

**THE IMPACT OF PODCASTING ON MENTAL HEALTH AMONG YOUTH IN
KAMPALA MAINLY AT UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY MAIN CAMPUS
AND THE MEDIA CHALLENGE INITIATIVE COMMUNITY**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

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DECLARATION

I, Michael Ainomugisha declare that this research report entitled The Impact of Podcasting on Mental Health Among Youth in Kampala Mainly At Uganda Christian University Main Campus And The Media Challenge Initiative Community is my own work and has never been presented for degree award to any University or institution, but due acknowledgement has been done where it is indebted to the works of others.

Signed.....

Date.....

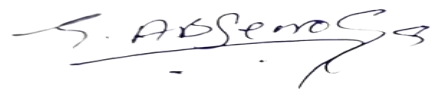
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APPROVAL

This research report entitled “The Impact of Podcasting Mental Health among Youth in Kampala Mainly at Uganda Christian University Main Campus and the Media Challenge Initiative Community has been done under my supervision and is now ready for submission to the School of Journalism Media and Communication at Uganda Christian University.

Signature:


02. Aug. 2024

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

WHO	:	World Health Organisation.
RQ	:	Research Questions.
MCI	:	Media Challenge Initiative
HSSP	:	Health Services Strategic Plan

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the impact of podcasting on mental health among youth in Kampala, specifically at Uganda Christian University and the Media Challenge Initiative community. The study aimed to address the gap in understanding how mental health podcasts influence the well-being of young listeners. A qualitative research design was employed, utilising interviews and surveys to gather data from podcasters, mental health professionals, and youth participants. The findings revealed that podcasts serve as a valuable resource for mental health support, providing accessible information and fostering community engagement. Participants reported improved mental health awareness and coping strategies as a result of their podcast consumption. The study concluded that podcasting can play a significant role in addressing mental health issues among youth, suggesting that mental health professionals and content creators should collaborate to enhance the effectiveness of these digital platforms in promoting mental well-being.

Keywords: podcasting, mental health, Kampala, Media Challenge Initiative, Uganda
Christian University youth, media.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Podcasting has become a popular medium for sharing information and entertainment. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of podcasts focused on mental health (Chartable, 2023) The Cambridge Dictionary has defined a podcast as a radio programme that is stored in a digital form that you can download from the internet and play on a computer or on an MP3 player. It is also a predetermined media interface, which creates a platform where people can share their digital audio and video files.

However, over the past years, podcasts have been added to mobile phones for quick access. Podcasts are increasingly used in mental health contexts, such as communicating advice around improving well-being, guided meditations, psycho education, and translating research findings. (Carrotte et al., 2023)

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines mental health as a “state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (World Health Organisation, 2021) Mental health is a significant issue in Uganda, with many people experiencing anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions. According to the New Vision, on May 13, 2022, approximately 14 million people suffered from mental health illnesses (New Vision, 2022) The data also found that Uganda ranks in the top six with 4.6% cases of depression and 2.9% of persons living with anxiety disorders relating to the 2017 data (Opio et al., 2021). According to the data released in 2018, 1.2 million youth in Uganda between the ages of 15 and 29 are idle (STATE OF UGANDA POPULATION report, 2018), posing a risk of idleness and mental health issues. Facing mental health stigma and lack of resources and knowledge on the subject both UCU and MCI students make up a portion of the large population of Uganda's youth today.

1.2 Problem Statement

Mental health is a significant issue in Uganda among youthful populations, with many youths experiencing anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions. There have been many interventions to address the problem of mental health such as communication. Podcasts that offer guidance, counselling and mentorship have been done to address the problem of mental health but what is the impact of podcasts? There is limited information on the impact of podcasting on mental health in Uganda, particularly at Uganda Christian University and Media Challenge Community. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring the impact of podcasting on mental health among youth.

1.3 General Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore the impact of podcasting on mental health among youth Uganda Christian University and Media Challenge Community.

1.4 Specific objectives

- To explore the impact of mental health podcasts on youthful listeners' mental health in Kampala mainly the MCI community and Uganda Christian University main campus.
- To identify the most popular mental health podcasts in Kampala, mainly the MCI community and Uganda Christian University main campus among the youth.
- To find out the factors that influence the effectiveness of mental health podcasts in Kampala, mainly the MCI community and Uganda Christian University main campus.

1.5 Research Questions

RQ1: What are the most popular mental health podcasts in Kampala mainly at the MCI community and Uganda Christian University main campus?

RQ2: How do mental health podcasts impact listeners' mental health in Kampala mainly the MCI community and Uganda Christian University main campus.

RQ3: What topics under mental health or issues are addressed on mental health podcasts?

