







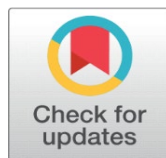
# DIGITAL SOUNDSCAPES OF WELL-BEING: A STUDY OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL OUTCOMES OF MOTIVATIONAL PODCAST CONSUMPTION

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## ABSTRACT

### Purpose:

This research examined the effect of motivational podcasts in Tamil on the positive psychological well-being of Tamil college students in Tamil Nadu. It analyses the way in which exposure to motivational audio material, especially Oru Cup Confidence, Maname Nalama, and Leader - Rajmohan can result in optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy through Positive Psychology [Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi \(2000\)](#).

### Design/Methodology/Approach:

Quantitative cross-sectional design was adopted and 250 college students of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu were involved. A structured questionnaire on frequency of podcast listening, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy was used to gather data between June and October 2025 on a five-point Likert scale. The correlational and regression analysis was used to study the relationships between the listening to the podcast and well-being outcomes.

### Findings:

The findings showed a high positive relationship between motivational podcast listening and psychological well-being ( $r = .62, p < .001$ ). It was found that optimism, resilience and self-efficacy were greatly predicted by listening frequency ( $b = .58, p < .001$ ). Emotional stability and goal orientation were higher among regular listeners than occasional and random listeners.

### Originality/Value:

This study offers factual information regarding the psychological strength and hope in the minds of young people through Tamil inspirational podcasts. This highlights the promise of vernacular digital media as a tool of mental wellness promotion of students in India that can be affordable and culturally relevant at the same time.

**Keywords:** Motivational Podcasts, Positive Psychology, Optimism, Resilience, Self-Efficacy, Tamil Nadu, Digital Well-Being

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The digital audio broadcasting systems have transformed the way people access information and motivation. Among them, inspirational podcast-short, story-based audio stories that aim to encourage personal growth have become especially popular amongst young adults. Compared to traditional media, the episodes of the podcasts are more intimate, flexible, and relatable, which is why they are the best means to convey the motivational content [Berry \(2016\)](#), [Meden et al. \(2024\)](#).

India is one of the top 5 podcast markets in the world with Tamil language programs having a distinct market niche in self-help and motivation. The Oru Cup Confidence (RJ Sha), Maname Nalama and Leader Rajmohan programs have thousands of listeners listening to them weekly via Spotify and YouTube. These performances are based on the real-life experiences and cultural idioms to give the students hope and purpose.

College students are encountering stressful academic pressure. In this regard, the scientific study of human strengths and flourishing, which is called positive psychology, can provide the framework of how motivational content can foster optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy [Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi \(2000\)](#). The informal but effective well-being interventions that may be provided through motivational podcasts may be the accessible narrative form.

Although there is world evidence of the relationship between podcast episodes and engagement and learning [Palenque \(2016\)](#), there is not much information on how these episodes have influenced the well-being of young Indians. This research paper fills this gap.

## 1.1. OBJECTIVES

- 1) To examine the connection between positive psychological well-being and motivational podcast listening.
- 2) To evaluate the prediction of optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy by listening frequency.
- 3) To investigate the implications to the educator and content creator to promote digital well-being.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As a versatile digital audio item, podcasts have developed as a tool of accessibility and emotion-finding to facilitate learning and well-being. The recent research points out their use in the informal education sector, where audio stories encourage knowledge retention and motivation due to the self-paced consumption [Berry \(2016\)](#), [Meden et al. \(2024\)](#). Podcasts are useful in the tertiary educational system as they can make the students more enthusiastic and motivated to learn, becoming an addition to conventional approaches [König \(2021\)](#). This is consistent with the wider trends in digital media, where audio formats foster psychological gains by establishing parasocial relationships and cultural salience especially in contextual diversity such as in India.

Positive psychology offers a fundamental prism in which the strengths are flourishing and emotional development [Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi \(2000\)](#). The broaden-and-build theory developed by Fredrickson assumes that positive emotions enlarge cognitive resources, which accumulate resilience in the long term [Fredrickson \(2001\)](#), [Fredrickson \(2013\)](#). Positive psychological interventions (PPIs) through apps and Web platforms are applied digitally, but with essential benefits as these schemes greatly increase well-being indices such as hope and gratitude and decrease stress and negative emotions in young people [Saboor et al. \(2024\)](#). Interventions such as mindfulness and optimism exercises have moderate effects, and better effects in young adults and nonclinical environments.

