

Digital Da'wah through YouTube Podcasts: Shaping Social Awareness among Adolescents in Deli Serdang, North Sumatera

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Abstract

Podcasts have emerged as a flexible audio-visual medium that surpasses conventional radio through their play-on-demand feature, allowing audiences—particularly the Millennial and Gen Z cohorts—to consume content according to their own preferences and pace. Among adolescent communities such as those in Paya Geli Village, this flexibility is especially significant, as teenagers are known for their short attention spans and constant pursuit of novel forms of entertainment and information. Despite the proliferation of studies on social media's influence on adolescent behavior, limited scholarly attention has been paid to how personal narrative-based YouTube podcasts—such as the *Gritte Agatha Podcast*, which addresses themes of resilience, family relationships, and everyday social struggles—function as a medium for cultivating adolescent self-awareness. This gap is particularly notable given the podcast's popularity and its potential pedagogical value in shaping character and social consciousness among youth, an area that remains underexplored in Indonesian communication studies. This study addresses that gap by examining the role of the *Gritte Agatha* YouTube podcast in enhancing adolescent awareness in Paya Geli Village, investigating both the extent to which the podcast contributes to increasing adolescent awareness and the level of adolescent interest in and engagement with its content. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, this research aims to provide an in-depth account of these phenomena, identifying patterns and developments that allow for meaningful comparison and evaluation. The findings reveal that the *Gritte Agatha* podcast exerts a substantial influence on adolescent audiences, offering insights and vicarious experiences that viewers actively internalize and apply in their daily lives. These results underscore the novelty of positioning digital podcasting as an informal yet impactful medium of adolescent moral and social education—an area meriting further empirical attention in dakwah and communication research.

Keywords

YouTube podcast, adolescent awareness, self-awareness, digital media, dakwah communication

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital communication technology has fundamentally transformed the way individuals communicate, access information, and construct knowledge in contemporary society. The development of the internet, mobile devices, and digital platforms has shifted communication from conventional one-way interactions into participatory, interactive, and on-demand communication processes. Digital media no longer function merely as channels for entertainment but have become



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strategic instruments for education, socialization, opinion formation, and behavioral change across different demographic groups, particularly adolescents, who represent the largest segment of digital media users in Indonesia (Richard West, 2018). This transformation has encouraged communication scholars to reconsider the role of digital media as persuasive communication channels capable of influencing cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions simultaneously. Indonesia has experienced remarkable growth in internet penetration during the last decade. The increasing accessibility of smartphones and affordable internet services has enabled adolescents to spend substantial amounts of time accessing digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Spotify, and various podcast applications (Choirin et al., 2024). Rather than relying solely on conventional educational institutions, adolescents increasingly obtain knowledge, motivation, and life experiences from digital media. This phenomenon indicates that social media platforms have evolved into informal learning environments where communication occurs continuously through audiovisual content, interpersonal interaction, and online communities (Livingstone, 2022; Valkenburg, 2022b). Consequently, communication researchers have emphasized that digital media literacy has become one of the essential competencies required for adolescents living in the digital era.

Among various forms of digital communication, podcasts have emerged as one of the fastest-growing communication media worldwide. Originally developed as audio-based broadcasting programs, podcasts have evolved into multimedia communication platforms distributed through YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and other digital services. Unlike traditional radio broadcasting, podcasts provide audiences with flexibility to access content anytime and anywhere according to their individual preferences. The availability of on-demand communication enables audiences to pause, replay, and selectively consume content based on personal interests, making podcasts particularly attractive to younger generations (McQuail, 2022). This flexibility has significantly contributed to the rapid expansion of podcast audiences in Indonesia. The integration of podcasts with YouTube has further strengthened their popularity by combining visual communication, verbal interaction, and storytelling within a single communication platform. Educational podcasts discussing mental health, family relationships, entrepreneurship, education, social issues, and self-development have gained considerable attention among adolescents because they present authentic experiences using conversational language that is easy to understand (Anwar et al., 2025). Instead of delivering formal lectures, podcast hosts encourage dialogue, empathy, and personal reflection through interactive interviews, enabling audiences to connect emotionally with speakers and internalize communication messages more effectively (Littlejohn, 2009).

