

Influence of Podcast Messaging on Mental Health Awareness among Nile University Undergraduates

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of podcast messaging in creating mental health awareness among undergraduates at Nile University. The background highlights the significance of mental health information dissemination and the potential of podcasts as an innovative tool to address this issue. The theoretical framework drew from Social Cognitive Theory, Media Richness Theory, and Uses and Gratifications Theory to understand how podcasts can affect mental health awareness and behavior. The methodology involved administering a questionnaire to 368 Nile University students across 6 faculties, the Bowley's proportionate sampling technique of 8,547 total students was employed to ensure equitable representation of faculties in the distribution of questionnaires to assess their perceptions, attitudes, and experiences regarding mental health podcasts. The findings revealed that while podcasts moderately raised awareness and positively influenced attitudes towards mental health, their full potential was yet to be realized. Mental health was recognized as a crucial issue among students, but stigma and barriers to seeking help persisted. Key factors contributing to student mental health problems were identified, including academic pressures, social isolation, financial difficulties, relationship issues, and lack of campus resources. Recommendations emphasize increasing podcast accessibility, tailoring content, integrating podcasts into university initiatives, expanding support services, and fostering an open dialogue around mental health. While limited by its scope and self-reported data, this study highlights the potential of podcasts in promoting mental health literacy and well-being among university students.

Keywords: Mental Health, Podcast, Students, Awareness, Digital Media, Nile University.

Introduction

Mental health is a state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being that affects how we think, feel, and act. It is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Good mental health enables people to cope with the stresses of life,

realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. Mental health conditions can range from mild to severe, and can include anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and eating disorders, among others. Mental health problems can affect anyone, and people with mental health problems often face stigma, which can prevent them from seeking help and hinder their recovery. Preserving good mental health involves maintaining and improving one's well-being through five simple steps: connecting with others, being active, learning new skills, taking notice of the present moment, and giving to others. Mental health is a basic human right and is crucial to personal, community, and socio-economic development. (World Health Organization, 2019).

The role of information dissemination in addressing mental health issues among University undergraduates in Nigeria is significant. Studies have shown that electronic health (eHealth) literacy and the dissemination of digital health information can play an important role in improving access to mental health and psychological care services, especially in a context where such services are severely lacking (Oluwadamilare, 2023). Additionally, the awareness of mental healthcare needs and the availability of tele-psychiatry services through information dissemination can help in addressing psychological distress, particularly during public health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic (Frances, 2022). However, it's important to note that the existing mental health system governance in Nigeria faces challenges such as insufficient data for planning and inadequate numbers of mental health professionals, highlighting the need for improved information dissemination and strategies for mental health system strengthening (Abdulmalik, 2016). Therefore, effective information dissemination can contribute to improving eHealth literacy, raising awareness, and ultimately enhancing the utilization of mental health services among university undergraduates in Nigeria.

Podcasting is an innovative tool for disseminating mental health information and destigmatizing conversations around mental health (Flinn, 2016). Podcasts can help dispel myths and promote resources, providing actionable insights and fostering a community of understanding and support. Podcasts can also be linked with social media to promote and disseminate health and health research information to the community without traditional communication barriers. Podcasting has been recognized as a means to rapidly disseminate public health information, and it has been used as a learning tool in medical education. Podcasts can be accessed by anyone, making it important to ensure that the information is accurate and peer-reviewed. Overall, podcasting has the potential to be a powerful tool for mental health information dissemination and de-stigmatization (Caoilte, 2023).

Podcasts which are also an episodic, downloadable or streamable spoken audio content accessible via the internet (Rime, Pike and Collins, 2022), have experienced a surge in popularity in recent years. With an estimated 424 million listeners in 2022, podcasts offer a free and accessible format for disseminating mental health-related content (Gotting, 2023). Podcasts serve as a customizable form of "edutainment," providing a platform for discussing diverse experiences and topics not typically covered in mainstream media. They

are perceived as more engaging and diverse than traditional radio, offering listeners a "productive" way to utilize their time during activities such as commuting or household chores. Unlike traditional radio, podcast communication is non-linear, fostering a sense of community and intimacy between hosts and listeners over time. Additionally, features like pausing, rewinding, and repeated listening can help overcome language or literacy barriers (Fernando, 2016).

