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CONTENT MARKETING IN THE DIGITAL AGE: ANALYZING
THE ROLE OF QUALITY WELLNESS CONTENT IN
BUILDING BRAND TRUST AMONG GEN Z

DISSERTATION TO UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA
PORTUGUESA TO OBTAIN A MASTER'S DEGREE IN
COMMUNICATION, ADVERTISING & MARKETING

By

Pamela Ponce

Universidade Católica Portuguesa

December 2024



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Abstract

This research focuses on the influence of content marketing in the wellness industry, particularly on the way Gen Z users interact with digital mental health apps. The importance of choosing this study arises from the increasingly important role that digital content plays in shaping consumer trust in wellness brands. The main objective was to analyze how quality content fosters trust among Gen Z users, which promotes sustained use of mental health and wellness apps.

The study adopted a qualitative methodology. To collect information from users, it involved the design and application of semi-structured interviews with 12 participants between 23 and 27 years old, all of them part of Generation Z. The theoretical framework explores content marketing strategies, wellness consumption and building trust through digital content. The expected results of the research considered the continued use of digital content applications in well-being, especially in the field of mental health due to the strong pressures to which members of Generation Z are subjected, the immediacy of the responses expected from them and the increasingly varied and accelerated technological changes.

The key findings show that most participants value mental health applications for their ease of use, affordability and accessibility, and many are aware of these applications through social networks. This finding constitutes a contribution to the scientific community of digital marketing and influencers, specialists in mental health, as it reveals not only the progressive consumption of these applications, but also the importance of these as tools for the digital natives of the generation Z

A notable conclusion is that the representation of mental health awareness on social networks played a fundamental role in the decision to use these applications. In addition, most respondents highlighted that the applications provided essential tools during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping them to manage anxiety.

Keywords: Content marketing, digital age, generation Z, well-being, mental health

Resumo

Esta investigação centra-se na influência do marketing de conteúdos na indústria do bem-estar, particularmente na forma como os utilizadores da Geração Z interagem com as aplicações digitais de saúde mental. A importância da escolha deste estudo surge do papel cada vez mais importante que o conteúdo digital desempenha na formação da confiança do consumidor nas marcas de bem-estar. O principal objetivo foi analisar como os conteúdos de qualidade promovem a confiança entre os utilizadores da Geração Z, o que promove a utilização sustentada de aplicações de saúde mental e bem-estar.

O estudo adota metodologia qualitativa, mas com um desenho documental importante para a construção cognitiva e a perspetiva teórica da investigação. Assim sendo, a recolha de informação dos utilizadores envolveu a conceção e aplicação de entrevistas semiestruturadas a 12 participantes entre os 23 e os 27 anos, todos pertencentes à Geração Z. O enquadramento teórico explora as estratégias de marketing de conteúdo, o consumo de bem-estar e a construção confiança através de conteúdo digital. Os resultados esperados da investigação consideraram a utilização contínua de aplicações de conteúdos digitais na área do bem-estar, especialmente no campo da saúde mental devido às fortes pressões a que estão sujeitos os membros da geração Z, ao imediatismo das respostas esperadas dos mesmos e às mudanças tecnológicas cada vez mais variadas e aceleradas

As principais conclusões mostram que a maioria dos participantes valoriza as aplicações de saúde mental pela sua facilidade de utilização, preço acessível e acessibilidade, e muitos conhecem estas aplicações através das redes sociais. Esta constatação constitui um contributo para a comunidade científica de marketing digital e influenciadores, especialistas em saúde mental, pois revela não só o consumo progressivo destas aplicações, mas também a importância destas como ferramentas para os nativos digitais da geração Z.

Uma descoberta notável é que a representação da sensibilização para a saúde mental nas redes sociais desempenhou um papel crítico na decisão de utilizar tais aplicações. Além disso, a maioria dos inquiridos salientou que as aplicações forneceram ferramentas essenciais durante a pandemia de COVID-19, ajudando-os a controlar a ansiedade.

Palavras-chave: Marketing de conteúdos, era digital, geração Z, Bem-estar, saúde mental

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Introduction

This research presents a response to the concern about the use of content marketing by people belonging to Generation Z, which is characterized by the fact that since birth they have been exposed to the use of smart and interconnected devices for much of their daily time. By virtue of their widely informed digital consumption, this generation is able to decide their purchases not based on the offers that abound on the Internet, but rather they validate them in terms of authenticity, transparency and usefulness according to their values, interests and life expectations. It should be noted that Generation Z is highly sensitive to environmental problems, such as the climate crisis and other problems that affect the environment, awareness of the area of health and general well-being, aspects derived from the crisis posed by the Covid19 pandemic and lately by the crises of armed conflicts in the current geopolitical scenario. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate this generation and its predilection for digital platforms that allow them to be informed, so that they can have the opportunity in decision-making that supports them in different aspects of life such as education and work. Due to the high rate of interconnected employment, the little personal interaction with their peers derived from this reality, the high pressure derived from the immediacy in responses in their daily aspects, it is necessary to know how it affects their behavior, their emotions, their general well-being and finally their mental health and how digital marketing applications respond to these circumstances.

This research holds significant relevance due to the growing role of content marketing in shaping the perceptions and consumption decisions of Generation Z, particularly in the realm of wellness and mental health. In a context where this generation faces unprecedented pressures from hyperconnectivity, immediacy, and technological challenges, it becomes essential to understand how content strategies can contribute to enhancing their overall well-being. Moreover, the study provides valuable insights for mental health professionals by offering practical tools to address the emotional needs of this population, as well as for marketing designers, by optimizing the creation of authentic and effective content that fosters trust and engagement among these users.

Therefore, a documental research is proposed that addresses this topic, and at the same time supported by a qualitative study that gathers first-hand information through interviews with a selection of people from Generation Z who voluntarily contribute their perspective of life from the reality of their high interconnectivity, how they connect, how they get information and decide to use applications that provide emotional support to solve the aspects of the dehumanization of personal relationships, connection times and their associated problems that affect the part of mental well-being and at the same time understand how content marketing affects their perception and consumption in this population group.

The research has concluded, as the most important aspects, that mental health and physical wellness applications are software-based tools created to provide professional assistance and support to people interested in improving and managing their mental health and emotional well-being. These applications offer a variety of useful functions and resources to help users control their mental health, assisting them in facing problems, understanding them, and improving their overall mental well-being. These mental wellness applications use content marketing to attract potential users, fostering engagement by utilizing educational, authentic, and visually appealing content, including infographics and short videos, which have proven to be an effective strategy for capturing Generation Z's interest. This preference and the results related to content are especially relevant in wellness applications, where the information can be complex and technical.

Additionally, the results of both bibliographic and field research show how these platforms aim to connect with other people in the same situation or condition, which is a consequence of well-designed and structured content, and it is not merely a commercialization process. Finally, the findings highlight that all beneficiaries reported gaining benefits from discovering and using these applications. However, users also mentioned certain disadvantages, including concerns about data privacy and others.

The findings are expected to represent a contribution both for mental health specialists to offer support in terms of mental health well-being when required, but also for content marketing designers so that they can present, through digital applications, effective strategies to attract and retain Generation Z consumers and for the same people of the generation object of study, in the search for applications with many opportunities for their access and daily

consumption. The problems associated with the scope focus on the temporal disposition and voluntary participation of the people to choose a situation that was minimized by virtue of the socio-personal approach to these participants by the author of this study.

1. Content Marketing

The new scenarios of global markets, in addition to the homogenization and standardization of business organization models, have simultaneously emerged alongside a society with high levels of information and significant knowledge supported by digitalization, a condition that has led it to be very demanding in its relationship with the markets, demanding important transformations in the modes of society-market interaction. This complex circumstance ended up exhausting traditional marketing models or shaping this relationship, emerging very sophisticated alternative marketing models supported by advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (Storbacka & Moser, 2020; Dąbrowska, et al, 2022).

From this point of view, it is necessary to add that within the framework of the development and innovation of computer sciences, very significant changes are promoted and promoted in marketing and commercialization systems, particularly in digital marketing schemes, highlighting the content marketing, within the framework of an important technological development that accelerates these transformations. Added to this is the existence of a very complex society that is progressing and moving towards intensive knowledge with high digitalization that defines itself as society 5.0 (Storbacka & Moser, 2020).

Therefore, content marketing is a “strategic marketing approach designed to create and distribute valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience, with the aim of driving profitable actions for customers” (Content Marketing Institute, 2024: 1). Content marketing involves the strategic use of high-quality, engaging content. However, content marketing experts use content to achieve what was mentioned above. Instead of replacing techniques such as traditional marketing, public relations or search engine optimization, content marketing becomes more efficient when applied simultaneously with them.

Content marketing involves the creation, dissemination, and distribution of content online, with a specific audience in mind (Nayak, 2021). Content marketing is a way of designing and distributing valuable and unrestricted content by engaging and revolutionizing potential customers. According to Eshiett, Eshiett, & Uwhubetine (2022) the fundamental purpose of content marketing is to: i) raise awareness among end users and drive traffic to a product or

service, ii) increase the customer base, iii) generate and expand virtual sales volume, and iv) enhance the perception of product or service quality. While according to Ansari et al., (2019) the key purpose of content marketing is: i) customer perspective reinforcement, ii) sales and lead generation, consumer engagement, brand awareness, customer upsells and enthusiastic followers, fans and subscribers.

Social media content marketing is crucial for drawing consumers to brands, particularly when the content is both impactful and captivating (Monteiro, 2022). Content marketing goes beyond being a mere tactic; it is a strategic approach. Companies that effectively respond to customer needs and inquiries through content contribute value to online conversations (Lieb, 2011). On the other hand, according to Gümüş (2017) in the digital age we live in, social media content marketing plays a crucial role in conveying impactful content to consumers, making it appealing for them to stay connected with brands.

From another perspective, content marketing consists of the publication of material and information through social networks, with content that is selected to be important, relevant, and valuable, whose purpose is to attract and increase the number of users, its objective is to position the product or service and complete it until the purchase process, some of the content can be presented in multiple formats such as blogs, eBooks, forums, images, banners, videos, podcasts, webinars, infographics, among others (Olson, Olson, Czaplewski, & Key, 2021; Czaplá, Glinkowska-Krauze, Chebotarov, & Chebotarov, 2023)

Significantly, content marketing exists in four fundamental forms: written, audio, video, and image. Many businesses leverage multiple content formats to interact with their audiences across various platforms, including social media, websites, and advertisements (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023). Brands ought to develop valuable content tailored to specific consumers, fostering enhanced communication and fostering stronger relationships and engagement with the brand. This approach enables a quality interaction between the brand and the consumer on social media (Monteiro, 2022). Moreover, if consumers find the content appealing, they are likely to engage actively in the brand's activities. As the content conveys information about the brand and its products, it facilitates consumers in forming a connection with the brand, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship. This bond serves as a magnet,

drawing in consumers and motivating them to make purchases (Dolan, Conduit, Frethey-Bentham, Fahy, & Goodman, 2019)

Ensuring a consistent posting frequency on social networks is a crucial content marketing strategy as it enhances brand engagement. The act of creating and sharing content on social media goes beyond mere presence; it is vital for actively involving consumers, who contribute valuable insights to brands and facilitate improvements in their processes.

In summary, content marketing can be conceived as a Marketing strategy based on attracting potential customers in a natural way, based on relevant and important content distributed in the various digital channels and media consulted daily by the audience.

1.1 The importance and objectives of Content Marketing

According to Owen (2023), the significance of content marketing lies in its capacity to amplify the influx of high-quality traffic to the website. Content, often referred to as king, plays a pivotal role in building awareness and generating quality leads, fostering robust sales growth. A well-strategized and meticulously executed content plan possesses the ability to attract the audience to your business's website, serving as the crucial platform where visitors can transform into leads and, ultimately, into sales (Owen, 2023).

Furthermore, content marketing is the art of engaging with your customers and prospects without overtly promoting or selling. Rather than simply pitching products or services, the focus is on providing information that enhances the intelligence of your buyers. The core principle behind this content strategy is the belief that, by consistently delivering valuable and relevant information to buyers, businesses earn their trust, business, and loyalty over time (Patruti-Baltes, 2015).

Content marketing is an enduring strategy that shows no signs of waning. The pandemic catapulted content consumption by 207%, a surge expected to persist into 2023. Notably, 55% of marketers intend to up their content frequency, while 53% aim to enhance content quality this year (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023). The key lies in selecting the optimal blend of content marketing channels to capture greater attention.

The importance of content marketing lies in the fact that it is a way to involve the target audience and grow your network of leads and clients by creating relevant and valuable content, attracting, involving and generating value for people, so that you can generate a positive perception of a certain brand, thus favoring business. Therefore, "Content Marketing seeks to promote the engagement of the target audience and produce growth in the network of leads and clients. It can be summarized that content marketing is a form of digital marketing whose importance consists in the creation of important and relevant spaces and content that favor increased sales; create and strengthen ties with people, solve problems, satisfy needs, find opportunities, communicate values and position searches (Forrest, 2019).

In this order of ideas, content comes into play in digital marketing (or online marketing), which encompasses all those advertising or commercial actions and strategies that are executed through Internet media and channels. It makes a series of highly diverse tools available to users, ranging from small actions at practically zero cost to complex (more expensive) strategies in which an infinite number of techniques and resources can be combined. Search engines, such as Google, Yahoo or Bing, are tools that allow Internet users to find content related to what they are looking for. Social networks are very effective for the dissemination of content, as well as for the creation of a brand community, branding and even online purchasing, crisis management and customer service. Furthermore, in many of them (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.) there is also the possibility of launching segmented online advertising campaigns, which can be a good complement to any online strategy (Osman-Gani & Rahman-Faroque, 2021).

In the current era of digitalization, characterized by technological innovation, the importance of digital marketing increases annually as part of the marketing strategy carried out by organizations of all types and sizes. Since digital marketing requires the existence of content marketing, both the success and failure of corporate online communication depends on the quality of its content marketing. In this order of ideas, at the same time as promoting high quality content marketing, digital marketing experts must properly analyze the target to adapt their content and opt for the appropriate and correct way to promote it (Patruti-Baltes, 2015).

One of the significant changes experienced by traditional marketing was due to the incursion of digital marketing, which required rethinking the marketing strategies of corporations that wanted to continue being productive and competitive in the new digital era. In this sense, content marketing has become the key factor in a successful online marketing campaign and the most significant tool in digital marketing (Patruti-Baltes, 2015).

For this reason, many companies are currently interested in developing the use of content marketing in their marketing policy, as they have observed the restrictions of the traditional marketing communication strategy, as well as the great possibilities that digital marketing offers. Currently, content marketing is practiced by both large corporations (mainly those in the information and communication technologies sector such as: Microsoft, Cisco, Meta, Google, Apple, etc.), and by small and medium-sized ones. companies (Patruti-Baltes, 2015).

Content marketing enables the sharing of valuable information with consumers, thereby enhancing their inclination to purchase products. However, achieving positive outcomes requires not only strategizing but also clearly defining objectives. As stated by Monteiro (2022: 34) content marketing objectives should be integral to a well-defined content strategy, defined as "the practice of planning for the creation, delivery, and governance of useful content."

The following provides important information about the objectives of content marketing studies. It would be beneficial for brands, especially in the early stages, to identify the targets most relevant to their needs. In addition, directing attention to the obstacles they encounter most frequently can also generate positive results, contributing to the success of their efforts for brands and companies. Therefore, the objectives of content marketing are: Increasing customer loyalty, increasing number of prospective customers, increasing brand awareness, increasing sales revenue, sustaining leadership in the sector, increasing website traffic, increasing customer retention and improving search engine ranks.

On the other hand, for Vinerean (2017), the objectives of content marketing must be part of a defined content strategy, which consists of the planning, creation, distribution and management of both useful and usable content. This same source points out that the objectives of a corporate content marketing strategy are the following:

1. brand awareness or reinforcement;
2. conversion and development of leaders;
3. customer conversion;
4. customer service;
5. additional sales to the customer;
6. passionate subscribers (Vinerean, 2017: 95).

Consequently, content marketing is the key factor in gaining the trust of the target audience. Trust is also identified as one of the drivers of content marketing success. Therefore, the four significant components in a content marketing strategy that could develop and maintain trust for a company or brand are as follows:

1. shared values (with the client);
2. interdependence (mutual value in the relationship);
3. quality communication; and
4. non-opportunistic behavior (Vinerean, 2017: 95).

1.2 Why should companies use content marketing today?

The answer to this question must involve the recognition that current marketing is totally impossible without appropriate, high-quality, attractive and excellent content. Content should be integrated into the marketing strategy and process, and should never be treated in isolation. In this sense, quality content must be part of all forms of marketing, which include:

- Email Marketing: Great content that empowers users to anticipate, open, and read brand emails
- Social media marketing: corporate content strategy based on the continuous use of social networks.
- SEO: Search engines reward and incentivize companies that publish consistent, good quality content.
- Public Relations: Successful public relations strategies address the topics that readers truly care about, not their businesses.
- PPC: pay-per-click: For PPC to work, you need great content behind the proposal.
- Inbound marketing: Content is crucial and decisive in generating inbound traffic and leads.

- Digital marketing: content is part of the foundation for an integrated digital marketing strategy, either to improve it or to start or restart it.
- Content strategy: it should be considered to establish the creation and management of content throughout an organization (Content Marketing Institute, 2024).

According to what was pointed out by Verbitskaya (2024), it is necessary to point out what the future trends of content marketing are, in order to determine why it should be used in the corporate marketing strategy. In this regard, it is necessary to consider the following:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) should be used by humans and only for humans. to optimize content quality and deepen research, never to replace human content writers. Generation Z benefits from using AI because it saves them time searching for content and locating relevant data to respond to their work or information pressures, and the quality of content is also improved by using AI. In this sense, when personal interests and AI merge, it definitely transforms the way Generation Z interacts with products, allowing them to unleash their creativity and demonstrate their individuality in ways never seen before.

AI is changing the mechanics of search engines: AI will definitely change the way search engines and rankings work. It is important to keep a close eye on these changes and adapt your content strategy. With the advent of Google's AI generative research and other AI-driven changes, content needs to be as useful and productive as possible to compete in search results. Adding participatory elements to blog posts will help maintain and retain reader attention. It is important to understand that AI algorithms are helping search engines better understand user intent, especially Gen Z users, and deliver more personalized search results, meaning Gen Zers get more accurate and relevant information than ever before. Therefore, integrating AI into search engines creates a more sophisticated and intelligent web experience. Features like smart replies, natural language processing, and image recognition are changing the way Gen Zers interact with search engines, making them more like personal assistants than just a tool for searching for information.

AI-generated content can help achieve high rankings quickly – AI leads to better SEO; many companies that use AI for content marketing report a substantial improvement in SEO

performance. The success of AI-generated content is due to a balance between AI innovation and human expertise. Integrating AI with SEO data and using tools like ContentShake will allow AI to improve content creation, making it more noticeable and effective for search rankings, which greatly benefits digital natives of Generation Z, because high-quality and engaging content will rank much better in search engine results than any other content, favoring this type of users' search for accurate information.

AI is driving a counter-movement among creators: Gen Z users are prioritizing and giving preference to genuine content that shows a brand's true personality. AI tools in content creation free up and facilitate time for brands to focus on more personal and human interactions. Brands that show real-life elements, such as unfiltered live videos, develop more consistent relationships with audiences. Gen Zers privilege and prioritize content full of honesty and brand personality, because authenticity highlights the incorporation of the most human side to information search results, but also generates benefits to the work of Gen Z users, which is why they demand and seek vulnerable, transparent and sincere content.

One important thing the trends show is that search click-through rates are top of mind for Gen Z users, and AI can help here: AI tools don't just create content, they can help identify content that could be optimized for more clicks. Gen Zers have understood that search engines answer users' questions more efficiently by providing overt and important snippets, related questions, and knowledge sections in search results.

Prepare for the addition of AI-powered lighting, cameras, and video content. AI-powered video tools will help personalize content for the target audience, going beyond generating basic videos with artificial intelligence. Short-form videos will continue to be a trend in content marketing. From this perspective, Gen Z users can enjoy personalized and interactive video messages, from webinars and advertisements to training videos, health and wellness videos, sales videos, and many other topics of interest. In this order of ideas, AI helps attract Gen Z listeners to different types of podcasts, using AI tools saves time when writing, producing and marketing podcasts, helping you appear in search engines and gain new users. In this order of ideas, AI helps attract Gen Z listeners to different types of podcasts, using AI tools allows you to save time when writing, producing and marketing podcasts, helping

you appear in search engines and gain new users. In this sense, currently, far from being just a tool for mass production of content, AI is now oriented towards allowing the creation of specialized content, such as in the area of well-being and mental health. It facilitates research and the creation of content tailored to a very specific audience, ensuring that each word resonates and adds value. This represents a substantial benefit for Gen Z users who are looking for specialized content that can help them solve their personal problems derived from the immediacy of the requirements they are subjected to.

Finally, AI will continue to provide a major boost to content consumption patterns. Looking ahead, live streaming will remain the most effective content marketing strategy for generating positive audience connections, and AI tools will help enhance and repurpose content for multiple platforms.