One of the most influential podcast creators in Indonesia is Gritte Agatha through her YouTube podcast channel. Unlike many entertainment-oriented digital creators, Gritte Agatha consistently presents discussions concerning adolescent life, educational motivation, family communication, mental health, social problems, and inspirational life experiences. (Grack Nelson, A., Tsakakis, E., & Christian Ronning, 2026) Her communication style is characterized by openness, empathy, and conversational interviewing techniques that encourage guests to share authentic stories regarding personal struggles and achievements. Such communication patterns create opportunities for audiences to reflect upon their own experiences while simultaneously developing empathy toward others. Previous studies have shown that persuasive storytelling delivered through digital media has considerable potential to influence attitudes and behavioral intentions among adolescent audiences ((Putri, Puspitasari, 2021). Adolescence represents a developmental stage characterized by rapid psychological, emotional, social, and cognitive changes. During this period, adolescents actively search for personal identity while

simultaneously facing various developmental challenges originating from family environments, peer groups, educational institutions, and digital media exposure. The increasing intensity of social media use has generated both opportunities and risks. On one hand, digital media provide adolescents with broader educational resources, motivational content, and opportunities for self-development. On the other hand, uncontrolled media exposure may contribute to cyberbullying, misinformation, addictive behaviors, declining social interaction, and risky lifestyles (Livingstone, 2022; UNESCO, 2021). Therefore, understanding how educational digital media influence adolescent awareness has become an increasingly important research agenda within communication studies.

The importance of this issue becomes more apparent in local community settings where adolescents experience diverse social problems. Paya Geli Village, located in Sunggal District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra, represents one such community where adolescents actively access YouTube while simultaneously facing challenges related to school dropout, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, and limited parental supervision. Preliminary observations indicate that adolescents frequently watch educational podcast content discussing life experiences, educational motivation, family relationships, and social responsibility. However, empirical evidence regarding how such podcast consumption contributes to adolescent awareness within this community remains limited. This condition provides an important opportunity to examine podcasts as persuasive communication media capable of encouraging positive behavioral change (Chen, C., & Lin, 2024). Previous studies have investigated podcasts from various perspectives. Research has generally focused on podcasts as educational media, language-learning platforms, digital entertainment, marketing communication tools, and interpersonal communication channels. Other studies have examined Gritte Agatha's interviewing techniques, communication style, audience engagement, and rhetorical strategies in building online interaction (Putri, Puspitasari, 2021). Although these studies provide valuable contributions to digital communication literature, most have concentrated on media characteristics rather than exploring the broader social implications of podcast consumption among adolescents within rural communities.

Furthermore, previous scholarship has predominantly employed quantitative approaches emphasizing audience satisfaction, media usage patterns, and communication effectiveness (Lim, W. M., Rasul, T., Kumar, S., Ala, M., & Sharma, 2022). Comparatively fewer qualitative studies have explored adolescents' lived experiences after consuming educational podcast content, particularly regarding how communication messages are interpreted, internalized, and translated into everyday behavioral awareness. Consequently, empirical understanding of podcasts as persuasive communication media capable of fostering self-awareness and character development remains relatively limited, especially within Indonesian rural contexts (Hidayat, M., & Siregar, 2024). This limitation constitutes the primary research gap addressed by the present study. Unlike previous investigations that emphasize media consumption behavior or communication effectiveness, this research explores adolescents' subjective interpretations regarding educational podcast content and examines how such interpretations contribute to awareness development within their everyday social environments. By involving adolescents, parents, and community leaders simultaneously, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of podcast communication from multiple social perspectives. (Alhabash, S., & Ma, 2022)

The novelty of this study lies in integrating Social Learning Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Parasocial Interaction Theory, and New Media Theory within a qualitative framework to explain how educational podcasts influence adolescents' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral

awareness simultaneously. (Bacon, K. B., Lohmeyer, B. A., & Riggs, 2026). Moreover, this research contributes empirical evidence from a rural Indonesian community, an area that remains underrepresented in previous communication research concerning digital media and podcast consumption (Ehrenreich, S. E., George, M. J., Burnell, K., & Underwood, 2021). Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich communication scholarship by demonstrating that educational podcasts function not merely as entertainment or information sources but also as persuasive communication media capable of facilitating reflective learning, self-awareness, and positive behavioral transformation. Practically, the findings may provide recommendations for educators, parents, community organizations, policymakers, and digital content creators regarding the effective utilization of educational podcasts as complementary communication tools for adolescent character development and digital literacy enhancement. Based on the background described above, this study addresses three research questions: (1) How does Gritte Agatha's YouTube Podcast contribute to increasing adolescent awareness among teenagers in Paya Geli Village, Sunggal District? (2) To what extent are adolescents interested in consuming Gritte Agatha's YouTube podcast content? (3) What positive and negative impacts do adolescents perceive after watching Gritte Agatha's YouTube Podcast? Answering these questions is expected to contribute to the growing body of communication research concerning digital media, persuasive communication, and adolescent development within contemporary Indonesian society.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design **to explore the role of Gritte Agatha's YouTube Podcast** in increasing adolescents' awareness in Paya Geli Village, Sunggal District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia. A qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to obtain an in-depth understanding of adolescents' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations after consuming educational podcast content. Rather than measuring causal relationships quantitatively, qualitative research allows researchers to investigate the meaning participants assign to communication messages and how these meanings influence their attitudes and behaviors (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, 2018). The study adopted a constructivist paradigm, assuming that social reality is constructed through interaction, communication, and individual experience. Adolescents' awareness is therefore understood as a socially constructed phenomenon influenced by family communication, peer interaction, educational experiences, and exposure to digital media. This paradigm enables researchers to interpret participants' perspectives within their natural social contexts rather than imposing predetermined categories.

The research was conducted in Paya Geli Village, Sunggal District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The selection of this location was based on purposive considerations. First, adolescents in Paya Geli Village actively utilize digital media, particularly YouTube, as one of their primary sources of information and entertainment. Second, the village continues to face various adolescent social problems, including school dropout, juvenile delinquency, alcohol consumption, smoking, and drug abuse. Third, local community leaders have expressed concerns regarding adolescent character development and the influence of digital media on youth behavior. (Bandura, 2021) These conditions make Paya Geli Village an appropriate setting for investigating how educational podcast content contributes to adolescent awareness within a real social environment.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly employed in qualitative research to identify information-rich participants capable of

providing relevant experiences concerning the research phenomenon (Boulianne, 2023). Twelve participants were involved in this study, consisting of: Eight adolescents aged between 14 and 16 years who regularly watched Gritte Agatha's YouTube Podcast; Three parents or community members who directly observed adolescents' media consumption behavior; One Village Head who served as a key informant representing the perspective of local government and community leadership. (S Sari, N., & Hidayat, 2023). The inclusion criteria required participants to: Reside in Paya Geli Village, Actively access YouTube or other digital media, have watched Gritte Agatha's podcast more than once, be willing to participate voluntarily, be capable of explaining experiences related to podcast consumption and adolescent behavior. The diversity of participants enabled the researcher to compare perspectives among adolescents, parents, and community leaders, thereby enriching data interpretation.

Data collection was conducted from January to March 2024 using three complementary techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The combination of these techniques strengthened the credibility of the findings through methodological triangulation. (Moreno, M. A., & Salerno, 2026). Semi-structured interviews constituted the primary method of data collection. An interview guide was developed based on the research questions while allowing participants sufficient flexibility to elaborate on their experiences. Interview questions explored several topics, including: adolescents' motivations for watching Gritte Agatha's podcast; perceptions of educational messages presented in the podcast; behavioral changes after watching podcast episodes; family communication related to digital media; perceived positive and negative impacts of podcast consumption. (Prasetyo, B., & Kusuma, 2024). Each interview lasted approximately 30–60 minutes, was conducted face-to-face, audio-recorded with participants' consent, and subsequently transcribed verbatim for analysis. Non-participant observation was employed to obtain contextual information regarding adolescents' daily activities, communication patterns, and media consumption behavior within the village environment (Putri, 2022).

Field observations focused on: adolescents' interactions with peers; use of smartphones and digital media; educational activities; community environments supporting adolescent development. Observation notes complemented interview findings and facilitated data triangulation (Rahmawati, D., & Pratama, 2024). Documentation served as supporting evidence throughout the research process. Documents included: interview recordings; field notes; photographs of research activities; village demographic data; relevant policy documents; publicly available information concerning Gritte Agatha's YouTube Podcast. Documentation enhanced the completeness and credibility of qualitative findings (Stephani, N., Rachmawaty, M., & Dyanasari, 2021). In qualitative research, the researcher served as the primary research instrument, responsible for planning, collecting, interpreting, and analyzing the data. To support consistency during fieldwork, several additional instruments were utilized: semi-structured interview guidelines; observation sheets; field notebooks; digital voice recorder; camera for documentation; laptop equipped with Microsoft Word for transcription and qualitative coding.