A podcast is also an audio file available on the internet that can be streamed or downloaded to a computer or mobile device, often presented as a series of episodes. Originating in the early 2000s, particularly during the rise of the iPod (BBC, 2023), podcasts have experienced significant growth, with approximately two million podcast series and over 48 million individual episodes now accessible (Casares, 2022). In the United States, more than 40% of adults, and over 30% of Australians, have listened to a podcast in the last month, with one in five tuning in weekly. Demographic trends indicating that younger individuals aged 12–34 constitute the majority of listeners, with a decline in listenership observed with age.

There are many mental health podcasts available that can provide valuable information and support. Some of the best mental health podcasts recommended by therapists include "We Can Do Hard Things," "The Happiness Lab," and "Oprah's Super Soul Conversations" (Calin, 2023). Other popular mental health podcasts include "Inside Mental Health" by Psych Central, "The Mental Illness Happy Hour," and "The Anxiety Coaches Podcast". "11 Mental Health Podcasts You Shouldn't Miss" by Integral Care also recommends "The Daily Meditation Podcast," "The Calm Collective," and "The Mindful Minute". These podcasts can provide valuable insights and support for those struggling with mental health issues.

Despite the prevalence of mental health issues among university students, there exists a significant gap in the accessibility and effectiveness of mental health resources and information dissemination channels. The paper "Influence Of Podcast Messaging on Mental Health Awareness Among Nile University Undergraduates" seeks to address this gap by examining the efficacy of podcasts in enhancing mental health literacy, normalizing mental health challenges, fostering connections, and instilling hope among Nile University undergraduates. Furthermore, the project aims to explore the potential of podcasts to destigmatize mental health conversations and facilitate the dissemination of actionable insights and resources. By investigating the impact of podcasts on the attitudes, knowledge, and help-seeking behaviors of university students regarding mental health, this project aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how podcasts can serve as a valuable tool for mental health information dissemination among university students. The problem is critical due to the prevalence of mental health issues among university students, compounded by barriers such as stigma, lack of knowledge, and limited access to mental health services. Addressing this problem is essential for promoting the well-being and academic success of university students and for fostering a supportive campus environment. Through the exploration of podcasts as a medium for mental health information dissemination, this project seeks to pave the way for the development of

effective and accessible mental health resources tailored to the needs of university students at Nile University.

The significance of this study extends to various sectors, including society in general, the media industry, academia, and theoretical relevance. Mental health is a fundamental aspect of overall well-being and quality of life. By exploring the influence of podcasting on mental health information dissemination among university students, this study addresses a pressing societal issue. The findings have the potential to contribute to the promotion of mental health awareness, reduce stigma surrounding mental health challenges, and enhance access to resources and support for individuals struggling with mental health issues.

Podcasting has emerged as a powerful medium for disseminating information and engaging audiences. This study underscores the importance of podcasting in addressing mental health concerns and normalizing conversations around mental health. The findings can inform media practitioners and content creators about the potential of podcasting as a tool for promoting mental health literacy, fostering supportive communities, and destigmatizing mental health discussions.

In academia, this study adds to the growing body of literature on mental health literacy and information dissemination strategies. By investigating the impact of podcasts on the attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors of university students regarding mental health, this research contributes valuable insights to the field of mental health education and intervention. The findings can inform curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and student support services in educational institutions.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the prevalence of mental health issues among university students, there exists a significant gap in the accessibility and effectiveness of mental health resources and information dissemination channels. The project "Influence of Podcast Messaging on Mental Health Awareness of Nile University Undergraduates" seeks to address this gap by examining

the efficacy of podcasts in enhancing mental health literacy, normalizing mental health challenges, fostering connections, and instilling hope among Nile University undergraduates. Furthermore, the project aims to explore the potential of podcasts to destigmatize mental health conversations and facilitate the dissemination of actionable insights and resources. By investigating the impact of podcasts on the attitudes, knowledge, and help-seeking behaviors of university students regarding mental health, this project aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how podcasts can serve as a valuable tool for mental health information dissemination among university students. The problem is critical due to the prevalence of mental health issues among university students, compounded by barriers such as stigma, lack of knowledge, and limited access to mental health services. Addressing this problem is essential for promoting the well-being and

academic success of university students and for fostering a supportive campus environment.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness among the audience regarding mental health issues through podcast messaging?
2. How do Nile university students perceive mental health issues?
3. How does exposure to mental health podcasts influence the attitudes of Nile University undergraduates towards mental health?

