The Importance of Self-Development Podcasts to Improving Mental Health in Generation Z

La importància dels pòdcasts d'autodesenvolupament per a la millora de la salut mental a la generació Z

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Abstract

Objectives: Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a global rise in mental health issues within Generation Z who has grown up in a digital age where social media platforms have become an integral part of their lives. Self-development podcasts can be a valuable resource for those, who are seeking support and guidance to improve their mental health and well-being on various platforms. However, there is a shortage of mental health professionals leveraging podcasts as a valuable tool for mental health education and support in the Vietnamese context. Therefore, this article takes the pioneering step by exploring the importance of self-development podcasts to improve mental health in Vietnamese Gen Z. *Methodology*: The research employs qualitative research, and data was collected through semi-structured interviews with nine content creators who produce self-development podcast programs in Vietnam. *Results*: The results highlight the role of self-development podcasts in improving mental health among Vietnamese Gen Z by analyzing how it is consumed and revealing the multifaceted impact of self-development podcasts on mental health among Vietnamese Gen Z.

Keywords

Resum

Objectius: Des de la pandèmia de la COVID-19, hi ha hagut un augment global dels problemes de salut mental dins de la Generació Z, que ha crescut en una era digital on les plataformes de xarxes socials s'han convertit en una part integral de les seves vides. Els pòdcasts d'autodesenvolupament poden ser un recurs valuós per a aquells que busquen suport i orientació per millorar la seva salut mental i benestar en diverses plataformes. No obstant això, hi ha una manca de professionals de la salut mental que utilitzin els pòdcasts com una eina valuosa per a l'educació i el suport en salut mental en el context vietnamita. Per tant, aquest article fa un pas pioner explorant la importància dels pòdcasts d'autodesenvolupament per millorar la salut mental en la Generació Z vietnamita. *Metodologia*: La investigació utilitza recerca qualitativa i les dades es van recollir per mitjà d'entrevistes semiestructurades amb nou creadors de contingut que produeixen programes de pòdcasts d'autodesenvolupament al Vietnam. *Resultats*: Els resultats ressalten el paper dels pòdcasts d'autodesenvolupament en

la millora de la salut mental entre la Generació Z vietnamita, analitzant com es consumeixen i revelant l'impacte multifacètic dels pòdcasts d'autodesenvolupament sobre la salut mental en la Generació Z vietnamita.

Paraules clau

Recommended citation

1. Introduction

In an era characterized by constant connectivity and an evolving social landscape, Generation Z grapples with an array of mental health issues, ranging from stress and anxiety to depression and feelings of inadequacy (Adedeji *et al.* 2023). Amidst these challenges, self-development podcast channels have risen to prominence as an innovative and accessible medium for imparting guidance, strategies, and support aimed at ameliorating these issues. According to Parija and Shanmuganathan (2020), podcasts can be a valuable resource for individuals, including those in Generation Z, who are seeking support and guidance to improve their mental health and well-being.

Geoghegan and Klass (2007) define podcasts as "audio and video via subscription". Madsen (2009) initially called podcasts "a new type of radio", while more than ten years later under the development of the Internet, we can see that podcasts are more than that. Spinelli and Dan (2019) also agree on this point as they emphasize the unique features of podcasts in separating this medium from radio. The concepts of online audio, the audio sphere, the edification era, and audio streaming are used to encompass the upsurge in a series of practices and products that include smart speaker use, the growth of voice messages, audiobooks, on-demand radio, streaming music consumption, and podcasts in the new millennium (Martín-Morán & Martín-Nieto, 2022). Podcast channels, often hosted by influential figures or individuals with expertise in the realms of personal development, self-improvement, and mental health, provide a platform for fostering awareness, destigmatizing mental health discussions, and offering practical tools to enhance well-being Prakash *et al.* (2017). So, from the concepts presented here, the term "podcast" used in this research refers to programs that include both audio and visual broadcasts that are distributed on social media channels and have significant followers.