1.3 Types of content marketing

Today, many marketers employ various forms of content marketing to engage with their audiences across multiple platforms. The choice of content a company develops depends on its business strategy and the primary audience it intends to connect with (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023). Regarding the different types of content, Adobe in 2023 suggested adding these eight types of content marketing: blogs, podcasts, video, social media, infographics, e-books, and paid advertising (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023). Some types of content marketing are as follows:

Blogs, serve as written resources that businesses utilize to promote their products, discuss industry trends, or showcase their expertise. Although most businesses publish blogs on their own websites, it is also common to generate guest blogs for external websites as a means of building links. While blogs are predominantly text-based, businesses frequently incorporate custom images and videos to enhance reader engagement (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023). Unlike previous generations, Gen Zers prefer to search and read information on their smartphones. This makes blog content great for Gen Zers. Blog posts can be easily shared on most internet channels, from social media to publishing websites.

In addition, blog posts rank among the most widely used forms of content marketing as they assist businesses in attracting both human readers and search engines. Integrating blogging into any content marketing strategy proves advantageous due to its cost-effectiveness, search engine-friendly nature, and relative simplicity compared to multimedia formats like video (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023).

Another type of content marketing is Podcasts, which allow businesses to engage niche audiences through the effectiveness of audio content. Businesses can create their own podcast or participate as guests on other podcasts within their industry to connect with a broader audience. In a branded podcast, businesses predominantly address audience pain points while also incorporating elements such as customer stories, industry trends, case studies, and other narratives that establish an emotional connection with their listeners (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023). Furthermore, numerous businesses underestimate the potential of podcasting, often due to uncertainty about leveraging audio-only content. However, podcasts are an expanding platform for businesses to connect with their customers. Furthermore, podcast viewership is on the rise, with a notable 22% increase in smart speaker sales post-pandemic, further encouraging a growing podcast audience (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023).

Gen Z monthly listeners are highly active. As digital natives who grew up with social media, social media obviously plays a major role in Gen Z's podcast listening experience. About nine in ten Gen Z listeners have heard a short podcast snippet on social media, and nearly three in four of them say the short snippet led them to listen to or watch the podcast elsewhere. More than 80% of Gen Z listeners say they learn about podcasts through YouTube or TikTok, more than 70% hear about them through Instagram, and more than 50% hear about them through Facebook or Twitter. Podcasts have become a crucial way for Gen Z to stay informed: Two in three monthly listeners say they listen to or watch podcasts to keep up with the latest topics, and 61% listen or watch specifically to keep up with social issues. (Paris, 2024).

Video is emerging as a significant trend in content marketing. Whether featured on a website or platforms like TikTok or YouTube, video provides brands with the ability to convey complex ideas and emotions to their audience in a concise timeframe. The affordability and accessibility of smartphones have facilitated the rapid creation of branded videos,

simultaneously enhancing content quality through the inclusion of visuals, music, and voiceovers (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023).

Numerous businesses leverage video content to showcase product demonstrations, share customer testimonials, narrate employee stories, or unveil new features. Some businesses even employ video to craft immersive experiences, such as entertaining concerts or game shows, in order to strengthen their connections with viewers. The popularity of multimedia is growing, as it is more accessible for consumers to comprehend and share with their social circles. Notably, 91% of consumers express a desire for more video content from their favorite brands, making it an effective way to meet customer expectations (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023).

In the ever-changing and evolving digital landscape, video stands out as the most engaging content medium, particularly among Gen Z audiences. Known for their digital skills and their preference for immersive, visually rich content, this generation is fond of video for both entertainment and information. The popularity of social media platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram, which favor video content, has further cemented video as the go-to format for reaching and engaging Gen Z users. Video content captivates this audience, while also fostering deep connections and encouraging meaningful engagement (Nativo, Inc, 2024).

Social media marketing is an extension of content marketing, involving the creation and dissemination of content through pertinent social platforms. In this strategy, brands share text, images, and video content on social media platforms. While businesses typically select a combination of social media channels aligned with their audience's preferences, popular platforms include Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Pinterest, and YouTube. Additionally, B2B brands often achieve success on platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023).

Social media serves as an advantageous content marketing tool, enabling businesses to interact and engage with customers wherever they are. Instead of relying solely on email or the website for engagement, businesses can share updates and entertaining content on social media to connect with their target audience. This approach allows followers of a brand to share content, potentially contributing to the brand going viral and reaching a wider

audience. Notably, social media can function as an organic or paid referral channel, consistently driving traffic to the business website (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023).

Gen Z has a high preference for platforms that provide short-form, interactive, visual content such as TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube. These platforms make it easy for them to express themselves creatively, connect with like-minded people, and stay up-to-date on trends and pop culture. Gen Z, therefore, has its own unique approach to social media, rejecting older social media platforms but favoring newer ones because they fit their preferences. Gen Z prefers TikTok and YouTube for 68% of their online entertainment time, as these platforms are used like television for consuming content from curated creators. For sharing and communicating, they use newer platforms such as Discord, Snapchat, BeReal, and IG Stories, which account for 19% of their time. Importantly, Gen Z spends more time on social media than before, but posts significantly less due to strong competition from algorithm-backed influencer/brand marketing (Roman, 2024).

Infographics represent a form of content marketing that presents compelling statistics and facts in an aesthetically pleasing visual format. While infographics are commonly utilized in B2B content marketing, they also find utility in certain B2C applications, particularly for conveying instructions or highlighting product features. Typically, businesses repurpose existing content, such as a blog, by condensing its key points into a visually engaging and easily digestible infographic. This approach maximizes the use of existing resources while enhancing engagement through visual learning (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023).

In addition, infographics are valuable as they condense complex concepts into visually appealing graphics that are both easy to read and share. In an era where audiences prefer easily digestible content, infographics facilitate the efficient consumption of a brand's content in less time. Moreover, businesses can break down the original infographic into smaller images, making them ideal for resharing on social media platforms (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023).

It is important to note that currently, static and animated infographics are compatible with Instagram and can be used to convey complex scientific information to a variety of audiences, which is why they are preferred by Generation Z. Animated infographics are made up of moving and dynamic elements that optimize visualization and improve recall,

values, and attitudes towards certain products, such as wellness and mental health applications (Martinez , Holt, Lamm , & Borron, 2021).

Ebooks are widely embraced as a form of B2B content marketing, although certain B2C brands also utilize them to educate consumers about product features or company-related topics, such as sustainability. However, this strategy is more prevalent among B2B brands. Numerous companies develop Ebooks as lead magnets, serving as tools to gather readers' email addresses for lead nurturing purposes (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023).

Additionally, an eBook serves as an effective tool for lead generation, which includes Gen Z, but businesses need to ensure that these digital publications provide genuine value that is craved and requested by this generation. By creating original research, gathering industry insights, or offering exclusive information not available elsewhere, businesses can leverage eBooks to generate more leads and improve their brand authority when executed effectively (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023).

1.4 Characteristics that digital content marketing should have

The fundamental characteristics of content marketing are as follows:

Applicability: The concept of content marketing's applicability implies that it is a tangible and actionable idea. Various sources on digital content marketing describe it as a technological platform that guarantees the delivery of essential and relevant information beneficial and applicable to consumers (Eshiett, et al., 2022). Effective and relevant communication with end-users regarding product service offerings constitutes the fundamental cornerstone of successful digital content. The urgent needs emphasize the importance of this communication approach. In this respect, pressing needs are effective in demanding content, and relevant communication with users within the framework of product and service offerings is the basis for successful digital content. Therefore, members of Generation Z, in terms of applicability of content to their daily lives, want fast digital speed, individualized digital experiences, opportunity to express their creativity, use of subscription services via the app. For this reason, gaming apps are desirable for Generation Z.

Must be able to instruct or educate: The goal of creating content to educate should be considered when planning and creating marketing strategies to attract the target audience. Because it is where it is necessary to provide exclusive and instructive information, including in the publication characteristics of the product or service such as: benefits, price, mode of use or consumption or other characteristics of interest to the consumer or client (Travassos-Rosário & Dias, 2023).

The educational landscape is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by the influx of digitally savvy students from Generation Z and the emerging Generation Alpha. These digital natives are not simply passive learners but active participants in their educational journeys, demanding innovative and engaging experiences. This demands continuous changes in educational marketing strategies to effectively connect with Gen Z users. Therefore, from their purchasing and job placement decisions, Gen Z adopts a pragmatic perspective on life, representing a real challenge for educational content marketers. According to CIO Women Magazine (2024), the most successful applications in educational content for Gen Z are:

Coursera, the leading and most preferred platform for eLearning for Gen Z. It provides its Z users with an extensive series of courses, certificates and academic programs from the best universities and educational institutions worldwide. The interface is very easy to use and the platform's mobile application is very accessible for digital natives of generation Z, who frequently learn on the go.

Khan Academy, a successful eLearning application in the field of mathematics, science and other basic subjects. It is a non-profit entity that offers high-level education free of charge to anyone, anywhere. Accessibility aligned especially with the inclusive values and accessibility of Generation Z.

Udemy, an eLearning platform very popular among Generation Z because it fits their multiple interests and professional expectations. Its courses cover areas such as technology, business, personal development and creative skills. Generation Z students value Udemy's affordability for the wide range of courses it offers.

Duolingo, generation Z behaviorally demonstrates its global and multicultural perspective, therefore, language learning is very significant throughout their educational process. Duolingo, through gamification, is perfect for Gen Z.

LinkedIn Learning is an adaptive learning technology platform that ensures that the courses it offers to Gen Z are tailored to their skill level and individual progress, enhancing the learning experience. The convenience, ease, and availability of mobile access and offline viewing enables Gen Z to learn and improve their skills at their particular level.

Adaptability: The failure to deliver coherent and understandable content may adversely impact an organization's image, profitability, and overall growth trajectory. Therefore, it is imperative to generate content that is not only comprehensible but also directly aligns with the expectations of end users (Eshiett, Eshiett, & Uwhubetine, 2022). In other words, it is the information provided to members of Generation Z through the content that is advertised to Z users by digital platforms where the competence, skill, capacity is appreciated and that will announce to the end user the ability, competence, style, experience and potential of the content owner to offer useful content, on different points of interest to Z users, especially in terms of well-being and mental health, because this is the case that concerns us in the present study.

It should be friendly and fun: If the advertising content is not friendly and fun, it will not be consumed in its entirety, since attractive content has the power to awaken greater attention and interest in consumers, especially members of the Z generation who appreciate and privilege the consumption of attractive and informative content with images, sounds and videos such as YouTube, TikTok. This is a good start to attract new customers, since the audience of the digital age wants to be entertained 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (Kee & Yazdanifard, 2015)

Reliability: Content owners must prioritize the provision of reliable information through their content using relevant models and techniques. Reliability involves the process of ensuring that data is collected and analyzed effectively to produce reliable and secure results. This aspect is very significant since Generation Z values the reliability of the content offered in the digital applications that they consume for various interests. This aspect is reinforced

because once this particularity is identified, the same Z users are responsible for disseminating this important aspect among their contacts (Eshiett, Eshiett, & Uwhubetine, 2022)

Interesting: Generation Z is characterized by consuming multimedia content such as photos or images, attractive words or terms and, if possible, sounds or short videos inserted in non-traditional formats that attract attention and generate entertainment. It is necessary that the texts can include phrases that help summarize the information so that the message is remembered (Haas, 2023).

Clarity: Messages to be conveyed to Generation Z within content must be specific, fluid and easy to understand, for which simple language must be used that is easy to understand and comprehend for this type of users. Consequently, the nature, execution, clarity, pleasant and attractive presentation of the content are fundamental to the success of digital content marketing (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019).

Uniqueness: The ability to offer a unique solution to the challenges faced by Gen Z users through distinctive content can lead to increased website traffic, higher sales, and improved profitability. One specific approach to gaining a high level of patronage is when Gen Z users become advocates, willingly promoting the product or service due to its perceived added value (Eshiett, Eshiett, & Uwhubetine, 2022).

Ethics and honesty: Marketers and experts create engaging and creative content by publishing it on various platforms, while Gen Zers have the freedom to choose what to search for and read. In the age of digitalization, where future and potential consumers are very well informed, marketing products and services by telling lies, giving false statistics, and covering up the truth no longer works in the information society. Therefore, content marketers must be relevant, authoritative, and authentic (Kee & Yazdanifard, 2015).

Emotional bond: The content must be structured with an emotion that is capable of awakening and generating interest in interacting with the publication by Generation Z. Even in informative formats, there is an affective component that motivates these users to interact with them (Haas, 2023).

Topic: This must respond to the reality about which you want to generate interaction with the generation Z user. The topics must have a true connection and correspondence with their interests and needs, but, at the same time, they must be consistent with the objectives and identity of the organization that disseminates them on different digital platforms. It consists of balancing what the community of users of generation Z wants to hear and what the organization wants to tell them. Content topics are the central themes or ideas around which content is created and organized (Foundation Marketing, 2024).

Innovation: Creativity stands as the cornerstone of remarkable success. When content encapsulates unique and solution-oriented ideas, it becomes imperative for content owners to engage experts and professionals skilled in the relevant field. This approach ensures the creation of innovative, valuable, and result-oriented digital content that is appreciated by Gen Z in their continuous search for something new (Eshiett, Eshiett, & Uwhubetine, 2022).

Benefits: An essential element in content development is the consideration of the benefits it brings to both Gen Z users and product service owners. Gen Z members are continually interested in determining whether a given piece of content has the potential to address their specific problems (Eshiett, Eshiett, & Uwhubetine, 2022).

Communicative action: Depending on the way in which you want to generate value for Generation Z users, communicative action refers to the way in which the content discourse is structured. It is the element that guides the tone and style with which the publication is produced. This can be to inform, entertain, educate or inspire this type of users (Haas, 2023).

1.5 Content Marketing Awards, Best Practice Examples from Winning Brands

The Content Marketing Institute CMI has been seriously and responsibly pushing content marketing forward. To this end, one of the best methods when trying to improve CMI's skills and broaden its vision is to select and reward the best examples and practices established by some brilliant industry professionals. In this sense, the winners of the Content Marketing Awards are presented annually, which are the best of the best among cutting-edge projects, outstanding results and exceptional experiences that lead the way in content marketing.

The winners presented below represent storytellers who know how to create outstanding content in the crowded content landscape. Their creative works led to success for their organizations and clients, and recognition by the generation as winners in PR Daily's Content Marketing Awards. In the different categories presented, all are relevant in the consumption of Z users. In 2023, the following categories were awarded and some of the winners are presented (Content Marketing Institute, 2023):

1.6 Distinguished marketing projects

Content Marketing Project of the Year:

Winner: The Ecopreneurs - Salesforce & FORTUNE Brand Studio. Ecopreneur: is an environmental entrepreneur who currently leads and promotes climate action at a global level as well as the fight for the preservation of all ecosystems at risk due to human activity. He has a series of short videos that can be seen on his webpage: https://brand-studio.fortune.com/salesforce/the-ecopreneurs/?prx_t=lz0HAAAAAAovEQA



Figure 1. Episode 11 – PMDP (A sacred Hawaiian national monument is threatened by 1 million pounds of marine debris. Follow PMDP on its voyage to clean it up.)

Source: (Studio Fortune, 2023)

Strategy

Best Content Marketing Launch

Winner: Wells Fargo Diverse Business Solutions - Imprint - Wells Fargo. Entity that develops strategies that help small business owners thrive and be successful by discovering their orientation, resources and tools that will allow them to achieve their unique objectives. To do this, they use business management strategies, business growth and development, and financial management of the business. To do this, they have micro videos and multiple types of content on their website <https://smallbusinessresources.wf.com/>



Figure 2. Discover financing options and advisory resources in your area through our partnership with Community Reinvestment Fund USA.

Connecting Small Businesses to More Pathways to Accessing Capital. No matter what stage or circumstance your business is in, resources are available to help you achieve your goals.

Source: (Wells Fargo, 2024).

Distribution

Best Use of Original Research in Content Marketing

Winner: The Press Reset: A 2023 Cybersecurity Report – Ivanti. Organization that leads the strengths of all types of businesses against cyber-attacks. This being the need of its users the most important things on your priority list. They offer the very clear product features and support you expect and encourage user participation in their active product communities. In this sense, they put their services and contacts on their website <https://www.facebook.com/GoIvanti/photos/tune-in-to-the-latest-ivantipartnerinsights-episode-with-michelle-hodges-svp-of-/1054252980044816/>

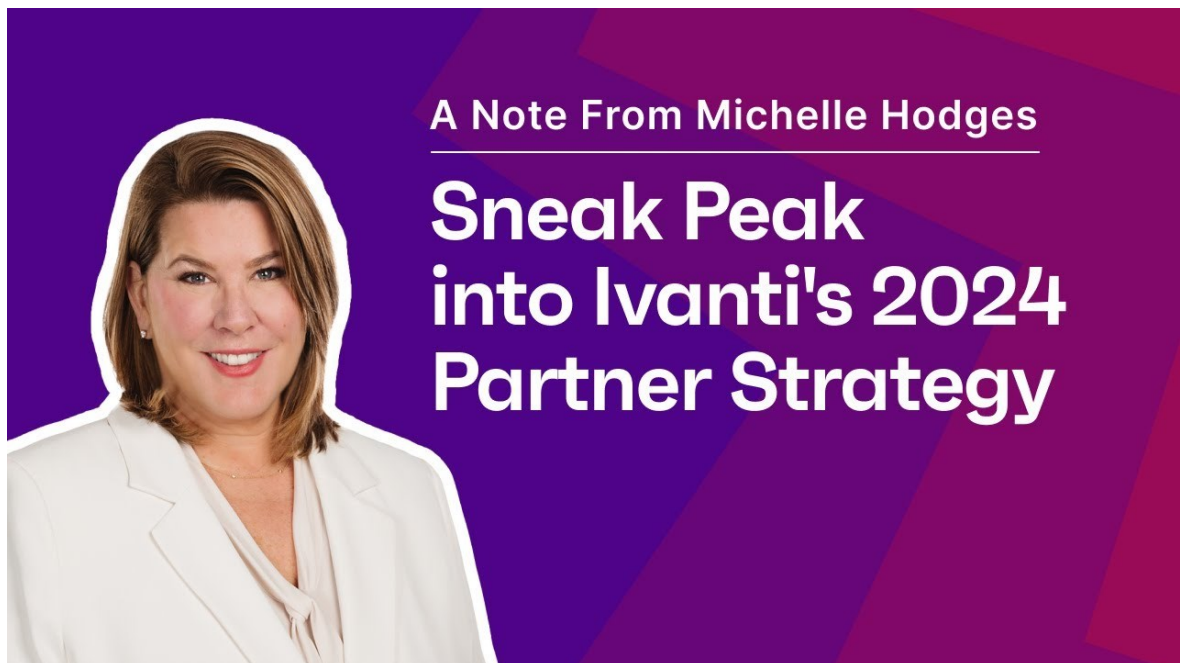



Figure 3. Locking arms and driving business outcomes
Staying conscious of your growth and profitability.
Source: (Facebook, 2024).

1.7 Visual Storytelling

Best Publication Design

Winner: Qantas magazine - Medium Rare Content Agency. Qantas' content marketing policy is INSPIRING TRAVEL WITH AUDIENCE-DIRECTED AND TARGET CONTENT

Qantas is Australia's leading airline and a significant global brand, however in 2015 its content program did not sufficiently and effectively engage passengers or meet its marketing objectives. That's why Qantas partnered with Medium Rare to relaunch its content across all channels: the in-flight magazine; content inspiration hub, Qantas Travel Insider; social content and bi-weekly inspirational emails. Its website offers everything a traveler requires for contact, services and enjoyment of their trips.



Any airline can match a member's status, but no airline can match our service

Australia, it's good to be flying again.
And it's a great time to be a Velocity member.

We're rewarding our existing Gold and Platinum Velocity members for their loyalty through Status Rewards including up to an additional year of Status, 5,000 bonus Points and extra benefits with eligible flights taken before 28 March 2021*.

Velocity Discover Gold Status for Qantas Frequent Flyer members.

We're also offering Velocity Discover Gold Status to eligible Gold, Platinum and Platinum One Qantas Frequent Flyers* because every Australian should enjoy award-winning service every time they fly.

The rewards just keep on coming at Virgin Australia.

For more information visit velocityfrequentflyer.com

*Discover Gold: Submit interest by 21 Dec 2020. Eligibility criteria, exclusions and Terms and Conditions apply. Status Rewards: Eligibility criteria, exclusions and Terms and Conditions apply. Velocity Membership: Terms and Conditions apply. [view at velocityfrequentflyer.com](http://velocityfrequentflyer.com)/?rewardConditions

velocity
frequent flyer

Virgin loyalty program of
australia

Figure 4. Best Publication (Qantas magazine)
Source: (Ad News, 2020)

The concept of visual storytelling has proven to be an effective tool in content marketing, especially for capturing the attention of Generation Z, which is characterized by a preference for visual and dynamic content. The examples presented, such as the use of animated infographics and short videos, are particularly relevant as they simplify complex concepts and enhance understanding and retention of information—key elements when addressing technical or in-depth topics like mental health and well-being. These visual methods not only attract users' attention but also create an emotional connection with them, fostering greater engagement and participation. In conclusion, the use of visual storytelling is essential for brands to connect with Generation Z, providing content that is both informative and engaging, thus promoting trust and loyalty toward mental well-being apps, a fundamental aspect in the context of this research.

1.8 Successful content marketing strategies

Analyzing the success of content marketing campaigns allows you to evaluate and increase awareness of the respective brand. The most effective and successful content marketing campaigns begin with a strategy describing the objectives, the voice of the process, the style and the idea, and an effective consideration of the audience, which involves two fundamental principles: Know the respective audience. Knowing your audience means listening to them properly and in a timely manner (Weinstein, 2021).