RQ4: What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of podcasts in addressing mental health among the youth?

1.6. The Scope of the Study

This study will focus on mental health problems among youth in Kampala, Uganda mainly the MCI community and Uganda Christian University main campus, and the impact of podcasting on these issues. The research will help to understand the different views regarding the impact of podcasting on mental disorders and problems, as well as to fill the gap in the published literature by focusing on mental health problems among youth in Kampala

1.6.1 GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

This research will focus on the youthful population in Kampala, Uganda particularly the MCI community and Uganda Christian University main campus.

1.6.2 CONTENT SCOPE

The study will analyse the content of the most popular mental health podcasts in Kampala

1.6.3 TIME SCOPE

The research study was conducted between December 2023 and May 2024 to assess the well-being of youth in both off-school and on-school periods.

1.7 Significance of the study

The study will aim to fill the gap in research on the impact of podcasting on mental health in Uganda, particularly Kampala, among the youth of the

MCI community and Uganda Christian University main campus. The study will provide valuable insights for Uganda's mental health professionals, policymakers, and podcast creators.

This study will also contribute to a global understanding of the role of podcasting in promoting mental health among youth.

1.8 Theoretical Framework.

The study was guided by a theoretical framework that provides a foundation for understanding the relationship between podcasting and mental health in Kampala. These will depend on the research questions and objectives of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature in relation to podcast coverage on mental health among youth at Uganda Christian University and Media Challenge Community. The literature reviewed shows that research has been partly done in the Western world, Australia, and less in Uganda and Africa. Mental health is a significant issue in Uganda with many youths experiencing anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions. While podcasts have been shown to have a positive impact on mental health, there is limited research on the impact of podcasting on mental health in Uganda, particularly among the youth.

Many recent studies have focused on other forms of media on issues concerning mental health. Yet, there are many people, especially youth, who listen to podcasts as their primary source for information concerning mental health and its related issues. While there is much research on mental health among youth and media, few researchers have taken podcasts into consideration.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by a theoretical framework within which this study is derived. The study was derived from the uses and gratifications theory.

2.1.1 The Uses and Gratifications Theory

The theory seeks to examine listening choices and behaviour. The theory focuses on ways in which people use media to satisfy individual wants. A study carried out in 2007 found that youth use music and audio content to express their identity, connect with others and cope with difficult emotions (mental health) (Gauntlett, 2007) Youths also listened to podcasts in 2022 to be informed, and entertained and learn new things (Podtrac, 2022)

2.2 Podcasting

A podcast is defined as an audio recording that can be delivered directly to consumers' media devices, including portable music players, computers, laptops, and smartphones (Kidd, 2012). Podcasts emerged in the early 2000s during the boom of Web 2.0 technologies and were quickly adopted by educators who saw the potential benefits of the medium. (Christopher Drew, 2017)

Podcasts are a unique form of media because of their availability online, and easy to produce, release, and play at any time. As downloadable content, youths can carry and listen to podcasts on portable devices like smartphones, tablets, and laptops and listen to them in places that suit them, such as on buses, in the car, and while exercising in gyms, making them a valuable form of media for affordance and accessing information on mental health. "Podcasts, unlike other forms of broadcast media, are cheap to produce, requiring little more than simple recording software and a microphone. They are also easy to distribute thanks to sites like Podbean, Spotify, and Google Podcasts, making radio-style broadcasts possible for mental health experts worldwide." (Fothergill, 2008.)

Podcasts are growing rapidly as a popular culture phenomenon, helping connect listeners to audio content created by professionals in fields like mental health, sports, and journalism, among others. Radio stations have also crafted their shows in the form of podcasts, for example, Capital Gang and Desert Island Discs, all on Capital FM Uganda, and selected a few radio stations in Uganda, both popular and amateur hobbyists. "Recent data from Edison Research revealed that an estimated 73 million Americans had listened to a podcast in the previous month, and those audiences listened to an average of seven podcasts per week" (Edison Research, 2018). This research will aim to find a podcast listenership on mental health in Kampala among youth.

2.3 MENTAL HEALTH

Poor mental health is a growing global health issue due to its long-term physical, social, and economic impacts (World Health Organisation, 2019)

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as a “state of well-being whereby individuals recognise their abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and contribute to their communities”. Mental health is, to date, considered a neglected area in developing countries. Mental health problems can affect one out of every four people during their lives by altering their functioning, behaviour, and thinking patterns. (van der Ham et al., 2011)

Factors for mental health issues include unhappiness, rejection, over thinking, self-downing and blaming, low self-esteem, anxiety and worry, and conflicts in familial and other interpersonal relationships. Of these, there are psychosocial and environmental factors. (Bowers et al., 2012) Although mental disorders reflect psychiatric disturbances, youths may be affected more broadly by mental health problems. These include various difficulties and burdens that interfere with youth development and adversely affect the quality of life emotionally, socially, and vocationally.

