics

To identify the sociodemographic features of sports podcast listeners, listeners’ age, gender, education level and salary were examined. According to the study findings, 73% of listeners were between the age of 21 and 41 years. A comparable percentage (16%) of listeners was between the age of 42 and 61 years. The findings also show that 95% of listeners are men, while only 5% are women. Findings indicate that podcast listeners are highly educated, as 73.5% have earned either a bachelor’s (38%) and/or a master’s degree (25%). More than half (58%) of listeners reported a higher-than-average salary. We examined listening frequencies of sports podcasts and the findings indicate that 79% of listeners consume sports podcast at least once a week: 22% listen every day, 37% listen 3–4 times a week and 30%, 1–2 times a week. In total 7% listen 1–2 times a month and 4% seldom listen to sports podcast.

Since podcasts are portable media that can be listened to at any time or in any place, listeners were asked where they typically listen podcasts of sport. More than half of listeners (55.9%) typically listen to the podcast when they are in their car. The remainder mentioned other locations, such as while doing housework (40.2%), engaging in exercise sport (39.2%), at the workplace (15%), as a background during Internet browse (15%), in bed before sleeping (8%) and as main activity, just listening to podcast (10%) (Table 1).

Finally, we examined uses and gratification needs regarding sports podcast consumption on the scale of 1–5. Findings indicate that most significant motive is the added value of deeper

| | | Just listening to podcast (as main activity) | During driving | As background during work | During workout | During housework (cleaning, etc.) | Before bad time | As background during Internet browse |
|---|------------------------|--|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| N | Valid | 472 | 491 | 488 | 481 | 494 | 490 | 492 |
| | Missing | 31 | 12 | 15 | 22 | 9 | 13 | 11 |
| | Mean | 2.08 | 3.50 | 2.13 | 2.07 | 3.28 | 1.72 | 2.04 |
| | Median | 2.00 | 4.00 | 2.00 | 1.00 | 3.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| | Mode | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| | Hgh freq and above (%) | 10.4% | 55.9% | 15% | 39.2% | 40.20% | 8% | 15% |
| | Std. deviation | 1.128 | 1.429 | 1.314 | 1.427 | 1.322 | 1.137 | 1.293 |

Table 1.
Demographics

and broader information (4.18), followed by the motive of niche issues that are not covered by traditional media (3.83), followed by knowledge (3.77). Coming afterward, social motive (3.25) and the least significant motive is escapism (3.14) (see [Table 2](#)).

Statistics

To examine whether there are average differences in the different needs that listening to podcasts satisfies between different age groups, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. It was found that in needs of knowledge, dealing with issues not covered in traditional communication and connection to a particular community there are no significant differences ($p > 0.05$).

In the need of escaping from reality, it was found that there is a significant difference between different age groups. $F(3,483) = 7,939$ and $p < 0.05$.

Follow-up analyses (Scheffe) show that there is a difference between the age group 0–21 years (mean = 2.8 and SD = 1.262) and the age group 62+ years (mean = 1.2 and SD = 0.447).

In addition, there is a difference between the age group 22–41 years (mean = 3.26 and SD = 1.159) and the age group 62+ years (mean = 1.2 and SD = 0.447).

Also, there is a difference between the age group 42–61 years (mean = 3.58 and SD = 0.925) and the age group 62+ years (mean = 1.2 and SD = 0.447).

In the need of added value, it was found that there is a significant difference between different age groups. $F(3,488) = 4,112$ and $p < 0.05$.

Follow-up analyses (Scheffe) show that there is a difference between the age group 0–21 years (mean = 4.35 and SD = 0.688) and the age group 62+ years (mean = 3 and SD = 0.707).

In addition, there is a difference between the age group 22–41 years (mean = 4.19 and SD = 0.919) and the age group 62+ years (mean = 3 and SD = 0.707) (see [Table 3](#)).

To examine whether there are average differences in the different needs that listening to podcasts satisfies between different age groups, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. It was found that in needs of knowledge, dealing with issues not covered in traditional communication in connection to a particular community there are no significant differences ($p > 0.05$).