Listen to the audience

The content communicates a message to the target audience, through different options such as articles, social media posts, videos, images, podcasts, etc. These are very effective means of reaching potential users and customers. But, without knowing their needs or preferences, you run the risk of offering what they don't need. In terms of content strategies, a true listener effectively understands users, from their personal points of view.

Here are some effective ways to find out what your audience cares about.

Interact with current customers, which indicates understanding what interests them. Focusing on this group, through surveys and interviews, will provide information about their wants, needs, concerns or even fears. Knowing these aspects, it will facilitate decision making to start a successful campaign.

Use social listening tools available to listen to potential clients in a non-intrusive way. Social networks are effective for this, because they make it easier to know their opinions and feelings regarding a specific topic.

Go from listening to understanding the target audience, the final step is to apply all the knowledge that has been acquired from them, especially about what matters to them, what they want or need. In addition, this will allow the understanding of how, where the content should be delivered.

Developing a content strategy favors the establishment of the objectives to be achieved, what its scope will be, how it will be created, how it will be distributed and the control of its performance. Developing a successful content strategy provides both focus and purpose to your efforts because it seeks to understand what your audience wants and needs; through the development of useful, educational and valuable content for her.

Research keywords, as these help the audience locate your content on the Internet, which makes it easier for users to search for a specific query in a specific search engine by entering the keywords that guide their search where they enter sets. of words. The search engine then searches these indexes to find content that matches those sets of words. The better the content relates to the search entry, the higher it will appear in search results (Weinstein, 2021)

1.9 Chapter I Summary

As a summary of this Chapter, it is important to highlight that Generation Z, made up of people born in the mid-1990s and early 2000s, constitute a unique population sector in the current demographic scenario. This generation grew up in a digitally saturated world, deeply permeating and shaping their perspectives and actions. This generation has had access to information, technology and social media since early childhood, influencing their way of thinking and acting. They are characterized by their potential to process information quickly, their tendency towards multitasking and their innovative and creative approach.

In terms of values, Generation Z seeks authenticity, their responsibility towards diversity and inclusion, and a strong socio-environmental awareness. They are consumers who value individualized experiences and seek brands that offer quality products that reflect their ethical and social values. Their importance in today's market is unquestionable as they are a driving force behind consumer trends and have significant purchasing power, making them an important target for brands and marketers.

This generation Z stands out for its unique digital habits. They opt for social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, because their content is dynamic, visual and continuously updated. This trend shows their desire for interactive and visually attractive and stimulating content, which offers immediate reward and opportunities for active participation. Likewise, this generation consumes content from multiple devices simultaneously, reflecting their ability to divide their attention and their desire to be constantly connected and entertained. Regarding their purchasing behavior, Gen Z tends to do in-depth research before buying. They are influenced by quality and price, online directions, suggestions from friends and family, and the brand's presence on social media. They seek authenticity and transparency in brands, choosing those aligned with their particular values and that demonstrate a true commitment to socio-environmental causes. Developing effective content strategies for Gen Z therefore requires an authenticity- and relevance-first approach. Gen Z appreciates content that is genuine, creative, and expresses their interests and concerns.

2. Wellness industry and Gen Z

Marketing is not a one-size-fits-all approach, it's all about building the right customer base for a particular business. Even if your sales force only sells one product, your strategy needs to be tailored based on a variety of factors, including age. You need to understand how to incorporate content that appeals to mass audiences throughout your generational marketing strategy while avoiding excluding key target groups. Generational marketing as a sales strategy therefore uses segmentation and age-based segmentation to effectively reach each target demographic. There are currently four generations of consumers that marketing teams and strategies should consider: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. You need to understand that each generation interacts with marketing in different ways. By understanding which age groups are part of your target audience, your marketing team and strategy will generate the appropriate content (LeadBoxer B.V., 2023).

A person is considered to belong to Generation Z if they were generally born after 1997 and up to 2012. In this sense, one third of the world's population belongs to this age group. Generation Z's experiences and interactions with today's technology have created their own perspective, which they have even transferred to their workplace. Generation Z, unlike other existing generations, never experienced a time without social media, smartphones or the Internet. Being born and growing up in a changing world characterized by information and communication technologies, the connectivity and portability of smart devices, this reality has been part of their daily lives, which is why they constitute the first generation of true digital natives. This Generation Z lives under the norm of seamless digital encounters. In their lives, they only expect efficiency, utility, convenience and user interfaces that are easy and quick to navigate. (LeadBoxer B.V., 2023)

The immediacy, efficiency and exploitation of opportunities for digital connection have generated a generation that is more connected than ever before, without spatial and temporal barriers. However, the immense amount of hours of connection to the network has depersonalized and perhaps dehumanized this generation. The pressure for quick responses in all areas generates stress, loneliness and ends with problems that affect their mental health and general well-being. In this order of ideas, digital applications with content in these areas

have been created, attended by specialists who provide therapeutic aspects to address mental health affected by the daily life of today's open and interconnected world.

2.1 Wellness industry

The different areas of knowledge define well-being from their perspectives, some of these are coherent and possibly some are both vague and imprecise, such as defining how well or not things are going in someone's life. On the other hand, others are much less clear and with a number of elements different from each other, considering among them the state of happiness, satisfaction, optimal state of physical and mental health, psychological balance (distress and anxiety under control). A generally accepted definition considers well-being as how people feel, how they function on a personal and social level, and how they view their lives as a whole. Therefore, this definition considers the multiple components of well-being in terms of emotion, performance, understanding and relationships (Jarden & Roache, 2023).

From another point of view, well-being is the experience of health, happiness and prosperity. It involves good physical and mental health, high levels of life satisfaction, a sense of meaning, belonging or purpose, and the ability to cope with everyday stress. In other words, well-being is simply feeling good. For this reason, all people seek their well-being, including in their daily lives many positive things such as routines that make them feel good, happy, healthy, related to many like-minded people and decide to walk firmly in life and make decisions that satisfy not only needs, but at the same time solve problems and allow the taking advantage of opportunities to relaunch in life (Davis, 2024).

However, in countries like the United States, well-being appears to be declining. However, increasing well-being could become complex if you do not have the tools and what to do and how to achieve it. Even though increasing personal well-being can be extremely simple, this is because there are multiple skills that can be developed to achieve it. However, for some people it is not that simple, so they must discover which parts are important for the personal achievement of well-being, and then develop different strategies to strengthen the required skills and, if necessary, demand or require additional help. (Davis, 2024).

On the official website of Colorado State University, USA, it is stated that well-being has eight dimensions that are interrelated jointly and simultaneously, these are:

- Emotional dimension,
- Physical dimension,
- Occupational dimension,
- Spiritual dimension
- Social dimension,
- Intellectual dimension,
- Financial or economic dimension
- Environmental dimension (Colorado State University, 2024)

If any of them are neglected in the long term, it will end up unfavourably affecting not only health, but well-being and therefore quality of life. However, an adequate balance between these dimensions will result in general harmony and personal well-being. In the same way that an adequate diet is necessary for healthy nutrition, the balance achieved in well-being will bring physical, mental and spiritual benefits. This important multi-dimensional holistic approach focuses on the relevance of positivity and motivation to promote healthy habits in pursuit of improved quality of life (Colorado State University, 2024).

Below is a descriptive table of the different dimensions that make up well-being.

Table 1. Dimensions of well-being

Dimensions of well-being	Description
EMOTIONAL DIMENSION	This dimension contributes to both health and general well-being. It includes the knowledge and skills to recognize and identify personal feelings and the ability to manage emotions. This can be defined as the suitability and competence to successfully manage everyday stress and adapt to a changing world in the midst

of difficult times. This emotional well-being also encompasses the ability to practice relaxation and stress management techniques, be resilient, develop self-love and develop healthy emotions that lead to the generation of healthy emotions as a source of good feelings.

To develop emotional well-being, it is necessary to perfect emotional skills, such as positivity, emotional control and mindfulness. It is frequently required to develop several of these skills to face the wide diversity of situations that arise in life. Once these emotional well-being skills have been achieved, you will be able to better cope with stress, control your emotions in the face of different challenges and quickly recover from disappointments. This will result in full enjoyment of life, being truly happy and achieving the proposed objectives effectively. The skills to develop for full enjoyment of emotional well-being are the skills of resilience, positive thinking, mindfulness and happiness.

OCCUPATIONAL WELL-BEING

Occupational well-being includes all aspects of well-being linked to personal satisfaction in the exercise and professional development in your job or career.

In other words, it is defined as the ability to fight for your interests, values and purpose in life, gaining meaning, prosperity, happiness, growth, development and professional enrichment. Good development in the context of

occupational well-being requires an increase in skills that allow achieving professional growth expectations, which includes increasing professional skills to achieve life goals, strengthen personal values, and above all, maintain and seek healthy balance between work and personal life. These skills allow the enjoyment of work, allowing concentration, motivation and finally work success.

PHYSICAL DIMENSION

This dimension covers all areas of personal health related to the physical aspects of the body, its care such as diet, physical activity, body weight control, ergonomic aspects, smoking, alcoholism, diseases, its adequate prevention, etc.

It includes the ability to improve the functionality of the human body through good healthy lifestyle habits and the fight against a sedentary lifestyle.

The development of appropriate physical well-being requires knowledge of healthy eating, as well as an effective physical exercise routine, eliminating harmful habits such as smoking, sedentary lifestyle and alcoholism. By improving physical well-being, health improves, diseases are prevented, emotional well-being is increased, and countless health challenges faced on a daily basis are curtailed. Some aspects that can improve this type of well-

being are: Eating healthy, detoxifying the body, correcting all nutritional deficiencies.

SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Social well-being covers those aspects of well-being linked to social connections and support networks, interpersonal relationships, and personal expression.

The ability to proactively participate in a healthy and prosperous community, culture, and environmental environment. An adequate development of social well-being requires the strengthening of skills that allow interconnection both with people and with the things and the world that surrounds the person. Skills need to be strengthened to support communities, fostering a culture of justice, solidarity and opportunities for compassion and kindness. These skills will help a person feel like an important part of the world and the community.

SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING

Spiritual well-being encompasses those aspects associated with the personal search for purpose and meaning in life. It includes the belief in a higher Being, however, spiritual well-being does not have to be related to some type of religious belief or belong to a specific religion.

INTELLECTUAL WELL-BEING

This dimension of well-being includes all those aspects of well-being that are related to mental health and brain development through mental activities that lead to reflection.

FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

Financial well-being encompasses all matters related to finances, including the knowledge and skills of financial planning and expense management.

ENVIRONMENT WELL-BEING

This type of well-being includes all aspects related to the area of health linked to the environment, and simultaneously how the environment and its problems can affect health. This well-being involves ecological considerations, proactive participation in the recycling and correct disposal of electronic products and medicines, as well as all types of organic and inorganic waste, conservation of energy, fuel and water, and the continued use of environmentally friendly products.

Source: (Colorado State University, 2024). <https://www.csupueblo.edu/health-education-and-prevention/8-dimension-of-well-being.html>

From the perspective of this research, it is important to specify how generation Z conceives their well-being. In this sense, this generation has redefined the meaning and value of well-being and looking to the future, starting in 2024, they will truly be able to take everything

related to their health and well-being into their hands. Paradoxically, generation Z has been considered the lonely generation. This qualification is surprising, since the hyper connectivity of this generation has led them to a significant social disconnection, therefore, well-being has been considerably and dramatically affected in terms of the trust required to communicate far beyond a simple screen of a computer or electronic device. This reality became very evident in the midst of the pandemic and the health emergency generated by COVID19, since social confinement led this generation to spend excessive time outside the personal contact of their friends and relatives (Matovu, 2024).

This reality has forced Gen Z people to try to find new ways to address their well-being. Derived from this concern, health professionals in both the United Kingdom and the United States still seem not to be equipped with sufficient tools and good practices to confront the multiple mental health problems caused by the progressive and growing mistrust and susceptibility. from conventional doctors, which has forced digital natives of generation Z to turn to social networks to find answers to their needs for health, balance and mental loneliness. Therefore, services such as increasingly illogical and illogical products promoted by a well-being industry not adapted to rapid and continuous changes, have made Generation Z tend to reject trends that do not fit with their new reality to solve problems. that affect your life (Matovu, 2024).

Consequently, due to the lack of support from established traditional healthcare providers, coupled with obstacles including exclusivity and affordability, have made the younger generation fervently assume that there must be another way to solve their existential problems linked with your well-being. in a way. While it is true that food and fitness have been the spearhead of the healthy lifestyle, 76% of Generation Z believe and assume that well-being should be something accessible and holistic, in other words, all of that or all something that makes them feel good, which can mean things like resting, feeling good, laughing, and above all being honest about mental, sexual and emotional health. In this order of ideas, generation Z, instead of being behind unrealistic objectives and aesthetics, wants to express its honesty in matters of health, accepting even imperfections, which is why brands that seek to capture the attention of this generation should offer content marketing in areas such as entertainment and other areas that make people feel good (Matovu, 2024)

In this framework of redefinitions regarding the well-being of generation Z, this is the first time that in the 12 years since the World Happiness Report has been published, a country like the United States has failed to appear in the first 20 happiest countries in the world. It dropped from 15th to 23rd place among more than 130 countries evaluated between 2023 and 2024. The decrease is due to the unhappiness of US citizens under 30 years of age. Subsequently, a study carried out by the Gallup-Walton Family Foundation, developed by happiness specialist Arthur C. Brooks, reveals information on the happiness of young people in the United States, through a survey carried out in the period included November 27 to 30, 2023, through the Gallup Panel, which surveyed 2,271 young people ages 12 to 26. The most relevant findings of the study reveal the following: Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of Generation Z report being very happy 25%, somewhat happy 478%. It also reveals that $\frac{1}{4}$ part of the same generation is not happy, another $\frac{1}{4}$ part reports that their life does not matter and about 50% report feeling anxious continuously and about 1 in 5 frequently feel depressed (Clifton & Hrynowski , 2024).

Particularly, the 60% of members of Generation Z who recognize themselves as happy people as long as they do something important and interesting every day, compared to the 28% of those who usually report feeling not happy. Likewise, about two-thirds (64%) of Gen Zers who are happy, compared to 38% of those who are not, agree that what they do at school and work are significantly important. The link between happiness and motivation of Generation Z to go to school or work is analogous: 60% report being happy and 31% of those who are not at least feel very motivated. Intrinsically linked to whether Gen Z people report their happiness is the degree to which they feel their lives have relevance, meaning and direction. Therefore, about 50% of members of Generation Z report that they always feel that their life is very important, while 28% maintain that they frequently feel that way. However, fewer say their lives have direction: six out of 10 people from Generation Z say they always (28%) or frequently (32%) feel that way (Clifton & Hrynowski , 2024).

2.2 Gen Z Digital Consumption Behaviour in the Wellness Industry.

Generation Z is a sector of the population that is increasingly worthy of attention, because it has become the most socially and politically aware generation, most versatile and with the

greatest agile and most literate digital literacy today. It is estimated that in the very near future, Generation Z will stand out from millennials, as they constitute approximately more than a third of the total population worldwide. It is a generation that consumes around 53% more content than the average. Even though they have many characteristics with millennials, Generation Z spends about 50% less time on content than millennials. Being digital natives, members of this generation were born and raised in the Internet age and spend much of their hyperconnected lives in networks that constantly compete for their money, attention and time (Ortmor Agency, 2022).

In this order of ideas, the same source cited points out that this particularity has made them immune to the efforts of insincere advertisers and marketing, since they respect the suggestions and recommendations of real users more than products endorsed by celebrities. This understanding of Generation Z is going to have a considerable effect on brands, as they must adapt to the way of Generation Z.

This generation is characterized because it was born in the period between 1997 and 2012. This population sector spends twice as much time socializing online than in real life. Something worth highlighting is that they consider the time they spend online not as a form of escapism but as an extension of real life itself. Therefore, this generation recognizes very little distinction between the physical and online worlds. Players of this generation spend more than twice as much time socializing with their friends in the metaverse as they do in real life. For them, technological knowledge occupies a place almost as high as freedom itself. Generation Z has an important characteristic that is its significant interest in science and technology. Likewise, the formative years of this generation converge with the emergence of web3 and the metaverse (Ortmor Agency, 2022)

Another characteristic of Generation Z is a concern for their environmental footprint. Environmental sustainability represents a very important priority of this generation. It is a personal concern that usually weighs heavily on them: around six out of 10 members of Generation Z, like millennials, report feeling concerned about global environmental issues such as climate change. A significant majority of Generation Z adopt measures to mitigate their impact on the environment. They believe that governments are committed to playing a

much more important role in pressuring large corporations to address and minimize their environmental and carbon footprint in the context of climate change. In this sense, corporations should simultaneously influence consumers to make more environmentally friendly purchasing decisions. Consequently, environmental protection is the social challenge that, according to Generation Z, companies have to generate a change in sustainable consumption. Both Generation Z and millennials are forcing companies to act through their professional decisions and responsible consumer behaviours (Deloitte, 2024).

Another characteristic of this generation is stress and mental health, it is estimated that among Generation Z and millennials, 40% of Generation Z and 35% of millennials feel stressed much of their time according to a Deloitte global survey in 2024. But these same statistics reveal the existence of certain favorable signs in terms of mental health since nearly four out of 10 members of Generation Z (39%) and millennials (37%) show that health Mental health has improved recently, with only 18% of Gen Z and 17% of millennials reporting that their mental health has worsened recently. But with only about half of Generation Z (51%) and millennials (56%) rating their mental health as good or considerably good, there is still significant room for improvement in this area (Deloitte, 2024).

So it is important to consider that Generation Z faces a type and levels of stress that surpass the generations that preceded them. An undeniable predictor of stress in members of this generation is the harsh academic pressure they endure. In a globalized society, which moves a very competitive labor market based on increasingly strong and progressive educational expectations, young people of Generation Z are frequently trapped in a continuous race to excel. The pursuit of success, while plausible, ends up affecting their mental well-being and places a considerable burden on their shoulders from a very early age.

Another concern that characterizes members of Generation Z or Zoomers is that of eating habits. This generation can be considered the newest adult generation today. He has been identified for his perspective regarding his vision of the future, his commitment and social responsibility and his undeniable interest in the environment. Generation Z consumers likewise have unique and different beliefs about food and eating that are totally different from other generations. Generation Z consumers are more aware of the environmental

impact of their food production than any other generation. In addition, they have a preference for food products of organic origin and containers or packaging that are sustainable, which is why they are more selective when purchasing their groceries (Shahbandeh , 2023).

Some trends in food and health of Generation Z reveal that, at the end of 2022, a percentage ranging between 19% and 27% of consumers of this generation followed a diet in that year. The calorie count is considerable in the most common diet consumed by this generation, however, plant-based or vegetarian eating has been very popular for them since 2017. Since the beginning of 2022, more than 50% of Generation Z consumers have assumed a partially vegetarian diet. Of this group, 21% reported being strict vegetarians. Likewise, it is possible that younger generations assume a meat-free diet as the only healthy alternative for their lives. It is important to note that food products from animals are not only the food products that this generation is most thoughtful about. An example of this is that 29% of Generation Z do without sugar consumption (Shahbandeh , 2023).

As for snacking, even though a large majority of members and consumers of Generation Z think very reflectively about food and its consumption, 77% of them still enjoy snacking at least once up to date. A figure that exceeds 80% of consumers of this generation prefer the consumption of potato chips, which makes this snack the most popular among Generation Z consumers, followed in order of importance by cookies and chocolate (Shahbandeh , 2023).

In terms of physical exercise and sports, Generation Z, like millennials, constitute just over 80% of the membership of sports clubs and gyms, therefore, this representative 80% of people cannot and should not be ignored by the clubs. sports. Therefore, sports training identifies Generation Z as an active generation. It is also important to consider that currently 85% of sports club members train at home, which highlights the digital options for this type of home training. In this order of ideas, Generation Z constitutes 89% of users of online or App-based training. Consequently, the preference for sports trainers for this active generation is smart trainers from remote applications. Therefore, the fitness market is represented by 80% of members of Generation Z (LES MILLS INTERNATIONAL LTD, 2024) .

One of the reasons why this generation has become active and has healthier eating habits is due to the reality that generation Z faces within the framework of a new lifestyle promoted by technology, which has unexpectedly given rise to an era of sedentary habits. The prevalence of the use of computers, smartphones, tablets and other digital devices has encouraged a decrease in physical activity among young people. By spending more time sitting in front of the screens of different electronic devices and less time dedicated to physical activities, the correlation between a sedentary lifestyle and the progressive prevalence of obesity in Generation Z becomes increasingly evident (Care, 2023).

In this sense, it is impossible to ignore that technology has improved communications and has given the opportunity to access knowledge like never before, but simultaneously it has contributed to a very poor physical culture. This has made it difficult for some members of this generation to struggle with being overweight and its related health problems, such as cardiovascular problems, diabetes and mental health problems. Consequently, concern for healthier habits is a premise for this generation Z.

Within the framework of Generation Z's environmental concern to minimize their environmental footprint in all their activities, travel and tourism are no exception for these consumers who are aware of the broad portfolio of environmental problems that afflict humanity. In their quest to preserve the planet, they opt for environmentally conscious trips. In this order of ideas, generation Z is oriented towards vacation enjoyment in sustainable tourist accommodations, they prefer the use of ecological transportation and activities, so that the tourist experience is more environmentally friendly. In many cases they choose to travel by train instead of using planes or vehicles, they also enjoy sharing their rewarding experiences through the network, and even go so far as to recommend places and spaces that allow them to meet these green objectives (Thompson, 2024).

