

Mind Matters: A Gamified Digital Platform for Mental Health Awareness Among Generation Z

SANDEEP S¹, SREYAS KRISHNAN P², THARUNKUMAR P³, SARAN S M⁴, DR. MYTHILI. A. S.⁵

^{1,2,3,4}*Department of Electronics and Instrumentation Engineering, Kumaraguru College of Technology, Coimbatore*

⁵*Assistant Professor, Department of Languages and Communication, Kumaraguru College of Technology, Coimbatore*

Abstract- *Mental health has emerged as a critical concern among Generation Z due to increasing academic pressure, social media influence, and lifestyle changes. Despite growing awareness, stigma, lack of engagement, and limited accessibility to support systems continue to prevent individuals from seeking help. This study proposes the development of Mind Matters, a gamified mental health awareness website designed to engage and support young users. A survey-based approach was employed to understand perceptions, awareness levels, and barriers related to mental health among students aged 16–24. The findings reveal a significant gap between awareness and help-seeking behaviour, highlighting the need for interactive and accessible platforms. The proposed system integrates gamification, visual design, and user-friendly interfaces to create an emotionally supportive digital environment. The study concludes that technology-driven, youth-centric interventions can play a vital role in promoting mental health awareness and reducing stigma among Generation Z.*

Keywords: *mental health, generation z, gamification, digital platforms, awareness, youth engagement*

I. INTRODUCTION

Mental health is a fundamental component of overall human well-being, encompassing emotional, psychological, and social dimensions. According to the World Health Organization, mental health influences how individuals think, feel, and behave in their daily lives. In recent years, concerns such as stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout have increased significantly among young people, particularly Generation Z (individuals born between 1997 and 2012). This trend reflects broader shifts in lifestyle, education, and digital engagement patterns. Generation Z has grown up in an environment shaped by rapid technological advancement, constant

connectivity, and heightened academic and social expectations. While digital platforms provide opportunities for learning and interaction, they also contribute to challenges such as social comparison, information overload, and uncertainty about future career prospects. These factors, combined with societal and familial pressures, have intensified psychological stress among young individuals.

Although mental health awareness has improved through global campaigns and institutional initiatives, several barriers continue to prevent open discussion and timely intervention. Stigma, fear of judgment, limited awareness of available resources, and lack of accessible support systems often discourage individuals from expressing their concerns or seeking help. In many cases, students recognize the importance of mental health but remain uncertain about where and how to access appropriate support.

In this context, there is a growing need for innovative and engaging approaches that go beyond traditional awareness methods. This study proposes the development of Mind Matters, a gamified digital platform designed to enhance mental health awareness and provide emotional support tailored to Generation Z. The platform aims to create a user-friendly and interactive environment that not only educates users about mental health but also offers reassurance and practical coping strategies in an accessible format.

The study also incorporates a survey-based analysis to examine students' perceptions of mental health, their experiences of stress, and their preferences for support systems. By combining empirical insights with a technology-driven solution, this research

attempts to address the gap between awareness and action, and to explore how interactive digital tools can improve engagement, accessibility, and help-seeking behaviour among young individuals.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Mental health awareness has gained increasing global attention in recent years, with several organizations working toward reducing stigma and improving access to support systems. Institutions such as the National Institute of Mental Health and the Mental Health Foundation have contributed significantly to public education by disseminating reliable information and promoting open conversations about mental well-being. Similarly, initiatives by the National Alliance on Mental Illness have played a crucial role in normalizing discussions around mental health and encouraging individuals to seek support.

Despite these efforts, existing digital mental health platforms often rely on formal, text-heavy content that may not effectively engage younger audiences. From the perspective of Generation Z, such platforms can appear distant, overly clinical, and difficult to relate to. Research in digital learning and user engagement suggests that younger users, who are accustomed to visually rich and interactive media environments, respond more positively to dynamic and multimedia-based content. Long textual formats and informational websites may therefore fail to sustain attention or provide the emotional reassurance that users seek during periods of psychological distress.