To examine whether there are differences between men and women in the average need for podcasts aimed for knowledge, a *T* test was conducted for independent variables, and it was found that there is no significant difference ($p > 0.05$).

In order to examine whether there are differences between men and women in the average need for podcasts aimed to escape reality, a *T* test was performed for independent variables, and it was found that there is no significant difference ($p > 0.05$).

In order to examine whether there are differences between women and men in the average need for podcasts aimed to deal with issues not covered in the traditional media, a *T* test was

| | Knowledge | Escapism | Deals with issues not covered in the traditional media | Gives me added value (deeper, broader and more detailed) | Connects me to a specific community (society) |
|----------------|-----------|----------|--|--|---|
| N Valid | 493 | 493 | 497 | 498 | 497 |
| Missing | 10 | 10 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| Mean | 3.77 | 3.14 | 3.83 | 4.18 | 3.25 |
| Median | 4.00 | 3.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 | 3.00 |
| Mode | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| Std. deviation | 0.927 | 1.211 | 0.989 | 0.892 | 1.237 |

Table 2.
Statistics

Demographics versus needs Descriptions

| | | N | Mean | Std. deviation | Std. error | 95% confidence interval for mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|--|-------|-----|------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|
| | | | | | | Lower bound | Upper bound | | |
| Knowledge | 0-21 | 51 | 4.00 | 0.872 | 0.122 | 3.75 | 4.25 | 2 | 5 |
| | 22-41 | 353 | 3.79 | 0.930 | 0.050 | 3.69 | 3.89 | 1 | 5 |
| | 42-61 | 79 | 3.61 | 0.898 | 0.101 | 3.41 | 3.81 | 1 | 5 |
| | 62 + | 4 | 2.75 | 0.957 | 0.479 | 1.23 | 4.27 | 2 | 4 |
| | Total | 487 | 3.77 | 0.926 | 0.042 | 3.69 | 3.86 | 1 | 5 |
| Escapism | 0-21 | 50 | 2.80 | 1.262 | 0.178 | 2.44 | 3.16 | 1 | 5 |
| | 22-41 | 352 | 3.26 | 1.159 | 0.062 | 3.14 | 3.38 | 1 | 5 |
| | 42-61 | 80 | 2.91 | 1.295 | 0.145 | 2.62 | 3.20 | 1 | 5 |
| | 62 + | 5 | 1.20 | 0.447 | 0.200 | 0.64 | 1.76 | 1 | 2 |
| | Total | 487 | 3.13 | 1.214 | 0.055 | 3.03 | 3.24 | 1 | 5 |
| Deals with issues not covered in the traditional media | 0-21 | 51 | 3.98 | 0.905 | 0.127 | 3.73 | 4.24 | 2 | 5 |
| | 22-41 | 355 | 3.87 | 1.002 | 0.053 | 3.77 | 3.98 | 1 | 5 |
| | 42-61 | 80 | 3.58 | 0.925 | 0.103 | 3.37 | 3.78 | 1 | 5 |
| | 62 + | 5 | 3.00 | 1.225 | 0.548 | 1.48 | 4.52 | 1 | 4 |
| | Total | 491 | 3.83 | 0.990 | 0.045 | 3.74 | 3.91 | 1 | 5 |
| Gives me added value (deeper, broader and more detailed) | 0-21 | 51 | 4.35 | 0.688 | 0.096 | 4.16 | 4.55 | 3 | 5 |
| | 22-41 | 356 | 4.19 | 0.919 | 0.049 | 4.10 | 4.29 | 1 | 5 |
| | 42-61 | 80 | 4.06 | 0.847 | 0.095 | 3.87 | 4.25 | 1 | 5 |
| | 62+ | 5 | 3.00 | 0.707 | 0.316 | 2.12 | 3.88 | 2 | 4 |
| | Total | 492 | 4.18 | 0.893 | 0.040 | 4.10 | 4.26 | 1 | 5 |
| Connects me to a specific community (society) | 0-21 | 51 | 3.35 | 1.230 | 0.172 | 3.01 | 3.70 | 1 | 5 |
| | 22-41 | 355 | 3.30 | 1.235 | 0.066 | 3.17 | 3.43 | 1 | 5 |
| | 42-61 | 80 | 3.08 | 1.220 | 0.136 | 2.80 | 3.35 | 1 | 5 |
| | 62 + | 5 | 2.20 | 1.304 | 0.583 | 0.58 | 3.82 | 1 | 4 |
| | Total | 491 | 3.26 | 1.237 | 0.056 | 3.15 | 3.37 | 1 | 5 |

Table 3. Age groups

performed for independent variables, and it was found that there is no significant difference ($p > 0.05$).