Within the framework of this green accommodation trend, pressured by Generation Z, the world is turning to hotels and hostels that prioritize sustainability. These spaces for recreation and tourist rest currently prioritize sustainability. These ecological rest and recreation spaces are currently revolutionizing the hotel tourism sector because they use renewable energy, recycle their waste and, frequently, support local communities. For Generation Z travelers, concerned about their environmental footprint, platforms have

emerged with content to take advantage of this environmentally friendly behavior, such as EcoBnB and Green Pearls (Thompson, 2024).

Therefore, these adjustments not only reduce the carbon footprint; They provide unique and remarkable experiences that traditional hotels cannot match. Accommodation in these places allows you to delve deeper and understand both the environment and the destination culture in an authentic and sustainable way. Many of these sustainable accommodation sites go above and beyond to be truly eco-friendly. Some use very low consumption lighting, low flow toilets and showers for water conservation, they have their own spaces for growing organic products for the consumption of their guests. Some even have their own composting systems and also use biodegradable cleaning products to ensure a low effect on the environment (Thompson, 2024).

When people from Generation Z stay in a sustainable establishment, they live a unique and special experience, because at the same time they cooperate with the protection of nature and the well-being of the entire planet. Another aspect that generation Z considers very consciously is the use of transportation with fewer carbon emissions and with added fun. It should be noted that sometimes it is necessary to travel by air, however, traveling by train and bus is more ecological and preferred by generation Z, because trains save up to 90% more carbon emissions than airplanes, being Therefore, preferred in the trips of this generation, in addition to allowing them, during the trip, to walk, stroll and observe the landscapes more closely, representing an advantage over air travel and its narrow space to move around during the trip. . On the other hand, buses are also an option that a large part of Generation Z prefers, especially those who take great care of their budget. They are usually cheaper than air travel. The new generation buses are more comfortable, have Wi-Fi, making the trip more comfortable and pleasant (Thompson, 2024).

In the case of shorter trips, Generation Z sometimes considers using bicycles or taking walks, which makes the trip healthier and more ecological. Carpooling for trips is another very popular option among members of this Generation. There are even travel platforms that allow you to share transportation until you reach the destination. Some platforms such as Zipcar and BlaBlaCar, by allowing ride sharing, reduce the number of vehicles circulating

on the carts. In addition, many of these vehicles are electric or hybrid, which is beneficial for the environment as they reduce fuel use.

Generation Z tries to reduce waste as much as possible during their trips and other recreational activities. In this regard, single-use plastics are a big no in the world of travel for this generation within the framework of their ecological awareness. . Annually, millions of tons of plastic waste end up in the oceans and landfills, contributing to pollution and damaging biological diversity. As environmentally conscious travelers, Generation Z is making a difference by reducing dependence on these harmful materials. Therefore, this type of traveller always carries reusable water bottles, bamboo utensils and cutlery, and cloth bags for personal use that considerably reduce waste. Currently, multiple destinations have water refill stations and plastic product markets, which promote hydration and minimize the use of disposable plastic materials. Consequently, the use of high-quality reusable water bottles only does not reduce the number of plastic bottles, but many of these reusable bottles come with added filters, guaranteeing the drinkability of the water at any destination. Likewise, the use of bamboo cutlery avoids the use of plastic cutlery, and in many food places these are used because they are reusable, light and easy to sanitize, and they are also easy to pack and reuse during the trip (Thompson, 2024).

Light luggage is another great way to travel ecologically for Generation Z. Using fewer bags means lighter loads during transportation, reducing emissions. Airlines burn less fuel when transporting less heavy loads, and the same thing happens in other means of transportation such as trains and buses. When you pack only what you need, not only does the trip become much more comfortable, but it decreases the environmental footprint of travelers of this generation. Many of the active members and travelers of Generation Z reduce waste during their trip by choosing sustainable accommodations, participate in beach clean-ups and collection of recyclable material, and simultaneously prefer and choose digital tickets and travel itineraries instead of the printed ones. (Thompson, 2024).

The same source cited maintains that opting for Ecological activities is a very characteristic way of Generation Z, which currently makes a real difference in their way of traveling. These activities impact as little as possible on the environment, promoting awareness and affection

for nature. Many of these low-impact activities include hiking, snorkeling in marine protected areas, bird watching, and wildlife tours that support conservation. These activities allow you to enjoy the attractions of nature and at the same time contribute to the preservation of the planet. Another activity that Generation Z enjoys is hiking. This activity allows you to explore nature without leaving an environmental footprint such as carbon. By walking through natural parks, climbing mountains, walking through forests, members of generation Z connect deeply with the environment and help to preserve it, in addition to collaborating economically by canceling tickets to these parks, helping to its maintenance and protection.

It is necessary to consider that everything raised in the paragraphs preceding the present, that the concern of generation Z for aspects such as health, care for the environment, the ecological way of traveling, nutrition and connectivity, are some elements that They not only characterize Generation Z, but make them prefer and consume very notable aspects of the wellness industry.

In order to understand very clearly the different aspects of Generation Z's Digital Consumption Behaviour in the wellness industry, one must understand what the wellness industry and economy currently represent for society. This industry includes economic sectors ranging from mental and occupational health to nutrition, healthy eating and personal care. Considerable growth has been observed from 2021, the market size of the global wellness industry amounted to 5.61 trillion US dollars in 2022. This figure projects a year-on-year percentage growth equivalent to 8.6%, considering an estimated amount of 8.47 trillion US dollars by 2027 (Gough, 2024).

In this order of ideas, the wellness industry involves much more than the latest diet that is fashionable, or the consumption of nutritional supplements that are popularized on social networks: it actually represents the search for activities, alternatives, options and styles of healthy lives in a comprehensive way. Currently, users have assumed proactive behaviour and increasingly invest their financial resources in wellness programs based on a healthier and nature-friendly lifestyle. Consequently, the well-being economy is made up of industries

that favour the change from a traditional lifestyle to one with responsible and healthy habits in their daily lives.

In this sense, well-being economics is significantly linked to what has currently been called happiness at the country level. Therefore, multiple sectors of this industrial sector are highly correlated with happiness at the national level: work well-being, healthy eating, physical activity, sports clubs, gyms, health tourism, hot springs, and prevention, among others. The intensity of this correlation is variable: sectors such as workplace well-being and healthy eating are strongly related to happiness, while others have it to a lesser extent, such as hot springs. Wellbeing economics is positively linked to important national health indicators such as life expectancy, healthy life expectancy, infant mortality rate, under-five mortality rate, and risk of death. premature due to non-communicable diseases. The wellness sectors that are most related to leisure and self-care show the most important relationships with many health indicators. Workplace well-being is the only sector that observes a statistically significant relationship with health indicators, as well as with happiness in all countries (Global Wellness Institute, 2024).

Regarding the consumption of generation Z of the different products and services of the wellness industry, it is necessary to highlight that both generation Z and millennials currently acquire more wellness products and services than the generations that preceded them. According to recent research on the future of the wellness industry from McKinsey, more than 5,000 consumers in China, the United Kingdom and the United States were surveyed. This survey reveals that Generation Z is currently more interested in consuming and investing in aspects related to appearance and health in general. They also spend much more than older consumers on wellness-related products such as meditation classes, mindfulness apps and therapy sessions; this is not surprising, given the mental challenges of this generation (McKinsey & Company, 2024).

Some findings from the survey conducted by McKinsey report that 56% of Generation Z consumers in the United States say that fitness represents a very high priority for them, compared to the rest of American consumers (40%) general level. Jointly, focusing on healthy aging is not solely exclusive to older generations interested in improving their

survival; Generation Z consumers are also looking for preventive alternatives to the health problems of aging (McKinsey & Company, 2024).

There are multiple reasons why Generation Z has a high interest in health and well-being at an early age. On the one hand, this Generation is more exposed and easily accesses information about health and well-being through social networks than other generations, even at very young ages. An example of this is FitTok, a TikTok space where workouts are shared, nutritional programs and various content associated with fitness that accumulated more than 64 billion visits. Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic, which catalyzed a global focus on health and well-being, coincided with Generation Z's years of academic training, and to minimize loneliness, this Generation seeks friends in places, which often include gyms or fitness classes, either in person or virtual (McKinsey & Company, 2024).

According to the findings of the McKinsey survey, wellness brands are currently adjusting their offerings to more effectively engage members of Generation Z, they are even migrating from in-person to virtual. However, it is important to consider that Well-being preferences of this Generation are affecting not only companies dedicated exclusively to this sector, but also the hotel sector, which continually offers gym services, massages, excursions, healthy cooking courses, and spas, to attract younger clients. Even the most sophisticated ones use Artificial Intelligence to highlight their fitness offerings. Therefore, companies in the sector promote well-being not only as a product or service but simultaneously as a benefit for their employed workers. Work benefits that include gym membership or mental health resources would be a valuable strategy that would help companies attract more Generation Z employees.

2.3 Perceptions of Wellness Content Authenticity among Gen Z.

It is important to consider that members of Generation Z perceive themselves as more authentic when using social media platforms, especially those related to general well-being and mental health, which generates good results in terms of care and therapeutic approaches to their mental health. In this sense, it highlights a very significant predictor of mental well-being in the digital age: the sense of authenticity online. Generation Z, in particular, has played a leading role in opening the debate about well-being, verbalizing their mental health

problems and requesting help and resources if necessary. They give an affirmative opinion if everything is fine or the opposite when it is not favourable. Therefore, the sense of authenticity about marketing content for them is clearer due to their capacity for discernment and analysis by virtue of their highly open and interconnected world, therefore, they have a high innate understanding of the balance of mindfulness, the physical aspects and social connection, and how these variables directly affect each other (Singer, et al., 2023).

Social media users, especially those from Generation Z, connect with influential individuals through channels such as TikTok and Instagram. In this sense, users must be able to determine whether or not the content creator is honest and credible based on the statements and actions of the interlocutor and the amount of information about the contacts generated by the use of different platforms. This degree of trust and certainty achieved by the audience's perception of the authenticity of the interlocutor is necessary to achieve the success of marketing techniques and, finally, for the consumer's purchase intention. It is important to note that the foundations of authenticity are formative and composite, generated through the fusion of originality, accuracy, legitimacy, connectedness, integrity and competence. Each term of these is required to build authenticity. Generation Z may place significant importance on connectivity in their perceptions of authenticity (Singer, et al., 2023).

Accordingly, accuracy is the level to which someone is perceived as transparent in their personal representation and the products or services promoted. Precision implies reliability, a particularity referring to always telling the truth. Therefore, accuracy is defined as transparency and truth, allowing users and the general audience to see the different angles of a brand, service or product they promote, including the good and the bad. In this order of ideas, originality is the degree to which a service, product or individual stands out from the rest in the same market and legitimacy is the level to which a product, services, individual or a group of these abide by the standards. and rules of a given group. Legitimacy is a cultural construct of a group or a generation. Connectivity is the degree to which an audience is familiar and involved with a service, brand, product or person. Integrity refers to the degree to which a service, product, brand or person is believed to be intimately motivated and acts independently and without profit. The fusion of these factors culminates in a perception of authenticity (Singer, et al., 2023).

2.4 Influence of Social Media on Gen Z's Wellness Choices.

Social networks have had an important effect on Generation Z, which was born and grew up in the digital era, characterized by social media platforms, which have become an integral part of everyday life. The influence of social networks on Generation Z is evident in aspects such as communication, self-expression, interpersonal relationships and mental health. In this regard, the most important effects of social networks on Generation Z have been communication advances and innovations. Digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter have opened up unthinkable opportunities to connect with others, allowing Generation Z to be in continuous contact with friends and family, and simultaneously meeting new people and options worldwide that allow them to choose aspects that they require to satisfy their needs in terms of well-being (Jabbar, 2023).

Social networks have given Generation Z the opportunity for self-expression, sharing photographs, videos and written publications, offering products and services so that people, or groups of them, not only show their preferences for their interests, but also end up choosing options in your digital search. This allows Generation Z to externalize and at the same time communicate their creativity to build personal brands and fight, as well as defend those causes in which they believe (Jabbar, 2023).

Given these scenarios, social networks have deeply affected Generation Z, providing opportunities for communication, self-expression, connectivity and choice of products and services from the wellness industry, ranging from nutritional options, personal care, travel and tourism to decision making to propose personal brands and business opportunities in terms of well-being.

The role of quality content in shaping Gen Z's knowledge and building trust on wellness industry topics and brands.

Quality informative and educational content, it plays a crucial role in generating trust and credibility because it demonstrates the experience and knowledge of the company. By continually delivering quality, meritorious and reliable content, companies generate trust

among members of Generation Z, who are continually eager for credible information, which favors their positioning as organizations with high credibility in the wellness industry. Marketing with quality content applies to both the medical, health and wellness industries. It helps these companies establish intellectual leadership, generates security and credibility, therefore, educate and engage the audience in terms of quality, opportunity and costs, improves brand awareness, promotes organic traffic, generates new customers and drives lasting relationships with users (Health & Wellness, 2023).

By providing quality content, companies not only empower Generation Z to make informed health decisions, but also address concerns and promote well-being. With the progressive importance of digital media and the gradual demand for high-quality information on health and general well-being, content marketing allows companies to connect with their target audience, standing out from the competition and favorably impacting results. of health. Marketing with high-quality content is vital for companies because it allows them to achieve strategic objectives, connect with the target audience and sustain competitiveness levels in the digital field, as well as establish brand identity, inform generation Z of their values and build a consistent online presence. Content marketing with a quality perceived by users allows companies to interact with them, generate meaningful relationships and promote customer loyalty. Likewise, it gives the opportunity to express your experience, educating the target audience and addressing their requirements and needs. This constant scenario of quality and valuable content makes it easier for companies to position themselves as reliable entities in their industrial sector, effectively achieving a competitive advantage (Health & Wellness, 2023).

2.5 Current successful mental health applications

In this study, we have chosen to analyze mental health platforms and their relationship with content marketing. The main reason for this choice is the impact on the mental health and overall well-being of this population group, which is characterized by long hours of searching for content that they need to satisfy their personal interests and expectations of personal and professional development. It is the generation that has connected the most to cyberspace in recent history, without limits of space and time, however, it is also the generation that has become the most de-individualized in terms of personal face-to-face contact with their peers. They are a generation that seems socially isolated despite having

their own social networks, they use portable devices with high connectivity and speed in searching for information. They decide after researching and evaluating the online behavior of other buyers.

Consequently, this continuous connectivity that isolates them socially tends to generate loneliness and probably depression, to which is added the pressure for immediate responses in the educational, work and even personal fields, which ends up affecting their biopsychosocial aspect. For this reason, it has been decided to link content applications on mental health, to analyze their impact on improving this through continuous consumption. It is important to note that in the digital market there are a number of applications that have taken advantage of this market niche because the impact on mental health is not a hidden reality for this generation motivated by mental fatigue and digital work overload.

In this regard, very recent research is presented that links mental health applications with generation Z.

A research entitled A spiritual self-care mobile application (Skylight) for mental health, sleep, and spiritual well-being among Generation Z and young millennials: a cross-sectional survey, conducted by (Park, et al., (2023) aimed to describe in a certain sample of generation Z users of a spiritual self-care application (Skylight), the interaction with the application, their perception and evaluation of the relationship given between the frequency of use of the application with mental health, sleep, and spiritual well-being. 475 adults from generation Z (18 to 28 years old) and young millennials (29 to 35 years old) who used the Skylight application participated. The anonymous web-based survey asked demographic data, self-care and spiritual practice, and participation and perceptions of the application users. The survey categories validated for mental health, including depression, anxiety, stress, and sleep disorders. The findings of this research reveal that app users had normal and average depressive symptoms (6.9/21), borderline abnormal anxiety levels (7.7/21), slightly elevated stress (6.7/16), and non-clinically significant sleep disorders (5.3/28). App use frequency was significantly associated with lower anxiety (moderate use: $\beta=-2.01$; $P=.02$; high use: $\beta=-2.58$; $P<.001$).

A study titled *The Mental Health of Generation Z: The Impact of Technology and Social Media*, conducted by Coe, et al., (2023), presents the results of the 2022 Generation Z Global Survey conducted by the McKinsey Health Institute (MHI) in which more than 42,000 respondents participated in 26 countries worldwide based on the four dimensions of health: mental, physical, social and spiritual. Subsequently, MHI analyzed the differences and similarities between generations and countries, with the expectation of reporting in a very extensive way on the mental health of Generation Z.

The findings of this survey reveal that social media and technology are powerful tools to promote well-being and offer large-scale support in mental health matters. Therefore, they suggest that developers could consider incorporating algorithms that make it easier for members of Generation Z to express their psychological distress, search for support groups, crisis telephone lines or emergency mental health services. Likewise, digital mental health companies should partner with virtual and community mental health providers to connect people with serious needs with timely and culturally appropriate services.

The study concludes that cooperation is needed between different stakeholders such as technology companies, mental health professionals, educators, employers, policy makers and the community at large. By prioritizing mental health and using technology positively, members of Generation Z are more likely to achieve and maintain better health. Other strategies include using social media to create online support communities for like-minded groups and encouraging Generation Z leaders to create and share content that promotes mental health.

Talkspace



Figure 5. Presentation and Working Method of the Talkspace App

Source: (Talkspace, 2024)

Talkspace leads the world in 2024 as the best mental health therapy app by virtue of its easy-to-use 24/7 access to medical professionals. It is an accessible online therapy alternative that provides more than just valuable guides and videos to watch. By accessing it online, you have access to a licensed therapist wherever and whenever you need one. Talkspace is a convenient option for those who are not attracted to, comfortable with, or satisfied with attending a mental health specialist's office in person or who choose to have online therapy appointments (Leamey, 2024)

Recently, a study conducted in 2020 revealed that messaging a therapist through Talkspace reduced feelings of anxiety and depression. Another study, but from a different perspective, maintains through its findings that the use of Talkspace's voice, video, and text functions

reduced the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Through this mental health application, you can access videos, text messages, and audio chat to establish direct communication with the therapist. However, users report the 5-minute limitation for audio messages. Talkspace is much more expensive than other mental health applications currently available on the digital market. on the list. However, if you are looking for an application that allows you to speak directly with a therapist, the price may not be so expensive. In this sense, the plans have an initial cost of \$69 per week (Leamey, 2024).

The advantages of this application is that Talkspace provides therapy with a duly accredited mental health professional. Not all of the brightest mental health applications offer this possibility. You can change therapists in the same app. Another advantage is that you can access the therapeutic approach and the different options and functions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Some of the disadvantages of this app are that it is much more expensive than others, which could put it out of reach for many people. Although Talkspace is well-known and can be covered by insurance, some users have complained that the wait times for customer service are very long when invoking payment through insurance (Leamey, 2024)

In 2024, the findings from a survey of 100 Talkspace users revealed the following:

92% rated Talkspace as very good or excellent overall

95% said their therapist met most or all of their needs satisfactorily

94% were completely satisfied with the online therapists' offerings

89% rated Talkspace therapists' ratings as very good to excellent

98% said there was a good and sufficient number of therapists available

97% would be willing to recommend the Talkspace app to their friends (Marschall, 2024)

Calm

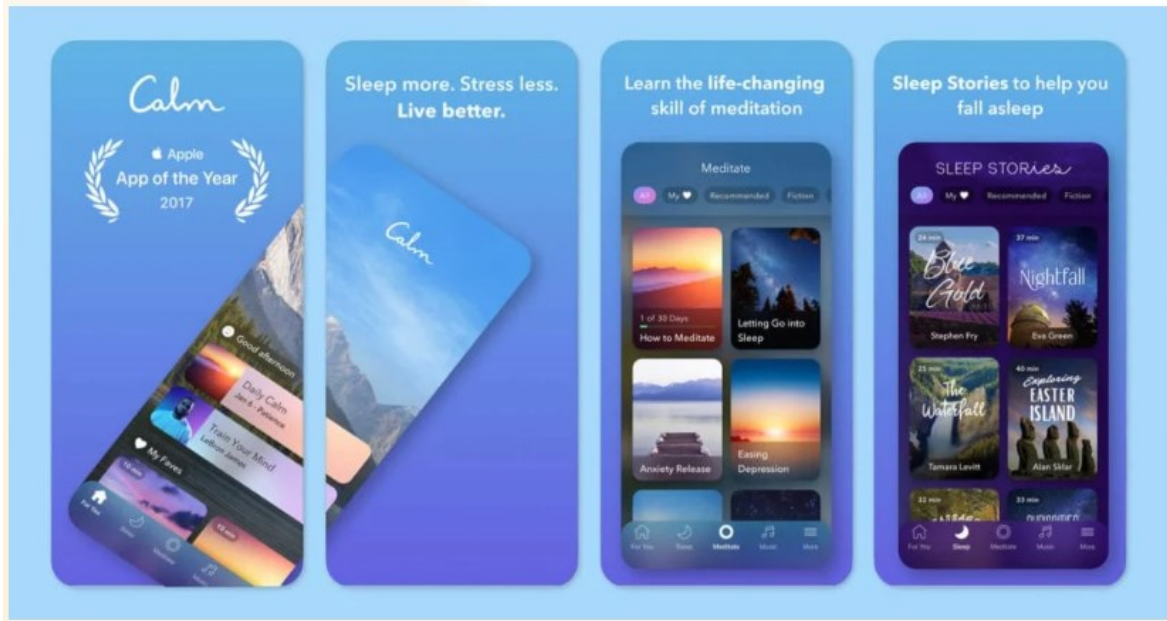


Figure 6. Presentation and Working Method of the Calm App

Source: (Calm, 2024)

Calm is a well-known mental health app in the mental wellness space, with over 100 million downloads. This app is considered to be among the best in the field of meditation due to its holistic and comprehensive offerings, which include relaxation techniques through breathing and calming exercises. It is a very simple app to navigate through its offerings and is excellently structured. Upon accessing it, the user is asked to take deep breaths, and then choose the user's goals to make recommendations tailored to their needs and requirements (Leamey, 2024).