In response to these limitations, gamification has emerged as a promising approach to enhance user engagement. Gamification refers to the integration of game-like elements—such as rewards, progress tracking, levels, and interactive challenges—into non-game contexts. Studies indicate that gamified systems can significantly improve motivation, participation, and retention. In the context of mental health, such approaches have been shown to encourage self-reflection, reduce anxiety, and promote positive behavioural changes by creating a supportive and non-threatening environment for users.

Recent research in digital mental health interventions also highlights the importance of user-centred design and emotional engagement. Platforms that incorporate personalization, interactive feedback, and relatable content are more effective in fostering trust and sustained usage among young individuals. Furthermore, the integration of visual storytelling, music, and scenario-based interactions has been found to enhance emotional connection and improve the overall user experience.

Another emerging area is the role of digital mental health tools in early intervention. Studies suggest that accessible online platforms can help identify stress patterns and provide coping strategies at an early stage, thereby preventing the escalation of mental health issues. However, the effectiveness of such platforms largely depends on their ability to balance informational content with emotional support and user engagement.

Despite these advancements, there remains a noticeable gap in platforms that successfully combine mental health awareness, gamification, and emotional accessibility in a cohesive manner. Many existing systems either prioritize information delivery or focus solely on engagement, without integrating both aspects effectively. This gap highlights the need for a youth-centric, visually engaging, and emotionally supportive platform.

The proposed Mind Matters platform seeks to address this gap by combining gamified elements with accessible mental health resources, aiming to create a space that not only informs but also supports and reassures users. By aligning with the preferences and behavioural patterns of Generation Z, the platform attempts to bridge the disconnect between awareness and meaningful engagement.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study adopts a descriptive, survey-based research design to examine mental health awareness, perceptions, and help-seeking behaviour among Generation Z students. The approach was chosen to gain a practical understanding of how young

individuals experience and respond to mental health challenges in their daily lives.

3.1 Data Collection

Data for the study were collected through an online questionnaire created using Google Forms. The survey was distributed among students aged 16 to 24 from various schools and higher educational institutions. The online mode of data collection ensured ease of access and allowed participants to respond at their convenience.

Anonymity was maintained throughout the process, which helped participants feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and personal experiences. This approach was particularly important given the sensitive nature of mental health-related questions.

3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study was conducted with a sample of 30 participants. A convenience sampling method was used, considering accessibility and time constraints. Although the sample size is limited, it provides initial insights into the perceptions and experiences of students within this age group.

3.3 Survey Design

The questionnaire consisted primarily of multiple-choice questions, designed to capture both awareness levels and personal experiences related to mental health. The survey focused on the following key areas:

- Awareness and understanding of mental health concepts
- Familiarity with common conditions such as anxiety, depression, and stress
- Comfort level in discussing mental health with friends, family, or professionals
- Frequency of experiencing stress, anxiety, or emotional challenges
- Preferred coping mechanisms and support systems
- Barriers to seeking help, including fear of judgment and lack of awareness
- Interest in using digital platforms for mental health support

The questions were framed in a simple and clear manner to ensure that participants could easily understand and respond without confusion.

3.4 Data Analysis

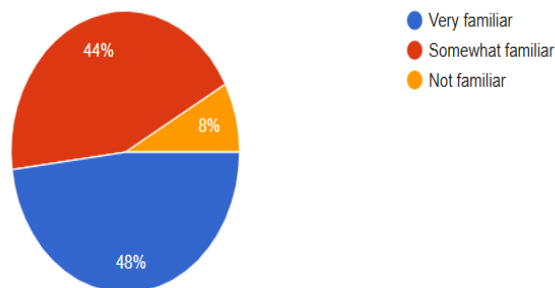
The collected responses were analyzed using percentage-based descriptive methods. This approach helped in identifying patterns and trends related to awareness, emotional experiences, and help-seeking behaviour among participants.