The motivational content is interrelated with central constructs, which are optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy. Optimism is associated with greater coping and persistence, which is witnessed in how digital media can improve psychological flexibility to boost the wellness of Gen Z [Song et al. \(2024\)](#). Through resilience and supported by social support and the digital space, young learners can overcome their difficulties, including political participation in the era of surveillance [Yang et al. \(2025\)](#). Per [Bandura \(1997\)](#), self-efficacy develops in vicarious experiences during audio stories, which include the development of belief in personal agency. Recent online trainings reveal the possibility to build resilience and decrease anxiety and high levels of satisfaction among users [Bäuerle et al. \(2023\)](#).

Mental health is specifically the focus of podcasts, which provide coping mechanisms and psychoeducation. Scoping reviews demonstrate their use in anxiety, depression, and stress treatment and in many cases as inexpensive and convenient methods [Dascombe et al. \(2025\)](#). Positive podcast content is inspirational, relaxing the stress just like meditation [Nabi et al. \(2025\)](#). In India, these effects can be enhanced by vernacular podcasts incorporating cultural accounts, and there are still gaps in empirical studies of youths. Altogether, the motivational podcasts could be discussed as an affordable means of positive psychological outcome, which should be investigated in terms of educational and therapeutic implications.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The present study applied a quantitative cross-sectional research design to analyze the connection between positive psychological well-being and podcast exposure amongst students. One hundred and fifty undergraduates and 100 postgraduates aged between 18 and 25 years were recruited through the stratified random sampling method to represent proportionality in terms of undergraduate (70) and postgraduate (30) student groups of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. The sample consisted of 54 percent of females and 46 percent males, mean age of the sample was 21.3 (SD = 2.4). The data collection was done during a time span of five months (June- October 2025), and this was adequate to collect detailed responses.

Two major constructs were measured, including Podcast Exposure and Positive Psychological Well-Being. The Podcast Exposure was assessed in terms of frequency, duration, and genre preference that comprises a multidimensional perspective of the listening patterns of the participants. Positive Psychological Well-Being was determined based on an 11-item scale that measures optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy on a 5-point Likert scale. This scale was tested with a high internal consistency (Cronbach a =.87) to make sure it was reliable. The data analyses consisted of descriptive statistics to summarize the features of the participants, Pearson correlation to investigate the relationships between variables, and multiple regression analysis to find out the predictive power of podcast exposure on psychological well-being. All the analysis was done in SPSS version 26.

#### 3.1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1



Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

### 4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 1 is a summary of demographics and listening trends. Students answered that they were listening motivational podcasts (Spotify and YouTube) an average of 3.8 hours per week.

Table 1

Table 1 Demographic and Listening Profile of Respondents (N = 250)			
Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	135	54.0
	Male	115	46.0
Age Group (Years)	18-20	84	33.6
	21-23	126	50.4
	24-25	40	16.0
Education Level	Undergraduate	175	70.0

	Postgraduate	75	30.0
Listening Frequency	Daily	90	36.0
	Weekly	103	41.2
	Occasionally	57	22.8
Preferred Platform	Spotify	120	48.0
	YouTube	95	38.0
	Others	35	14.0

**Table 1** has offered a universal picture of the demographic and listening pattern of the respondents. There is a near balance in gender distribution with a small majority of female respondents (54%), which guarantees gender diversity in the representation of listening behavior. Most respondents (50.4) were aged 21-23 and this is attributable to the fact that there are more young students in colleges who are digital citizens and are also more frequently using mobile audio platforms.

Another noteworthy fact is a large percentage of people who listened to podcasts (70%), which suggests that the consumption of podcasts is more widespread among early-stage learners who want to have a number of motivating materials that can guide them personally. Regarding the frequency of listening to the motivational podcasts, 77.2% of all participants would listen to motivational podcasts daily or weekly, indicating that they listen on a regular basis.

Spotify and YouTube prevail as the most frequent solutions (48% and 38% correspondingly), which proves the prevalence of mobile streaming services among the young population of Tamil Nadu. The mean amount of time spent by the respondents listening to the motivational podcasts amounts to 3.8 hours weekly, which is a sign of moderate yet consistent consumption.

Altogether, the results provided above can be viewed as the indications of the fact that motivational podcasts are properly incorporated into the online routine of Tamil College students. The population structure also shows the rising trend of podcasting as a self-help media of accessible information among educated young people.

## 4.2. DESCRIPTIVE SCORES OF KEY VARIABLES

**Table 2** presents the means and standard deviations of the main constructs.

**Table 2**

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Core Study Variables (N = 250)				
Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Podcast Exposure	3.94	0.82	1.00	5.00
Optimism	4.12	0.73	2.10	5.00
Resilience	4.08	0.68	2.00	5.00
Self-Efficacy	4.00	0.71	1.90	5.00
Positive Well-Being (Aggregate)	4.07	0.69	2.10	5.00

As it is stated in **Table 2**, all psychological variables assessed in the research-optimism ( $M = 4.12$ ), resilience ( $M = 4.08$ ), and self-efficacy ( $M = 4.00$ ) scores were higher than the neutral point of the 5-point Likert scale. This shows that there is a relatively high degree of positive psychological well-being among the respondents.