“According to Uganda’s Health Services Strategic Plan (HSSP), the main challenges in the mental health system include access, a weak referral system (curative, preventive, or motivational), skilled staff shortages, and stock-outs of pharmaceuticals.” In addition, there is a need to extensively strengthen the supervision, monitoring, and evaluation of existing programmes to produce timely and useful information on effectiveness. (Kopinak, 2014)

In Uganda, discussions around mental health have gained increased attention in recent years, with several new initiatives trying to improve services. The mental health system, however, still faces many challenges. (Ssebunnya et al., 2011)

This research will fill the gap between media (Podcasts) and its impact on mental health among youths

2.4 Kampala Youth

Kampala is the capital city of Uganda, a low-income country in sub-Saharan Africa (The World Bank, 2019). The national youth policy defines youth as young people aged 12 to 30 years, female and male. (International Youth Foundation, 2011) Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development,2015). It should be noted that Uganda is home to the world's youngest population, with over 78 per cent of its population below the age of 30. These pose a risk of mental health issues like depression, stress, and anxiety, among others.

The global annual economic impact of anxiety and depression is estimated to be \$1 trillion (World Health Organisation, 2019). According to the demographic dividend data from the Population Reference Bureau (2016), youth are classified as working age.

The youth population in Uganda is projected to increase by 10,976,000 (Uganda Bureau Of Statistics,2023) compared to how it was by the last population census in 2014, the urban population was also projected to be 17.0 million, (Mid-year 2023) Since the covid-19 global lockdown there has been an increase of interest in the long-term mental health consequences among youth. Mental health issues rose and according to the New Vision, on May 13, 2022, approximately 14 million people suffer from mental health illnesses, the youth inclusive (New Vision, 2022).

2.5 MCI Community and Uganda Christian University.

2.5.1 MCI Community.

The Media Challenge Initiative is a youth-led non-profit organisation that uses experiential learning, peer-to-peer mentoring, and training to develop the next generation of journalists in Africa. Since 2012, MCI has offered training

in multimedia journalism and professional journalism. A group of four Ugandans founded this social company, which offers journalism seminars and media fellowships to aspiring journalists in an effort to help them further their careers. Thereby developing a youthful community at their projects like Solutions Now Africa, Debunk Media Initiative, MCI Academy and MCI radio all at the MCI Media Hub in Kabalagala, Kampala.

2.5.2 Uganda Christian University.

Uganda Christian University (UCU), a private Christian university, is situated in Mukono, Uganda. Having been established in 1997, this highly regarded university in Uganda holds accreditation from the Uganda National Council for Higher Education. A wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs in a variety of disciplines are available at UCU through our dynamic Schools and Faculties, including business, computer science, education, law, medicine, dentistry, engineering, visual arts and design, nursing, agricultural sciences, social sciences, journalism, media and communication, and theology. Situated in Greater Kampala's Mukono the University is a home to a youthful population that aided this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study uses a qualitative research design to explore the impact of podcasting on mental health among youth in Kampala. Interviews were conducted to collect data from target populations like podcasters, mental health experts, researchers, university students, and policymakers, among others.

3.1 AREA OF STUDY

The study will focus on the youthful population of Kampala, Uganda particularly the UCU Main Campus and MCI Community.

3.2 Sources of information

The study uses primary data collected through a survey and secondary data from academic journals, books, and online sources.

3.3 Population and Sampling Techniques

The target population for this study was youth in Kampala between the ages of 18 and 35. The study will use stratified random sampling techniques to select participants from different parts of UCU Main Campus and MCI Community.

3.4 Variables and Indicators

The independent variable was podcasting, while the dependent variable was mental health. The study will use indicators such as stress levels, anxiety, and depression to measure mental health

3.5 Procedure for data collection

The study uses a self-administered questionnaire and survey to collect data from participants. The questionnaire was distributed among sources and correspondents online and in person.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments and Equipment

The study uses a structured questionnaire as the data collection instrument. The questionnaire will collect data on the research questions and objectives.

3.7 Quality/Error Control

The study used a pilot test to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The study will use statistical software like Google Sheets and Raven's Eye to analyse the data and minimise errors.

3.8 Strategy for Data Processing and Analysis

This study aims to establish an understanding of the relationship between podcasting and mental health among youth in Kampala.