In order to examine whether there are differences between women and men on average in the need for podcasts for added value, a *T* test was performed for independent variables, and it was found that there is no significant difference ($p > 0.05$).

In order to examine whether there are differences between women and men in the average need for podcasts in order to escape from reality, a *T* test was conducted for independent variables, and it was found that there is no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) (see Tables 4 and 5).

To examine whether there are average differences in the different needs that listening to podcasts satisfies between different education levels, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. It was found that in the needs of knowledge, escapism, dealing with issues not covered in traditional communication and added value there are no significant differences ($p > 0.05$).

In need of connection to a particular community, it was found that there is a significant difference between different education levels. $F(3, 489) = 4.447$ and $p < 0.01$.

A follow-up analysis (Scheffe) shows that there is a difference between B.A. (mean = 3.44 and SD = 1.107) and M.A. (mean = 3.04 and SD = 1.281) (see Table 6).

To examine whether there are average differences in the different needs that listening to podcasts satisfies between different socioeconomic levels, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. It was found that in the needs of knowledge, escape from reality, dealing with

| | Group statistics | | | | |
|--|------------------|-----|------|----------------|-----------------|
| | Sex | N | Mean | Std. deviation | Std. error mean |
| Knowledge | Male | 469 | 3.78 | 0.910 | 0.042 |
| | Female | 23 | 3.65 | 1.229 | 0.256 |
| Escapism | Male | 469 | 3.17 | 1.191 | 0.055 |
| | Female | 23 | 2.61 | 1.530 | 0.319 |
| Deals with issues not covered in the traditional media | Male | 473 | 3.84 | 0.975 | 0.045 |
| | Female | 23 | 3.74 | 1.287 | 0.268 |
| Gives me added value (deeper, broader and more detailed) | Male | 474 | 4.19 | 0.877 | 0.040 |
| | Female | 23 | 4.00 | 1.168 | 0.243 |
| Connects me to a specific community (society) | Male | 473 | 3.25 | 1.220 | 0.056 |
| | Female | 23 | 3.30 | 1.608 | 0.335 |

Table 4.
Gender

issues not covered in traditional communication and added value, there are no significant differences ($p > 0.05$).

In need of connection to a particular community, it was found that there is a significant difference between different socioeconomic levels. $F(4,466) = 2,931$ and $p < 0.05$.

Follow-up analyses (Scheffe) show that there is a difference between those who receive a salary slightly below average (mean = 3.63 and SD = 1.159) and those who receive a salary slightly above average (mean = 3.02 and SD = 1.269) (see Table 7).

To examine whether there are average differences in the different needs that listening to podcasts satisfies between different religious levels, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. It was found that in the needs of knowledge, dealing with issues not covered in traditional communication, added value AND connection to a particular community there are no significant differences ($p > 0.05$).

In need of escaping from reality, it was found that there is a significant difference between different socioeconomic levels. $F(3, 489) = 5.306$ and $p < 0.05$.

A follow-up analysis (Scheffe) shows that there is a difference between secular (mean = 3.2 and SD = 1.204) and ultraorthodox (mean = 2.31 and SD = 1.352).

In addition, there is a difference between traditional (mean = 3.36 and SD = 1.143) and ultraorthodox (mean = 2.31 and SD = 1.352) (See Table 8).