All means of positive well-being ( $M = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ) can be taken as evidence of the stable and confident temperament displayed by students that actively listen to the motivational podcasts. The standard deviations are not high (0.68-0.82) and it can be supposed that the answers are rather similar among the participants and therefore there is a common benefit of listening to a podcast.

The results confirm the assumption of Positive Psychology [Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi \(2000\)](#), which states that optimism and resilience cultivated by nurturing leads to the subjective well-being. In this regard, frequent listening to inspirational podcasts seems to maintain positive psychological states in students in colleges.

### 4.3. CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Podcast exposure was strongly correlated with optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy [Table 3](#).

**Table 3**

Table 3 Pearson Correlations Among Core Variables (N = 250)					
Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Podcast Exposure	-				
2. Optimism	.58***	-			
3. Resilience	.60***	.63***	-		
4. Self-Efficacy	.55***	.59***	.57***	-	
5. Psychological Well-Being	.62***	.71***	.74***	.69***	-

Note. \*\*p < .001.

The exposure to podcasts as shown in [Table 3](#) had significant and positive relationships with optimism ( $r = .58$ ), resilience ( $r = .60$ ), and self-efficacy ( $r = .55$ ). Moreover, the entire amount of psychological well-being showed peak correlation with podcast exposure  $r = .62$  ( $p < .001$ ), which suggests a strong linear correlation.

The internal relationships among optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy are high (between .57 and .74), which indicates that these constructs are all interdependent conceptions of psychological wellness, not independent variables.

These findings empirically confirm the concept model that was suggested in this research. The effects of motivational podcast episodes are positive emotions that support psychological resources. This is in conformity to the broaden and build theory by [Fredrickson \(2001\)](#), whereby repetitive positive emotional experiences increase the adaptive capacity and resilience of the individuals.

Essentially, the correlation testing evidences that the more individuals are exposed to motivational podcast content, the more optimism, resilience and self-belief individuals are likely to experience, which justifies - "Podcast listening frequency is positively correlated with positive psychological well-being.

### 4.4. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Multiple regression [Table 4](#) confirmed that podcast exposure significantly predicted positive psychological well-being after controlling for gender and education.

**Table 4**

Table 4 Regression Analysis Predicting Psychological Well-Being					
Predictor	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	1.84	0.18	-	10.22	< .001
Podcast Exposure	0.42	0.03	0.58	12.27	< .001
Gender	0.06	0.05	0.06	1.04	0.30
Education Level	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.71	0.47

Model Summary.  $R = .62$ ;  $R^2 = .38$ ;  $F(3, 246) = 150.41$ ;  $p < .001$ .

In the multiple regression model to [Table 4](#), exposure to podcast at the most significance was related to predicting psychological well-being ( $b = .58$ ,  $t = 12.27$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The model accounted 38% of the overall variance ( $R^2 = .38$ ) showing a significant contribution of podcast involvement to the well-being outcomes of the students.

Both gender ( $b = .06$ ,  $p = .30$ ) and education level ( $b = .04$ ,  $p = .47$ ) were not found to be a significant predictor, which means that the psychological advantages of the podcasts listening are not demography-specific.

These findings support the theoretical assertion that repeated viewing motivational material increases emotional regulation and cognitive resilience regardless of gender and academic grade.

The self-efficacy theory as postulated by [Bandura \(1997\)](#) holds that one builds confidence by being verbally persuaded and observed numerous times. This mechanism is supported by the strong beta ( $b = .58$ ) that podcast exposure has on it: having heard success stories and perseverance on motivational podcasts, students internalize them, which in turn supports their psychological well-being. The positive psychological well-being is, therefore, supported by the fact that the exposure to Podcasts was a significant predictor of the same.

#### 4.5. MEAN DIFFERENCES BY LISTENING FREQUENCY

[Table 5](#) shows that daily listeners scored significantly higher in all dimensions of well-being ( $F = 25.61, p < .001$ ).