Vietnam, a Southeast Asian nation undergoing rapid modernization, is home to a burgeoning Generation Z population. According to Enos (2020) this generation, comprising individuals born from the mid-1990s to the early 2010s, faces a unique set of challenges in a country characterized by dynamic socio-economic shifts and technological advancements. Among the foremost concerns for Vietnam's Generation Z are various mental health issues, including stress, anxiety, depression, and the pressures of academic and societal expectations (Nguyễn Hà, *et al.* 2023). In this context, self-development podcast channels have emerged as a novel and increasingly influential resource, offering guidance and support aimed at ameliorating these mental health challenges.

According to Statista forecasts (2024), from 2024 to 2029 the number of social network users in Vietnam will increase continuously with a total of 13.9 million users (+16.18%). Notably, the number of social network users has continuously increased in recent years; the podcast medium has only recently experienced significant growth and development in the past few years. Based on a survey conducted in May 2022, many Vietnamese across all generations took less interest in listening to podcasts; 64 percent of baby boomer respondents said they would neither pay for nor likely subscribe to podcast services next year. On the contrary, podcast subscriptions were popular among other generations. A quarter of Gen-X respondents who did not pay for podcasts yet said they would subscribe soon (Statista, 2023). So, the young generation prefers this communication medium. The figure below illustrates in detail this point.

Figure 1. Podcast subscription status in Vietnam as of May 2022, by generation
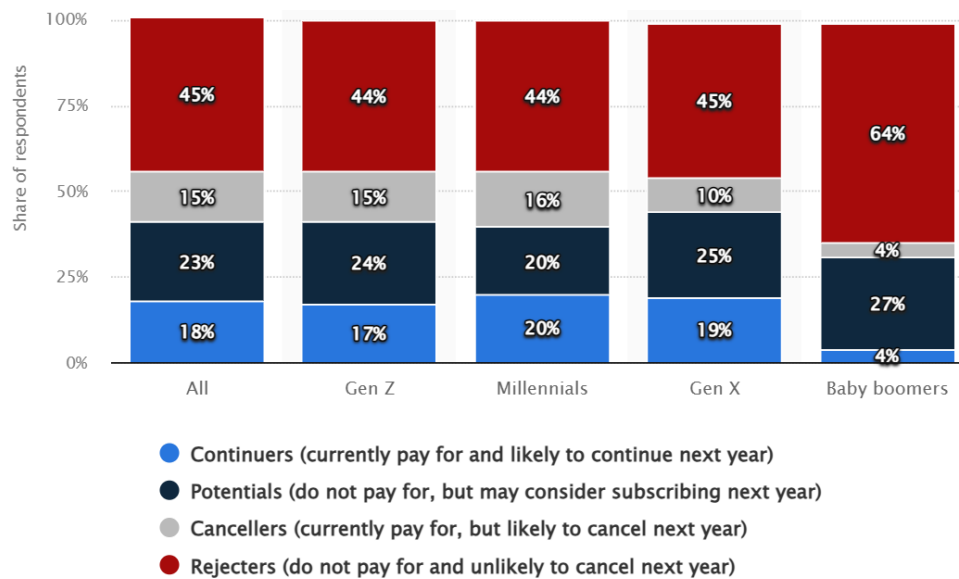
Source: *Statista* forecasts (2024)

According to Podnews (2023), Vietnam has about 3000 podcast channels across 124 genres. The top three most popular channels are Art, Education, and Business. What is trending are Gen-Z topics such as wellness, but what would be most risk-averse and eventually lead to cumulative returns are evergreen topics. Topics such as (1) Culture & Arts - Arts is the topmost common channel within Vietnam, (2) Global History, (3) General Science, and (4) Finance. Rahmia (2021) emphasizes the potential of podcasts as educational media based on local wisdom, which can contribute to societal change and knowledge enhancement. Since podcasts recently gained significant traction and development in the Vietnamese market, there are several limitations in terms of data availability, as there are few reliable and continuously updated sources. It can be seen that there is a lack of research on podcasts, and no research specifically mentions self-development podcasts in the context of improving mental health. However, the authors contend that podcasts will likely sustain growth in the future and the importance of self-development podcast channels serve as vehicles for guidance, education, and support concerning mental health issues among Vietnam's Generation Z. Therefore, we have chosen the research topic "the importance of self-development podcasts in improving mental health in Generation Z" employs qualitative research; data was collected through semi-structured interviews with nine content creators who produce self-development podcast programs in Vietnam. This research is guided by the

following research questions "How are self-development podcasts consumed among Vietnamese Generation Z" and "What is the impact of self-development podcasts on mental health among Vietnamese Generation Z". The study also provides managerial insights to content creators in developing podcast content, allowing them to engage with their audiences by improving the mental health of Generation Z in Vietnam.