Empirical Review

Research by Ukwueze and Okpulo L. O titled "The Use of Mental Health Awareness Podcasting in Nigerian Universities" aimed to investigate the challenges impeding the adoption of mental health awareness podcasting in Nigerian universities. To accomplish this goal, the researchers formulated five research questions and conducted surveys among 19 lecturers and 81 students from relevant departments at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The researchers employed a structured questionnaire consisting of 52 items aligned with the research inquiries to collect data. The findings revealed that while necessary infrastructure for podcast integration was available, there was a significant lack of awareness among the participants, which emerged as a major obstacle. The study suggested several strategies to enhance the integration of mental health awareness podcasting in Nigerian universities. These strategies included organizing workshops, conferences, and in-service training programs to educate both faculty members and students about the benefits and techniques of mental health awareness podcasting. Additionally, ensuring regular power supply was highlighted as crucial for sustaining podcasting initiatives. Based on the study's findings, the researchers provided recommendations aimed at addressing the identified constraints. These recommendations likely focused on raising awareness, providing training and support, and addressing infrastructure challenges to promote the effective integration of mental health awareness podcasting in Nigerian universities.

Existing literature by Amal Ibrahim titled "The Positive Impact of Podcasts in Education at El Baha University College of Science and Arts Elmikhwa Branch" aimed to investigate the role of mental awareness podcasts in promoting mental health literacy and well-being within the educational setting. The research employs descriptive and analytical methods to examine the impact of mental awareness podcasts on teaching and learning processes. The findings indicate that mental awareness podcasts have a positive impact on education at El Baha University College of Science and Arts Elmikhwa Branch. When utilized effectively, mental awareness podcasts serve as innovative teaching resources that facilitate the design of engaging classroom activities focused on mental health education. They also offer numerous benefits for students, both inside and outside the classroom, by providing access to supplementary materials and resources that promote mental health literacy and well-

being. The study underscores the importance of integrating mental awareness podcasts into educational practices to enhance teaching and learning processes and promote mental health awareness among students. By leveraging mental awareness podcasts as a tool for instructional design and student engagement, educators can create dynamic and interactive learning experiences that foster mental health literacy and well-being. Moreover, mental awareness podcasts offer opportunities for collaborative learning and knowledge sharing, enabling students to actively participate in discussions and activities focused on mental health education.

Aremu B. V., Ayodeji M. A., and Adeoluwa O. V., in prior research examined the relationship between the use of podcasts and students' learning attitudes at universities in Ekiti State. It employed a descriptive survey research design and sampled 300 undergraduate students through accidental sampling. Data was collected using a questionnaire titled "Podcast and Attitude of Students towards Learning (PASLO)", validated through expert assessment and reliability testing. The findings revealed low utilization of educational podcasts but a positive attitude towards learning through them. Moreover, a significant relationship was observed between podcast usage and students' attitudes towards learning, suggesting podcasts could predict learning attitudes. Recommendations included integrating podcasts into curriculum planning and providing necessary resources for podcast use in teaching.

Montagni and Christophe Tzourio in their systematic review titled "Mental Health-Related Digital Use by University Students" examined studies from 2008 to 2018 to gain insights into students' digital behaviors, preferences, and challenges regarding mental health support. Among the 24 articles reviewed, findings revealed a strong demand for mental health information among students worldwide, along with a willingness to utilize digital tools for well-being. However, students face obstacles such as difficulty discerning trustworthy online information and concerns about data privacy. The review suggests the need for web- and mobile-based interventions tailored to address these challenges and promote mental health within university communities.

Studies conducted at Afe Babalola University in Nigeria on the prevalence of mental health problems among undergraduate students revealed that 58% of the students had depression, with 37.0% experiencing mild depression, 15.7% moderate depression, 3.9% severe depression, and 1.67% very severe depression (Edidiong, 2023). Another study focused on medical students at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria and found a high prevalence of mental health problems, particularly anxiety and depression (Chibuike, 2021). These findings highlight the significant prevalence of mental health issues among university undergraduates in Nigeria, emphasizing the importance of addressing and supporting the mental well-being of students in the country.

Naoise Ó Caoilte, Sharon Lambert, Raegan Murphy, and Gillian Murphy, conducted a study on the impact of mental health-related podcasts on listeners' engagement and experiences. These scholars observed that mental health-related podcasts have become increasingly popular, yet there remains limited knowledge about how demographic and personal mental health characteristics influence individuals' interactions with this medium. The study aimed

to shed light on the motivations and experiences of listeners of mental health-related podcasts. Data for the study was collected through an online survey involving 722 participants. The analysis focused on identifying factors associated with participants' reasons for listening to mental health-related podcasts and examining their experiences with the content. The findings of the study indicate that mental health-related podcast listeners are primarily motivated by a desire to enhance their mental health literacy. Interestingly, participants with lower levels of education and mental health literacy reported experiencing the most significant benefits from engaging with these podcasts. These findings underscore the positive impact that mental health-related podcasts can have on listeners, particularly those with lower levels of education and mental health literacy. The study suggests that mental health-related podcasts have the potential to serve as valuable psychoeducational tools for personal and professional development.