The app allows access to statistics to monitor the time used in the app or completed sessions. There is a completely free version of Calm, but it is limited as a trial of at least 7 days is required to help the user decide whether to continue with the free or paid option. The goal of Calm is to help the User improve both their health and happiness, through techniques to manage and improve sleep quality; reducing stress and anxiety; improving concentration; and self-improvement. The app's own page states that 84% of Calm users who used the app 5 times a week reported improvements in their mental health. The app has a version that is available for personal use, but it also has another for corporate use, so there are currently

more than 3,500 organizations that trust Calm Business to support the mental health of more than 10 million employees globally (Leamey, 2024).

Calm was named the Best Mindfulness App of 2017 for meditation and sleep. Millions of people around the world are experiencing less stress, less anxiety, and more restful sleep with guided meditations offered by Calm. The app offers meditations with sleep stories, breathing programs, master classes, and relaxing music. It is highly recommended by top psychologists, therapists, and mental health experts. Calm is the ideal Mindfulness app for beginners, but also includes hundreds of programs for intermediate and advanced users. Guided meditation sessions are available in 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, or 25 minute versions, so you can choose the length that best suits your routine (Apple Inc., 2024). The app covers the following themes:

- Calming anxiety
- Stress management
- Deep sleep
- Focus and concentration
- Relationships
- Breaking undesirable habits
- Happiness
- Gratitude
- Self-esteem
- Body scanning
- Loving kindness
- Ability to forgive
- Non-judgment
- Going to work or school
- Mindfulness at university
- Mindfulness at work
- Walking meditation
- Calm for kids
- In addition, the following is offered:

- A new Daily Calm session every day: we're adding a new 10-minute program every day, to help you get through the day or relax before going to sleep.
- More than one hundred Sleep Stories: stories for adults that will lull you to sleep.
- 7- to 21-day programs for both beginner and advanced users
- A new Calm Masterclass every month, with world-renowned experts
- Breathing exercises to help you relax
- Exclusive music designed to help you focus, relax, or fall asleep
- Unguided, timed meditation
- Meditations with no time limit
- Over thirty relaxing nature sounds and scenes, to use in your meditations, yoga sessions, or to help you fall asleep (Apple Inc., 2024)

Moodfit

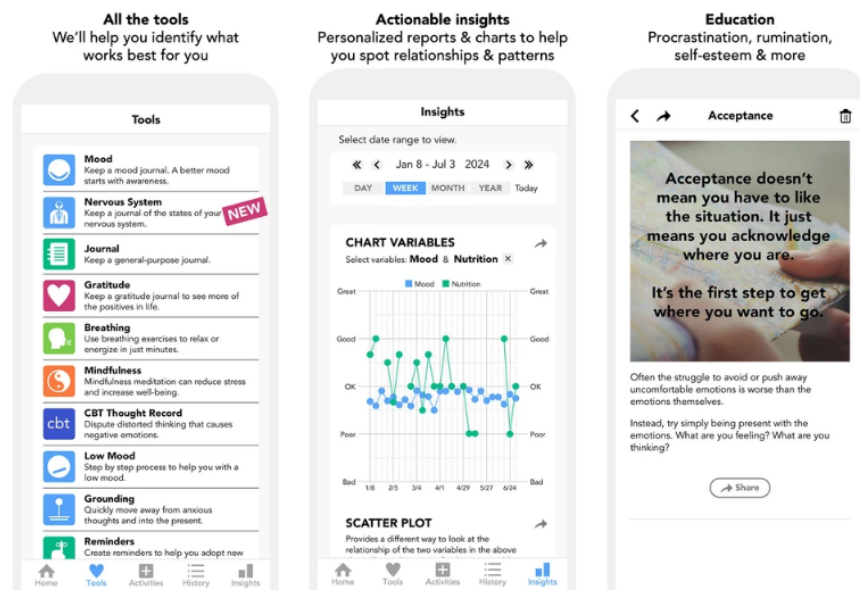


Figure 7. Presentation and Working Method of the Moodfit App

Source: (Attract Group, 2022)

The Moodfit app is the best option for combating negative thoughts, and it has a lot to offer and you can choose how you use it. You can track sleep, nutrition, exercise, and much more in the app's navigation of personal wellness. Moodfit through its tools and sessions helps the user to evaluate their feelings, identify negative thoughts, and change them. The Moodfit app has a fairly standard navigation. It has a "reminders" tab at the bottom, which is

considered to be an educational alternative. There is enough useful information available to the user, such as how thoughts influence and affect behavior and feelings. Moodfit's tools consider and establish the use of a user's mood journal, as well as encouraging the expression of gratitude, cognitive behavioral therapy, breath work, mindfulness, and sleep. The app provides information through individualized reports and graphs that will help users discover relationships and patterns (Leamey, 2024).

Moodfit is based on the interrelationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviours, so it helps you change the way you think and control your emotions. Within its perspective, it believes that there is no single solution for optimal mental health. Moodfit proposes a comprehensive range of customizable tools. It encourages learning and focusing on what truly disturbs your mood. Awareness and good practices carried out regularly are the way to generate a better mood. The benefits of this app are the following:

- It reduces stress and increases resilience
- It helps the user learn what makes him feel good and what depresses him
- It overcomes the continuous repetition of negative thoughts and procrastination
- It teaches the user to respond instead of react
- It helps in the recovery of motivation
- It identifies and questions disturbing thoughts (Moodfit, 2024)

Sanvello

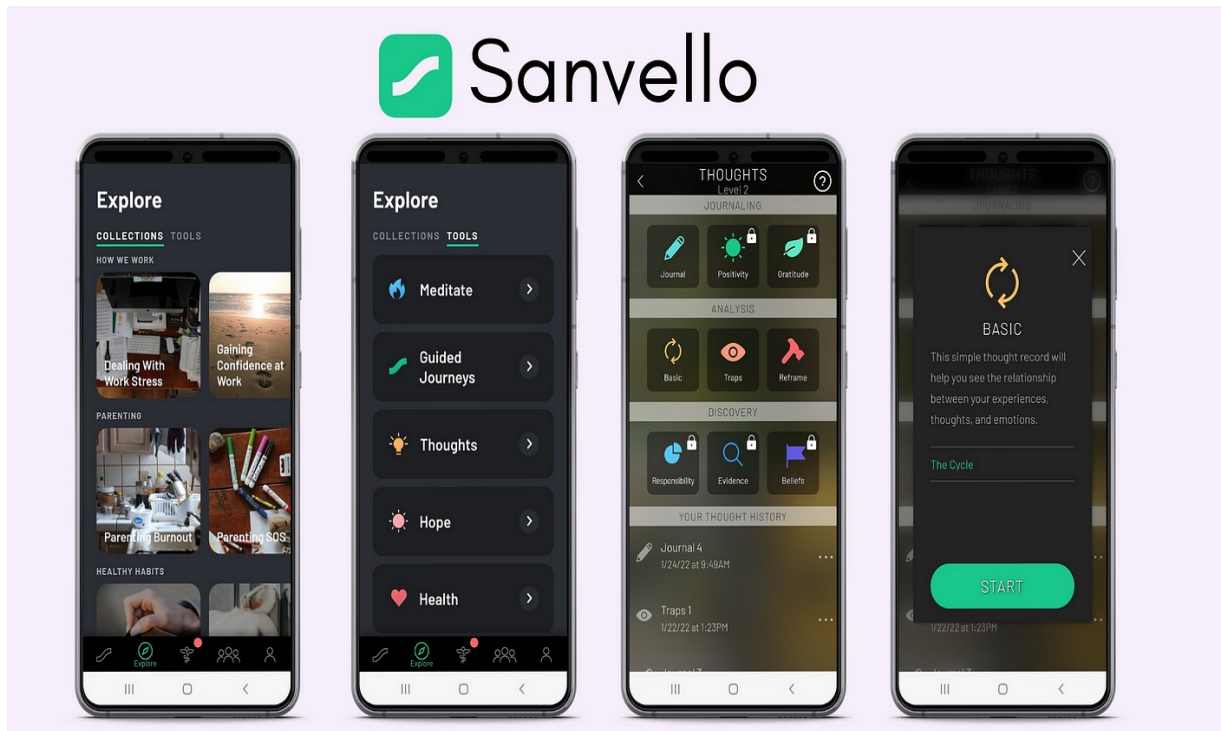


Figure 8. Presentation and Working Method of the Sanvello App

Source: (Medium, 2023)

Sanvello is rated worldwide as the best mental health app for stress relief thanks to its multiple and updated meditation files, guided journeys, health monitoring and cognitive behavioral therapy tools. You can choose the goals to achieve such as reducing anxiety and distress, feeling personally happier, developing self-esteem and self-confidence, among many others. That is, you can choose as many goals to achieve as you want. It contains an educational section. Sanvello makes use of therapeutic strategies through text messages, videos and audio within the framework of a multimedia experience that is easy to access, assimilate and follow (Leamey, 2024).

Sanvello is characterized by supporting users in their mental health in a flexible format adaptable to any schedule. Access to therapeutic tools and resources 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Thematic guides to help cope with daily stressors. Fully guided meditations, and mood tracking.

The user can explore how to:

- Control stress levels and feel more in control of it.

- Change disturbing thoughts and habits
- Overcome obstacles to change and manage life changes and transitions
- Create plans for self-care and mood improvement
- Set more rigorous goals and limits □
- Learn to communicate to others the needs that concern the user (AbleTo, 2024)

2.6 Chapter II Summary

Generation Z faces significant challenges regarding interpersonal relationships, autonomy, and satisfaction with their environment. Many of them feel lonely despite being connected most of the time every day, therefore, they lack true close and trusting relationships, despite appreciating the support and affection of their friends. There is a lack of emotional support, but a high pressure from the demands of daily life, which sometimes ends in depression; they also face challenges in expressing themselves on problematic issues and have a constant concern about the external evaluation of their life choices and the influence of others.

All this reality shows a duality between the search for independence and the influence of the social environment on their decisions and expressions, and reveals the permanent need for a favorable environment, probably related to age and stage of development, since some members of Generation Z are experiencing the transition to professional life. The importance of addressing these aspects within this generational cohort is thus highlighted, combined with the review of social pressures and environmental changes, which are also a source of concern for this generation, to promote their integral well-being, especially regarding their mental health, in an increasingly complex and changing globalized world.

For this reason, health specialists have addressed this problem through digital applications that provide the support required to address and recover their mental health. Therefore, in their continuous browsing they come across these proposals and appeal to them as a response to their daily crisis full of pressing challenges and demands for immediate responses, which worry and affect them, leading to real crises of insomnia, anxiety, panic and loneliness. This

is the origin of the multiple offer of digital mental health applications, some very popular and successful, which satisfy the demand of generation Z in this regard.

3. Methodology

3.1 Relevance of the research and formulation of the research question

In this study, a qualitative approach was chosen to delve into how Generation Z engages with wellness and mental health applications. This method was selected to address the need for a nuanced understanding of this demographic's perceptions and values concerning digital marketing content in wellness apps. As true digital natives, Gen Z displays a particular affinity for technological platforms, and they place high importance on factors like authenticity and accessibility in mental health services. The methodological approach involves semi-structured interviews designed to capture their personal experiences and insights. Through this lens, the study aims to provide a detailed view of the factors that build trust and sustain ongoing use of these applications among young people, offering a comprehensive understanding of their behaviors and attitudes toward digital wellness.

In this regard, Gen Z's mental health orientation makes them seek guidance in this regard, with approximately 18% of the US population, or about 59 million people, turning to and asking social media influencers on digital platforms like TikTok and Instagram for information on healthcare and advice on treating chronic diseases. Therefore, in terms of using wellness apps, 66% of Gen Z consult, use, and follow instructions from apps dedicated to wellness and physical activity (Pragmatic Coders, 2024).

These individuals suffer from high rates of anxiety and depression, and simultaneously identify with aspects associated with spirituality, which can be holistically integrated into mental health treatment and care. As a generation that grew up with technology, Gen Zers spend much of their time alone or continually using digital communication platforms instead of engaging or interacting face-to-face with other people (McKinsey Health Institute, 2022). Therefore, in the period between 2007 and 2018, a significant increase was observed in the percentages of self-harm (47%), serious suicide estimates (76%), and suicide attempts (58%) among Gen Zers. Gen Zers are more likely to suffer from mental health problems such as depression and anxiety than the generations that preceded them (Park, et al., 2024).

In a 2022 public survey of 1,055 Gen Z adults in the United States, 1 in 4 people reported having more bad days than good days in 1 month. More than 2 in 5 (42%) had been diagnosed with a mental health condition, and more than 25% of them were diagnosed during the COVID-19 pandemic or long after. Anxiety and depression are the most common mental health conditions among Gen Z. In this order of ideas, 9 out of 10 members of this generation have been diagnosed with anxiety and 8 out of 10 with depression. It is important to highlight that Gen Zers feel more and more comfortable verbalizing about their mental health. A third of them report disclosing aspects of their mental health through social media. They also attend therapy and are willing to cancel mental health care and services. But despite Gen Z's comfort in discussing their mental health, there is a clear need to address the significant rates of anxiety, depression and other health issues they experience (Park, et al., 2024).

Therefore, it is important to investigate how they value the marketing content of these types of apps, which digital platforms they frequently consult in search of these options, how and why they adhere to the programs offered by these apps, how they adjust their schedules and what aspects they value when choosing the health specialists who will support them in their health needs. Given this reality, questions arise that motivate research on the subject, such as the following: How does the wellness content of an app influence the trust of Generation Z users as well as the identification of significant patterns and relationships that can determine the effectiveness of the app's proposal?

3.2 Research Objectives

To answer the research question posed, the following objectives are presented.

Research Objective No. 1: Characterize Generation Z users who use apps aimed at physical health, mental health, and well-being.

Objective 2: Identify the health and wellness apps consulted by Generation Z users in the selected sample

In the process of searching for a health and wellness app on the different digital platforms, how many did I find?

Did I contact one or several apps before deciding?

Which one did I choose?

Objective 3: Assess the experience of Gen Z users, in the selected sample of participants, in choosing and using the health and wellness app

The question categories will contain information about:

How did I find out about the wellness and mental health app?

Why did I choose that wellness and mental health app instead of another one that was available in the digital market?

How did I register on the app?

How did I schedule my therapy sessions?

How did I feel when using the app?

How was I assigned or matched with a therapist?

What concerns did I have about using the app?

What would be the pros and cons of using the app? Can I check out other app users' or reviewers' experiences before using the app?

3.3 Research Design

The type of research is descriptive and correlational. It aims to describe how the wellness content of a given app influences Gen Z users' trust in the app and correlate this data to identify meaningful patterns and relationships that can determine the effectiveness of the app's proposition. In this sense, descriptive research is research designed to provide a snapshot or situation representative of the current state of affairs. Correlational research is designed to recognize and identify relationships between variables and predictively favor future events based on current knowledge (Walinga & Stangor , 2014).

This research is conceived from a qualitative approach. This type of research investigates and provides knowledge with greater depth about the various problems that occur in the real world. It is not characterized by the collection of numerical data, or by interposing through special treatments or approaches as quantitative research does. Qualitative research proactively contributes to the generation of hypotheses to explore, glimpse and understand quantitative data in depth. Therefore, from a qualitative perspective, experiences, experiences, appreciations, procedures and behaviors of participants are collected. It allows obtaining answers to questions based on how and why instead of how many or how many. It can be constituted or organized as an independent study, based only on qualitative data, or as part of a mixed research that merges qualitative and quantitative data (Tenny, Brannan, & Brannan, 2024).

In this sense, qualitative research essentially proposes open questions whose answers cannot be easily expressed in numbers. Because of the open-ended nature of research questions, qualitative research design is often not as linear as quantitative design. One of the strengths of qualitative research is its potential to illuminate processes and patterns of human behavior that are very difficult to quantify. Manifestations such as habits, experiences, qualities, attitudes, and actions can be difficult to capture accurately and quantitatively. In contrast, a qualitative approach allows participants the opportunity to explain specifically how, why, or what they thought, felt, or experienced at a specific time or during an event of interest. Evaluating qualitative data is certainly possible, but essentially, qualitative data explores themes and patterns that are difficult to quantify, and it is essential to ensure that the argument and information of qualitative work are not lost by trying to quantify something

that is not meant to be evaluated. However, while qualitative research is occasionally placed in opposition to quantitative research, where they are precisely opposites and therefore in competition with each other and with the philosophical models linked to each other, qualitative and quantitative work are not necessarily opposed or incompatible. While qualitative and quantitative approaches are distinct, they are not necessarily contrary, and they are clearly not mutually exclusive. One example of this is that qualitative research can help to increase and deepen the understanding of the data or findings obtained from quantitative analysis (Tenny, Brannan, & Brannan, 2024).

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection through interviews with participants in a given study is a very characteristic feature of much qualitative research. Interviews both attempt to and provide the simplest method for gathering detailed and specific data on a given phenomenon. The type of interview used to collect data can be tailored to the research question, the types of participants and their characteristics, and finally the preferred approach of the researcher. Interviews are often conducted face-to-face, but recently it has become more common to use telephone or telephonic interviews in order to overcome geographical barriers both for the recruitment and participation of key informants.

Data collection is one of the components of research design. These components are the following: The first three components are involved in the procedures for collecting information. Consequently, data collection includes determining the unit of analysis or observation; creating code categories (questions for the instruments to be applied); training the coders who will participate in the data collection; and coding the units in different categories. The problem statement takes the initial position in the data collection scheme since it provides the clue as to what is going to be investigated, therefore, it identifies the media that focus the research and proposes the actual content category of the media that will be explored.

Data collection through interviews with participants in each study is a very characteristic feature of much qualitative research. Interviews both attempt to and provide the simplest method for gathering detailed and specific data on a given phenomenon. The type of interview used to collect data can be tailored to the research question, the types of

participants and their characteristics, and finally the preferred approach of the researcher. Interviews are often conducted face-to-face, but recently it has become more common to use Zoom to overcome geographical barriers both for the recruitment and participation of key informants.

In this study, the interview is used as a tool for gathering information. An interview can be conceived as a two-way conversation, the purpose of which is to gather information from the interviewee, related to his or her particular interpretation of the values and meanings of the phenomena raised in the problem statement. In a complementary way, it could be understood as a dialogue, an extensive and pleasant conversation between people whose objective is to obtain in-depth information on a specific topic or issue, and through which a phenomenon would be interpreted based on the meanings provided by the interviewees (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

This accumulation of meanings can be carried out in different ways, of which individual interviews are the most common. In addition to these, group interviews are equally popular. Within the methodological framework of research, there are four types of interviews frequently used. The first is the structured interview, which is characterized by being organized and carried out especially around a series of direct questions previously established by the researcher, which demand immediate responses, mostly through a yes or no. Therefore, in a structured interview, the interviewer and the interviewees would have little freedom. The second type of interview is the unstructured or open type, which, unlike the previous type, is much more open and flexible, giving autonomy to both parties in terms of planning, implementation, and organization of the content and questions of the interview. In these cases, the interviewer would be oriented and willing to follow the interesting events in full development and to let the interviewee expand on the subject studied and others that interest him. The third type is the semi-structured interview, which is a much more flexible version of the structured interview, as it favors the achievement of greater information depth by giving the interviewer the opportunity to investigate and expand on the interviewee's answers. The last type of interview is the focus group, which is a type of interview where the interviewees are intentionally selected, even though they are not exactly representative of a certain population and the group focuses on a specific topic (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

3.4 Tools used

An interview was conducted with questions about the user experience with the mental health wellness app. Platform used: Zoom was used to obtain information about how people interact with these apps in an invitation sent by their phones or other devices for the interview to be face-to-face with the selected key informants. However, it was announced that the interview can also be face-to-face according to the circumstances regarding the time and disposition of the participants, as well as the geographical proximity to the researcher.

3.5 Sample group and participants

Determining the sample size in research is a crucial and important step in the planning process for the quality of a particular study, especially quantitative studies. The researcher must have sufficient and solid competence in statistics to determine, at least, a minimum sample size requirement and how to estimate it, since an insufficient sample size will not respond to the objectives and much less to the research questions formulated by the problem to be investigated. On the other hand, a sample that is too large would represent a waste of resources, would also increase the complexity of its interpretation and would require a greater amount of time for its processing and would delay the results of the study. Both situations are ethically unacceptable for researchers (Adhikari, 2021).

Consequently, calculating or determining the sample size can be a truly complex and sometimes difficult task and can lead to results that lack all veracity or are incorrect, if the researcher (especially beginners) does not have the necessary skills in the area of inferential statistics.

In this research, the statistical method of non-probabilistic sampling is adopted in two aspects, intentional sampling and convenience sampling. For these purposes, convenience sampling allows the selection of a certain sample based on the accessibility and proximity of the subjects to be studied for the researcher, in the same way, the individuals have agreed to participate voluntarily in the study. As for intentional sampling, this allows the researcher to carefully and painstakingly choose the subjects to be investigated based fundamentally on

both their knowledge and their experience on the subject of study. (Oxfam International, 2019).