2. Literature review

2.1. Understanding Mental Health Issues Among Generation Z

Generation Z faces a complex array of mental health challenges, influenced by various social, cultural, economic, and technological factors. Many papers highlight the need for attention and support for the mental health of Generation Z. Generation Z is the first generation to grow up in a digital world, with constant access to social media and online platforms. While digital connectivity offers many benefits, such as access to information and social connections, it also exposes them to cyberbullying, unrealistic beauty standards, and excessive screen time, which can negatively impact their mental health.

Behuku et al (2023) found that mental health problems have increased among Generation Z in Melanesian communities in Indonesia. Kassymova *et al.* (2023) emphasized the negative impact of digital technology on the mental health of Generation Z, particularly due to a lack of face-to-face communication and increased stress levels. Of 260 students pursuing engineering from a university in India, 87 % of them believe that mental health problems make young people unpredictable and dangerous which is false (Veluchamy *et al.*, 2016). Generation Z may hesitate to reach out for support due to fear of judgment, discrimination, or lack of understanding from their peers and society, leading to underreporting and untreated mental health conditions. The paper also emphasized that people need to change their perceptions with people who are having mental health issues, especially students.

Additionally, Duong *et al.* (2023) investigated the impact of COVID-19 crisis on students' mental health at the Vietnam National University of Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCMC) with the total number of students participating in the survey was 37150; which summarized as the fourth findings: (1) students mostly suffered online learning pressure and stressed about handling tuition fees, (2) sleeping disorders and lack of concentration and interest in life, (3) female students and third-year students were more prone to pressures and mental health problem during COVID-19 outbreak and (4) the level of lockdown status was not associated with negative mental health conditions of students.

Additionally, Veluchamy *et al.* (2016) indicated that students must be trained to manage their time, how to solve problems which might decrease stress and encourage them to talk about their problems. Building strong peer support networks can provide a sense of belonging and solidarity, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness associated with mental health struggles.

By acknowledging the unique needs and experiences of Generation Z, we can pave the way for a healthier and more supportive environment for future generations. So, the potential of self-development podcasts to foster a sense of community and connection is an element often lacking in the digital age's more isolating aspects.