The analysis also aimed to highlight gaps between awareness and action, particularly in terms of accessing support systems and adopting coping strategies. These insights were used to inform the development of the proposed Mind Matters platform.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:

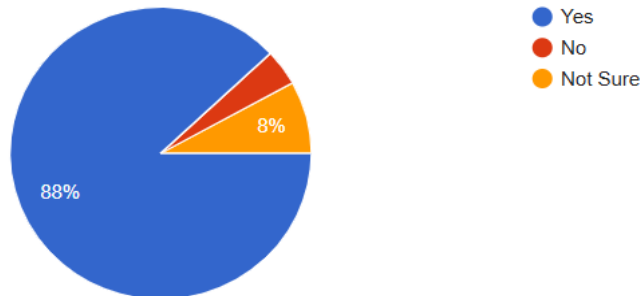
1.How familiar are you with the concept of mental health and mental well-being?

25 responses



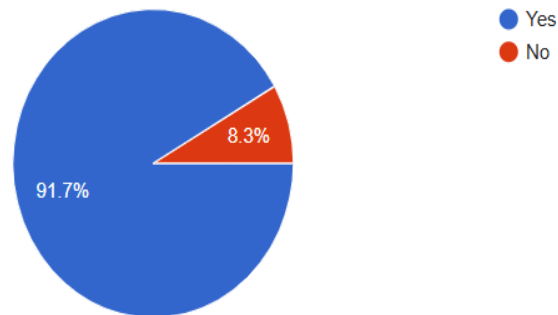
2. Do you believe mental health is as important as physical health?

25 responses



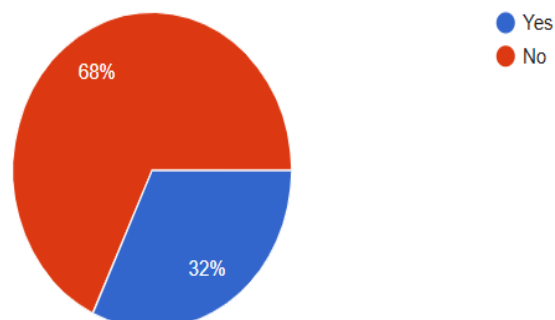
3. Are you aware of common mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and stress?

24 responses



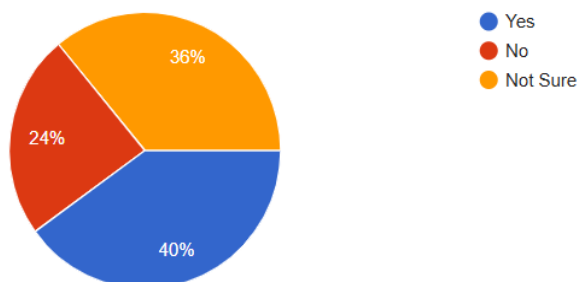
4. Have you ever attended any mental health awareness program, workshop, or seminar?

25 responses



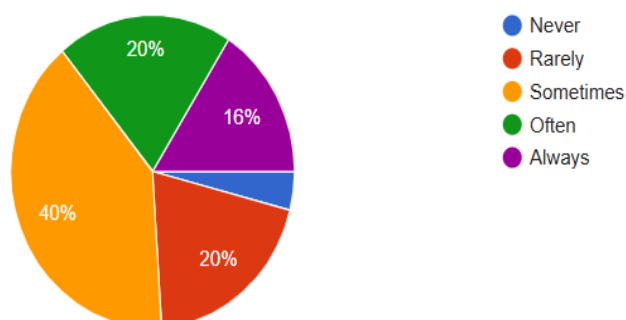
5. Do you know where to seek help if you experience mental health issues?

25 responses



6. How often do you feel stressed in your daily life?

25 responses



The survey also shows how people feel about emotional expression and support systems, in addition to the content. It shows that some people are okay with talking about their mental health with friends or people they trust, but a lot of people are still afraid to do so because they are afraid of being judged or don't feel safe doing so. The answers show that people still often hide their feelings and are afraid to ask for help, which shows that the stigma around mental health is still strong. It also talks about how often people feel overwhelmed, lonely, or emotionally drained, which gives us an idea of the group's overall mental health.