This study interviewed 10 Generation Z people who were close to the researcher, who voluntarily offered to participate in the research, with a view to determining whether they had used health-related digital applications in the past year, especially those dedicated to offering professional services in the area of mental health.

3.6 Research Procedure

Interview Design

The interview includes questions about the frequency of interaction with the content of a digital application that provides wellness services in the area of mental health, the perception of the quality of the content, and trust in the application (brand). The survey was validated by a pre-test with a small group of participants to ensure the clarity and relevance of the questions.

3.7 Ethical aspects of research

Since this research dealt with people, it was decided to obtain their voluntary consent to participate in the study, pointing out to the participants the confidentiality of their opinions within the framework of an academic research. Therefore, no pressure was exerted to obtain answers that coincided with the opinions of the researcher, but rather they freely expressed their perception. Likewise, they were told what the objectives of the study were, and they were told that they could answer or not those questions that they did not wish to answer and that if they wished to withdraw from the study at any time, they could do so without any prejudice in this regard. The time and place to carry out the interview was freely and voluntarily agreed upon and it was carried out within the established time periods.

4. Research Results

The findings of this research are presented according to the different categories that are raised in the objectives of the survey carried out. Below, the analysis of each of these is presented, however, it is important to characterize the key informants who voluntarily participated in the study.

In this order of ideas, 10 participants were interviewed, all of whom were born in the period that corresponds to the Z generation, therefore, their ages range between 23 and 27 years as presented below:

Table 2. Interview participants

PARTICIPANT	AGE	SEX	NATIONALITY
A	26	Female	Netherlands
B	26	Female	Bolivian
C	27	Female	Ecuadorian
D	24	Female	United States
E	24	Female	Italian
F	24	Female	Italian
G	23	Female	French
H	27	Male	Ecuadorian
I	26	Male	Ecuadorian
J	27	Female	Ecuadorian
Statistical average	25,4		

Source: Author's own research (2024)

As can be seen, the average age of the participants is 24.4 years, 80% are female and 20% are male, 40% of the participants are of Ecuadorian nationality and 20% are of Italian nationality, the rest of the respondents are from different countries.

It is important to highlight that the interviews were conducted via video calls and all participants authorized the author of this research to record the interview in order to achieve the objectives of this study. Below are the results by category

Section 1: Understanding app usage and introduction to wellness apps

Aim: To explore how users discovered the app and why they started using it, as well as how they position mental health and wellness in their lives.

100% of the participants reported having consulted health and general well-being apps both in the past and currently. The reasons for this are diverse, some did it to calm the anxiety and stress to which they are subjected, others to improve their general well-being in terms of physical body and nutrition, others, especially participant C, literally said that “As a clinical psychologist, I usually look for applications and resources to help my patients. I look for materials that can help create a more comfortable and welcoming space for them, as well as tools that provide relaxation and mindfulness techniques. In addition, I need resources that offer information on how they can practice these methods effectively” (Interviewed C).

Most respondents reported using 2 apps, one only mentioned 1 app while interviewee j has used three simultaneously. In this sense, 4 participants have used Calm, 3 have used Headspace and two point to 'Nike Training app', the rest have used Butterfly; MyFitnessPal Stop, Breath, and Think; yoga downward facing dog, Lumosity Meditation”, 'Zen', and 'Sleepy Cycles'.

Participants say that the way they have learned about the use of health and wellness apps has been through personal research, referrals from friends, and from bosses and companies that pay premiums for using the app, as in the case of Interviewee B, who said: “My boss told me, showed me, and I didn't hesitate to download the app. It wasn't for a specific reason. At the time, my old company had a promotion with this app, so we didn't have to pay the

premium. But yes, I think that's why many of my coworkers used that app (Butterfly), but stopped using it because it didn't offer new options" (Interviewed B).

The main purpose of almost all of them was to improve mental health, since both anxiety and stress seem to be a symptom or trigger for the search for this type of applications, as well as the need to feel part of a community that goes through the same problems and with support the burdens of life are better handled; in this sense, interviewee J clearly summarizes what most people say in this regard in the following way:

Interviewee J: "I think my main motivation came from wanting to better manage my stress level. In my day to day life, I have a lot of work, so I have a lot of stress. So, there was a moment when I realized that I needed to focus more on my mental health, especially when I am in a situation of uncertainty and during all the difficult times, the ups and downs that we have in life. So, that is my main motivation, to have these applications that are very useful for me. I think I chose this app after reading a lot of reviews and comparing a few others because there are a lot of apps out there when you are on this journey, it seems to offer the best balance between providing meditations and educational content. I think all of these apps have a lot of different things going for them. They have a good community of people who are on the same path as me. They are sharing all the time similar situations and for that reason I think I chose these apps".

Most people fully agree that they chose these apps because they are free, affordable, and easy to use. They obtained information from them due to the content presented on various social media platforms, which was accessible and open, allowing them to become familiar with the services and benefits in most cases. This exposure enabled them to trust the apps, although not in all cases. However, many respondents mentioned this factor as favorable in their decision-making process for accessing and later paying for the apps. While some users mentioned being influenced by recommendations or advertisements, most agreed that the valuable information provided was an important component in their decision-making. Additionally, the majority concur that they chose these apps because they are free, affordable, and easy to use, and they affirm that during the COVID-19 pandemic, these apps helped them to calm the anxiety caused by confinement. In the same way, they refer to some more than others, specifically Calm, which should be more aggressive to effectively position

itself in the market. It is an app with traditional promotion, not like the others, which in the case of interviewee G, who refers to the opposite in the Headspace app, which is very focused on educational content, especially on social networks like Instagram.

In summary, the interviewees generally indicated that all the apps are adequately and successfully positioned in the market and not only in the area of personal well-being but are also educational with a view to achieving their objective in this sense. In this regard, Interviewee J says the following: “I think these applications are positioned in a mix of education and community support as I told you before, and they provide tools that are very accessible to all people. And they also emphasize the importance of connecting with other people who are on the same path. I would say that it is not just about therapy, it is also about learning new ways to take care of my mental health”.

The findings of the second category are presented below.

Section 2: Personal Importance of Mental Health and Wellness

Goal: To understand the personal relevance of mental health/wellness for the interviewees and how they align this with their app use

For the interviewees, the role mental health and wellbeing play in their current life and the factors that have influenced changes over time reflect their concern about getting older and moving out of their parents' home. Many suffer from anxiety, which can ruin the balance between work and personal life, it can bring problems both at work and in social life. In the case of Interviewee, A, she literally states that it is definitely an important factor in my life at the moment, as I am getting older and older, life is getting busier with finishing university, starting a new job, moving abroad, having more friends and family. It is becoming more and more important in my life to be overly stressed and a little overstimulated.

They also say that it is essential to maintain balance in life, especially with the professional demands of their careers. More and more people show that over time they expected their mental health to improve, but the reality is different. In this sense, Interviewee D maintains that: “mental health and well-being are very important to me. I am a very anxious person. If I tend to neglect them, I feel like I'm going downhill quickly. It has definitely changed over

time. I think that when I was younger I assumed that my mental health would improve with age and, obviously, I was proven wrong. Now I know that it takes a lot of effort, without a doubt”.

Others who are more optimistic, like Interviewee G, reveal that: “Mental health and well-being help me to maintain balance and calm. By taking care of myself, I manage stress better and stay positive. It helps me to manage problems and enjoy life more”.

It is important to mention that one of the interviewees was diagnosed with mental health problems in his childhood and that is why as an adult he has taken matters into his own hands and reveals that “My mental health has always been of great importance to me. Being diagnosed with a mental illness as a child, I have always been very aware of the importance of mental health. As I got older, I had anxious-depressive episodes, which worsened my situation and I had to take other measures in this regard. Both chemical and palliative treatments” (Interviewee H)

Regarding mental health, the interviewees prioritize it because it plays a very important role, because if you have a clear and peaceful mind, it will be reflected in how you see yourself and how you perceive others.

Therefore, they have high hopes for improvement in the use of mental health and general well-being apps. In fact, most of them report that they have benefited from the use of the therapeutic proposals they received from the apps they have selected.

For this reason, they practice the yoga, meditation and breathing exercises for which they have opted for relaxation and calming apps. Others go to the gym and do the exercises recommended by the app's therapists to improve their physical health and be in a position to face the tough challenge of their professions.

In this regard, Interviewee J says the following: “I want to achieve a more balanced and conscious lifestyle. My goals include reducing stress, reducing anxiety, practicing mindfulness daily, developing better emotional resilience and dealing with the ups and downs we have in our personal and professional lives”.

As for the benefit obtained from using the apps, everyone reports having benefited from having come across and enjoyed the app, especially in the midst of the pandemic lockdown and are satisfied to have consulted them and followed their guidance at that stage of their lives. In this regard, Interviewee I, maintains the following: “I think it became important for me after the pandemic, because during that time, we were all stuck at home and couldn't even see our friends or hang out. Once things started to open up again and we were able to go out, some people were eager to reconnect and get out. I feel like that experience helped me understand people better and made me realize how essential it is to prioritize mental health and well-being”.

Something striking in the interviewees' responses is that once they had implemented and sufficiently mastered the therapeutic techniques for relaxation, overcoming insomnia, and controlling stress and anxiety, they stopped using them because they had achieved success in what they expected from the apps and ended up incorporating and establishing these practices as a daily routine without requiring the use of the app again.

The findings for Category 3 are presented in detail below.

Section 3: User Experience with the App (Content and Education)

Goal: To analyze how users engage with the app’s content and what educational or supportive aspects they find most beneficial.

Respondents in this category expressed their opinions on trust in the app and the possibility of losing trust in it, the main features of the app that they found useful for their mental health and general well-being. They also described how their understanding or approach to mental health has changed using the app.

As for trust in the apps they have used, all respondents said they had full confidence, not only in the results, but in the seriousness and rigor of the proposals contained in the app, while they used it and in the participation of certified professionals in the area of general well-being and mental health.

This can be seen in some of the opinions of the interviewees, such as:

Interviewee A: “Yes, I don't think I have any reason not to trust the apps I have used”.

Interviewee C fully trusts the apps used because: Interviewee C: “Yes, the truth is that I use the app some days, and I also incorporate Spotify, which has a wide range of podcasts and exercises related to mindfulness. I find it useful to combine both tools. What really attracts me to this app is its ease of use, as I mentioned before. It offers both free and paid activities, but even the free exercises are quite beneficial. These include relaxation exercises such as nature sounds, animal sounds, and ambient sounds such as ocean waves or air. The app also features guided meditations that often incorporate imaginative techniques. During these exercises, you can listen to a guide that helps you visualize places and perform activities that focus on the goal of being present. In addition to meditation and relaxation exercises, the app offers breathing exercises at different intervals, such as the 4-7-8 technique or timed breathing exercises. You can also find short stories designed to stimulate your imagination, which you can listen to in order to relax”.

Interviewee E: “Yes, for sure, because I trust that it is made by professionals who have the knowledge and experience to deal with current issues, otherwise they would not launch any platform on the market, so I trust it”.

Interviewee G: “I think I can trust the app because its purpose shows that the creators care about mental health in general and it helps me feel better in my daily life”.

Interviewee H: “There is no reason why you cannot trust the app. So my answer is yes. It is not an app that teaches me exercises that can injure me, it is a guide to learn how to breathe, which we all do constantly, you just have to know how to control it”.

Interviewee I: “Yes, for example, when I downloaded the app, I had to register with my name and all the usual details. I don't remember all the details, but I think the app asked me about my goals, like wanting to improve my sleep. It then provided tools and explanations on why it is important to focus on those areas for better wellbeing, so in a way, I felt very trustworthy”.

Interviewee J: “Yes, I trust these apps because they constantly provide valuable content and tools that are useful in my daily life. One of the reasons for my trust is that my data is used

to personalize the experience and I can see real benefits in my mental health; it has become a routine. I have developed new habits with the app and I can see the positive impact in my daily life. So, all the benefits feel real to me and that is why I trust it”.

As can be seen from the responses obtained from the interviewees, the reasons for fully trusting the selected apps to improve their general well-being and mental health are very commendable from various points of view, ranging from the certainty that they will not harm but rather improve their health, to the quality of the proposed exercises and the formality of the registration process they had to complete in order to access the applications.

When asked if there was any reason to distrust the app, most responded asymmetrically. Some of the answers show this. In the case of Interviewee A, his answer was clear in this regard and he values the trustworthiness of the app in the following way: “I would say that if they start sharing personal information with other companies or people, I will no longer trust the app, because obviously there is a lot of personal information. I don't want people to get into my personal life, which would make me not trust the app, perhaps, if they partner with other companies or apps whose values I no longer support”.

Another response was from Interviewee C, who thinks about this in the following way: “I would say that the exercises are very good, but there is a limit to what you can try before having to pay. I think that many people in the community at large may not always have the resources to pay for it. Therefore, while it is great for those who can pay, it can be limiting for others. For example, when I recommend the app to my patients, I usually suggest they try it for just a day to see if it works for them. I think limitation is a problem for most people because they need to find useful tools. However, at the same time, people are less likely to look for apps that offer limited features. The idea of downloading an app, learning how to use it, and then running into a paywall may deter some people from trying it”.

Interviewee D: “I guess the decrease in free content affected my confidence a bit. I used to have a lot of free meditations and the last time I used it, those options were very limited”.

Interviewee E: “Well, I might lose trust in the app if I find out that they haven't been truthful about what they were saying, such as in relation to the content they share. For example, on

the 'Calm' app, if they share fake news or suggestions/recommendations that aren't completely truthful, then they will delete the app immediately”.

Interviewee G: “If I heard that the company is unethical, for example, if it treats its employees poorly. You can't promote wellness if you don't care about the well-being of your associates”

Interviewee H: “Nothing to be honest, it's just noise, music, and a guide on how to control my breathing”

Interviewee I: “I would say that if the app provides inaccurate or misleading information, especially about health and wellness, that could seriously undermine my trust”

Interviewee J: “I think one of the main reasons I would lose trust in the app is if it starts showing too many ads. These apps are meant to help with calmness, relaxation, and meditation, so when they get filled with ads, it disrupts that experience and makes me trust them less. Plus, the content feels less authentic and more commercialized. I will reconsider using it”.

As can be seen, the reasons for losing confidence in an app vary according to the perspective and security that the user feels. In this case, they are very asymmetrical, but in some points they coincide in terms of the disclosure of personal information of users, the use of misleading and insincere offers, the loss of free services, and the inclusion of multiple advertisements during the therapeutic day, which would generate distraction, which is what the respondents do not want.

Regarding the features of the application that they find most useful to support their mental health or general well-being and about the use of meditation, therapy, community aspects, etc. that the application assumes, the respondents also answered from their realities and mental health needs, therefore, some of the answers are presented and then an analysis of these is carried out.

For Interviewee A: “I think it's like structuring my day and telling me how to prioritize. On the other hand, it's quite nice to have little reminders about what I prioritize and sometimes change depending on how I'm doing. Plus, it feels good to just have a kind of conversation

or know that if someone from your friends or family isn't available, you'll always have the app”.

Along these lines, Interviewee D, comments that “Yes, definitely meditation. But I think that's the only part really”.

Interviewee E: “I mean, there are a lot of things that I use, so I would say meditation, definitely, breathing exercises, sleep techniques, and also the workouts that they create based on the goals that you have. I think that's a really nice feature because you can define the goals and they'll give you some exercises and workouts that will help you achieve them and I think that's really important”.

Interviewee F: “Yeah, mostly yoga and meditation”.

Interviewee G: “I don't really use the community aspects, but I do use a lot of meditation, especially in the morning and before I sleep at night. I have used the therapy feature at times”.

Interviewee H: “As I said before, it is a meditation app, so meditating contributes to my mental health and physical health in the same way”.

Interviewee I: “For me it was mostly meditation, just meditation and breathing exercises. That was it. Because not only when I do things like educational or work stuff, I usually have an easy way to focus. The only problem is that when I did meditation in college, I didn't know how to do it properly. Maybe that was a good guide for me”.

Interviewee J: “I think the app I have used the most is ‘Zen’ for meditation and mindfulness exercises. It helps me deal with difficult times, and the community there is really great and supportive. I have made a lot of friends from all over the world through the app, and over time, connecting with people who are similar to me has become one of the aspects I enjoy the most”.

Once these responses have been analyzed, the practice of meditation, accompanied by breathing exercises to promote relaxation, prevails as the therapeutic approach of greatest benefit to the users of the consulted apps.

The answers concerning whether the application has changed the interviewee's understanding or approach to mental health vary and differ from the interviewees' personal and professional particularities. The portfolio of responses is very broad, and it is necessary to point out some for further analysis. That is why the following answers are cited.

Interviewee A: “I think it makes me focus more on my mental health. I don't think it changes my perception, but I do think it makes me prioritize everything more”.

Interviewee C: Interview 3: “As I mentioned before, I am a clinical psychologist, and I work closely with people in understanding and processing their emotions. My approach is very humanistic and for this I use many exercises within this framework, particularly those that focus on reprocessing trauma, difficult moments, or grief. In the therapeutic space, imagination-based exercises are incredibly useful for these specific problems. For example, I guide patients through breathing exercises to bring them into the moment and help them reprocess their emotions. This allows them to experience the intensity of their feelings in a way they couldn't before, ultimately helping them connect with the present. I think if these apps included more exercises focused on improving these techniques, such as guided breathing exercises and imaginative exercises, it would be incredibly beneficial. Before I dive into imagination work with patients, I always start with breathing exercises and then gradually move towards imaginative exercises to help them reconnect with unresolved emotions”.

Interviewee D: “I guess just being able to try and calm myself down and divert my negative thoughts”.

Interviewee E: “Yeah, that's for sure, because I have to say that I didn't know anything about mental health at first and this app gives you all the information you need to know more about the skills. So let's say it completely changed my view on mental health and I started to understand how important it is in our life”.

Interviewee F: “I looked for the app when my mindset had already changed, so no”.

Interviewee G: “Yes, the app has changed the way I look at mental health. It taught me to be more mindful and manage stress better. For example, I used to react quickly when I was

stressed, but now I take a moment to breathe and stay calm. It has helped me become more aware of my thoughts and reactions”.

Interviewee H: “No. What has really contributed to my mental health is my therapist, my family, my friends, and a calm lifestyle”.

Interviewee I: “Yes, I have become more aware of these situations and have been making an effort to better understand people who struggle with mental health issues. I try to put myself in their shoes and see things from their perspective”.

Interviewee J: “Absolutely, I think these apps have helped me see mental health as something proactive rather than reactive. I have learned that daily mental care is important, not just when you are feeling down. It is something you have to work on every day, just like you work on your body. A concrete example is that I have incorporated mindfulness into my daily routine. It is now a regular part of my life: I wake up and spend five, seven, or even ten minutes meditating and practicing mindfulness, gratitude. This has been one of the biggest changes and realizations of my life”.

As can be seen, the answers range from an absolute no in virtue of having changed before using the app therapies and from the opinion that the changes were not due to the app but due to the intervention of therapists, family group and support circles, to a prevalence of absolute change due to the therapeutic practices and exercises proposed by the app allowing behavioral improvements and better appreciation of the environment and the rest of human beings.

In order to complement the objectives of category 3, an example of something learned or how your behavior has changed was explored, as well as features that are missing in the applications used.

Consequently, the opinions on these questions lead to findings derived from the experiences of users, their needs and their worldviews of life, which is why some of the opinions of the participants are presented and then an analysis in this regard.

Interviewee A: “It would be nice to have an app that had it all, where you could see how other people are running, where I could track if I'm eating healthy, and another option that told me how to prioritize my mental health and also meditation exercises”.

Interviewee C: “Maybe having longer exercises would be helpful. For example, when I have trouble sleeping, I ask Alexa to play nature sounds and let them run all night. On this app, while it's great that most people prefer shorter exercises, which are really helpful, it can be limiting for those who need longer durations. The app offers longer exercises, up to an hour, but for me, I sometimes prefer sounds that play all night, and I think this could be very beneficial for other people as well”.

Interviewee E: “I would say that I've started to understand how to take better care of myself, by prioritizing how I feel instead of always focusing on how others around me feel. I'm not sure if that makes sense, but I've realized that it's important to think about myself as well. This has changed over time because, in the past, I didn't approach things this way. I'm pretty satisfied with all the features I've used so far. So, for now, I won't give any recommendations. I think it's a pretty good app and has a lot of ideas and features”.

Interviewee G: “One feature that could be improved in Headspace is more personalized recommendations based on my mood or my goals for the day. Sometimes, I'm not sure which meditation to choose, so a daily suggestion based on how I'm feeling would be helpful”

Interviewee H: “I've never thought about anything additional for the app. They have everything I need and I've never really looked for anything else. If I need help in a crisis, I look for a professional. Apps help you manage certain things, but they're not helpful when it comes to actually helping you with your mental health. They can give you advice, guides, recommendations, but a human being needs to be heard by another to feel a release”.

Interviewee I: “I understand that all apps need to make money, but many people are put off when they see that they have to pay after a free trial ends. Often, the free trial period is too short to really get a sense of the value of the app. It would be better if there was a free version with ads or some other way to use the app without having to pay immediately. Yes, because the app has different levels for each topic within each area. I don't remember if I completed

the whole area, maybe I only completed two or three levels. Once you get to the point where you want to complete everything, you have to pay”.