Figure 2. The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on students' mental health at the VNU-HCMC
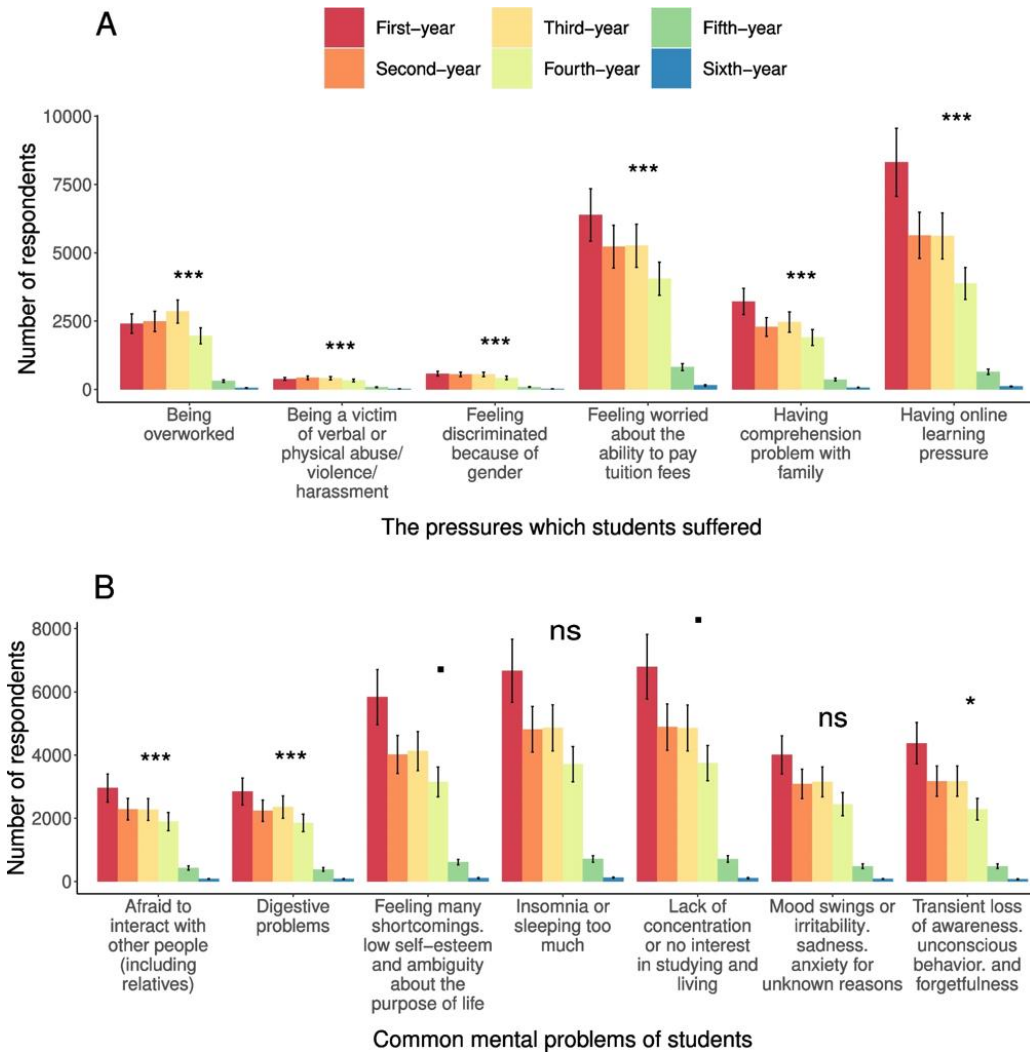
Source: Duong *et al.* (2023)

2.2. Role of Self-development Resources in Improving Mental Health

Self-development resources play a crucial role in improving mental health by empowering individuals to enhance their psychological well-being, develop resilience, and cope effectively with life's challenges (Caoilte *et al.* 2023). Piltch (2016) also emphasizes the importance of self-determination in the recovery process, highlighting factors such as access to information, support from others, exposure to mentors, willingness to experiment, and engagement in meaningful activities. In the context of this research, self-development is a genre of Podcast that provides audiences with valuable information for their personal and self-improvement, enhancing their own lives. Moreover, podcasts can be a useful part of a comprehensive approach to promoting mental well-being among Generation Z (Carrotte *et al.*, 2023). On the positive side, these resources offer convenient and affordable ways to access support and information about mental health issues, empowering individuals to take proactive steps toward improving their well-being. When combined with other forms of support, such as therapy, a strong social network, and healthy lifestyle choices, self-development podcasts can contribute positively to the mental health of this generation.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the impact of self-development podcasts on mental health can vary from person to person. And while self-development podcasts can be a valuable resource, they are not a substitute for professional mental health support when needed. Also, there are just limited papers that provide insights into the impact of podcasts on mental health and the authors have not come across any studies conducted in Vietnam regarding self-development podcasts and the mental health of Vietnam's Generation Z.

2.3. Recent Research on the Impact of Podcasts on Mental Health

2.3.1. Podcasts as a Tool for Enhancing Mental Health Literacy: An Investigation of Mental Health-related Podcasts

Caoilte *et al.* (2023) explore the motivations and experiences of mental health-related podcast listeners. The authors notice the increasingly popular medium of mental health-related podcasts and the lack of knowledge of the influence of demographic and personal mental health characteristics on listeners' engagement and experiences. The research result indicated that participants with little mental health knowledge reported significant positive results from listening to mental health-related podcasts. Also, factors such as podcast listeners' motivations and experiences related to mental health focus on developing their understanding of mental health.