**Table 5**

Table 5 Mean Scores of Psychological Well-Being by Listening Frequency				
Frequency	Optimism (M ± SD)	Resilience (M ± SD)	Self-Efficacy (M ± SD)	Overall Well-Being (M ± SD)
Daily (n = 90)	4.35 ± 0.56	4.29 ± 0.54	4.28 ± 0.61	4.31 ± 0.48
Weekly (n = 103)	4.08 ± 0.65	4.03 ± 0.61	3.96 ± 0.64	3.98 ± 0.52
Occasional (n = 57)	3.62 ± 0.71	3.68 ± 0.69	3.54 ± 0.74	3.42 ± 0.57

[Table 5](#) gives a definite indication that the frequency of podcast listening has a great impact on well-being. Daily listeners also received the highest scores on all variables-optimism ( $M = 4.35$ ), resilience ( $M = 4.29$ ), and self-efficacy ( $M = 4.28$ )- compared with the weekly and occasional listeners. Statistically significant differences between groups are proved by one-way ANOVA ( $F = 25.61, p < .001$ ).

This trend showed that more psychological benefits were obtained with habitual and regular listening to motivational podcasts. Not only did the daily listeners express greater overall well-being ( $M = 4.31$ ), but also, they had less variance, indicating a less unstable emotional and motivational pattern.

The results of these studies confirm the hypothesis of the frequency effect when it comes to media psychology where the intensity of exposure increases the affective and cognitive effect [Rubin \(2009\)](#). The evidence also supports the essence of Positive Psychology: the frequent reinforcement of positive stories creates long-term hopefulness and strength. Therefore, listeners of Daily podcast have much greater well-being than infrequent listeners".

#### 4.6. DISCUSSION

These results highlight the central nature of the motivational podcasts in the improvement of the psychological well-being of the students through the creation of the positive emotional states and the development of the adaptive psychic resources. The fact that optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy have increased over an agreed period point to the fact that frequent interaction with such content does not only positively affect the mood but also has a lasting personal strength that helps in coping with academic and life difficulties. This is in accordance with the broaden-and-build theory of [Fredrickson \(2001\)](#) which assumes that positive emotions widen the repertoire of thought-action among individuals with the accumulation of enduring psychological resources. Also, one can explain the concept of vicarious experience by [Bandura \(1997\)](#) as the success stories and inspirational messages delivered by podcasts can be internalized by the students, making them have a stronger belief in their abilities.

In addition, cultural and linguistic usefulness of the Tamil motivational podcasts seems to enhance such psychological advantages by providing the feeling of familiarity and enhanced emotional appeal. This cultural closeness probably allows having more engagement and association with the material, and motivational messages have more significant effects. New media such as podcasts, in addition to spreading knowledge, also help in personal growth by making listeners think about the attitudes, goals, and coping mechanisms, thus helping to address holistic development outside the educational system.

#### 4.7. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

- **Teachers:** Incorporate podcasts into student success and counselling courses.
- **Podcast Makers:** Be authentic and culturally true to storytelling.

- **Mental Health Practitioners:** Suggest inspirational podcasts to use as a supplement to emotional resiliency.
- **Policy Makers:** Podcasts are affordable digital interventions that should be recognized by policy makers as effective methods of supporting the youth in mental health.

#### **4.8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

The region Coimbatore under focus in the study limits its generalizability. The longitudinal and experimental designs of the future are supposed to be able to quantify causality and investigate the relative impact of genres (e.g., mindfulness vs. motivation).

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

The example of motivational podcasts, including Oru Cup Confidence, Maname Nalama, and Leader - Rajmohan, is an effective method to improve the psychological well-being of college students in Tamil Nadu due to their establishment of optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy. These podcasts are using culturally relevant stories and emotionally authentic content, where the listeners can relate to the content on a personal level. They become relatable and more influential since they embed the local cultural values and experiences in the process of storytelling, which resonate with the lives of youths. Such cultural internalization does not only increase the sense of identity among the listener but also offers functional modalities of overcoming the difficulties thus enhancing mental health in a culture-sensitive way.

Moreover, these podcasts are also digital companions, which are affordable and provide full-time assistance in the everyday life of its listeners. The podcast listening habit allows developing hope, purpose, and confidence gradually, which are the essential elements of psychological resilience. Through linking media communication and promoting mental health, these digital platforms provide an informal but significant space to interact with positive psychological constructs among the youth. This creates a potentially valuable opportunity in incorporating motivational content into the mainstream public health programs to empower the youth adults particularly where traditional mental health service might be unavailable or stigmatized in some areas.

#### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest associated with this work. No financial, personal, or institutional relationships have influenced the research, analysis, or interpretation presented in the manuscript

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#### **DATA AVAILABILITY**

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the authors upon reasonable request. Due to the nature of the survey dataset and participant privacy considerations, the raw responses cannot be publicly shared. Processed data and analysis files can be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

#### **DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI**

The authors declare that generative AI tools were used only to assist in language refinement, grammar correction, and improving readability. All conceptualization, methodology, analysis, interpretation of results, and final conclusions were developed solely by the authors. The authors reviewed and verified all AI-assisted outputs to ensure accuracy and integrity.

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