3.8.1 Data Collection

The study will use a self-administered questionnaire to collect data from participants, which was distributed among sources and correspondents online and in person. The questionnaire was designed to collect data on research questions and objectives using structured questions.

3.8.2 Data Cleaning

This study cleaned up the collected data by removing duplicates, handling missing values, and correcting errors or inconsistencies.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study aimed at obtaining informed consent from the participants and ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality. The study also followed ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects

3.10 Anticipated methodological constraints:

The study may face challenges such as low response rates, incomplete questionnaires, low resources to organise interviews

3.11 Work Plan/Timeline

The study was conducted between December 2023 and May 2024. The work plan includes the following activities: literature review, questionnaire design, pilot tests and study, data collection, analysis of the data, and report writing.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the results of analysis that has been done to look at the specific objectives of the study and in relation to the reviewed literature. The study was carried out using questionnaires with UCU Main Campus and MCI Community. The findings are presented with the help of tables for purposes of clarity and interpretation.

4.1 Background characteristics of respondents

The background information of respondents was deemed necessary because the ability of the respondents to give satisfactory information on the study variables greatly depends on their background. The background information of respondents solicited data on the samples and this has been presented below categorized into; name of institution and age range.

4.1.1 Findings on name of institution

Table 1: Name of institution

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Uganda Christian University	29	72.5	72.5
MCI Community	11	27.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: *Primary data*

The findings in Table 1 show that the majority of respondents, 72.5%, were from Uganda Christian University, while the remaining 27.5% were from the MCI Community. This indicates that a significant portion of the data was gathered from participants at Uganda Christian University, suggesting that the perspectives and information provided are predominantly reflective of this institution. The

lower percentage from the MCI Community implies that the findings might be less representative of this group.

4.1.2 Finding on the age range of the respondents

Table 2: Age range

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-23 years	25	62.5	62.5
23-28 years	14	35.0	97.5
28-35 years	1	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: *Primary data*

The findings in Table 2 reveal that the largest proportion of respondents represented by 62.5% falls within the 18-23 years age range, indicating that the majority of participants are young adults. This is followed by 35.0% of respondents who are aged 23-28 years, suggesting a considerable representation of slightly older young adults. The least represented age group is 28-35 years, comprising only 2.5% of the respondents. This implies that the data and insights obtained are predominantly reflective of younger individuals, particularly those between 18 and 23 years old.

4.2 Presentation and interpretation of findings from the research objectives

Table 3: Do you understand the term “Mental Health”?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	36	90.0	90.0
No	2	5.0	95.0
Maybe	2	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: *Primary data*

The findings in Table 3 indicate that a significant majority of respondents, 90.0%, understand the term “Mental Health,” highlighting a high level of awareness and knowledge about the concept among the participants. Only 5.0% of respondents noted that they do not understand the term, while another 5.0% are uncertain, indicated by the “Maybe” response. This implies that educational efforts and information dissemination regarding mental health have been largely successful among the respondents. This high level of understanding suggests that the participants are likely to be receptive to further information and initiatives related to mental health, though the small percentage of those who do not understand or are unsure indicates that there is still a need for ongoing education and clarification in this area to achieve comprehensive awareness.

Table 4: Have you ever listened to a podcast?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	39	97.5	97.5
No	1	2.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: Primary data

The data in Table 4 reveals that an overwhelming majority of respondents, 97.5%, have listened to a podcast, indicating that podcasts are a widely adopted medium among the participants. Only 2.5% of respondents have never listened to a podcast. The high percentage of podcast listeners suggests that this format is a popular and accessible source of information and entertainment for the respondents. This implies that podcasts could be an effective platform for disseminating information, including educational and mental health content, given their widespread use.

Table 5: Do you think it is vital to talk about Mental Health on podcasts?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	40	100.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: *Primary data*

Table 5 indicates that all respondents represented by 100% believe it is vital to talk about mental health on podcasts. This unanimous agreement underscores the perceived importance of discussing mental health topics in accessible and popular formats such as podcasts. This highlights a universal recognition of the need for mental health awareness and education among the respondents. Given this consensus; leveraging podcasts as a medium to address mental health issues could be highly effective, resonating well with the audience and potentially leading to greater mental health awareness.

Table 6: Do you ever listen to podcasts about mental health?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	23	57.5	57.5
No	17	42.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: *Primary data*

Table 6 shows that 57.5% of respondents listen to podcasts about mental health, while 42.5% do not. This indicates that a majority of the respondents engage with mental health content through podcasts, but a significant proportion still do not. This implies that while there is a considerable interest in mental health discussions via podcasts, there remains a notable segment of the population that does not utilize this medium for such content. This gap presents an opportunity for increased outreach and education to encourage broader engagement with mental health topics through podcasts.