The interview guide was developed based on the conceptual framework integrating New Media Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Parasocial Interaction Theory (Sutrisno, A., & Wahyuni, 2022). Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), consisting of four interrelated stages. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary evidence were compiled into a qualitative database. Data collection and preliminary analysis occurred simultaneously throughout the fieldwork process (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, 2020). Researchers carefully reviewed all transcripts to identify

meaningful statements relevant to the research objectives. Similar responses were coded and categorized into preliminary themes concerning: educational podcast consumption; adolescent awareness; behavioral change; family communication; digital literacy; social interaction. Irrelevant information unrelated to the research objectives was excluded during this stage (elp, N. C., Concha Paredes, G., Ea, L., McCollough, K., Weber, L., & Gibson, 2026).

The coded data were organized into thematic matrices and narrative descriptions to facilitate comparison among participants. Four dominant themes emerged: Podcasts as alternative learning resources; Self-awareness through inspirational life stories; Motivation for positive behavioral change; Podcasts as persuasive digital communication media (Putri, 2022). These themes subsequently formed the basis for interpreting the research findings (Valkenburg, 2022a). The final stage involved interpreting relationships among themes while comparing empirical findings with relevant communication theories. Interpretations were continuously verified by comparing interview transcripts, observation records, and documentary evidence until analytical consistency and data saturation were achieved. To ensure methodological rigor, this study applied the four trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was established through prolonged engagement with participants, repeated interviews when necessary, member checking, and triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentation (Yusuf, M., & Hidayah, 2023). Transferability was enhanced by providing detailed descriptions of the research setting, participant characteristics, and research procedures, enabling readers to evaluate the applicability of findings in similar contexts. Dependability was ensured through systematic documentation of research procedures, interview protocols, coding processes, analytical decisions, and field notes, thereby allowing future researchers to understand the research process comprehensively. Confirmability was strengthened by maintaining an audit trail consisting of interview transcripts, observation records, coding documents, and reflective notes to ensure that interpretations were grounded in empirical evidence rather than researcher bias (Zhang, Y., & Leung, 2022).

Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, all participants received explanations regarding the objectives of the study, research procedures, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage without negative consequences. Written or verbal informed consent was obtained from all participants before interviews commenced. Because adolescent participants were involved, parental permission was also obtained where appropriate. Participants' identities were protected through the use of pseudonyms or participant codes in interview transcripts and research reports. All research data were stored securely and used exclusively for academic purposes. The study ensured that participants experienced no physical, psychological, or social harm during their involvement in the research (Zhou, R., & Chen, 2023).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of interview transcripts, field observations, and supporting documentation identified four major themes regarding the role of Gritte Agatha's YouTube Podcast in enhancing adolescent awareness in Paya Geli Village, Sunggal District. These themes include: (1) podcasts as alternative learning resources; (2) self-awareness through inspirational life stories; (3) motivation for positive behavioral change; and (4) podcasts as persuasive digital communication media. Each theme reflects adolescents' experiences in interpreting educational podcast content and illustrates how digital communication contributes to cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development.

3.1 Podcasts as Alternative Learning Resources

Interview findings reveal that adolescents perceive Gritte Agatha's YouTube Podcast not merely as entertainment but also as an important source of informal learning. Participants consistently stated that podcast episodes provide practical knowledge about education, mental health, family relationships, social interaction, entrepreneurship, and life motivation.

One participant explained:

"Saya sering menonton podcast Gritte Agatha karena banyak pelajaran hidup yang tidak saya dapatkan di sekolah. Saya belajar bagaimana orang lain berjuang menghadapi masalah dan tetap semangat menjalani kehidupan." (I often watch Gritte Agatha's podcast because there are a lot of life lessons I didn't get in school. I learn how other people struggle with problems and still stay enthusiastic about life). (Participant A, 15 years)

Another participant stated:

"Podcast membuat saya sadar bahwa banyak orang sukses memulai dari kesulitan. Hal itu membuat saya lebih menghargai pendidikan." (The podcast made me realize that many successful people started out facing hardships. That has made me appreciate education even more) (Participant B, 16 years)

Field observations indicated that most adolescent participants accessed podcast content through smartphones after school or during leisure time. Several participants reported watching the same episode repeatedly because they considered the discussions relevant to their daily experiences. These findings indicate that adolescents actively utilize podcasts to satisfy cognitive needs, particularly the need for information and self-development. This supports Uses and Gratifications Theory, which argues that audiences intentionally select media capable of fulfilling informational and psychological needs. Rather than functioning as passive media consumers, adolescents actively evaluate podcast content based on perceived usefulness for solving personal problems and improving knowledge. The findings are consistent with previous studies reporting that Indonesian adolescents increasingly regard podcasts as flexible learning media due to their conversational style and accessibility. Educational podcasts provide an informal communication environment where audiences are encouraged to learn voluntarily without the rigid structure of formal education.