Benedict et al (2021) in his research explored the role of podcasts in health communication, particularly focusing on the Public Health Insight Podcast (PHIP). The study delves into the significance of health communication, defined as the art of informing, influencing, and motivating individuals and communities about crucial health issues. It highlights the increasing popularity of podcasts as a medium for disseminating health-related information, supplementing education, and engaging listeners in public health and global health topics. The PHIP, hosted by a team of public health professionals with Master of Public Health (MPH) degrees, covers a wide range of population health issues, including mental health, climate change, and harm reduction. Through platforms like Spotify and Apple Podcasts, the podcast reaches audiences globally, with a significant number of downloads recorded across various countries and territories. The study also explores emergent opportunities resulting from the dissemination of PHIP. These opportunities include partnerships and collaborations for student-organized health conferences, addressing anti-Black racism, incorporating podcast content into academic assignments, and raising awareness about neglected tropical diseases. Additionally, efforts are being made to overcome access barriers in low and middle-income countries, such as language diversity and internet connectivity issues. While acknowledging limitations, such as the need for further research to assess listeners' perceptions and the challenges in reaching audiences in resource-constrained settings, the study concludes that podcasts have the potential to serve as effective health communication tools. They can expand the reach of population health-related information, facilitate collaborations, and introduce public health topics to new audiences.

Research Methodology

Research Design

Research design refers to the overall strategy that a researcher chooses to integrate different components of a study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring the validity and reliability of the research. Creswell (2018) explains that research design is a framework or plan for conducting a study. It includes the overall strategy, the methods to be used, and

the procedures for collecting and analyzing data. The research design involves a survey of Nile University undergraduate students, chosen for its reliability in gathering authentic responses. This method allows for a large sample size and has been effective in similar studies. Structured questionnaires ensure systematic and organized data collection, leading to meaningful conclusions.

Population of Study

The research focuses on all undergraduate students enrolled at the Nile University, Abuja. According to the school's Academic Planning Unit, the undergraduate population at Nile University, Abuja stood at 8,547. The table below shows how students are distributed across all six Faculties in Nile University, Abuja.

Table 1: Nile University Undergraduates Population

FACULTIES	POPULATION
College of Health Sciences.	1800
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences.	547
Faculty of Engineering.	1200
Faculty of Law.	2000
Faculty of Management Sciences.	1000
Faculty of Natural & Applied Sciences.	2000
TOTAL	8,547

Source: Nile University Planning Unit

Sample Size

Wimmer and Dominick (2013) argue that a sample is a small part of the population that embodies the characteristics of the entire population. Given that it's unfeasible to examine the entire population in a single study, it's essential to choose a representative subset. To ensure validity, the sample size must accurately reflect the population's attributes. Using the Australian sample size calculator, the sample size of this study is 368. It is represented below:

Determine Sample Size	
Confidence Level:	95%
Population Size:	8547
Proportion:	0.5
☐ Confidence Interval:	0.04998
Upper	0.54998
Lower	0.45002
☐ Standard Error	0.02550
☒ Relative Standard Error	5.10
☐ Sample Size:	368
Calculate Clear	

Sampling Technique

This study employed the multi-stage sampling approach. This includes cluster sampling technique, simple random sampling, Bowley's proportionate sampling and the convenience sampling techniques.

Stage one

At this point, the researcher employed cluster sampling technique in which the population is divided into groups, or clusters, based on some shared characteristic (such as geographic location or organizational structure). Then, a random sample of clusters is selected, and all individuals or units within the selected clusters are included in the sample. In this case, the Nile University Abuja was divided into its 6 faculties, with each faculty containing departments, forming the research cluster.

Stage two

In simple random sampling, everyone in a group has the same chance of being picked, which helps make sure the results are fair and can apply to the whole group. The researcher split the school into different groups based on their faculties, and then chose four groups - Law, Engineering, Arts & Social science and College of health to stand for the whole school. Inside each group, they picked departments by writing their names on pieces of paper and choosing them randomly from a container. This way of picking made sure that the selection was random and covered all the different subjects, which is what Thompson (2012) suggested.