2.3.2. Podcasts, Mental Health, and Stigma: Exploring Motivations, Behaviors, and Attitudes Among Listeners

Carrotte *et al.* (2023) study podcast listeners' demographics, motivations, behaviors, and attitudes toward podcasts with content and topics related to mental health. In the current context of increasing demand for mental health treatment, podcasts are being used as a platform to impart health advice, guided meditation, and mental health education. This research shows that people who listen to podcasts with a mental health theme are more likely to have experienced mental health problems than podcast listeners in general. Participants reported a variety of reasons for listening to mental health-themed podcasts. Most of them feel that by learning about mental health through podcasts, people's level of stigma towards them will be lower and they will also have more health knowledge.

2.4. Cultural and Contextual Factors Influencing Mental Health and Podcast Consumption in Vietnam

Cultural and contextual factors play a significant role in shaping mental health perceptions and behaviors, as well as podcast consumption patterns in Vietnam, a Southeast Asian country amid rapid modernization. Mach and Nash (2019) state that social media platforms and digital content consumption are integral parts of daily life for many Vietnamese. While social media offers opportunities for connection and self-expression, it also exposes individuals to unrealistic standards, social comparisons, cyberbullying, and information overload, all of which can negatively impact mental health. Nguyen and Loo (2024) indicate that Generation Z in Vietnam is influenced by a blend of traditional Vietnamese culture and globalized trends. They navigate between embracing

traditional values and adopting modern lifestyles, often manifesting in their consumption habits, social interactions, and cultural preferences. Traditional Vietnamese cultural values, such as collectivism, filial piety, and face-saving, may influence attitudes toward mental health. Nguyễn Hà *et al.* (2023) indicate that mental health issues are often stigmatized and viewed as a source of shame or embarrassment, leading to reluctance to seek help or disclose personal struggles. Additionally, Vietnam faces a shortage of mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. According to Vietnamnews (2023), about 14 million people suffer from mental disorders in Vietnam, but the country has only 143 clinical psychologists and psychotherapists. Vuong *et al.* (2011) also discusses the cost of mental health services, including consultations, medications, and therapy sessions, which can be prohibitive for many individuals in Vietnam, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. However, changing attitudes, increased awareness, and advocacy efforts are gradually destigmatizing mental health discussions in Vietnam (Nguyen and Loo, 2024).

So, understanding cultural and contextual factors is essential for developing culturally appropriate interventions, promoting mental health awareness, and leveraging podcasts as a valuable tool for mental health education and support in the Vietnamese context; also influencing mental health and podcast consumption in Vietnam.

3. Method

The research employs a qualitative research approach to provide an in-depth understanding of the importance of self-development podcasts in improving mental health in Generation Z by June 2023. Based on Vaismoradi & Snelgrove (2019), this research method allows for a detailed investigation of participants and points of view, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the research questions. Data collection for this research is conducted through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews offer flexibility by allowing interviewers to follow up on relevant points and delve deeper into specific areas of interest while maintaining a basic interview guide (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The authors of this research contacted fifteen content creators who produce self-development podcast programs in Vietnam and were rejected by six of them. As a result, nine content creators agreed to participate in this research interview; these creators are touching and driving on topics such as religion, lifestyle, wellness, and personal development. The selection of content creators aims to capture a diverse range of perspectives and experiences related to improving mental health in Generation Z through self-development podcast programs. Interviews are conducted either face-to-face or online for thirty to forty-five minutes each, based on the preferences of the participants. The interviews are audio-recorded with the participant's consent to ensure accurate data capture. The data collected through interviews are transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. The participants are influential figures or individuals with expertise in the realms of personal development, self-improvement, and mental health, providing a platform for fostering awareness, destigmatizing mental health discussions, and offering practical tools to enhance well-being. The analysis process includes coding the data, organizing codes into themes, and interpreting the themes concerning the research objectives. The participants' profiles are as below.