3.2 Self-Awareness Through Inspirational Life Stories

A second major finding concerns the influence of inspirational narratives presented by podcast guests. Participants explained that authentic stories regarding poverty, illness, family conflict, educational struggles, and personal achievement encouraged them to reflect upon their own lives.

One participant stated:

"Saya paling ingat cerita seorang pemulung yang tetap sekolah walaupun hidupnya sulit. Setelah menonton podcast itu saya merasa harus lebih bersyukur dan lebih semangat belajar." (What I remember most is the story of a trash collector who kept going to school even though life was hard for him. After listening to that podcast, I felt I needed to be more grateful and more motivated to study.) (Participant C)

Another participant commented:

"Saya sering membandingkan kehidupan saya dengan narasumber di podcast. Saya jadi berpikir bahwa masalah saya tidak sebesar yang saya bayangkan." (I often compare my life to that of the guests on the podcast. It makes me realize that my problems aren't as big as I thought they were) (Participant D)

These narratives generated emotional engagement among participants, encouraging empathy and

self-reflection. Adolescents reported becoming more aware of their responsibilities toward parents, education, and future aspirations after watching inspirational episodes. This finding strongly supports Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes observational learning through exposure to role models. Participants observed the experiences of podcast guests, interpreted the consequences of positive and negative behaviors, and mentally simulated these experiences within their own lives.

Furthermore, emotional attachment to podcast speakers reflects the concept of Parasocial Interaction, whereby audiences develop psychological closeness with media personalities despite having no direct interpersonal relationship. Because adolescents perceived Gritte Agatha as a trustworthy and empathetic communicator, educational messages became easier to accept and internalize. Unlike traditional classroom instruction, podcasts facilitate emotional learning through storytelling. Participants indicated that authentic personal experiences were more persuasive than abstract advice because they illustrated real-life consequences of individual decisions.

3.3 Motivation for Positive Behavioral Change

The third theme demonstrates that podcast consumption contributed to gradual behavioral changes among adolescents. Although participants did not claim that podcasts immediately transformed their behavior, they consistently reported increased motivation to improve themselves after regularly watching educational episodes.

One participant stated:

"Sekarang saya lebih berhati-hati memilih teman karena banyak cerita di podcast tentang pengaruh lingkungan." (Now I'm more careful about choosing friends because there are so many stories on podcasts about the influence of one's environment) (Participant E)

Another participant explained:

"Saya lebih semangat belajar setelah melihat perjuangan orang-orang yang tetap sekolah walaupun hidup mereka susah." (I'm more motivated to study after seeing the struggles of people who keep going to school even though their lives are difficult) (Participant F)

Parents interviewed during this study also observed several positive changes.

One parent commented:

"Anak saya sekarang lebih sering berdiskusi tentang masa depan dan pendidikan setelah sering menonton podcast." (My child now talks more often about the future and education after listening to podcasts regularly.) (Parent 1)

The Village Head similarly acknowledged that educational media may complement existing community programs addressing adolescent problems.

According to the Village Head:

"Remaja membutuhkan contoh nyata. Podcast seperti ini dapat menjadi media yang membantu membangun kesadaran mereka, tetapi tetap harus didampingi keluarga." (Teens need real-life examples. Podcasts like this can be a helpful tool for raising their awareness, but they should still be guided by their families.)

The convergence of adolescent, parental, and community perspectives suggests that educational podcasts function as complementary communication tools capable of reinforcing positive social values. Nevertheless, participants emphasized that podcast influence depends upon individual willingness to change. Several adolescents admitted that media messages alone are insufficient without parental guidance, supportive peer environments, and educational reinforcement. These findings demonstrate that digital communication should be understood as one component within a broader communication

ecosystem involving families, schools, and communities.

3.4 Podcasts as Persuasive Digital Communication Media

Participants consistently highlighted that Gritte Agatha's communication style represented one of the primary reasons for repeatedly watching the podcast.