Table 7: If so, How often?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Once in a while	16	40.0	40.0
Daily	4	10.0	50.0
Weekly	7	17.5	67.5
Monthly	4	10.0	77.5
Sometimes	9	22.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: Primary data

Table 7 reveals that among the respondents who listen to podcasts about mental health, 40.0% do so “once in a while,” making this the most common frequency. Following this, 22.5% listen “sometimes,” 17.5% listen “weekly,” and 10.0% each listen “daily” or “monthly.” This distribution shows that the majority of listeners engage with mental health podcasts infrequently, with only a smaller proportion tuning in daily or weekly. This implies that while there is interest in mental health podcasts, engagement tends to be sporadic rather than consistent. This suggests a potential opportunity to increase regular listening through more compelling or accessible content and possibly to improve the integration of mental health podcasts into listeners' routines.

4.2.1 Mental health podcasts respondents have listened to

The respondents who are youths aged 18-35 years at UCU Main Campus and MCI Community were further asked to give the mental health podcasts they have listened to and their responses were as follows;

The respondents revealed a diverse range of mental health podcasts that listeners have engaged with. Notably, popular podcasts like "On Purpose by Jay Shetty" and "Therapy Chat by Megan" are mentioned, indicating a preference for well-known and professionally produced content. Other responses include "Side B (Basement Conversations) by Tim Ross" and "Fighting Anxiety," which also suggest an interest in podcasts that address specific mental health issues or offer practical advice. Additionally, some respondents have highlighted more niche or personal choices,

such as "Red Room with Lynda Ddane" and "A Better You by Fernanda Ramirez," reflecting a variety of preferences and topics within the mental health genre.

Furthermore, the mention of podcasts like "Rotten Mango," which primarily focuses on crime but also touches on mental health, indicates that some listeners are drawn to content that integrates mental health topics with other themes, such as true crime. This suggests that while listeners value mental health content, they might also appreciate it when it is combined with other engaging subjects. On the other hand, responses like "I surely do not remember" and "Haven't really listened to one" reveal a portion of the audience with less engagement or recall of specific mental health podcasts, highlighting a potential gap in awareness or interest. Some of the respondents had this to say,

".....I listen to Rotten Mango podcasts; it's a crime featuring podcast, but it also talks about mental health....." **UCU Student**

".....I haven't really listened to one honestly....." **MCI Community**

Therefore, this variability in podcast engagement points to a need for targeted outreach to both educate and attract those who are less familiar with mental health resources available through podcasts.

4.2.2 Topics covered in mental health podcasts

The respondents who are youths aged 18-35 years at UCU Main Campus and MCI Community were further asked to give the topics under mental health or issues that were addressed on the mental health podcasts and their responses were as follows;

The analysis of mental health topics addressed in podcasts reveals a broad and diverse range of issues that resonate with youth audiences from UCU Main Campus and MCI Community. The majority of the respondents identified a focus on significant emotional and psychological challenges, including stress, depression, and trauma. Topics such as "Stress, depression, setbacks" and "Stress management and depression" underscore the prevalent concern for coping with daily pressures and mental health struggles.

A notable number of responses pointed to specific conditions like "Post-Partum Depression," "Grief," and "Alcoholism," highlighting an awareness of various mental health issues that impact individuals in different stages of life. This shows a recognition of the need for targeted discussions on how mental health conditions manifest and affect people, particularly in contexts that may not be commonly addressed in mainstream conversations.

Respondents also indicated that podcasts explore broader concepts related to mental well-being, such as "Mental fitness," "Finding inner peace and dealing with emotions," and "Complementing oneself." These topics reflect an interest in strategies for personal growth and self-care, suggesting that listeners are seeking practical advice on maintaining mental health and enhancing overall well-being.

Cultural aspects and the role of social media in mental health were also mentioned, with topics like "Culture and mental health" and "Social media" being noted. This indicates a growing awareness of how external factors influence mental health, pointing to a broader understanding of the interplay between societal influences and individual mental health.

Several respondents mentioned the general themes of happiness and emotional resilience, including "Happiness, death, anxiety" and "Building Confidence." These responses highlight an interest in positive mental health practices and strategies for achieving emotional balance. As one respondent noted, "Finding inner peace and dealing with emotions" suggests a proactive approach to managing mental health challenges.

In summary, the diverse range of topics covered in mental health podcasts reflects a broad spectrum of issues, from specific conditions and emotional challenges to strategies for personal growth and coping mechanisms. This variety indicates a comprehensive approach to mental health discussions, catering to the multifaceted needs of the youth audience.