Table 1. Interview participants' profiles

Participant	Gender	Year of Birth	Expertise
PC1	Male	2001	Host of university TV channel
PC2	Male	2002	Manage and operate a self-improvement podcast channel
PC3	Female	1998	Founder of personal development podcast
PC4	Male	1990	Manage and operate a mental health podcast channel
PC5	Female	1991	Influencer, founder of personal development podcast
PC6	Female	1983	Communication expert, host, and content manager of a mental health podcast channel
PC7	Female	1990	Health coach, manage and operate mental health podcast channel
PC8	Male	1992	Host. Manage and operate a self-improvement podcast channel
PC9	Female	1985	Doctor of Education, blogger, author of a self-help book, host of the self-development podcast

4. Findings

4.1. Overview of Mental Health Issues Among Vietnamese Generation Z

Generation Z individuals are known for their mobile-centric lifestyles, relying heavily on smartphones and other portable devices for accessing information and entertainment. The curated nature of social media feeds often portrays idealized lifestyles and unrealistic beauty standards, creating pressure to conform and fear of missing out (FOMO).

"Excessive screen time, particularly on social media platforms, has been linked to negative mental health outcomes such as low self-esteem, body image issues, and sleep disturbances among Vietnamese youth". – Respondent PC7

They are the first generation to grow up in a digital world, with constant access to social media and online platforms.

"While digital connectivity offers many benefits, such as access to information and social connections, it also exposes them to cyberbullying, unrealistic beauty standards, and excessive screen time, which can negatively impact their mental health." – Respondent PC1

The study also revealed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a rise in mental health issues in Vietnam, especially among Vietnamese Generation Z

"Generation Z in Vietnam has experienced disruptions in education, employment, and social interactions due to lockdowns, social distancing measures, and economic downturns caused by the pandemic. Those also affected the mental well-being of Generation Z, leading to feelings of confusion, frustration, and lack of motivation." – Respondent PC6

Vietnamese Generation Z not only faces a myriad of mental health challenges stemming from the intersection of the COVID-19 pandemic but also the pervasive influence of the digital age.

"The constant exposure to COVID-19-related news and information on digital media platforms has exacerbated feelings of anxiety, fear, and uncertainty among youth, leading to a phenomenon known as *pandemic fatigue*" – Respondent PC2

Vietnam is feeling impacts due to a gradually aging population and a high proportion of people with neural disabilities, as well as the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. But compared to other industries, mental health receives less attention.

"The lack of access to mental health resources and support services, compounded by the stigma surrounding mental health issues in Vietnamese society, has made it challenging for Generation Z individuals to seek help and cope with the psychological impact of the pandemic and digital age." – Respondent PC9

Vietnam faces a shortage of mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers; also, there are barriers in cultural beliefs to accessing mental health care.

"Despite efforts to improve mental health services, access to professional help remains limited in Vietnam, particularly in rural areas. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are only 1.1 psychiatrists and 0.1 psychologists per 100,000 people in Vietnam, significantly below the global average. Cultural beliefs, financial constraints, and the shortage of mental health professionals contribute to barriers to accessing care." – Respondent PC5

As a result, many individuals turn to alternative sources of support, such as self-help resources, online communities, and peer support groups, including podcasts.

4.2. Analysis of Self-development Podcast Consumption Patterns among Vietnamese Generation Z

Analyzing self-development podcast consumption patterns among Vietnamese Generation Z reveals several key insights into their preferences, behaviors, and motivations. First, they show a high preference for the content which empowers listeners to take proactive steps toward self-improvement.

"There is a growing interest among Vietnamese Generation Z in self-improvement and personal growth topics. We can see from our audience that they seek podcasts that offer practical tips, strategies, and insights for enhancing their skills, productivity, and well-being." – Respondent PC3

"Our channel listeners show a preference for contents that offer actionable tips and insights on personal growth, career advancement, and mental well-being. These contents also provide coping strategies for managing stress, building resilience, and improving overall well-being." – Respondent PC4

Given their busy lifestyles and short attention spans, Vietnamese Generation Z tends to prefer bite-sized podcast episodes that are concise and focused.

"They are more likely to listen to shorter episodes or series that offer actionable insights in a condensed format." – Respondent PC7

Since Vietnamese Generation Z values convenience and flexibility in accessing self-development content.

"We can see that our audience often listens to podcasts during commutes, exercise, or other daily activities, leveraging mobile devices for on-the-go consumption". – Respondent PC2

While audio remains the primary format for self-development podcasts, there is a growing interest among Vietnamese Generation Z in visual and multimedia content.