Table 2: Nile University Undergraduates Population Breakdown

FACULTIES	DEPARTMENTS	POPULATION
College of Health Sciences.	MBBS Medicine, BSc Human Anatomy & Physiology	1800
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences.	Economics English Language & Communication Studies & Mass Communication	547
Faculty of Engineering.	Computer Engineering, Electrical, Electronics Engineering and Civil Engineering	1200
Faculty of Law.	Law	2000
Faculty of Management Sciences.	Estate management, Accounting, Marketing and Public administration	1000
Faculty of Natural & Applied Sciences.	Information Technology, Biotechnology, Biochemistry and Industrial Chemistry	2000
TOTAL		8,547

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Stage three

At this stage, the Bowley's proportionate sampling technique of 8,547 was employed to ensure equitable representation of faculties in the distribution of questionnaire, to ensure equal representation of faculties in the distribution of questionnaire, maintaining a proportional balance with their respective populations. The equation of this for this calculation is: $nh = (N_h/N) \times n$. Where nh is the sample size for strata h , N_h is the population for strata h , N is the population for stratum h , n is the total population for size, while n is total sample size.

For College of Health Science

$$nh = (N_h/N) \times n \quad nh = (1800/8,547) \times 368 = 52$$

For faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

$$nh = (N_h/N) \times n \quad nh = (547/8,547) \times 368 = 86$$

For faculty of Law

$$nh = (N_h/N) \times n \quad nh = (2000/8,547) \times 368 = 77$$

For faculty of Management Science

$$nh = (N_h/N) \times n \quad nh = (1000/8,547) \times 368 = 43$$

For faculty of Engineering

$$nh = (N_h/N) \times n \quad nh = (1200/8,547) \times 368 = 86$$

For faculty of Natural and applied science

$$nh = (N_h/N) \times n \quad nh = (2000/8,547) \times 368 = 24$$

Stage four

The researcher used a sampling method called convenience sampling, where they picked participants who were easy to reach and willing to take part. This method is also called an available sample. In this study, the researcher gave out questionnaires to specific

departments in the university, using this method to collect data from a group of participants.

Instrument for Data Collection

The main tool that will be used is a set of questions in a survey. This would be administered online and the question has multiple-choice answers. The researcher also will use a scale called Likert to see how much people agreed or disagreed with different statements.

Method of Data Analysis/Presentation

In the data analysis phase, the researcher utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods to address the research questions. Quantitative analysis involved statistical tools and numerical data, while qualitative analysis delved into detailed descriptions and interpretations. Clear presentation was ensured through simple tables. The data will be logically organized, beginning with demographic characteristics of respondents, followed by analysis and interpretation of the research questions.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Description of the sample

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the research. The primary sample of this study is Nile University students, Abuja. A total of 368 questionnaires were distributed, representing the sample size determined using the Australian Scientific Calculator method. All 368 questionnaires, comprising 30 questions each, were returned valid. The table below illustrates the questionnaire distribution.

Table 1: Questionnaire Response Rate

Item	Total	%
Copies of Questionnaire Administered	365	100
Copies of Questionnaire Returned	365	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

All 368 questionnaires that were distributed were returned and considered valid for the analysis. This represents a 100% response rate from the sample. Having all questionnaires returned ensures the analysis covers the full intended sample size.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	154	41.85
Female	214	58.15
Total	368	100
Age		
18 – 23	204	55.43
24 – 29	120	32.61
30 – 35	36	9.78
36 – 41	7	1.90
42 – 47	1	0.27
Total	368	100
Year		
100	33	8.97
200	63	17.12
300	88	23.91
400	102	27.72
500	82	22.28
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

The sample had more female respondents at 58.15% compared to 41.85% male respondents. This gender split allows the analysis to capture perspectives from both genders, though skewed slightly more towards females. The vast majority (88.04%) of respondents were under 30 years old, with the 18-23 age group being the largest at 55.43%. This aligns with the study's focus on university students' perspectives. The respondents were well distributed across academic years, with the highest numbers in years 400 (27.72%) and 300 (23.91%). Having a range of academic years allows comparing perspectives based on years of university experience.

Table 3: Mental Health Status

Variable	Frequency	%
Mental Health Diagnosis		
Yes	85	23.10
No	231	62.77
Maybe	52	14.13
Total	368	100
Sought Support		
Yes	131	35.60
No	181	49.18
Maybe	56	15.22
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

While the majority (62.77%) have not been diagnosed with a mental health disorder, a notable portion (23.10%) have received a diagnosis, allowing the study to capture perspectives from those directly impacted. Around half (49.18%) of respondents have not sought mental health support or counselling, while over a third (35.60%) have, indicating a divide in experiences that can be explored.