Table 8: Have you ever recommended a mental health podcast to an Individual?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	19	47.5	47.5
No	21	52.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: *Primary data*

The findings in Table 8 reveal that 52.5% of respondents have not recommended a mental health podcast to an individual, while 47.5% have. The majority, therefore, falls into the category of not having made such recommendations. This suggests that slightly less than half of the respondents are actively sharing mental health podcast resources with others, which could imply either a lack of awareness about the benefits of recommending such content or limited engagement with mental health podcasts themselves. This also implies that there may be an opportunity to increase awareness and encourage the sharing of mental health resources, potentially enhancing the reach and impact of mental health podcasts among the population.

4.2.2 Positive impacts of podcasts on mental health

The respondents who are youths aged 18-35 years at UCU Main Campus and MCI Community were further asked whether they have ever felt that a podcast helped them improve their mental health and how it did so and their responses were as follows;

The responses from youths aged 18-35 years at UCU Main Campus and MCI Community reveal that podcasts have played a significant role in enhancing their mental health in various ways. Many respondents reported a positive change in their self-perception and mindset. For instance, one individual shared, "My view of myself changed positively," indicating that the podcasts fostered a healthier self-image and improved self-esteem. This shift often stemmed from the insights and guidance provided by the podcasts, which helped listeners navigate their mental health challenges more effectively.

Several respondents noted that podcasts served as valuable sources of guidance and support in managing mental health. One respondent mentioned that the podcasts offered "guidelines on how to navigate mental health challenges" and "obtained/learned stress management skills," highlighting their practical utility. These podcasts not only provided coping strategies but also offered a sense of direction in dealing with stress and other mental health issues, which many found beneficial in their personal lives.

The sense of community and shared experience emerged as another crucial benefit. As one listener expressed, "I realized I wasn't alone and even though it feels like I'm not making any steps towards it's okay to stay behind a bit and collect yourself up." This sentiment reflects how podcasts can create a supportive environment where individuals feel connected and less isolated in their struggles. The shared experiences and stories from podcast hosts and guests helped listeners feel understood and validated, which is vital for mental well-being.

For some, podcasts provided an alternative to professional therapy services, offering meaningful support during times when traditional therapy was not accessible. One respondent noted, "I listen to a number of mental health podcasts and they have tremendously helped where I lacked therapy services." This suggests that podcasts can serve as a supplementary tool for those who might not have immediate access to conventional mental health resources.

Lastly, the inspirational and motivational content from podcasts was highly valued by respondents. For example, one person stated, "It refreshes my mind and soul with the Inspirational Quotes, stories, and experiences put out there." This indicates that the uplifting and hopeful messages conveyed through podcasts played a significant role in maintaining a positive outlook and fostering resilience. Overall, podcasts emerged as a powerful medium for improving mental health by enhancing self-awareness, providing practical advice, fostering a sense of community, and offering motivational support.

4.2.3 Negative impacts of podcasts on mental health

The respondents who are youths aged 18-35 years at UCU Main Campus and MCI Community were further asked whether they have ever felt that a podcast made their mental health worse and how it did so and their responses were as follows;

The responses from youths aged 18-35 years at UCU Main Campus and MCI Community indicate that while many found mental health podcasts beneficial, some experienced negative impacts on their mental health. A key concern was the way certain podcasts addressed topics and the generalizing nature of some content. Listeners felt that the approach and manner in which issues were discussed often failed to respect individual differences, leading to discomfort or aggravation.

Additionally, some respondents felt that podcasts, while potentially helpful, might lack the personal touch and depth offered by professional help or personal interactions with friends and family. This perceived lack of depth and personal connection could result in listeners feeling that their unique needs and experiences were not adequately addressed, potentially leading to frustration or a sense of alienation.

There was also a sentiment that podcasts sometimes provided information that was already known or did not add value beyond what was available from other sources. This redundancy could contribute to a feeling of stagnation or dissatisfaction with the content, impacting mental health negatively.

Despite these issues, some individuals did not report any negative effects from listening to podcasts, suggesting that their experiences with mental health podcasts were generally positive or neutral. This divergence in experiences highlights the subjective nature of media consumption and its impact on mental health.

Overall, the responses suggest that while mental health podcasts can be a valuable resource, their effectiveness and impact can vary significantly. The lack of personalized content and the generalization of topics were noted concerns that could potentially worsen mental health for some listeners. This underscores the

need for a balanced approach in mental health media, integrating professional guidance and personal support with podcast content.