Discussion

The study examines the demographics and uses and gratifications of sport podcasts consumers to understand whether they reflect widening societal gaps in a similar manner to former studies (Samuel-Azran *et al.*, 2019) or whether the sport genre invited more diverse demographics and more diverse uses. The analysis aims to contribute to analyses of the knowledge gap and digital divide theories with respect to the podcast platform. The demographic analysis illustrated that of the respondents, the great majority is males, secular and the dominant generation is millennials: 22–41 years old listeners (see Tables 1–8). This is not surprising since this generation is considered digital natives (Lissitsa and Laor, 2021). More than half of the participants reported that their wage is above average. More than 60% reported academic education (versus 47.7% in the general population). The results of our first research question reflect that the listeners demographic belongs to Israel's upper middle class, thus strengthening the notion that the podcast content-delivery platform, which analyzes and discusses events in the format of digital audio files, appeals mostly to upper class and privileged groups almost regardless of the genre.

| | Levene's test for equality of variances | | <i>t</i> test for equality of means | | | | | 95% confidence interval of the difference | | |
|---|---|-------|-------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---|--------|-------|
| | <i>F</i> | Sig. | <i>t</i> | df | Sig. (two- tailed) | Mean difference | Std. error difference | Lower | Upper | |
| Knowledge | Equal variances assumed | 2.250 | 0.134 | 0.626 | 490 | 0.531 | 0.124 | 0.198 | -0.265 | 0.513 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 0.477 | 23.198 | 0.638 | 0.124 | 0.260 | -0.413 | 0.661 |
| Escapism | Equal variances assumed | 5.800 | 0.016 | 2.169 | 490 | 0.031 | 0.560 | 0.258 | 0.053 | 1.067 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 1.729 | 23.326 | 0.097 | 0.560 | 0.324 | -0.109 | 1.229 |
| Deals with issues not covered in the traditional media | Equal variances assumed | 4.012 | 0.046 | 0.464 | 494 | 0.643 | 0.098 | 0.212 | -0.318 | 0.514 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 0.361 | 23.244 | 0.722 | 0.098 | 0.272 | -0.464 | 0.661 |
| Gives me add value | Equal variances assumed | 0.395 | 0.530 | 0.975 | 495 | 0.330 | 0.186 | 0.190 | -0.188 | 0.560 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 0.752 | 23.219 | 0.459 | 0.186 | 0.247 | -0.325 | 0.696 |
| Connect me to specific community | Equal variances assumed | 5.940 | 0.015 | -0.215 | 494 | 0.830 | -0.057 | 0.265 | -0.577 | 0.463 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -0.168 | 23.247 | 0.868 | -0.057 | 0.340 | -0.760 | 0.646 |