Table 4: How frequently do you listen to podcasts in general?

Frequency	Total	%
Never	16	4.35
Rarely	87	23.64
Occasionally	150	40.76
Frequently	80	21.74
Very Frequently	35	9.51
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

The majority of respondents (40.76%) listen to podcasts occasionally, while 21.74% listen frequently and 23.64% listen rarely. Only a small portion (4.35%) never listen to podcasts, suggesting podcasts are a popular medium among this sample.

Table 5: How do you usually access podcasts?

Access Method	Total	%
Smartphone/tablet	241	65.49
Computer/laptop	92	25.00
Smart speaker	35	9.51
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

The predominant way respondents access podcasts is via smartphone/tablet at 65.49%, reflecting the dominance of mobile devices. Computer/laptop (25.00%) is the second most common access method.

Table 6: How did you learn about mental health podcasts?

Source	Total	%
Social media	215	58.42
Friends	97	26.36
Family	56	15.22
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

Social media (58.42%) is the primary way respondents learned about mental health podcasts, with friends (26.36%) being the second biggest source. This underscores the role of online platforms and social circles.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This section presents a deeper interpretation of the data collected from respondents. Beyond frequencies and percentages, the results are analyzed to uncover patterns, possible implications, and their alignment with mental health theory and practice in academic settings.

The level of awareness among the audience regarding mental health issues through podcast messaging:

Table 7: To what extent do you feel informed about mental health issues after listening to mental health podcasts?

Extent of awareness	Total	%
Not at All	35	9.51
Slightly	73	19.84
Moderately	131	35.60
Much informed	110	29.89
Very Much Informed	19	5.16
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

A majority (65.49%) feel moderately to very much informed about mental health issues after listening to related podcasts. However, 29.35% feel only slightly informed or not at all informed, suggesting room for improvement in the effectiveness of podcast messaging.

Table 8: How effective do you find the information presented in mental health podcasts in increasing your awareness of mental health issues?

Effectiveness	Total	%
Not Effective at All	17	4.62
Slightly Effective	72	19.57
Moderately Effective	146	39.67
Very Effective	111	30.16
Extremely Effective	22	5.98
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

Most respondents (70.83%) find the information presented in mental health podcasts to be moderately to extremely effective in increasing awareness. Only 4.62% find it not effective at all, indicating that podcasts are generally seen as a useful awareness tool.

Table 9: To what degree do you think mental health podcasts have helped in reducing stigma surrounding mental health topics?

Degree of Help	Total	%
Not at All	25	6.79
Slightly	69	18.75
Moderately	130	35.33
Very Much	120	32.61
Completely	24	6.52
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

While 35.33% believe mental health podcasts have only moderately helped in reducing stigma, a significant portion (39.13%) think they have helped very much or completely. This suggests podcasts can play a valuable role in destigmatizing mental health topics.

Table 10: How likely are you to recommend mental health podcasts to others for increasing awareness about mental health issues?

Recommendation	Total	%
Very Unlikely	24	6.52
Unlikely	48	13.04
Neutral	107	29.08
Likely	141	38.32
Very Likely	48	13.04
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

Over half (51.36%) are likely or very likely to recommend mental health podcasts to others for increasing awareness, reflecting a positive perception of their usefulness. However, 29.08% remain neutral and 19.56% are unlikely or very unlikely to recommend them.

Table 11: How often do you listen to mental health podcasts?

Listening Frequency	Total	%
Never	30	8.15
Rarely	91	24.73
Occasionally	118	32.07
Frequently	102	27.72
Very Frequently	27	7.32
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

The frequency of listening to mental health podcasts is varied, with 32.07% listening occasionally, 27.72% frequently, and 24.73% rarely. A smaller portion (8.15%) never listen, while 7.32% listen very frequently.

Perception of Nile University undergraduates on mental health issues:

Table 12: To what extent do you believe mental health is an important issue among Nile University students?

Extent of Importance	Total	%
Not Important at All	18	4.89
Slightly Important	55	14.95
Moderately Important	80	21.74
Very Important	134	36.41
Extremely Important	81	22.01
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

The vast majority (58.42%) believe mental health is a very important or extremely important issue among young university students, underscoring the relevance of this topic for the sample population. Only 4.89% consider it not important at all.