4.2.4 Podcasts vs. other mental health information sources

The respondents who are youths aged 18-35 years at UCU Main Campus and MCI Community were further asked whether they think that podcasts compare to other sources of information about mental health (e.g., friends, family, professional help) and why they think so and their responses were as follows;

The responses from youths aged 18-35 years at UCU Main Campus and MCI Community reveal a nuanced view of how podcasts compare to other sources of mental health information, such as friends, family, and professional help. Many respondents appreciate the accessibility and convenience of podcasts, noting that they can be listened to anytime and anywhere, making them a valuable resource for those hesitant to seek in-person help due to fear of judgment. This flexibility allows individuals to reflect on mental health issues while multitasking, which some find beneficial.

Podcasts are praised for their ability to offer diverse perspectives and experiences that might not be available through personal interactions with friends or family. This aspect can be particularly useful for those who prefer not to discuss deeper life issues with those close to them or who lack a support system. The experiences shared by individuals on podcasts can validate listeners' feelings and provide insights that are relatable and applicable to their own situations.

However, there are limitations to podcasts compared to other sources of mental health support. Respondents pointed out that while podcasts can offer valuable information and emotional support, they may lack the depth and personalized guidance provided by professional help or the intimate understanding of friends and family. Professional help and personal relationships are seen as offering more tailored advice and solutions, which might be necessary for addressing complex mental health issues.

The emotional connection and understanding provided by close relationships are noted as significant advantages over podcasts. While podcasts can offer broad insights and validation, they may not fully address the individual needs and personal nuances that friends and family or mental health professionals can provide. This personal connection often plays a crucial role in effective mental health support and intervention.

Overall, the responses suggest that podcasts are a useful supplement to other sources of mental health information but may not fully replace the need for professional help or personal interactions. They offer convenience and a range of perspectives but should be integrated with other forms of support to provide a more comprehensive approach to mental health care.

Table 9: Would you recommend podcasts as a way of helping solve cases of mental health?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	28	70.0	70.0
Maybe	10	25.0	95.0
Most likely	2	5.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	

Source: *Primary data*

The findings from Table 9 indicate that a majority of respondents, 70%, would recommend podcasts as a method for addressing mental health issues. This suggests a strong endorsement of podcasts for their potential value in mental health support. In contrast, 25% of respondents are uncertain and select "Maybe," indicating some hesitation or ambiguity about the effectiveness of podcasts in solving mental health cases. A small minority, 5%, expressed a tentative endorsement by selecting "Most likely." This distribution highlights a general optimism about the usefulness of podcasts in mental health while acknowledging that their efficacy might not be universally agreed upon. This implies that while podcasts are widely considered a beneficial tool for mental health support, there remains some uncertainty about their overall effectiveness, suggesting that they are best used in conjunction with other forms of support.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes all findings reported in chapter four according to questions of the study, draws conclusions, suggests recommendations and also proposes some areas for further study.

5.1 Summary of findings

The findings reveal a high level of awareness and engagement with mental health and podcasts among youths at Uganda Christian University and the MCI community. A substantial majority, 90%, understand the term “Mental Health,” indicating a solid foundation of knowledge in the target population. This is complemented by 97.5% of respondents who have listened to podcasts, reflecting the medium's widespread acceptance and potential as a tool for information dissemination. All participants agree on the importance of discussing mental health in podcasts, suggesting a strong recognition of their value in raising awareness and providing support.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that among those who listen to podcasts, 57.5% engage with mental health content specifically, though this engagement is often sporadic rather than regular. Popular podcasts mentioned include "On Purpose by Jay Shetty" and "Therapy Chat by Megan," showing a preference for both mainstream and niche content. The topics covered range from stress and depression to broader concepts like mental fitness and social media impacts. Despite the general positive reception, 52.5% of respondents have not recommended mental health podcasts to others, highlighting a gap in advocacy and potential outreach opportunities.

Lastly, regarding the impact of podcasts, the majority of respondents view them positively, noting benefits such as improved self-perception, guidance, and a sense of community. However, some negative impacts were reported, including generalization of content and lack of depth compared to professional help.

Despite this, 70% of respondents would recommend podcasts as a mental health resource, though 25% remain uncertain. This indicates a broad acceptance of podcasts' potential benefits, while also acknowledging that they should be part of a comprehensive approach to mental health support, integrating other resources for optimal effectiveness.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings indicate a high level of awareness and engagement with mental health topics and podcasts among youths at Uganda Christian University and the MCI community, with a solid understanding of “Mental Health” and widespread podcast listenership. While many podcast listeners engage with mental health content, this engagement is often sporadic, and there is a notable gap in advocacy, as some have not recommended mental health podcasts to others. Despite some negative feedback regarding content generalization and depth, podcasts are generally viewed positively as a mental health resource and are recommended by a significant portion of respondents. This suggests that while podcasts are widely accepted and beneficial for mental health awareness and support, they should complement other resources to provide a more comprehensive approach to mental health care.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been found necessary concerning exploring the impact of podcasting on mental health among youth in Uganda Christian University main campus and the media challenge initiative community.