One participant explained:

"Cara Gritte bertanya sangat santai sehingga narasumber mau bercerita secara jujur. Saya jadi merasa seperti ikut berbicara." (Gritte's way of asking questions is so relaxed that the interviewee feels comfortable speaking honestly. It made me feel like I was part of the conversation) (Participant G)

Another participant stated:

"Podcast tidak menggurui. Justru membuat kita berpikir sendiri." (Podcasts aren't preachy. Instead, they make us think for ourselves.) (Participant H)

Field observations confirmed that adolescents preferred podcast episodes emphasizing dialogue rather than formal lectures. The findings suggest that persuasive communication within podcasts emerges through authenticity, empathy, storytelling, and interpersonal interaction rather than direct persuasion. From the perspective of New Media Theory, podcasts illustrate how digital communication enables participatory learning. Audiences voluntarily access content, engage emotionally with discussions, and actively construct meaning from communication experiences. The combination of audiovisual communication, narrative storytelling, and conversational interviewing enhances message credibility and audience engagement. Consequently, podcasts become persuasive communication channels capable of encouraging reflective thinking without imposing behavioral instructions.

3.5 Positive and Negative Impacts of Podcast Consumption

Although participants generally perceived podcasts positively, interviews also identified several potential risks associated with digital media consumption.

Positive impacts included:

1. increased learning motivation;
2. stronger appreciation for parents;
3. improved self-confidence;
4. greater awareness of educational opportunities;
5. enhanced empathy toward others;
6. avoidance of risky behaviors.

However, adolescents also recognized several challenges.

One participant explained:

"Kalau terlalu lama menonton YouTube juga bisa membuat lupa waktu." (If you spend too much time watching YouTube, you might lose track of time)

Another participant added:

"Tidak semua podcast memberikan informasi yang benar sehingga kita harus memilih." (Not all podcasts provide accurate information, so we have to be selective)

Parents similarly emphasized that educational podcasts should complement—not replace—family communication.

One parent stated:

"Orang tua tetap harus mendampingi anak agar mereka dapat membedakan informasi yang baik dan yang

tidak baik.” (“Parents must continue to guide their children so that they can distinguish between good and bad information.”)

These findings indicate that digital literacy remains essential in maximizing the educational benefits of podcast consumption while minimizing exposure to misinformation and excessive media use

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that Gritte Agatha's YouTube Podcast contributes to adolescent awareness through four interconnected communication mechanisms: knowledge acquisition, emotional reflection, behavioral motivation, and persuasive interpersonal communication. Unlike previous studies that primarily discussed podcasts as educational or entertainment media, this study shows that adolescents actively interpret podcast messages according to their own social experiences. The qualitative findings illustrate that educational communication occurs through reflection rather than direct instruction. The integration of Uses and Gratifications Theory explains why adolescents intentionally select educational podcast content to satisfy cognitive and emotional needs. Social Learning Theory explains how observational learning occurs through inspirational narratives, while Parasocial Interaction Theory clarifies the emotional attachment developed between adolescents and trusted digital communicators. Finally, New Media Theory demonstrates how interactive digital platforms facilitate participatory communication and reflective learning. This study therefore extends previous communication research by positioning educational podcasts as persuasive communication media capable of fostering adolescent self-awareness, rather than merely as entertainment platforms. The triangulation of adolescents, parents, and community leaders further strengthens the credibility of these findings and demonstrates that podcast effectiveness depends upon collaboration between digital media, families, schools, and local communities. The findings also imply that educational podcasts have considerable potential to support character education, digital literacy, and youth empowerment programs, particularly within rural communities where access to educational resources may be limited. However, the effectiveness of podcast communication remains contingent upon critical media literacy and active parental supervision, ensuring that adolescents are able to interpret digital information responsibly and apply positive messages within their everyday social lives.

Theme	Main Findings	Representative Evidence	Related Theory
Podcasts as Alternative Learning Resources	Adolescents use podcasts to obtain educational information, motivation, and life experiences.	Participants reported learning about education, family relationships, and social responsibility through podcast episodes.	Uses and Gratifications Theory
Self-Awareness Through Inspirational Stories	Podcast narratives encourage adolescents to reflect on their own lives and future aspirations.	Participants compared their own experiences with guests' life stories and became more appreciative of education and family.	Social Learning Theory
Motivation	Podcast content motivates	Participants reported increased	Social Learning

Theme	Main Findings	Representative Evidence	Related Theory
for Positive Behavioral Change	adolescents to improve their attitudes and avoid risky behaviors.	motivation to study, respect parents, and avoid juvenile delinquency.	Theory
Podcasts as Persuasive Digital Communication Media	Authentic storytelling and empathetic communication increase message acceptance.	Adolescents preferred Gritte Agatha's conversational communication style because it was relatable and non-judgmental.	Parasocial Interaction Theory; New Media Theory

The conceptual model resulting from this study can be described as follows.