"We notice that podcasts that incorporate video, animations, or interactive visuals can capture their attention and enhance the overall listening experience." – Respondent PC9

By understanding these consumption patterns, podcast creators and marketers can tailor their content, formats, and distribution strategies to better resonate with Vietnamese Generation Z, effectively engaging them in their self-development journey.

4.3. Perceived Impact of Self-development Podcasts on Mental Health among Vietnamese Generation Z

The perceived impact of self-development podcasts on mental health among Vietnamese Generation Z is multifaceted, encompassing both positive outcomes and potential challenges. Firstly, self-development podcasts have educational, inspirational, and motivational content that brings many positive impacts to Vietnamese Generation Z.

"Our podcasts' content mostly focuses on imparting practical skills and knowledge. Learning new skills and gaining knowledge can contribute to a sense of accomplishment and self-efficacy, positively impacting mental health." – Respondent PC8.

Also, self-development podcasts create a sense of community and belonging among listeners, especially for those who may feel isolated or marginalized.

"We tend to feature success stories, personal anecdotes, and motivational messages to inspire Vietnamese Generation Z to set goals, pursue their passions, and overcome obstacles, instilling a sense of hope and optimism." – Respondent PC2.

However, the rising demand for self-development podcasts currently also brings out the need for careful consideration of challenges since self-development podcasts might harm Vietnamese Generation Z. Most self-development podcasts often focus on surface-level solutions or quick fixes without addressing underlying psychological or emotional issues.

"Some podcasts may promote unrealistic expectations or quick-fix solutions for complex mental health issues, potentially fostering a sense of inadequacy or disappointment among listeners if results are not immediate or attainable. While they may provide temporary relief or motivation, they may not address the root causes of mental health issues such as trauma, depression, or anxiety. Ignoring these underlying issues can delay or prevent individuals from seeking professional help when needed." – Respondent PC6.

Some self-development podcasts also just focus on portraying success as easily achievable, leading listeners to feel inadequate or overwhelmed by unattainable goals.

"Just like social media, self-development podcasts can inadvertently foster a culture of comparison, where listeners measure their progress against others and feel inadequate if they perceive themselves as falling short. This can exacerbate feelings of stress, anxiety, and self-doubt, particularly if listeners feel pressured to constantly improve themselves without recognizing their limitations or pacing." – Respondent PC3.

While self-development podcasts can be valuable tools for personal growth, listeners need to approach them with a critical mindset and seek a balanced approach to self-improvement that prioritizes mental health and well-being above external validation or achievement.

5. Discussion

This section explores the significance of self-development podcasts in improving the mental health of Vietnamese Generation Z. Through a nuanced examination of the intersection between self-development podcasts and mental health outcomes which seeks to provide insights into the transformative potential of digital media in promoting holistic wellness and resilience among Generation Z individuals in Vietnam.

5.1. Understanding the Role of Self-development Podcasts in Improving Mental Health among Vietnamese Generation Z

Assessing the first research question, which is *"How self-development podcast is consumed among Vietnamese Generation Z"* the results of this study reveal several key insights into their preferences, behaviors, and motivations. First, generation Z in Vietnam exhibits diverse preferences for self-development content, spanning areas such as career development, mental health, mindfulness, financial literacy, and relationships. Overall, self-development podcasts that offer practical tips, strategies, and insights for enhancing skills, productivity, and well-being can effectively resonate with Vietnamese Generation Z listeners by providing relevant, authentic, and engaging content that empowers them to navigate the challenges of modern life and achieve their personal and professional goals.

Vietnamese Generation Z also values convenience and flexibility in accessing self-development content since it allows them to integrate personal growth and learning into their busy schedules without disrupting their daily routines. Given their short attention spans and busy lifestyles, Generation Z prefers self-development podcasts with well-structured and digestible content. They gravitate towards podcasts with clear titles, episode descriptions, and time stamps, allowing them to quickly identify relevant topics and segments. Podcasts that offer concise and focused episodes, ranging from 20 to 40 minutes in length, are more likely to hold their attention and keep them coming back for more.