Table 13: How comfortable do you feel discussing mental health problems with your peers?

Comfort Level	Total	%
Very Uncomfortable	27	7.34
Uncomfortable	44	11.96
Neutral	130	35.33
Comfortable	138	37.50
Very Comfortable	29	7.88
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

Most respondents feel comfortable (37.5%) or neutral (35.33%) discussing mental health problems with peers, indicating a relatively open environment for such conversations. However, 19.3% feel uncomfortable or very uncomfortable, suggesting some stigma persists.

Table 14: Do you think mental health issues are adequately addressed and supported within the university community?

Perceived Adequacy	Total	%
Strongly Disagree	63	17.12
Disagree	123	33.42
Neutral	93	25.27
Agree	71	19.29
Strongly Agree	18	4.89
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

Half of the respondents (50.54%) disagree or strongly disagree that mental health issues are adequately addressed and supported within the university community. Only 24.18% agree or strongly agree, revealing a perceived gap in support systems.

Table 15: How confident are you in recognizing signs of mental health issues in yourself or others?

Confidence Level	Total	%
Not Confident at All	30	8.15
Slightly Confident	58	15.76
Moderately Confident	132	35.87
Very Confident	126	34.24
Extremely Confident	22	5.98
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

A majority (70.11%) feel moderately to extremely confident in recognizing signs of mental health issues in themselves or others, suggesting a decent level of awareness. However, 23.91% lack confidence, indicating a need for further education.

Table 16: How likely are you to seek help or support if you were experiencing mental health difficulties?

Likelihood	Total	%
Very Unlikely	27	7.34
Unlikely	47	12.77
Neutral	103	28.00
Likely	150	40.76
Very Likely	41	11.14
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

There is a significant divide in the likelihood of seeking help for mental health difficulties, with 40.76% likely to do so but 28% being neutral and 20.11% being unlikely or very unlikely. This highlights potential barriers to accessing support.

Influence of mental health podcasts on the attitudes of Nile University undergraduates towards mental health:

Table 17: To what extent do you think mental health podcasts have helped in normalizing conversations about mental health among Nile University students?

Degree of Normalization	Total	%
Not at All	20	5.43
Slightly	72	19.57
Moderately	132	35.87
Very Much	123	33.42
Completely	21	5.71
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

A combined 39.13% believe mental health podcasts have very much or completely helped in normalizing conversations about mental health among students. However, 35.87% think the impact has been moderate, suggesting room for further progress.

Table 18: How likely are you to challenge misconceptions about mental health after listening to mental health podcasts?

Likelihood	Total	%
Very Unlikely	17	4.62
Unlikely	42	11.41
Neutral	115	31.25
Likely	151	41.03
Very Likely	43	11.68
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

Over half (52.71%) are likely or very likely to challenge misconceptions about mental health after listening to related podcasts, reflecting their potential to dispel harmful myths and stereotypes. However, 31.25% remain neutral on this.

Table 19: Level of Influence on attitude of respondents

Variable	Frequency	%
Empathy Level		
Strongly Disagree	21	5.71
Disagree	40	10.87
Neutral	113	30.71
Agree	164	44.57
Strongly Agree	30	8.15
Total	368	100
Impact Level		
Not Impacted at All	21	5.71
Slightly Impacted	67	18.21
Moderately Impacted	143	38.86
Very Impacted	117	31.79
Extremely Impacted	20	5.43
Total	368	100

Source: Questionnaire, 2024

While 30.71% remain neutral, a majority (52.72%) agree or strongly agree that they feel more empathetic towards individuals with mental health struggles after listening to related podcasts. This suggests podcasts can foster greater understanding and compassion. Most respondents (70.65%) report that mental health podcasts have moderately to extremely impacted their understanding of mental health disorders, indicating their effectiveness as an educational tool. Only 5.71% report no impact at all.

Discussion of Findings

This section provides a comprehensive interpretation of the research outcomes in light of existing literature. It draws meaningful connections between the survey data and prior studies, particularly highlighting how mental health podcasts influence awareness, empathy, and help-seeking behavior among undergraduates at Nile University.