The study recommends the need for increased advocacy and promotion of mental health podcasts among the youth. Despite a high level of awareness and podcast usage, there is a noticeable gap in recommending mental health podcasts to peers. Implementing targeted campaigns to encourage sharing and discussion of these resources could enhance their reach and impact, fostering a more supportive community around mental health.

The study also recommends the need for creating and promoting consistent mental health podcast content. While many respondents engage with mental health podcasts, this engagement is often irregular. Developing a series of reliable, high-quality podcasts with regular updates and diverse topics could help maintain consistent engagement and provide ongoing support for mental health.

Furthermore, the study recommends the need for integrating podcasts with other mental health resources. Although podcasts are positively received and recommended, they are perceived as less comprehensive compared to professional help. Combining podcasts with access to professional mental health services and resources could provide a more holistic approach to mental health support, ensuring that individuals have multiple avenues for assistance.

In addition, the study recommends the need for addressing content generalization in mental health podcasts. Some respondents reported that the content can be overly generalized and lacks depth. Ensuring that podcast creators collaborate with mental health professionals to deliver accurate, detailed, and personalized content could improve the effectiveness of these resources and better meet the needs of the audience.

Lastly, the study recommends the need for ongoing evaluation and feedback mechanisms for mental health podcasts. Establishing systems for listeners to provide feedback on podcast content and its impact can help creators refine their approaches and address any identified gaps or issues. This continuous improvement process will enhance the relevance and quality of mental health podcasts, making them a more effective tool for supporting youth mental health.

5.4 Areas for further research

Since this study aimed at exploring the impact of podcasting on mental health among youth in Uganda Christian University main campus and the media challenge initiative community, the study recommends that; similar study should be done on other areas concerning this topic and these areas of further research needed include the following;

- First and foremost, further research should include exploring the specific types of mental health content that resonate most with different youth demographics, such as those based on age, gender, or socio-economic background.
- Additionally, investigating the long-term effects of regular podcast consumption on mental health outcomes among youth could provide deeper insights into its sustained impact.
- Further research should also examine the role of podcasting in complementing traditional mental health support services and its effectiveness in addressing mental health issues within different community settings.
- Finally, exploring barriers to recommending and sharing mental health podcasts could inform strategies to increase advocacy and dissemination among youth.

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Appendices

31/07/2024, 19:34

Impact of Podcasting on Mental Health

Impact of Podcasting on Mental Health

Dear My name is **Michael Ainomugisha** I am a finalist of Bachelor's of arts in Journalism and Communication at Uganda Christian University

Youth mental health is an important concern in Uganda, where many young people suffer from depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. Numerous therapies, including communication, have been developed to address the issue of mental health.

Although podcasts that provide direction, therapy, and mentorship have been developed to address the issue of mental health, what effect do they actually have? Information regarding the effects of podcasting on mental health in Uganda is scarce, there is not enough to record whether the podcasts are vital in addressing mental health especially among youth.

Media Challenge Community and **Uganda Christian University (MAIN CAMPUS)** are spaces largely occupied by youth and in this research study, I attempt to close this gap by investigating how podcasting affects young people's mental health.

** Indicates required question*

1. Email *

2. Name *

3. What is your Institution? *

Mark only one oval.

Uganda Christian University

MCI Community

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/10mVvFNwAqIqGv9-jIwczytVA_v7MY8hcIAaS9c-D3Q/edit

1/7

4. What is your age range? *

Mark only one oval.

18-23

23-28

28-35

5. Do you understand the term "Mental Health"? *



Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

6. Have you ever listened to a podcast? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

7. Do you think it is vital to talk about Mental Health on podcasts? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

8. Do you ever listen to podcasts about mental health? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

9. If so, How often?

Mark only one oval.

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Sometimes

Once in a while

10. Which mental health podcasts have you listened to?

11. What topics under mental health or issues were addressed on the mental health podcasts?

12. Have you ever recommended a mental health podcast to an Individual *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

13. Have you ever felt that a podcast helped you improve your mental health? If so, how?

14. Have you ever felt that a podcast made your mental health worse? If so, how?

15. Do you think podcasts compare to other sources of information about mental health (e.g., friends, family, professional help)? *

16. If so why?

17. Would you recommend podcasts as a way of helping solve cases of *Mental health*? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No
 Maybe
 Most likely

18. Thank You for Participating, I appreciate your time

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