The elitist
nature of sport
podcast
listeners

Table 5.
Independent samples'
test for gender

| Descriptions | | N | Mean | Std. deviation | Std. error | 95% confidence interval for mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|--|--------------|-----|------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|
| | | | | | | Lower bound | Upper bound | | |
| Knowledge | High school | 132 | 3.88 | 0.883 | 0.077 | 3.73 | 4.03 | 1 | 5 |
| | Diploma/ | 52 | 3.73 | 0.972 | 0.135 | 3.46 | 4.00 | 2 | 5 |
| | Professional | | | | | | | | |
| | B.A. | 186 | 3.76 | 0.901 | 0.066 | 3.63 | 3.89 | 1 | 5 |
| | M.A. | 119 | 3.70 | 0.962 | 0.088 | 3.52 | 3.87 | 1 | 5 |
| | Total | 489 | 3.77 | 0.919 | 0.042 | 3.69 | 3.85 | 1 | 5 |
| Escapism | High school | 131 | 3.02 | 1.212 | 0.106 | 2.81 | 3.23 | 1 | 5 |
| | Diploma/ | 51 | 3.29 | 1.205 | 0.169 | 2.96 | 3.63 | 1 | 5 |
| | Professional | | | | | | | | |
| | B.A. | 186 | 3.26 | 1.152 | 0.084 | 3.09 | 3.42 | 1 | 5 |
| | M.A. | 121 | 3.07 | 1.283 | 0.117 | 2.84 | 3.30 | 1 | 5 |
| | Total | 489 | 3.15 | 1.209 | 0.055 | 3.04 | 3.26 | 1 | 5 |
| Deals with issues not covered in the traditional media | High school | 132 | 3.87 | 0.936 | 0.081 | 3.71 | 4.03 | 1 | 5 |
| | Diploma/ | 52 | 3.85 | 0.998 | 0.138 | 3.57 | 4.12 | 1 | 5 |
| | Professional | | | | | | | | |
| | B.A. | 188 | 3.86 | 0.949 | 0.069 | 3.73 | 4.00 | 1 | 5 |
| | M.A. | 121 | 3.75 | 1.075 | 0.098 | 3.56 | 3.95 | 1 | 5 |
| | Total | 493 | 3.84 | 0.981 | 0.044 | 3.75 | 3.92 | 1 | 5 |
| Gives me added value (deeper, broader and more detailed) | High school | 132 | 4.19 | 0.839 | 0.073 | 4.04 | 4.33 | 1 | 5 |
| | Diploma/ | 52 | 4.25 | 0.883 | 0.122 | 4.00 | 4.50 | 1 | 5 |
| | Professional | | | | | | | | |
| | B.A. | 189 | 4.23 | 0.848 | 0.062 | 4.11 | 4.35 | 1 | 5 |
| | M.A. | 121 | 4.07 | 0.976 | 0.089 | 3.90 | 4.25 | 1 | 5 |
| | Total | 494 | 4.18 | 0.882 | 0.040 | 4.10 | 4.26 | 1 | 5 |
| Connects me to a specific community (society) | High school | 132 | 3.09 | 1.310 | 0.114 | 2.87 | 3.32 | 1 | 5 |
| | Diploma/ | 51 | 3.55 | 1.238 | 0.173 | 3.20 | 3.90 | 1 | 5 |
| | Professional | | | | | | | | |
| | B.A. | 189 | 3.44 | 1.107 | 0.081 | 3.28 | 3.60 | 1 | 5 |
| | M.A. | 121 | 3.04 | 1.281 | 0.116 | 2.81 | 3.27 | 1 | 5 |
| | Total | 493 | 3.26 | 1.234 | 0.056 | 3.15 | 3.37 | 1 | 5 |

Table 6.
Education

Nevertheless, it is important to note that our analysis also indicates some nuances in the consumption of sport podcasts with respect to a prior analysis of the demographic listening to history podcasts (Samuel-Azran *et al.*, 2019). Our analysis indicates that the demographic of sport podcasts is more reflective of the general population in Israel in comparison to the audience of a popular history podcast analyzed in a former 2019 study in Israel, where the wage and education and the rate of high-tech workers reflected disproportional and highly elitist demographic (Samuel-Azran *et al.*, 2019). This could either be the result that in the last two years more people adopted the podcast medium but it also illustrates that the genre does play a role, even if secondary, as the genre as sport podcast did attract a bit less elitist audience than history podcast (Laor *et al.*, 2019).

Similar patterns emerge of elitist consumption and the increased knowledge gap in the analysis of the uses and gratification of the sport podcast consumption. Among the demographic examined, the main uses and gratification in general before breaking down to various groups was gaining added value from podcast content, followed by the similar category of consuming content not available in other platforms, indicating that information seeking was a major use of respondents, again highlighting the elitist nature of podcast consumers. The statistical analysis based on demographics revealed that the ultraorthodox