The level of awareness among the audience regarding mental health issues through podcast messaging:

The findings show that while podcast messaging has achieved moderate success in raising awareness about mental health issues among the audience, there is still significant room for improvement in this regard. A majority of respondents reported feeling moderately to very much informed about mental health issues after listening to related podcasts, and most found the information presented to be moderately to extremely effective in increasing their awareness. However, a notable portion of respondents still felt only slightly informed or not informed at all, indicating that the effectiveness of podcast messaging in creating awareness has not reached its full potential. While mental health podcasts have helped in reducing stigma surrounding mental health topics for some respondents, a

significant proportion believes that these podcasts have only moderately contributed to stigmatization efforts. However, these findings show the relevance to the study by Ukwueze and Okpulo (2014) that found that while the necessary infrastructure for podcast integration was available, there was a significant lack of awareness among participants, which emerged as a major obstacle to adopting mental health podcasting. Despite these shortcomings, there is a generally positive perception of the usefulness of podcasts for increasing awareness about mental health issues, as evidenced by the fact that over half of the respondents are likely or very likely to recommend mental health podcasts to others for this purpose. This suggests that podcasts are seen as a valuable tool for raising awareness, but their impact could be further enhanced by addressing the gaps in effectiveness highlighted by the findings.

Perception of Nile University undergraduates on mental health issues:

The findings clearly indicate that mental health is widely recognized as a crucial issue among young university students, underscoring its relevance and importance for this specific population. While a majority of respondents reported feeling comfortable or neutral when discussing mental health problems with their peers, a notable portion still expressed feeling uncomfortable or very uncomfortable in such situations. This suggests that despite progress in destigmatizing mental health discussions, there is still a persistent level of stigma and discomfort surrounding these topics within the university community. Significantly, half of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that mental health issues are adequately addressed and supported within the university environment, highlighting a perceived gap in the availability and accessibility of support systems for students struggling with mental health challenges.

On a more positive note, a majority of respondents felt moderately to extremely confident in their ability to recognize signs of mental health issues in themselves or others, indicating a decent level of awareness and knowledge about mental health within the student population. However, there was a significant divide in the likelihood of seeking help or support for mental health difficulties, with many respondents expressing neutrality or an unwillingness to seek assistance. This potentially points to the existence of barriers, whether logistical, cultural, or personal, that prevent students from accessing the support they may need when facing mental health challenges.

Influence of mental health podcasts on the attitudes of Nile University undergraduates towards mental health:

Mental health podcasts appear to have positively influenced the attitudes of Nile University undergraduates towards mental health in several ways. A majority report feeling more empathetic towards individuals with mental health struggles after listening to related podcasts, indicating increased understanding and compassion. Most respondents also report that these podcasts have impacted their understanding of mental health disorders, suggesting their effectiveness as educational tools. Furthermore, over half are likely to

challenge misconceptions about mental health after listening to podcasts, reflecting their potential to dispel harmful myths. A majority also feel more motivated to support friends or peers with mental health difficulties, highlighting the positive influence of podcasts on fostering a supportive environment. As found by Amal (2022), mental health awareness podcasts served as innovative teaching resources that facilitated engaging classroom activities focused on mental health education. They also provided supplementary materials and resources that promoted mental health literacy and well-being among students

Limitations of the study

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations: The sample was limited to Nile University students, potentially restricting generalizability. The self-reported data may be subject to response biases and inaccuracies. Additionally, the study focused specifically on podcasts and did not explore other media channels. The cross-sectional design captures a single point in time, limiting longitudinal analysis. Furthermore, cultural and socioeconomic factors influencing mental health were not extensively examined. Finally, the study did not investigate the effectiveness of different podcast formats or styles.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the role of podcasts in creating mental health awareness among university students. While podcasts have made strides in raising awareness and influencing attitudes, their full potential is yet to be realized. The findings underscore the pressing need to address mental health issues within university communities, as students face numerous challenges that can significantly impact their well-being. Tailored interventions, improved support services, and a concerted effort to destigmatize mental health discussions are crucial steps towards fostering a more supportive and inclusive campus environment. By leveraging the power of podcasts and addressing the identified gaps, universities can play a pivotal role in promoting mental health literacy and ensuring students have access to the resources they need to thrive.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness of podcast messaging and improve mental health support for university students:

1. There should be increased accessibility and promotion of mental health podcasts on campus. This can be done through collaboration with mental health professionals to ensure accurate and comprehensive information and these podcast content should be tailored to address specific challenges faced by students.
2. A stance to integrate podcasts into university mental health initiatives and awareness campaigns can provide training for faculty and staff on recognizing signs

of distress. Moreso, this can expand on-campus counselling and support services and foster a culture of open dialogue around mental health issues.

3. Partnering with student organizations to amplify mental health advocacy efforts to conduct regular assessments to identify emerging mental health needs can be a clear means to prioritize mental health as a key component of holistic student well-being.

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