Finally, there is a growing interest among Vietnamese Generation Z in visual and multimedia content, which is driven by their preferences for visual engagement, storytelling, entertainment value, personalization, educational opportunities, and social sharing. Podcast creators and platforms can capitalize on this trend by producing visually compelling and engaging content that resonates with the interests and preferences of Vietnamese Generation Z listeners.

To remind that, the other research question is *the impact of self-development podcasts on mental health among Vietnamese Generation Z"*, the study reveals it is multifaceted, encompassing both positive outcomes and potential challenges. To begin, podcasts offer valuable resources for empowerment, education, and community building. Listeners need to approach them critically, discerningly, and in conjunction with professional mental health support when needed. Self-development podcasts offer easily accessible resources for individuals seeking guidance and support for their mental health concerns. In a country like Vietnam, where mental health services may be limited or stigmatized, podcasts provide a discreet and convenient avenue for self-improvement and reflection. Also, self-development podcasts often cover a wide range of topics related to mental health, including stress management, mindfulness, resilience, and emotional intelligence. By disseminating accurate information and promoting mental health literacy, podcasts contribute to raising awareness and reducing the stigma surrounding mental illness in Vietnamese society.

Self-development podcasts can have many positive effects on mental health, but there are also potential negative impacts to consider, especially among Vietnamese Gen Z. As mentioned above, some self-development podcasts often focus on surface-level solutions or quick fixes without addressing underlying psychological or emotional issues; and portraying success as easily achievable, leading listeners to unattainable goals. This also makes them feel isolated or disconnected from others, which can negatively impact their mental health. Gen Z individuals may use self-development podcasts as a form of validation-seeking behavior, constantly seeking external approval or validation for their self-worth and identity. So, it is important for listeners to critically evaluate the credibility and accuracy of the information presented in self-development podcasts.

5.2. Implications of the Findings

Self-development podcast creators should consider several implications to enhance the effectiveness and impact of their content, especially concerning the mental health of Generation Z. First, ensure that the podcast content remains relevant to the diverse experiences and challenges faced by Generation Z. Incorporate diverse perspectives, addressing a wide range of topics related to personal development, mental health, and well-being. And make sure to keep the content fresh and up-to-date. Regularly release new episodes that address emerging trends, issues, and interests of Generation Z. Consistent updates maintain audience engagement and demonstrate a commitment to ongoing support. Secondly, collaborate with experts, psychologists, mental health professionals, or individuals with expertise in various relevant fields; delve into the root causes of common mental health issues faced by Vietnamese Generation Z individuals instead of simply offering tips or techniques for surface-level solutions or quick fixes. Self-development podcast creators should provide listeners with tools and resources for developing healthy habits and coping skills over time including physical health, relationships, self-esteem, and purpose. And finally, foster a sense of community and engagement by actively interacting with the audience. Encourage feedback, respond to comments, and consider featuring listener stories or questions in episodes. This engagement can enhance the feeling of connection and involvement. Also, regularly analyze podcast analytics and gather feedback from the audience. Understanding which topics resonate the most and how the audience responds allows for continuous improvement and tailoring content to meet audience expectations.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

While this study offers valuable insights into Vietnamese personal development podcast practices and challenges and its contribution to improving mental health for Generation Z, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The qualitative approach and focus on a specific context may limit the generalizability of findings. Future research could adopt a mixed-methods approach to validate and complement qualitative results. Additionally, a broader geographic scope could provide a more comprehensive understanding of personal development podcasts in diverse cultural contexts.

6. Conclusions

The research explores the importance of self-development Podcasts to improve mental health in Vietnamese Generation Z. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a global rise in mental health issues within this generation who has grown up in a digital age where social media platforms have become an integral part of their lives. Self-development podcasts can be instrumental in fostering positive mental health outcomes for them by providing valuable content that empowers, educates, supports, and encourages a holistic approach to well-being.

This study analyzed how self-development podcast is consumed among Vietnamese Generation Z and reveals the multifaceted impact of self-development podcasts on mental health among Vietnamese Generation Z. The study also provides managerial insights to content creators in developing Podcast channels, allowing them to engage with their audiences by improving their mental health, managing stress, and building resilience for Generation Z in Vietnam.

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