The elitist nature of sport podcast listeners

| Descriptions | | N | Mean | Std. deviation | Std. error | 95% confidence interval for mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|--|---------------------|-----|------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|
| | | | | | | Lower bound | Upper bound | | |
| Knowledge | Well below average | 89 | 3.88 | 0.850 | 0.090 | 3.70 | 4.06 | 1 | 5 |
| | A bit below average | 57 | 3.86 | 0.990 | 0.131 | 3.60 | 4.12 | 1 | 5 |
| | Average | 52 | 3.81 | 1.030 | 0.143 | 3.52 | 4.09 | 1 | 5 |
| | A bit above average | 125 | 3.70 | 0.942 | 0.084 | 3.54 | 3.87 | 1 | 5 |
| | A lot above average | 144 | 3.66 | 0.878 | 0.073 | 3.52 | 3.80 | 1 | 5 |
| | Total | 467 | 3.75 | 0.923 | 0.043 | 3.67 | 3.84 | 1 | 5 |
| Escapism | Well below average | 89 | 3.25 | 1.100 | 0.117 | 3.02 | 3.48 | 1 | 5 |
| | A bit below average | 57 | 3.19 | 1.187 | 0.157 | 2.88 | 3.51 | 1 | 5 |
| | Average | 52 | 3.02 | 1.276 | 0.177 | 2.66 | 3.37 | 1 | 5 |
| | A bit above average | 126 | 3.29 | 1.180 | 0.105 | 3.09 | 3.50 | 1 | 5 |
| | A lot above average | 144 | 3.11 | 1.207 | 0.101 | 2.91 | 3.31 | 1 | 5 |
| | Total | 468 | 3.19 | 1.184 | 0.055 | 3.08 | 3.29 | 1 | 5 |
| Deals with issues not covered in the traditional media | Well below average | 90 | 3.76 | 0.964 | 0.102 | 3.55 | 3.96 | 1 | 5 |
| | A bit below average | 57 | 3.96 | 0.906 | 0.120 | 3.72 | 4.21 | 1 | 5 |
| | Average | 53 | 3.98 | 0.930 | 0.128 | 3.72 | 4.24 | 1 | 5 |
| | A bit above average | 127 | 3.72 | 1.083 | 0.096 | 3.53 | 3.91 | 1 | 5 |
| | A lot above average | 145 | 3.87 | 0.974 | 0.081 | 3.71 | 4.03 | 1 | 5 |
| | Total | 472 | 3.83 | 0.991 | 0.046 | 3.74 | 3.92 | 1 | 5 |
| Gives me added value (deeper, broader and more detailed) | Well below average | 90 | 4.10 | 0.875 | 0.092 | 3.92 | 4.28 | 1 | 5 |
| | A bit below average | 57 | 4.33 | 0.764 | 0.101 | 4.13 | 4.54 | 3 | 5 |
| | Average | 53 | 4.26 | 0.836 | 0.115 | 4.03 | 4.49 | 2 | 5 |
| | A bit above average | 127 | 4.21 | 0.888 | 0.079 | 4.06 | 4.37 | 1 | 5 |
| | A lot above average | 145 | 4.12 | 0.968 | 0.080 | 3.96 | 4.28 | 1 | 5 |
| | Total | 472 | 4.18 | 0.891 | 0.041 | 4.10 | 4.26 | 1 | 5 |
| Connects me to a specific community (society) | Well below average | 89 | 3.40 | 1.259 | 0.133 | 3.14 | 3.67 | 1 | 5 |
| | A bit below average | 57 | 3.63 | 1.159 | 0.154 | 3.32 | 3.94 | 1 | 5 |
| | Average | 53 | 3.32 | 1.205 | 0.166 | 2.99 | 3.65 | 1 | 5 |
| | A bit above average | 127 | 3.02 | 1.269 | 0.113 | 2.80 | 3.25 | 1 | 5 |
| | A lot above average | 145 | 3.19 | 1.204 | 0.100 | 3.00 | 3.39 | 1 | 5 |
| | Total | 471 | 3.25 | 1.237 | 0.057 | 3.14 | 3.37 | 1 | 5 |

Table 7.
Socioeconomic

reported that escapism was significantly higher motivation than secular participants, indicating that less privileged groups within the podcast audience are less likely to consume podcasts for information acquisition but rather as a form of entertainment, thus