The findings indicate that adolescents intentionally consume podcast content to obtain educational information, emotional support, and practical life experiences. This supports the Uses and Gratifications perspective, which argues that audiences actively choose media capable of satisfying cognitive and personal needs. Similar findings were reported by Stephani et al. (2021), who found that Indonesian youth preferred podcasts because they provide flexible and accessible educational content. Recent studies also demonstrate that educational podcasts improve knowledge acquisition and learner engagement through conversational communication and authentic storytelling.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of Gritte Agatha's YouTube Podcast in enhancing adolescent awareness among teenagers in Paya Geli Village, Sunggal District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. Based on the analysis of interview data, field observations, and supporting documentation, the findings indicate that educational podcast content functions not only as a source of entertainment

but also as an effective medium for informal learning, persuasive communication, and adolescent character development. The results demonstrate that adolescents actively interpret and internalize podcast messages, applying them to their daily lives through reflection on education, family relationships, social interaction, and future aspirations. The study identified four interrelated mechanisms through which Gritte Agatha's YouTube Podcast contributes to adolescent awareness. First, the podcast serves as an alternative learning resource by providing educational information presented in a conversational and accessible manner. Second, inspirational life stories shared by podcast guests encourage adolescents to engage in self-reflection, develop empathy, and appreciate educational opportunities as well as family support. Third, repeated exposure to educational podcast content contributes to increased motivation for positive behavioral change, including stronger commitment to learning, greater respect for parents, more careful peer selection, and increased awareness of the risks associated with juvenile delinquency. Fourth, the podcast's empathetic communication style strengthens audience engagement, allowing persuasive messages to be accepted through dialogue and storytelling rather than direct instruction.

The findings further suggest that the effectiveness of educational podcasts is influenced by broader social factors. Adolescents acknowledged that the positive impact of podcast content becomes more meaningful when supported by family communication, school environments, and responsible digital media use. Although educational podcasts provide valuable opportunities for learning and personal development, participants also recognized potential challenges such as excessive media consumption and exposure to inaccurate information. Consequently, podcasts should be understood as complementary communication media that support, rather than replace, parental guidance and formal education. From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches communication research by illustrating how New Media Theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Parasocial Interaction Theory can collectively explain the influence of educational podcasts on adolescents' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development. The findings indicate that digital communication platforms are not merely channels for information dissemination but also spaces where adolescents construct meaning, develop self-awareness, and learn through observation and emotional engagement. This integrated theoretical perspective contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of persuasive communication in contemporary digital environments. Practically, the study provides several implications for educators, parents, digital content creators, and policymakers. Educational institutions may consider integrating credible podcast content into learning activities to stimulate reflective thinking and digital literacy. Parents are encouraged to accompany adolescents during digital media consumption and maintain open communication regarding the content they access. Content creators are expected to continue producing educational podcasts that are accurate, ethical, and relevant to adolescent needs. In addition, local governments and community organizations may utilize educational podcasts as complementary communication tools in youth empowerment, character education, and digital literacy initiatives.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The research was conducted within a single village using a qualitative descriptive approach and involved a limited number of participants. Therefore, the findings emphasize contextual understanding rather than statistical generalization. In addition, the study focused exclusively on Gritte Agatha's YouTube Podcast; consequently, the results cannot be generalized to all podcast creators or digital communication platforms. Future research is recommended to involve participants from different geographical regions and socio-cultural backgrounds to obtain broader perspectives regarding adolescents' use of

educational podcasts. Comparative studies involving multiple podcast creators or different digital media platforms could provide a more comprehensive understanding of persuasive communication strategies in contemporary digital environments. Furthermore, mixed-methods and longitudinal studies are encouraged to examine the long-term influence of educational podcast consumption on adolescent awareness, digital literacy, emotional well-being, and behavioral development. Such research would strengthen the evidence base for utilizing digital media as an effective communication strategy for adolescent empowerment.

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