The data also shows how big the gap is between knowing about something and doing something about it. Many people who answered the survey know how important mental health is and know some basic ways to deal with it, but not everyone uses them or asks for help when they need it. The survey says that making counseling services easier to get to,

encouraging open conversations, and adding mental health education to schools or workplaces could make a big difference in outcomes. Overall, the content suggests that while more people are becoming aware, there is still a lot of room for improvement in areas like practical support systems, normalizing asking for help, and regular self-care.

It looks at how well people understand mental health concepts, if they think mental health is as important as physical health, and if they know about conditions like anxiety, depression, and stress. The survey also looks into participation in mental health programs, knowledge of where to get help, and personal experiences like how often they feel stressed, anxious, emotionally drained, and overall mentally healthy. It also asks about sleep patterns, how comfortable people are talking about their mental health problems, and how stress from school or work affects them.

The second part of the content talks about what causes mental health problems, how to deal with them, and how people feel about getting help for them. Respondents cite academic pressure, work stress, family issues, social media, and financial problems as significant stressors, while also contemplating the detrimental effects of social media on mental health. It talks about common ways to deal with stress, like exercise, meditation, talking to friends, listening to music, and doing hobbies. The survey also looks at how open people are to things like yoga or counseling, what stops them from getting help (like shame, not knowing about it, cost, and fear), and what can be done to raise awareness about mental health, such as education programs, social media campaigns, workshops, counseling services, and peer support system.

The survey conducted among 25 students provides valuable insights into students' awareness, perceptions, and experiences related to mental health. The findings indicate that while there is a moderate level of awareness about mental health issues, several challenges such as stress, and lack of access to coping methods continue to affect individuals.

Firstly, the survey reveals that a majority of students are familiar with the concept of mental health and mental well-being. Around 48% reported being very familiar, while 44% indicated being somewhat familiar, and a small percentage reported not being familiar. This states that awareness about mental health is increasing among students. 80% of students believe that mental health is as important as physical health, demonstrating a strong recognition of its significance in overall well-being.

The survey also highlights awareness regarding common mental health conditions. Nearly 91.7% of students stated that they are aware of conditions such as anxiety, depression, and stress, states that students are generally informed about common psychological issues. However, Only 32% said that they attended a mental health awareness program, workshop, or seminar, while 68% have never participated in such program or something like that. This gap suggests the need for more accessible and engaging awareness programs.

When asked about seeking help for mental health issues, 48% of students reported knowing where to seek help, while others were either unsure or unaware. This shows that although students understand mental health issues, many still lack clarity about available support resources. Additionally, the survey shows that stress is a common experience, with 44% reporting that they sometimes feel stressed in daily life, and others indicating frequent or occasional stress.

Emotional well-being is another important area highlighted by the results. Many respondents reported experiencing anxiety or emotional exhaustion at varying frequencies. A significant percentage indicated that they sometimes feel emotionally drained or mentally exhausted, reflecting the pressures faced by students in academic and personal environments.

The survey further identifies academic pressure as the main cause of stress, with 60% of respondents selecting it as the primary factor. Other contributing factors include financial problems, family issues, and social relationships. This finding emphasizes the impact of academic demands on students' mental health and the need for supportive academic environments.

Lifestyle factors such as sleep also play a role in mental well-being. The responses indicate that only a portion of students consistently get sufficient sleep, while many report irregular sleep patterns. In addition, 64% of respondents believe that academic or workload pressure affects their mental well-being, reinforcing the strong link between academic stress and mental health.

The survey also explores coping mechanisms. Students reported using several strategies to improve their mental well-being, including exercise, meditation, talking to friends, listening to music, and engaging in hobbies. However, more than half of the respondents have never tried formal relaxation techniques such as meditation or yoga, indicating an opportunity to promote healthier coping strategies.

Finally, the survey addresses barriers to seeking mental health support. Lack of awareness and stigma were identified as the most significant obstacles, along with concerns about cost and accessibility. students suggested that peer support, workshops, social media campaigns, and educational programs could be effective strategies for improving mental health awareness.