Table 8.
Religiosity

| Descriptions | N | Mean | Std. deviation | Std. error | 95% confidence interval for mean | | | Minimum | Maximum |
|--|-----|------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---|---------|---------|
| | | | | | Lower bound | Upper bound | | | |
| Knowledge | | | | | | | | | |
| Secular | 384 | 3.77 | 0.920 | 0.047 | 3.68 | 3.86 | 1 | 5 | |
| Traditional | 44 | 3.77 | 1.008 | 0.152 | 3.47 | 4.08 | 2 | 5 | |
| Religious | 49 | 3.69 | 0.962 | 0.137 | 3.42 | 3.97 | 2 | 5 | |
| Ultraorthodox | 16 | 4.06 | 0.772 | 0.193 | 3.65 | 4.47 | 3 | 5 | |
| Total | 493 | 3.77 | 0.927 | 0.042 | 3.69 | 3.85 | 1 | 5 | |
| Escapism | | | | | | | | | |
| Secular | 385 | 3.20 | 1.204 | 0.061 | 3.08 | 3.32 | 1 | 5 | |
| Traditional | 44 | 3.36 | 1.143 | 0.172 | 3.02 | 3.71 | 1 | 5 | |
| Religious | 48 | 2.73 | 1.125 | 0.162 | 2.40 | 3.06 | 1 | 5 | |
| Ultraorthodox | 16 | 2.31 | 1.352 | 0.338 | 1.59 | 3.03 | 1 | 5 | |
| Total | 493 | 3.14 | 1.211 | 0.055 | 3.03 | 3.25 | 1 | 5 | |
| Deals with issues not covered in the traditional media | | | | | | | | | |
| Secular | 389 | 3.84 | 0.971 | 0.049 | 3.74 | 3.93 | 1 | 5 | |
| Traditional | 44 | 4.05 | 1.120 | 0.169 | 3.71 | 4.39 | 1 | 5 | |
| Religious | 48 | 3.58 | 1.048 | 0.151 | 3.28 | 3.89 | 1 | 5 | |
| Ultraorthodox | 16 | 3.94 | 0.772 | 0.193 | 3.53 | 4.35 | 3 | 5 | |
| Total | 497 | 3.83 | 0.989 | 0.044 | 3.75 | 3.92 | 1 | 5 | |
| Gives me added value (deeper, broader and more detailed) | | | | | | | | | |
| Secular | 389 | 4.19 | 0.903 | 0.046 | 4.10 | 4.28 | 1 | 5 | |
| Traditional | 44 | 4.32 | 0.800 | 0.121 | 4.07 | 4.56 | 3 | 5 | |
| Religious | 49 | 3.94 | 0.899 | 0.128 | 3.68 | 4.20 | 1 | 5 | |
| Ultraorthodox | 16 | 4.38 | 0.719 | 0.180 | 3.99 | 4.76 | 3 | 5 | |
| Total | 498 | 4.18 | 0.892 | 0.040 | 4.10 | 4.26 | 1 | 5 | |
| Connects me to a specific community (society) | | | | | | | | | |
| Secular | 389 | 3.26 | 1.201 | 0.061 | 3.15 | 3.38 | 1 | 5 | |
| Traditional | 44 | 3.50 | 1.372 | 0.207 | 3.08 | 3.92 | 1 | 5 | |
| Religious | 48 | 3.02 | 1.329 | 0.192 | 2.64 | 3.41 | 1 | 5 | |
| Ultraorthodox | 16 | 2.94 | 1.389 | 0.347 | 2.20 | 3.68 | 1 | 5 | |
| Total | 497 | 3.25 | 1.237 | 0.056 | 3.14 | 3.36 | 1 | 5 | |

strengthening the notion revealed in the demographic analysis regarding an increased knowledge gap and digital divide reflected from the data.

For online information studies and podcast studies in particular, the findings indicate that demographic and uses and gratifications of sport podcasts was more heavily related to the elitist nature of the podcast platform rather than the non-elitist nature of sport contents' genre. The implications of our study mean that the expansion of podcasts to various genres (Antunes and Salaverría, 2020) is less likely to lead to access of diverse demographic with similar uses but that the proactive act of tuning in to listen to information-based contents in various genres via podcasts still attracts more privileged groups who use the platform to further increase their knowledge. At the same time, since the sport genre analysis did indicate less elitist trends in comparison than a former study on the consumption of a history podcast in Israel (Samuel-Azran *et al.*, 2019), it is possible that future studies which will examine demographic and uses and gratifications of even more accessible content, such as comedy that recent surveys identified as the genre most appealing to audiences (Omnicores, 2022), will discover that the knowledge gaps and digital divides are actually narrowing. In this regard, it is interesting to note our findings regarding the case of ultraorthodox listening to sport podcasts that provides an interesting and new insight regarding this under-explored demographic. While the findings regarding their interest in secular content is surprising, the findings regarding their use of sport podcasts for escapism is not entirely surprising as it is possible that some of the podcast listeners were actually breaching the order of not being exposed to such contents and were avoiding adherence to so-called kosher Internet content, thus by definition depicting their podcasts tuning as escapism. It may also be explained by the fact that the podcast is a development of the radio medium, which is for the ultraorthodox population a prominent medium, alongside the written press (and as opposed to visual mediums, such as TV). These findings are consistent with similar findings regarding the consumption of Internet radio among the ultraorthodox society, according to which the ultraorthodox population is motivated to consume non-kosher Internet radio products (Laor *et al.*, 2019).

