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I-RoLE 2023

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF
RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE EDUCATION 2023

**EMBRACING CHANGE:
EMANCIPATING THE LANDSCAPE
OF RESEARCH IN LINGUISTIC,
LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

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‘LET’S TALK FEELINGS’ PODCAST

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ABSTRACT:

Our emotional, psychological, and social well-being are all parts of our mental health (What Is Mental, n.d.). It plays a role in influencing our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. Additionally, it affects how we respond to stress, interact with others, and make decisions. Some of the effects that could happen are the weakening of immune system and exposure to substance abuse. Mills (2019) claimed that the immune system can suffer because of anxiety. A weak immune system can lead to various serious diseases that will result in serious health issues. Mills (2019) also reported that substance addiction is more likely to occur in people with mental illnesses. Unfortunately, people who are diagnosed with mental health illnesses avoid treatment due to society’s perception of mental health and a lack of information. Let's Talk Feelings is a podcast that aims to educate and raise awareness about mental health among its listeners. As a result, it will change society’s perception towards mental health and provide support to those dealing with mental health problems in a healthy and positive way.

Keywords: Mental health, Podcast, Society’s perception, Awareness

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, mental health cases have been rising astronomically. According to research conducted by World Health Organization (2022, as cited by the United Nation), approximately 1 billion individuals have been affected by some form of mental illness, which further asserts the serious worldwide situation. Despite the serious statistics, it is prevalent that most afflicted individuals hinder themselves from receiving aid in curing their mental illnesses. Dure (2020) added to the claim by stating that nearly 70% of people with mental disorders do not receive proper treatment to cure their disorders. There are various reasons why individuals prefer not to seek treatment; the fear of judgement, lack of information, and doubt. Bennet (2019) made a convincing case when she argued that society’s high expectations make it hard to find help for mental health issues without being considered weak. They could be stigmatised by their condition, leaving them open to prejudice and discrimination. The lack of information also becomes a major factor in influencing the society and a person’s reaction to mental health issues. Looking at this perspective, the Let’s Talk Feelings podcast aims to dissect mental health issues to spread information and awareness and pave the way for individuals to discover more about situations involving mental health issues. As a result, individuals can be more open to finding solutions to their mental health problems.



1.1 Project Objective/ Purpose

The Let's Talk Feelings podcast is a series of audio episodes that talk about mental health issues that could be very harmful to individuals, such as body imagery, anxiety, trauma, and many more. This podcast aims to discuss in depth mental health issues and raise awareness among its listeners so that they can better understand the issues faced. The Let's Talk Feelings podcast also allows the listeners to explore mental health issues from various angles within a short period of time due to its convenient, accessible, and compact nature.

1.2 Entrepreneurial Opportunity

There are various entrepreneurial opportunities that come with hosting a podcast. One of them is podcast sponsorship, which is a form of marketing by companies or institutions formed through an agreement or partnership with content creators. They would either provide funds or free samples (product vendors) in return for promoting the respective sponsor or simply allow them to participate in the podcast. Some might argue that listeners might be against podcasts with sponsorships due to unnecessary ads and announcements, but Revglue (2021) asserted that consumers are comfortable with sponsorship.

Subscription plans could be created to gate the content behind a paywall. It is also crucial to create quality content that is worth the money the listeners are spending to ensure their satisfaction. This is because subscriptions must be renewed monthly, and the customer would either proceed or unsubscribe if the content is unsatisfactory. RM 12.00 monthly will be the estimated charge, with added benefits such as exclusive episodes, higher audio quality, and a private chatroom that allows the listener to chat with the host and request topics they would like to hear in future episodes.

Exclusive merchandise printed with the podcast's signature logo could also be marketed to gain income from the podcast and to further promote the branding. Kramer (2020) mentioned that branding on merchandise increases consumer awareness and gives them a sense of belongingness. For this podcast, the merchandise concept will revolve around flowers with soft pastel colors. Additionally, a website will be created to promote the products and manage the orders. Items such as sweaters, mugs, pins, T-shirts, and stickers are being considered for the merchandise line. The price range for the merchandise is as follows (postage charge not included):

Merchandise	Price
Stickers	RM 4.00
Pin	RM 3.00-5.00
Mug	RM 8.00
Sweater	RM 70.00- RM 85.00
T-shirt	RM 30.00

2. METHODOLOGY

Before starting the podcast, the brainstorming technique was used to identify and analyze the problem faced and to determine the solution. This solution then becomes the project, which birthed the "Let's Talk Feelings", a podcast that talks about mental health issues. A total of 5 episodes were planned for the project, of which 2 were solo episodes and 3 were collaboration episodes planned with a student taking a diploma in psychology at MSU, a behavioural therapist, and the English Language Society. The collaboration with the English Language Society was under a sponsorship agreement.

To gain opinions and suggestions, consultation sessions with the supervisor and an experienced podcaster were held. Then, an Instagram account was created to give more information regarding the objective of the podcast, to update the listeners on episode releases, to act as a platform to conduct surveys and gain feedback, and to inform the listener if any changes are made. To record, edit, and manage the podcast, a podcasting platform called Anchor FM was utilised. It was preferred because it does not require any fee and it is a beginner-friendly platform. The recording process takes place in a private space to block out unnecessary background noises. The equipment required to record the podcast is as follows:

Items	Purpose
Laptop	To edit the audio file
Microphone	Used to record the audio files
Phone	A substitute to record the audio in the absence of a microphone

The audio was either recorded fully or separated into pieces. The separated audio files were then merged into a unit according to its time frame. After the recording process ended, the audio file was edited to remove any unnecessary or flawed parts. Soon after the editing part was successfully completed, the audio underwent a repeated inspection to confirm its appropriateness before being released on the podcast channel.