Interviewee J: “Maybe apps should do more research focused on their users. Most of these apps are based in the US or countries like Germany, but they should recognize that users come from different places, like Ecuador. It would be great if they created features that resonate more with different cultures, so people can feel more supported and relate better to the content.”

When analyzing the answers, there is a disparity in them, ranging from those who think that they do not need any additions to improve, to those who think that they do, but in certain points such as improvements in the time periods for testing, as well as the possibility of extending the free nature of the app after the trial period has ended.

Continuing with the research findings, the aspects related to the fourth category are presented

Section 4: Social Impact and Influence

Objective: to explore the social and community context surrounding the use of the app and mental health.

This time, the opinion of those interviewed is explored on issues related to the influence of social factors such as mental health awareness movements or media coverage on their decision to use mental health apps, as well as whether the interviewee felt inclined to prioritize their mental health due to public discourse, as well as the belief that apps fit into the broader conversation about mental health and well-being in their generation (Generation Z), and whether these apps truly enhance or sometimes hinder genuine progress in mental health.

In this category, regarding the influence of social factors such as mental health awareness movements or media coverage on their decision to use mental health apps, the majority said that they had influenced, only two respondents said no as follows:

Interviewee D: “No, I don't think so. I've been in therapy for about 10 years, so I don't think it's changed my opinion much.

And similarly, Interviewee H, said “No. I was a child when I had to start worrying about my mental health. I was so young that I didn't know anything about social media, I didn't read the news or browse the internet much. It was more because of loss and grief”.

However, some of those who answered yes did so as follows:

Interviewee A: “Definitely. I think that, especially in the generation we're in, there's a huge focus on mental health. I see on social media that all my friends prioritize their mental health. I also follow people on social media, especially on Instagram and TikTok, mental health and psychology influencers, it definitely influences me. I think if I see something that gives me advice on how to approach certain situations, I will think about it and implement it into my life. On the other hand, if someone were to recommend an app to me that I think has good features, I would definitely consider downloading it”.

Interviewee B: “Yes, social factors like mental health awareness movements and media coverage have definitely influenced my decision to use mental health apps. When you see people, whether friends, influencers, or even celebrities, openly talking about and using these apps, it helps normalize the idea of focusing on mental wellbeing, especially for people my age or a little older. I tend to follow people who prioritize mental health because it is something I value as well. When they share their experiences with different apps, whether it is for mindfulness or other forms of self-care, it sparks my curiosity. I think trying these apps is the only way to really know what works for you. Since social media plays such a big role in our lives today, it is also an important way to discover new tools and resources. Ultimately, everyone makes their own decisions about which paths to take, but these shared experiences definitely influence my decisions”.

Interviewee C: “Yes, absolutely. I think social media gained a lot of positive influence after COVID, especially in the mental health field. Many professionals now offer their services through platforms like Instagram. For example, during the pandemic, when I was experiencing a lot of anxiety symptoms, I started looking for apps that helped reduce them. I first came across a post that a friend had reposted on Instagram, which led me to follow the page. It was for Headspace, and as I explored more posts, I was drawn to the short, impactful sentences. Later, I did more research on Google and found that guided meditation was available on Netflix, along with various relaxation exercises. That's when I learned that

Headspace also had an app, which I downloaded. So yes, things like posts shared by friends and ads I saw on other apps influenced me. After downloading Headspace, I became more interested in exploring other apps, like Calm, which I found through ads on TikTok”.

Interviewee E: “Definitely. Mental health is becoming a much bigger topic of interest around the world, which wasn’t the case in the past. Now, for example, on Instagram there are influencers who talk about mental health and encourage people to take care of it. They try to provide the support you need to manage it. So yes, especially on social media, you can share more about these topics and feel understood”.

Interviewee F: “Yes, definitely. I thought that the apps I was going to use would have more of a wellness focus for me. I said that I would be more motivated to do it. And at one point I even cancelled all my apps on the iPad. And I decided to use the iPad just for wellness, just for wellness apps. So I downloaded a bunch and then forgot about them. Well, I think this is a matter of your brain, and not really the app you’re using, but the engagement was there, the intention was there”.

Interviewee G: “Yes, societal factors like mental health awareness movements and media coverage definitely influenced me to use apps like Headspace. Mental health became a bigger topic of discussion, especially during the pandemic, and it made me realize the importance of taking care of it. Also, seeing others openly talk about their struggles during the pandemic made me more inclined to prioritize my own mental health”.

Interviewee J: “Yes, I think developing awareness and openness around mental health in the media and among peers makes it seem more accessible. Social media and media, in general, create a sense of shared experience, which encourages us to seek out mental health tools and apps that are more affordable. As I mentioned before, the pandemic and the increased focus on health has made mental health issues more prominent. We are more open to talking about them now and there are more resources available to support people struggling with their mental health, including myself, as well as to help others going through a similar process. I also think that older generations, like our parents and grandparents, were more reluctant to go to therapy or didn’t even acknowledge practices like meditation. For them, concepts like anxiety or stress weren’t part of the conversation. Our generation is much more open to talking about these issues, which can help prevent the negative consequences of not

addressing them. I think we are better prepared and more educated about mental health compared to those who came before us”.

When evaluating the responses, in relation to the question posed, it is evident that social influence, mental health awareness movements or media coverage in their decision to use mental health applications and the media prominence of social networks met the need of the majority of the interviewees and opened them to a new opportunity to improve their mental health, hence the very forceful responses in this regard and the benefits they refer to throughout the interview.

In terms of how the belief that apps fit into the broader conversation about mental health and wellbeing in Gen Z and whether these apps truly enhance or sometimes hinder genuine progress in mental health, interviewees’ responses reaffirmed in a conscious and majority way that Gen Z believes that mental health and general wellbeing are considered predictors of favourable opinions in the discourse of members of their generation, some responses that are considered important in this regard are cited below.

Interviewee A: “I think it fits very well because in our generation apps are such a thing. In the market, we can find apps for literally everything. They are very popular; they make it easier to talk about it and they even normalize mental health. I feel like if there are so many apps that people use at least one of them, it just normalizes the conversation about wellbeing and mental health. Yeah, definitely. I think it’s something that grows with you. As the app improves, so do I, and I think in the future they will add more features that will be even more useful. We are a generation that tends to get bored easily, so it is important for these apps to constantly evolve and improve. I would definitely recommend them to everyone. And if they don’t like it, at least give it a try. I think it is better to read about wellbeing and mental health and be a bit more aware of your mental health and how you can take care of it”.

Interviewee B: “I think these kinds of apps help, as we don’t always have the money or time to go to therapy, for example. So they are like some exercises that we should all do in our daily lives. So I would say that they are very useful, and in Gen Z it is not a taboo to talk about wellbeing. Any kind of wellbeing, like mental and physical wellbeing. When we have conversations with friends or even people you don’t know, sometimes it’s normal to say something like “I have trouble sleeping” and someone might come up to you and say “Oh,

I've listened to this kind of music, or I have this app, or maybe you know how to read, or I've learned this or that." So it's easier for us, it's very open to talk about it." ·

Interviewee C: "I think mental health is still gaining ground, especially in Ecuador, but among the current generation, more and more people are going to therapy. This is making it easier and more common to talk about these topics. I feel like mental health-related apps, which appeal to a wide range of generations, could be a great way to promote self-care and highlight the importance of mental well-being. These apps provide easy access to help people manage their mental health needs or symptoms, such as anxiety, especially for those who can't afford therapy. Right now, I think this could be an important topic of conversation as people discuss how these apps can support their mental health needs"

Interviewee D: "I think they can be very helpful because they help to have affordable options instead of, for example, therapy, which is very expensive. I think maybe the ability to have something so easy to use is also very nice, especially for young people as well. We are always on our phones, so it is great to have wellness right where you already are".

Interviewee E: "Well, I think Gen Z is a generation where you can openly talk about wellness. Compared to my grandmother's or my parents' generation, wellness was not even a part of their lives; it is something they never really experienced or understood, mainly because they didn't have access to this kind of knowledge. In our generation, these platforms are essential because we are more aware of what is going on in our minds and the challenges we face. I think these platforms are helpful in dealing with those kinds of situations".

Interviewee G: "In my opinion, apps that revolve around mental health are an important part of how Gen Z approaches this topic. We are used to using technology for everything, so having mental health tools readily available on our phones feels natural. These apps allow us to take control of our wellbeing".

Interviewee J: "I think wellness apps are a key tool for our generation. As I mentioned before, we are much more open to talking about mental health, and using digital resources like these apps empowers people by giving them easy access to something that might have been harder to find in the past when people weren't as open to talking about it. For older generations, it

can be more complicated to engage with these apps, and there are also concerns that they may oversimplify the complexity of mental health issues”.

It is clear that for members of Generation Z, mental health and well-being is a topic that they can freely address, since most of them feel concerned about this topic due to the realities and circumstances they have to face every day, and that in some way affect their lives and that the technologies they use provide them with opportunities that their ancestors could not enjoy. Therefore, they are in favor of the empowerment that apps provide to genuine progress in terms of mental health, which makes them inclined to recommend their use.

Finally, the findings of the last category are presented, derived from the different opinions of those interviewed

Section 5: Future commitment and sustainability

Objective: To assess how the interviewees see their long-term relationship with the application and whether they see it as a sustainable solution.

This category addresses aspects such as whether the interviewees see themselves using this application in the long term, as well as what would be the main characteristics or benefits that would make them continue using it over time. Likewise, the influence of the experience with the application on their broader approach to mental health is addressed, as well as the adoption of other therapeutic or physical exercise practices outside of the application, whether they would agree to recommend the application they have used to other people and what aspects of the application they would highlight or warn potential users about. In the same category, the Headspace application is explored, regarding the interviewees' knowledge of it.

Regarding whether the interviewees would see themselves using the app in the long term, the answers are not totally affirmative, but some do not see themselves using it in the long term, others do, and some do not know if they will do so, and others have already stopped using them because they have achieved the goal of well-being and mental health that they were seeking.

In this regard, those who definitely stated that they would not see themselves using the app in the long term, had the following opinion:

Interviewee D: “No, not really. I probably should, but I forget a lot of things and I also get bored of the same meditations over and over again”.

Interviewee H: “No, I only used it when I needed to. If I couldn't sleep, I would look for audio on Spotify, also a podcast about meditation”.

A conditional response was obtained by Interviewee C who had the following opinion:
Interviewee C: “I think the app should stay up to date with current conversations in the field, especially since psychology and mental health are constantly evolving with new research and knowledge. It is important for these apps to stay aligned with the latest developments. If the app continues to offer new content, new focus areas, and updated exercises, I would definitely continue using it”.

Below are some opinions from those who will definitely use the app long-term due to the good experiences they have gained.

Interviewee A: “Yes, definitely. I think it's something that grows with you. As the app gets better, I do too, and I think in the future they will add more features that will be even more useful. We are a generation that tends to get bored easily, so it's important for these apps to constantly evolve and improve”.

Interviewee E: “Yes, definitely. Over time, I think I'll be able to handle these kinds of problems on my own. But I think the app is important as a starting point - to learn about anxiety, understand how to handle it, and then, over time, rely more on myself than on the app. Researcher: Totally, it's always helpful to have the app as a backup for guidance. Sometimes we're managing so many things, like college and work, and we can't control everything. So it's really good to have something like this to guide you along the way”.

Interviewee F: “Yes, I think so. Once I get back into a routine now that it's September, I might as well download it again and see if I can pay for it now or get more out of it”.

Interviewee G: “I see myself using the app long-term, especially since it’s convenient and helps me stay consistent with my mindfulness practice”.

Interviewee J: “Yes, I see myself using the app long-term, as long as it continues to provide value. There are always new tools and apps coming out, so I want to maintain the routine and habits I’ve developed. Features like adaptations and mindfulness reminders fit well with my lifestyle, so I want to keep this app as part of my routine long-term”.

It is clear that those who positively affirm the long-term use of the mental health and well-being app, do so fundamentally due to the optimal experience with its interface and the benefits they have received and the improvements progressively observed in their mental health and general well-being.

Regarding the features or benefits received by users that will make them continue to use the app over time, the answers are very diverse and depend on the particular appreciations of the interviewees and the particularities of the app and the use given to it.

Accordingly, some of the answers are presented below:

Interviewee A: “I definitely think that staying informed about mental health is something that I will continue to prioritize. As we get older and face new challenges, it is important to continue learning and evolving as individuals. I want to be the best version of myself and maintain my mental health, so this is something that I will continue to focus on. It is very important to me that they continue to improve the meditations and also that the app somehow helps me achieve my wellness goals”.

Interviewee F: “If it stays consistent and has good updates, because otherwise, after a while, all the practices are the same and can become boring. So, if they update that and maybe some new videos, maybe some challenges to be more motivated. Maybe they already did, when they had the app, sometimes they had a challenge”.

Interviewee J: “I think meditation and mindfulness”.

In this order of ideas, it is necessary to highlight that several interviewees did not respond to this research concern, but it is evident that the update is a starting point to continue using the

app, as well as the innovation of new functions and the user-friendliness of the app to avoid user boredom.

As for the influence of app experience on the interviewees' approach to mental health, the findings differ as a result of the ongoing approach to the app and the expectations of the users who were interviewed. In reference to this aspect, some opinions of the interviewees are presented and then an analysis will be made to evaluate the coincidences or not of the answers.

Interviewee A: “I think it makes mental health more accessible and normalized. Some of the things I'm learning on the app are things I might have gone to a therapist for five years ago, when these apps weren't as popular. But now, for smaller issues that might not require a therapist, it seems easier to handle. If I'm a little stressed and want to learn how to cope, I know a therapist would be great, but sometimes you don't have the money or time for that. So, it's really convenient to just pick up my phone and see if there's anything on the app that can help”.

Interviewee C: “I think it’s important to distinguish between people who have anxiety disorders and those who experience occasional symptoms or are simply seeking self-care. For people who are seeking daily self-care, these exercises are very helpful and can also help those who are dealing with stress. However, for people with anxiety disorders or other mental health issues, while the exercises can be helpful, they are ideally used in conjunction with therapy. In my personal experience, I find breathing exercises particularly beneficial. Not only do they reduce the intensity of anxiety, but they also help me come back to the present. When we are in a state of anxiety, negative thoughts can take us into the future or make us imagine catastrophic scenarios. Breathing exercises allow us to come back to the present moment and reduce anxiety. I think the exercises offered by these apps are great for that – they help you stay centered and in turn enjoy your surroundings more, whether it’s time with family, work, or hobbies, because they keep you focused on the here and now.”

Interviewee D: “I have tried to incorporate meditation practices into my daily life in some ways. I like to walk and I try to sit with my thoughts a bit more”.

Interviewee E: “As I mentioned, the app really sparked my curiosity about my mental health and helped me recognize the kind of issues I was facing. These platforms definitely gave me the knowledge I needed to realize I had a problem and then start addressing it”.

Interviewee G: “Using the app has made me more aware of my daily mental health. It encouraged me to try other practices like regular exercise, journaling, and even consider therapy to maintain a balanced approach to my well-being”.

Interviewee J: “I have also started doing therapy and physical exercise as additional ways to support my mental health. The app has made me more aware of how they are interconnected with these aspects. So I am now more intentional about taking care of my mind and body”.

As can be seen from the responses, the interviewees' approach to mental health did change in a positive way because it made them more aware of mental health and its importance for emotional and mental balance to cope with the circumstances of modern life.

Regarding the adoption of other practices, for example, such as therapy, physical exercise outside of the app, some opinions that are considered important are presented below, however many did not answer this question, so we consider it important to present the most relevant opinions

Interviewee A: “Yes, definitely. I have been in therapy and I have also been trying to exercise”.

Interviewee E: “Outside of the app, the only additional practice I have adopted is physical exercise, such as working out or going to the gym, which helps me clear my mind. I have not yet started therapy outside of the app, although I would love to. Unfortunately, I do not have the financial means at the moment. I think therapy is important, but for now, I rely on these apps. At some point, I plan to consider therapy and work with a professional when my situation allows it”.

Interviewee H: “The app is used solely for what it was created for, it has not prompted me to do anything else. If I have exercised it has been of my own free will, due to my health and doctor's recommendation. If I go to therapy it is out of necessity, no app should influence anyone, or at least that is what I believe”.

As can be seen, some have included other practices in a mild and progressive way to complement the proposals of the app, however, one of the interviewees believes that it should not be done because the app has enough to be done without other types of support, but that in the future when he has more resources he will require the personal help of a therapist to do. When asked if they would recommend the app to other people they know or are interested in using it for mental health and wellbeing, most said yes, so there are some opinions on this matter, however one would recommend it but conditionally.

Interviewee A: “Yes, I would definitely recommend it to everyone. And if they don't like it, at least give it a try. I think it's important to read about wellbeing and mental health and be a little more aware of your mental health and how you can take care of it”.

Interviewee D: “I would if someone was interested in meditation. It's great that it's free. But, for long-term use, I don't know (conditional case)”.

Interviewee E: “Yes, absolutely. Many of my friends are dealing with similar issues, like anxiety or sleep problems, especially after COVID. It seems quite common in these situations. So yes, I would definitely recommend the app to them”

Interviewee G: “I would recommend Headspace to others, especially those who are just starting to explore mindfulness. It's easy to use and has a lot of variety. However, I think it's important to make the distinction between wanting to take care of your mental health and needing actual therapy when it comes to deeper mental health issues. For people who have deeper issues, this app wouldn't be enough”.

Interviewee H: “If people want a guide to meditating, then yes, but I would also recommend Spotify podcasts because there are some really good ones. But it's not something I talk to people about. It's not a recommendation that's on the tip of my tongue every time I talk to someone”

Interviewee J: “Yes, I would recommend it, especially to anyone looking for an app that's easy to use. Many apps have issues like high prices or complex interfaces, but I find these apps simple. I especially recommend the 'Zen' app because it offers valuable features that

integrate well into your digital lifestyle and routine. Based on my experience, I feel confident recommending these apps”.

By way of inference, if one is willing to recommend wellness and mental health apps to others, the recommendations are based on their ease of use, the safety of the app, the free nature of some apps used, and the variety of therapeutic proposals.

Finally, in this category 5, the Headspace application is explored, especially in terms of the knowledge of it by the interviewees.

Regarding the app ‘Headspace’, it has been referenced by several interviewees, that is, they know it through this route, but they do not use it. One of the interviewees had definitely never heard of the app, and others used it in the past and others currently use it on a daily basis. However, those who have had references from their friends and acquaintances, but who do not yet use it, say that it seems like a good option, with eye-catching and highly credible material with pleasant, friendly and effective proposals.

On the other hand, those who have used it and currently use it have the best recommendations of this app, in terms of content, timeliness and relevance. Some of the opinions of these interviewees who do know it and use it are presented below

Interviewee C: “Yes, I have used the app. I think I can trust it because it has very useful tools and good content. The short, advice-like phrases used in the app help to foster a sense of understanding, as they focus on being present. It makes me feel like if you are overwhelmed by thoughts, the message is to slow down and enjoy the moment, like being in nature or appreciating your surroundings. So in a way, the app creates a sense of understanding, security, and support. What initially attracted me to this page was the use of colors. I discovered the app through Instagram, and I think that can be a limitation in staying engaged in the long term. The Instagram profile is the first impression you get, so it plays a big role in drawing you in, and it has to be authentic”.

Interviewee G: “Yes, I use it almost every day. I trust the app because it is well established, and the content seems well researched. The guidance is helpful, and I have noticed positive changes in how I manage stress since using it. The content seems calming and accessible. It

is simple but effective, and the images and voiceovers are soothing. It makes me feel more relaxed, especially when I am having trouble sleeping. Yes, the content is clear and seems genuine. The app's focus on mindfulness and wellbeing feels real. For me, it's really important that the content is authentic because mental health is a sensitive area. If the content feels forced, I wouldn't feel comfortable relying on the app for support. Yes, I think Headspace's content is authentic, the tone of the content seems genuine and consistent with their mission of promoting mental wellbeing. It doesn't feel overly commercialized, which is important to me”.

Interviewee I: “Yes, I would say you can trust the Headspace app. It's a well-established platform with a strong reputation for promoting mindfulness and mental wellbeing. The content is developed by experts, including trained meditation teachers, and is widely used by people around the world. I feel calm and safe. Their content is carefully designed, with calming images and clear, friendly guidance that makes it accessible. The combination of animations, simple instructions, and expert-led sessions gives me confidence in their material. It seems carefully created, which would give me the impression that they take mental wellbeing and mindfulness seriously. Even without prior experience, their content alone would probably make me feel confident about the brand's credibility”.

As can be seen from these responses, this app is safe, reliable, creative, eye-catching, engaging, versatile, very well designed, and seriously addresses mental health content to provide tangible benefits to its users. Its content is rigorously presented and gives the impression of a good professional team behind it.

4.1 Main results of the analysis

When analyzing the interview results, it becomes clear that Gen Z users place a high value on health and wellness apps that offer accessibility and educational content. In the context of the health crisis posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the context of social confinement, digital mental health applications played a leading role for a large part of the members of Generation Z, who, faced with a reality not previously experienced by this population sector, experienced high levels of anxiety and stress. This finding is consistent with those of Twenge et al. (2020), whose findings revealed a significant increase in mental

health problems among members of Generation Z due to the effects of the pandemic, social confinement and high digital connectivity. For these researchers, the increase in anxiety and the demand for digital resources in mental health matters reveal a representative dependence on digital applications for emotional support and support from support groups, a trend intensified during the course of the pandemic (Twenge, et al., 2020).