For knowledge gap studies, the analysis highlights podcast as one of the platforms that mostly contribute to knowledge gaps. Whereas some platforms, most notably TV, proved as leveling and even decreasing the knowledge gaps due to their palatable content and easy access (Eveland and Scheufele, 2000; Jerit *et al.*, 2006), it appears that podcasts increase the gaps regardless of genre. This trend is also reflected in recent surveys that identify that 68% of podcast listeners have a postgraduate degree (Omnicores, 2022). One possible explanation could simply be that whereas TV is centered around colors, simplification and extravaganza (Postman, 2005), podcasts by definition are mostly focused around *knowledge*, even if it is served in a manner that aims to make it palatable. Thus, the essence is still to enrich the audiences with new insights that attract more elitist demographics interested in learning about various subjects.

For digital divide studies, the findings fit within the notion of the second-level digital divide that sees that demographic factors such as level of education, level of skill, profession and ethnicity (e.g. Helsper, 2012; Blank and Groselj, 2014). The second-level digital divide sees that whereas most demographic have some kind of access to web services in the 21st century, different demographic makes different use of this access, and those who are already advantageous use the web to further this advantage. Thus, for example, studies identify that within the same elderly group those who are already privileged will use the web in a manner that will allow them to further increase the gap from their peers (Lüders and Gjevjon, 2017). In the same manner, our analysis identified that those who are more educated and earn higher wages from all cohorts will be more likely to tune in and listen to podcasts and thus increase the gaps from their peers within the same group.

Future studies should address the issue of podcast listening across genres using a qualitative method, specifically interviews, to better understand these findings, specifically regarding the different uses and gratifications among the different groups. Specifically, in light of a recent survey that highlighted humor as the genre that most people find appealing (Omnicores, 2022), future studies should examine whether humor related podcasts, which might be more gender-neutral than the sport realm examined in this study, reflect wider demographic and more similar uses and gratifications among the varied groups. In addition, other studies should conduct comparative cross-country and cross-culture analyses to understand the impact of these on podcast consumption.

Conclusion

The study examines the demographic and uses and gratifications of Israel's three main sport podcasts to examine whether they reflect former studies that highlighted podcast as an elitist platform (Samuel-Azran *et al.*, 2019; Newman and Gallo, 2019), or alternatively, whether the sports genre, which appeals to all population groups and thus reflects the microcosmos of society (Galily, 2014), invited more diverse demographic and uses among podcast consumers. In other words, the study examined whether the podcast demographic and uses and gratification depend on the platform or the genre. The study found that the main demographic of sport podcast listeners is composed of upper middle-class groups, strengthening the notion found in a previous study that also revealed that secular, young, high-paid educated people are the main podcast consumers demographic (Samuel Azran *et al.*, 2019). The studies illustrate that the spread and expansion of podcast consumption stems from the characteristics of the podcast realm, where users proactively download and listen to material that deepens their knowledge. Thus, from a theoretical perspective, the study strengthens the knowledge gap theory and digital divide notions. Still, optimistically, the study also highlight that the more the sport content platform attracted the more diverse demographic groups in comparison to history podcast (Samuel Azran *et al.*, 2019), indicating the future studies might reveal that more groups benefit from podcast content as it reaches late adopters (Rogers and Beal, 1957) or, alternatively, as it produces content in a more palatable manner across content genres, such as humor.

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Corresponding author

Yair Galily can be contacted at: ygality@runi.ac.il

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