After the episode was posted on Spotify, notification was released on Instagram to inform the listeners that a new episode was released. After the episode is listened to by at least 10 listeners, a survey form was posted on the Instagram page to inspect listeners' opinions on the respective episodes. Then, improvements will be made to efficiently conduct future episodes.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were a total of 53 participants in the survey conducted after Episode 1 was released. Table 1 shows the listener's response to the first episode of the Let's Talk Feelings podcast. It is proven that the episode has succeeded in conveying precise information about the mental health issue that was being discussed which is body image.

Survey Question	YES	NO
Does the podcast give precise information and efficient tips in dealing with mental health issue?	100%	0%

Table 1 (Episode 1 survey)

Survey Question	YES	NO
Do you think the podcast affects you positively in dealing with mental health issue?	100%	0%

Table 2 (Episode 1 survey)

Table 2 results validate that the podcast is assisting listeners in responding positively to the information as intended by the podcast's purpose. This is crucial in curing mental health disorders because positive thoughts will have many beneficial effects. According to Smith (2022), positive thinking has a positive impact on better mental health because it leads to reduced stress, curbs depression, and soothes anxiety. He also argued that positive thinking must be done in the right way. He stated that people should not avoid problems by denying its existence but rather maintain an optimistic attitude when confronted with them. Individuals

should understand the problems they are facing and maintain a balanced, realistic, and optimistic mindset in solving them.

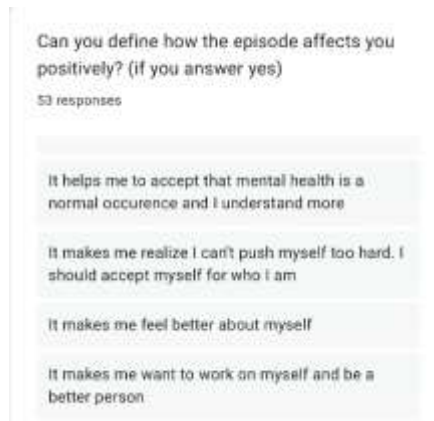


Figure 1

The survey result shown above shows the audience's perspective on the positive effect the podcast has had on them. Rather than ignoring the mental health issue, they understood their problems better, accepted themselves as they are, and tried to improve themselves.

Individuals who achieve positive outcomes in dealing with mental health have a better chance of curing their mental health disorder and receiving various benefits. The first one would be improved physical health. According to Ferguson (2020), chronic stress could lead to various physical problems such as migraines, muscle tension, digestive issues, and insomnia. These physical illnesses will surely cause great discomfort to those who are afflicted by them. Individuals can prevent the sickness from happening and, in turn, could even have resistance towards certain illnesses. Levine (n.d., as cited by Hicks, 2021) asserted that cardiovascular disease and mortality risk are linked to positive psychological traits. Improved relationships with others is another advantage that could be gained. Healthmenza (2021) stated that even the strongest relationships can suffer from unhealthy attitudes, feelings, and behaviors. Mental disorders such as chronic stress and depression could have the potential to lead an individual to segregate themselves from others. This will create tension and fracture relationships. By prevailing over mental health issues, people can boost their connections with others. Moreover, improved mental health could also promote better coping skills. Overcoming mental health issues is not an easy feat because it requires an individual to put forth a lot of effort and strength when there is none. By taking the step of persevering against mental health problems, people can build resistance, which could be helpful in dealing with future problems that could result in the reoccurrence of mental health problems.

Survey Question	YES	NO
Does the podcast show a more positive light on people affected by mental health issue?	100%	0%

Table 3 (Episode 1 survey)

Additionally, Table 3 shows that the podcast changed their perspective on people dealing with mental health issues. Since it is known that stigma is one of the major issues, people are afraid of finding help to cure their mental disorders. By changing society's mindset in perceiving mental issues, we have encouraged individuals to be more open in expressing their problems, and as a result, they will be more determined to cure their mental health and find external help.

Borenstein (2020) asserted that fear or a lack of understanding are two common causes of stigma. Since the media covers a major part of our daily lives, it also affects how society views

mental health issues nowadays. Borenstein (2020) also argued that the media's inaccurate or deceptive portrayals of mental illness have a role in both of those issues. Verywellmind (2023) agreed with Borenstein (2020) by reporting that there is a lot of stigmatisation of mental illness in the media. For instance, some mental health diseases, like schizophrenia, are considered so disruptive that their sufferers need to be excluded from society. VerywellMind (2023) also contended that media accounts of mental illness tend to focus on the individual rather than framing mental illness as a societal issue. Consequently, media consumers are more likely to blame an individual for the illness. This will lead to society viewing people with mental illness as problematic, thus creating a sense of fear for those who are afflicted with mental health. These afflicted individuals will then proceed to hide their illnesses, which will have disastrous consequences. By bringing positive awareness to its listeners, Let's Talk Feelings Podcast has succeeded in changing society's perception towards mental disorders. This would shape society to be more accepting and helpful towards those who are diagnosed with mental health disorders.

4. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, Let's Talk Feelings Podcast is an efficient platform to spread awareness regarding mental health, help listeners discover more about themselves, and be more confident in finding solutions to cure their disorder. The podcast will strive to evolve according to current situations and give helpful solutions for the audience to follow through on. Let's Talk Feelings Podcast will undoubtedly become a successful and distinctive platform.

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