Overall, the results highlight that while students recognize the importance of mental health, there is still a need to improve awareness programs, encourage open discussions, and provide accessible support services. Educational institutions can play a crucial role by promoting mental health initiatives, reducing stigma, and creating supportive environments that encourage students to seek help when needed.

V. DISCUSSIONS:

The survey conducted among 30 students aged 16–24 reveals that while awareness of mental health is relatively high, emotional struggles and fear to express remain common and often left unnoticed. Most participants said that they are familiar with the concept of mental health and they think it is as important as physical health, showing a positive sign in attitude among Gen Z kids. But a significant number of students have said that they are experiencing stress, anxiety, and depression in their daily lives, with academic and workload pressure as a primary source of stress. Other than this many students have expressed and asked where to seek professional help, and some may have felt uncomfortable discussing their problems and revealing their issues. Barriers like fear of judgment, cost, and lack of awareness exist to prevent students from accessing support, which highlights a gap between awareness and approach to professional. From an educational perspective, the charts suggest that traditional awareness methods may not be that great and effective for this generation. Students have showed stronger preference for peer support and professional support, and interactive approaches rather than formal approach. This indicates that Gen Z responds better to relatable, accessible, and digital platforms with vibrant colours and so much

compared to seminars or web page like info. These results align with existing literature, which emphasizes the importance of early intervention, peer influence, but also points out that many current existing platforms fail to emotionally connect with young users especially gen z. Therefore, the development of Mind Matters directly addresses this gap by offering a youth-centred, visually engaging, and supportive digital space that bridges awareness with practical guidance and emotional reassurance

VI. CONCLUSION:

This study examined the thought process of mental health awareness and issues with Gen Z and evaluated the requirement for a good and super digital awareness platform more like a website with vibrant colours. The study indicates that most students recognize the importance of mental health and are generally familiar with common conditions, while many students continue to experience stress, anxiety, and emotional problems. Academic pressure is said to cause a lot of pressure in this generation kids and they are unsure about it, not knowing where to seek help, and fear of judgment is the common issues these face and often leave it unnoticed, which after years causes a lot of problems and challenges. Even though awareness levels are increasing among students, there is a clear gap between understanding mental health and actively seeking support with professional coaches or peers or even family. The study also highlighted a strong preference for accessible, engaging them with the process while doing it over traditional awareness methods which these kids consider boring and not interesting, To be put simple in these kids terms ,they are not non-chalant it seems .The primary objective of this research was to analyze the requirement and need of a youth-centred mental health awareness website and to propose the development and start of Mind Matters as a meaningful solution.

Based on the survey results and supporting charts, this objective was successfully achieved. The study confirms that there is a genuine demand for a safe, interactive, engaging students to actively address and participate and feel free to express their concerns and issues to family, Peers and professional staffs, and

emotionally supportive online platform altered to Gen Z mind set and their need and mind set. Mind Matters has the potential to positively influence young individuals (Gen Z) by normalizing conversations about mental health, reducing stigma and pressure and awkwardness, and providing guidance in a comfortable and visually engaging environment with vibrant colours and so much fun activities along with learning and therapy. Ultimately, this website is not just an informational platform but a supportive digital space that can empower students and encourage them to get early help-seeking behaviour, and contribute to mental well-being peace and stuff5.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

These are our ideas on implementing our website based on our survey and findings

- Implementation: using Mind Matters as a digital mental health resource to promote awareness
- Conducting awareness workshops
- Emphasis on integrating and normalizing the importance of mental health and counselling sessions
- Encouraging peer-led interactions and discussions to reduce stigma
- Public health campaigns can be conducted to attract a large number of people and spread awareness
- Conducting periodic surveys for feedback

VIII. LIMITATIONS

Though our study shows great signs of positive responses and responses there are some notable limitations that we discussed

Firstly, the survey only included 30 participants, and the responses may not be applicable for the wide Gen Z audiences due to small sample size. This was a short-term study and does not measure the long-term impact of digital platforms. The survey was conducted among people from our institutions thereby limiting diversity hence opinions of people could vary from the geographic scope. However, Future researches can involve larger sample sizes

across various regions to strengthen our ideas and findings

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