The Digital World by Storm: Fashion Podcasts in Higher Education

Changhyun (Lyon) Nam, Florida State University
Eulanda Sanders, Iowa State University

Keywords. podcast, fashion, higher education, pedagogy, learning experience, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), motivation

Introduction

The podcast industry is experiencing a significant boom, presenting lucrative opportunities for both podcasters and marketers who effectively connect with their target audiences. With more than 464 million podcast listeners worldwide, this number is projected to increase to 504.9 million by the near future, with the United States alone boasting over 100 million listeners by 2024 (Backlinko Team, 2024; Götting, 2024). Podcasts are digital audio segments available for streaming or download on-demand. They communicate various topics, from trending news to niche interests within various subcultures, such as ethnic or pop culture (Yuen, 2024). Furthermore, podcasts come in multiple formats, including interviews, in-studio conversations, or even video podcasts and platforms (i.e., Apple Podcasts, iHeartRadio, Spotify, and YouTube), which offer a wide array of subscription options to cater to diverse listener preferences. The immersive nature of podcasts has contributed to the rise of mobile apps dedicated to their consumption. However, the fashion podcast market has been largely untapped.

An educational podcast commonly refers to a podcast created or employed for educational objectives, encompassing formal and informal learning contexts (Drew, 2017). For example, educational podcasts offer a dynamic and accessible platform for learners to enhance their understanding of complex topics, catering to diverse learning styles and preferences and facilitating engagement across various locations and professions (Indahsari, 2020; Nicolaou et al., 2021; Shaw& McNamara, 2021). Although podcasts have increased in popularity in various courses (e.g., English, Nursing, Social Work and Library Information Science, Business, etc.) as an effective teaching and learning tool (Gunderson & Cumming, 2023), only a few studies address the podcasts related to fashion in higher education (Fernandes & Ricardo, 2021; Winge & Embry, 2013). Fashion podcasts offer valuable insights ranging from the history of fashion to recent trends, styles, and brands, featuring contributions from designers, stylists, models, and celebrities (The Glossary Team, 2024). They serve as valuable resources for understanding and following the rapid changes in the fashion industry in both audio and video formats.

Theoretical framework. This study utilizes a Universal Design for Learning framework (UDL, Roberts et al., 2011) and McNamara and Min's (2024) educational podcast motivation (EPM) to develop a proposed conceptual framework. UDL holds the potential to provide an inclusive solution and facilitate the design and implementation of accessible lessons and assessments for learners (Meyer et al., 2024). The EPM demonstrates strong psychometric properties for the scales related to motivations to listen to educational podcasts among educators (McNamara & Min, 2024). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the motivational factors (information

gathering, professional encouragement, flexibility in use, entertainment, social interaction) that enhance listeners' intentions toward listening to fashion educational podcasts. Drawing from the literature review, three research questions (RQs) have been proposed:

RQ1: How do educators utilize fashion podcasts in their courses?

RQ2: What motivations do students engage in listening/watching fashion podcasts as a learning tool?

RQ3: What are the impacts of using fashion podcasts in teaching and learning related to fashion, retail merchandising, and product development courses?

Methods and data analysis

As mixed research, an online survey questionnaire will be conducted with educators and college students who take courses related to fashion, retail merchandising, and product development in colleges and universities in the United States. The survey questionnaire consists of three sections: (a) demographic questions, (b) open-ended questions, and (c) multiple-item measurements adapted and modified from previous research (McNamara & Min, 2024; Yuen et al., 2021). Information gathering (six items), professional encouragement (four items), flexibility in use (four items), entertainment (five items), social interaction (six items), and behavioral intention (four items) using a 7-point Likert scale. SPSS 29 and Mplus 9 software will be used for the data analyses. SEM will be performed to test the hypothesized paths in the proposed conceptual framework.

Significance

The findings of this study will demonstrate the importance of considering the educational motivation of fashion podcasts among information gathering, professional encouragement, flexibility in use, entertainment, social interaction, and behavioral intention. This study will clarify that educators and professional podcasters consider students' motivation along with these factors. This assures that fashion podcasts need to be accepted by educators to meet students' needs, expectations, and perceptions as course recourses as educational podcasts continue to increase in popularity (Pattier, 2021). The significance of this study lies in its potential to advance educational practices, foster inclusivity, and offer valuable insights for educators and podcast industry stakeholders in fashion education and beyond. Consequently, these results will be a call to action for higher education to adopt the proposed conceptual framework for course content delivery and use fashion podcasting as a strategy well-aligned with motivation, engagement, representation, and action and expression in their courses. Overall, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of fashion podcasts in higher education and emphasizes their potential to enhance student learning experience in fashion-related disciplines.

References

Backlinko Team (2024, January 29). 13 Podcast statistics you need to know. Backlinko. https://backlinko.com/podcast-stats

Drew, C. (2017). Educational podcasts: A genre analysis. *E-learning and Digital Media*, *14*(4), 201-211.

Fernandes, C., & Ricardo, R. (2021). Podcasts are fashionable, too: the use of podcasting in fashion communication. *Comunicação Pública*, *16*(31). 1-21.

Götting M. C. (2024, March 18). U.S. podcasting industry- statistics & facts, Statista. https://www.statista.com/topics/3170/podcasting/#topicOverview

Gunderson, J. L., & Cumming, T. M. (2023). Podcasting in higher education as a component of Universal Design for Learning: A systematic review of the literature. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, *60*(4), 591-601.

Indahsari, D. (2020). Using podcast for EFL students in language learning. *Journal of English Educators Society, 5*(2), 103-108.

McNamara, S. W., & Min, S. D. (2024). Understanding why educational professionals engage with podcasts: Educational Podcasts Motivational Scale development and validation. *British Journal of Educational Technology*. 1-19.

Meyer, A., Rose, D. H., & Gordon, D. (2014). Universal design for learning: Theory and practice. CAST Professional Publishing.

Nicolaou, C., Matsiola, M., Karypidou, C., Podara, A., Kotsakis, R., & Kalliris, G. (2021). Media studies, audiovisual media communications, and generations: The case of budding journalists in radio courses in Greece. *Journalism and Media, 2*(2), 155–192.

Pattier, D. (2021). Science on Youtube: successful edutubers. *Techno Review. International Technology, Science and Society Review/Revista Internacional de Tecnología, Ciencia y Sociedad*, *10*(1), 1-15.

Shaw, M., & McNamara, S. (2021). I can just get all the bits that I need: Practitioners use of open-access sport science podcasts. *Frontiers in Education, Section Digital Learning Innovations, 6*, 1–10.

Roberts, K. D., Park, H. J., Brown, S., & Cook, B. (2011). Universal design for instruction in postsecondary education: A systematic review of empirically based articles. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, 24*(1), 5-15.

The Glossary Team (2024). The 23 best fashion podcasts to download now for an inside look at the fashion world, *The Glossary*. https://theglossarymagazine.com/fashion/best-fashion-podcasts/

Winge, T. M., & Embry, M. C. (2013). Fashion design podcast initiative: Emerging technologies and fashion design teaching strategies. *Increasing Student Engagement and Retention Using Mobile Applications: Smartphones, Skype and Texting Technologies*, 145-174.

Yuen M. (2024 March 18). Guide to podcast industry: Top platforms, key audience stats, and ad trends, EMarketer. https://www.emarketer.com/insights/the-podcast-industry-report-statistics/

Yuen, K. F., Cao, Y., Bai, X., & Wang, X. (2021). The psychology of cruise service usage post COVID-19: Health management and policy implications. *Marine Policy, 130*, 104586.