It is important to highlight that the motivation to select and use these applications was influenced by both social and cultural factors, as well as the progressive trend based on mental health awareness and the continuous presence of these issues on digital platforms and social media. Corey Keyes (2021) extensively researched psychological and social well-being in younger generations, noting that Generation Z significantly values self-expression and authenticity, prompting them to select platforms that match their personal perspectives, interests, and values that provide spaces for self-exploration and mental health. Keyes argues that young people's use of mental wellness apps largely stems from the perception of authenticity and transparency in these digital environments, fostering a deeper, more sustained engagement (Keyes, 2021).

Additionally, several participants mentioned that after adopting certain wellness habits, they stopped using the apps, suggesting that these digital resources serve as an initial support system for developing sustainable self-management practices. This finding is consistent with the study by Bakker and Rickard (2019), who explain that mental health apps can act as temporary tools that facilitate learning coping strategies, which users eventually internalize and apply independently. This "transitory use" shows that while these apps are beneficial, their real impact lies in their ability to encourage self-care practices that endure beyond active app use (Bakker & Rickard, 2019).

The findings also reveal concerns about privacy and intrusive advertising on digital platforms, generating distrust among some users surveyed, which is consistent with a study carried out by Montag et al. (2021) which highlights that Generation Z has a strong sensitivity in the area of digital privacy, especially on digital mental health platforms, where confidentiality is essential. According to these researchers, invasive procedures, such as

excessive advertising, tend to undermine the perceived authenticity of the application and affect the choice and preference of Z users (Montag, et al., 2021).

As a corollary, the findings of this study reveal that young people from Generation Z feel a strong predilection and connection with digital applications that address spirituality and development, aligned with the point of view of Pargament et al. (2021). These authors indicate that Gen Z tends to seek a holistic approach to well-being that includes not only mental health but also spiritual and emotional growth. This approach, which integrates various dimensions of wellness, is fundamental to user engagement with wellness apps, as it meets the need for comprehensive development beyond psychological support (Pargament, Wong, & Exline, 2021).

5. Conclusion

In today's world, characterized by being highly changing, very volatile due to external and internal circumstances of nations, so driven by technology, the importance of mental health, as well as the physical well-being of people cannot be underestimated (World Health Organization, 2022). It is impossible to deny that the life of members of Generation Z, the so-called digital natives, is currently a portfolio full of emotions, commitments, subjective reasoning and perceptions. Added to this is the digitalization of all knowledge and all forms of work, all types of communication and personal interaction. It seems that digitalized society de-individualizes human beings and takes away the possibility of continuous and personal contact, generating a society of highly connected individuals, but at the same time very lonely and very pressured.

It is possible to conclude that, on a daily basis, more and more, many globalizing elements intertwine and build a scenario full of overwhelming and countless moments, decisions and multiple, varied and fast experiences. Today, in an open and interconnected world with almost no limits, focused on ever-evolving technology, where the pace of work days, socializing, staying physically and mentally healthy, it seems that life itself is constantly accelerating with each passing day. This heavy burden of life can end up crushing with its full weight of immediacy the physical and mental health of the digital natives of Generation Z.

However, it is important to conclude that, favorably, in an increasingly digital world, in which smartphones and the applications offered in this digital market have practically become extensions of their users, therefore those who develop these applications are taking giant steps to help improve the mental health and emotional well-being of users of products based on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). This has resulted in the possibility of having mental health applications, which emerge as invaluable tools to provide support and countless resources and a sense of belonging to members of Generation Z whose lives are spent surfing the web and simultaneously generating a complex perspective of mental health.

After analyzing the various sources that allowed the construction of the theoretical perspective of the present study, it is important to conclude that mental health and physical well-being applications are mobile and software applications created to provide professional assistance and support to people interested in improving and managing various aspects of their mental health, emotional and physical well-being in general. These applications are usually easily accessible and can be downloaded on any type of operating system of any smartphone, tablet or computer through an application store or other digital platforms. Some are completely free, others have a trial period of a certain time in which the services are free, and then payments for services begin, others have their cost from the beginning, they are also characterized by having images, sounds, videos and tele calls, some are 24 hours a day, seven days a week coverage. On the other hand, many mental health applications not only offer a multiple variety of useful functions, tools and resources to help users control their mental health, but also help them face their problems (if any), understand them and improve their mental health. General mental well-being and emotional and physical health.

Mental wellness apps, in addition to providing tools for tracking mental health, are also a significant asset in content marketing targeting Generation Z. These platforms use digital content strategies that not only make it easier for users to interact with mental health information but also encourage engagement through educational, authentic, and visually appealing content. Studies show that content marketing for this generation should focus on elements that add value, build trust, and empower users to make informed health decisions (Health & Wellness, 2023).

One of the key aspects is authenticity in digital communication. According to Dolan et al. (2019), Generation Z places high importance on content that reflects transparency and authenticity, which is crucial for building an emotional connection with the audience and fostering loyalty toward wellness apps. Informative and educational content on these platforms not only attracts users but also helps brands establish themselves as trusted leaders in mental health.

Furthermore, the use of visual content, such as infographics and short videos, has proven to be an effective strategy for capturing Gen Z's interest. This preference is especially relevant in wellness apps, where the information can be complex and technical. Studies referenced in

this research suggest that visual representation facilitates understanding and retention of information, allowing users to process concepts quickly and effectively—an essential feature in today’s digital landscape.

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This study conducted research by consulting several members of Generation Z in five different categories, through an interview-type instrument, which had the following particularities:

Section 1: Understanding the use of the application and introduction to wellness applications

Objective: To explore how users discovered the application and why they began to use it, as well as how they position mental health and well-being in their lives.

Section 2: Personal importance of mental health and well-being Objective: To understand the personal relevance of mental health and well-being for the interviewees and how they align this with their use of the application.

Section 3: User experience with the application (content and education)-

Objective: To analyze how users interact with the content of the application and what educational or supportive aspects they find most beneficial.

Section 4: Social Impact and Influence

Objective: To explore the social and community context surrounding their use of the application and mental health.

Section 5: Future Engagement and Sustainability

Objective: To assess how interviewees view their long-term relationship with the application and whether they see it as a sustainable solution.

The most relevant findings in this field research and according to each category, allow us to conclude in order of categories the following:

The interviewees in general indicated that all applications are adequately and successfully positioned in the market and not only in the area of personal well-being but are also educational with a view to achieving their objective in this regard. The applications are positioned in a mix of education and community support and provide tools that are very accessible to all people. Emphasizing the importance of connecting with other people who are in the same situation or condition, it is not just about one path. I would say that it is not just about therapy, it is also about learning new ways to take care of mental health.

As for the benefit obtained by using the apps, everyone reports having benefited from having known and enjoyed them, especially in the midst of confinement due to the pandemic, and they feel satisfied to have consulted them and followed their guidance at that stage of their lives. Once they had sufficiently implemented and mastered the therapeutic techniques for relaxation, overcoming insomnia, and controlling stress and anxiety, they stopped using

them because they had achieved success in what they expected from the apps and ended up incorporating and establishing these practices as a daily routine without requiring the use of the app.

The reasons for losing trust in an app vary depending on the perspective and security that the user feels. However, in some points they agree regarding the disclosure of personal information of users, the use of misleading and insincere offers, the loss of free services and the inclusion of multiple advertisements during the therapeutic day, which would generate distraction, which is what the respondents do not want.

Social influence, mental health awareness movements, and media coverage primarily obtained through valuable content have been key factors in the decision to use mental health apps. The media prominence of social networks addressed the needs of most interviewees and provided them with a new opportunity to improve their mental health.

For members of Generation Z, mental health and well-being is a topic that they can address and discuss freely, since most of them feel concerned about this topic due to the realities and circumstances that they have to face every day, and that somehow affect their lives and that the technologies they use provide them with opportunities that their ancestors could not enjoy. Therefore, they are in favor of the empowerment that apps provide to genuine progress in mental health, which makes them inclined to recommend their use.

Regarding the long-term use of apps, the interviewees are not homogeneous in their answers, as these are not totally affirmative, some do not see themselves using them in the long term, others do, some do not know if they will do so and others have already stopped using them because they have achieved the goal of well-being and mental health they were looking for.

The use of apps, in terms of the interviewees' approach to mental health, changed in a positive way because it made them more aware of mental health and its importance for emotional and mental balance to face the circumstances of modern life. It is also concluded that the majority of the interviewees recommend the use of mental health and general well-being apps. In conclusion, if one is willing to recommend well-being and mental health apps to others, the recommendations are based on their ease of use, the security of the app, the free nature of some apps used and the variety of therapeutic proposals.

Finally, regarding the Headspace app, the interviewees who know and use it or have references from their friends and acquaintances, claim that this app is safe, reliable, creative, eye-catching, attractive, versatile, very well designed and seriously addresses mental health content to provide tangible benefits to its users. Its content is presented in a rigorous manner and gives the impression that there is a good professional team behind it.

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Appendix A. Transcription of the interviews

Section 1: Understanding the App Usage and Introduction to Wellness Apps

Goal: To explore how users discovered the app and why they started using it, as well as how they position mental health and wellness in their lives.

1. Do you use or have you used a wellness app?
 - If yes, could you please tell me which app have you used?
2. Can you share how you first came across this app?
 - Probe: Was it through social media, a recommendation, or other means?
3. What motivated you to download and start using this particular app?
 - Probe: Was it a specific event or ongoing concerns about mental health/wellness?
4. Why did you choose this app over others?
 - Probe: Did you research multiple options, or was it more spontaneous?
5. How do you feel this app positions itself in the market?
 - Probe: Does it seem more educational, community-focused, or therapy-oriented?

Section 2: Personal Importance of Mental Health and Wellness

Goal: To understand the personal relevance of mental health/wellness for the interviewees and how they align this with their app use.

1. What role does mental health and wellness play in your life currently?
 - Probe: How has it changed over time, and what has influenced that change?
2. What specific mental health/wellness goals are you hoping to achieve through this app?
3. Why was it important for you to prioritize mental health and wellness in your life at this moment?

- Probe: Are there any life experiences or societal pressures (e.g., pandemic, Gen Z trends) that contributed to this?
4. How do you feel the app supports your mental health/wellness journey?
 - Probe: Does it provide tools, education, or community support that you find valuable?

Section 3: User Experience with the App (Content and Education)

Goal: To analyze how users engage with the app's content and what educational or supportive aspects they find most beneficial.

1. Would you say that you can trust in the app?
 - If yes, why?
2. What could you make you lose trust in the app?
3. What features of the app do you find most useful for supporting your mental health/wellness?
 - Probe: Do you use the app's meditation, therapy, community aspects, etc.?
4. Has the app changed your understanding or approach to mental health?
 - Probe: Can you give an example of something you've learned or how your behavior has shifted?
5. Are there any features that you feel are missing or could be improved in the app?

Section 4: Impact and Social Influence

Goal: To explore the societal and community context surrounding their use of the app and mental health.

1. Have societal factors like mental health awareness movements or media coverage influenced your decision to use mental health apps?
 - Probe: Did you feel more inclined to prioritize your mental health because of public discourse?
2. How do you think apps like this fit into the broader conversation on mental health and wellness in your generation (Gen Z)?

- Probe: Do you feel they empower or sometimes hinder genuine mental health progress?

Section 5: Future Engagement and Sustainability

Goal: To gauge how the interviewees view their long-term relationship with the app and whether they see it as a sustainable solution.

1. Do you see yourself using this app long-term? Why or why not?
 - Probe: What features or benefits would make you continue using it over time?
2. How has your experience with the app influenced your broader approach to mental health?
 - Probe: Have you adopted other practices (e.g., therapy, physical exercise) outside of the app?
3. Would you recommend this app to others? Why or why not?
 - Probe: What aspects of the app would you highlight or warn them about?

Headspace app

1. Have you heard about the app Headspace?
2. Do you trust the app?
 - Why and why not
3. When you look at the content that the app produces how do you feel?
4. If you only look at the content, will you trust the brand?
5. How important it's for you that content is authentic?
 - Why?
6. Do you believe that the content that the app post is authentic? Why and why not?
7. If you find that their content is not authentic, will you stop using the app?

Interviewed A

Researcher: Good morning Rhianne, thank you so much for be here and for helping me with my research for my master's degree dissertation. I really appreciate your time here, as you know, the title of my dissertation is about the “Content marketing in the digital age, analyzing the role of quality wellness content in building brand trust among Gen Z”. So, the way that I divided this interview is in five sections. Feel free if you don't want to answer one of these questions, you can tell me that you would like to skip for the following one. So, let's start with the first section. It's for understanding the app usage and introduction to wellness apps. Do you use, or have you used a wellness app?

Interviewed A: Yes, I have used multiple apps. For track my fitness. Sometimes I've tried my food. I've used different apps that I was training for a marathon to kind of keep track of my trainings and stuff like that. So, yeah, definitely.

Researcher: Could you please tell me which apps have you used?

Interviewed A: I've used a lot of my own names, but I've definitely used the app of Nike and also Calm.

Researcher: Okay, sounds like you had a lot of experience using wellness apps. So then let's continue with the following question. Can you share how you first came across these apps?

Interviewed A: Usually through either Instagram or Tiktok. Sometimes my friends would tell me about it, but most of them I just found on social media.

Researcher: Okay, perfect. And what motivated you to download and start using this particular app?

Interviewed A: Usually, if I had a goal in mind. So either was I want to get more faith, or I want to train for marathon, or if it was to maybe my head was a bit busy, so I needed an app to kind of help me focus and put my thoughts in order. That's most of the reason why I would use one of the app.

Researcher: Yeah, totally agree. And why did you choose this app over others?

Interviewed A: I feel like I try all of the apps, usually, if I see something at some sites, usually if they're free, according to me, if I can try them out for free, because then if I don't like the features I can just delete the app without paying extra. But usually, if I see advertisement or content that speaks to me, I will try it out, and then when I try out if I like it.

Researcher: Interesting. And the last question of this section will be, how do you feel this app positions itself in the market?

Interviewed A: I would say the fitness ones are more community focused, because you see from your friends. Social media show you how your runs are doing, to see how your friends are doing, like posts from other people. But then I would say the ones that are aimed to coursework, like mental health and meditation.

Researcher: Awesome, so now we're going to start with the section number two. In this part, we're going to talk about the personal importance of mental health and wellness apps. What role does mental health and wellness play in your life currently? Like, how was it changed over time, and what has influenced that change?

Interviewed A: I would say it's definitely a big factor in my life right now, since I'm getting older and growing up, life is getting busier with finishing university, starting a new job,

moving abroad, having more friends and family. Is getting more important in my life for over stressed and a bit overly stimulated.

Researcher: That's true, once we're growing up is good to have a safe place, where we have a moment for us. What specific mental health or wellness goals are you hoping to achieve through this app?

Interviewed A: I would definitely say that there's structure in my head, making sure my head is like a calm space, that my thoughts are in order, that I know what to prioritize, and if you just take a little break the app can guide me through more stressful moments in my life. It's more like getting my head in order, not freaking out and even having like a "friend", who will guide you through some moments in your life.

Researcher: Totally agree and for the next question. Was it important for you to prioritize wellness in your life at this moment? For example, they are any life experiences or societal pressures that contributed to this?

Interviewed A: As I was saying earlier in life, as we grow older, we're getting more busy. I'm finishing my master study, I'm in a relationship, I have friends and family at home. Of course, you're still meeting people and work it's getting more and more busy, so I feel like it's good to sometimes take a step back and focus on that. My life is going great. I'm very happy, but I'm also want to prioritize my wellness

Researcher: Of course, yeah, that's really important to prioritize ourselves. And how do you feel the app supports your mental health or wellness journey, like, does it provide good tools?

Interviewed A: I think that is having like a kind of therapist in your pocket. The app gives me features to use in my daily days and to know what is important and what is not. Sometimes will give me just a reminder, like "hey, today take 30 minutes to focus on

yourself.” With the app you heard things that you sometimes forget on your own. Also, it gives you a little reminder to don't forget about yourself and your mental health.

Researcher: Okay, perfect. So thank you so much. Now we are going to pass to the third section. Here we're going to talk about your experience with the app. Will you say that you can trust in the apps that you have used?

Interviewed A: Yes, I don't think I will have a reason to don't trust in the apps that I had used.

Researcher: What could you make you lose trust in the app?

Interviewed A: I would say if they start sharing personal information with another companies/people I will not trust in the app anymore, because obviously there's a lot of personal information. I don't want people running out on in my personal life, which would make me not trust the app, maybe, if they do certain partnerships with other companies or apps that I don't stand behind their values anymore.

Researcher: Totally agree. And then, what features of the app do you find most useful for supporting your wellness in your life?

Interviewed A: I think kind of just like structuring my day and telling me how to prioritize. On the other hand, it's quite nice to just have little reminders about what I prioritize and sometimes changing with how I'm doing. Also, feels good to just have a kind of talk or that you know if someone of your friends/family is not available you will always have the app.

Researcher: Has the app changed your understanding or approach to mental health?

Interviewed A: I think it makes me focus on my mental health more. I don't think it changes my perception, but I do think it makes me prioritize everything more.

Researcher: Ok, can you give an example of something you have learned or how your behavior has shifted?

Interviewed A: I think that on some of these apps, you can definitely find interesting articles about mental health and how to become a better version of yourself. I don't have any specific examples, but let's say I'm feeling really stressed, as everyone does sometimes. These apps often have a section on coping with stress, and I'll read an article or try an exercise, depending on the situation. The app helps calm me down and allows me to manage stress in a healthier way. Stress is normal, but these apps help me deal with it better.

Researcher: Yeah, correct. That's why these apps have a really important role in our life's, in our generation because we have to deal with the stress of the University, work and everything. So yeah, and are there any features that you feel are missing, or it could be proof in the apps that you have used?

Interviewed A: It would be nice having an app with everything, where you can see how other people are running, where I can track if I'm eating healthy, and another option telling me how to prioritize my mental health and also meditation exercises. I think it would be nice if you could have them all in once.

Researcher: Totally agree, that would be awesome actually. We're going to continue with the fourth section. Okay, that is about the impact and social influence. Have society factors like mental health, awareness movements or media coverage influence your decision to use mental health apps like? For example, did you feel more inclined to prioritize your mental health because of public discourse?

Interviewed A: Definitely. I think, especially in the generation that we're in has a huge focus on mental health. I see on social media all my friends prioritizing their mental health. I also follow people on social media, especially on Instagram and Tiktok influencers for mental health and psychology influencers, I definitely get influenced. I think if I see something that give me tips on how to approach certain situations, I will think about it and will implement in my life. In the other hand, if someone recommended me an app I think has good features I would definitely consider downloading it.

Researcher: How do you think apps like this fit into the broader conversation on mental health and wellness in your generation (Generation Z)?

Interviewed A: I think it fits really well because in our generation apps are such a thing. In the market, we can find apps literally for everything. They are really popular, it makes it easier to kind of talk about it and even normalizes mental health. I feel like if there are so many apps that people are using at least one of them, it just normalizes the conversation around wellness and mental health.

Researcher: Totally, and then for section five, we're going to talk about the future, engagement, and sustainability. Do you see yourself using this app for a long term? Why and why not?

Interviewed A: Yes, definitely. I think it's something that grows with you. As the app improves, so do I, and I believe in the future they will add more features that will be even more helpful. We are a generation that tends to get bored easily, so it's important for these apps to constantly evolve and improve.

Researcher: Which features or benefits will make you continue using the app over the time?

Interviewed A: I definitely believe that staying informed about mental health is something I'll continue to prioritize. As we get older and face new challenges, it's important to keep

learning and evolving as individuals. I want to be the best version of myself and maintain my mental health, so this is something I'll keep focusing on. For me is really important that they keep improving the meditations and also somehow that the app help me to reach my wellness goals.

Researcher: And how was your experience with the apps influence your approach to mental health?

Interviewed A: I think it makes mental health more approachable and normalized. Some of the things I'm learning on the app are things I might have gone to a therapist for five years ago when these apps weren't as popular. But now, for smaller issues that might not require a therapist, it feels easier to manage. If I'm just a bit stressed and want to learn how to cope, I know a therapist would be great, but sometimes you don't have the money or time for that. So, it's really convenient to just grab my phone and see if there's something on the app that can help.

Researcher: Yes, and have you adopted other practices, for example, like therapy, physical exercise outside of the app?

Interviewed A: Yes, definitely. I've been in therapy, and I've also been trying as much to work out as well.

Researcher: And the last question of this section, would you recommend these apps to others?

Interviewed A: Yes, I would definitely recommend it to everyone. And then if they don't like it, at least they try. I think reading about wellness and mental health and being a bit more aware of your mental health and how you can take care of this.

Researcher: Okay, and then, so for the last section of this interview, we're going to talk about the app “Headspace”. I don't know if you have heard about this app?

Interviewed A: Yes, I have heard about this app.

Researcher: Would you say do you trust the app? Why and why not?

Interviewed A: I think Headspace is definitely one of the best apps out there in terms of how it's made, how it looks and also the content

Researcher: When you look at the content that headspace produces. How do you feel? Their content in general, either social media or in the app.

Interviewed A: I would say, Headspace definitely produces quality content. For an example, they use a lot of facts. It's very informative, and I think usually it's being told by experts in the in the field. So if you even look at the Instagram or also with the content on the app itself, they would never use, for example “Kim Kardashian talking about using Headspace and how it helps improve our mental health”, like it will always be, still someone with maybe a bigger following, but it would be like a certified psychologist, instead of just a random influencer who said “Oh, this app is great. I love it.” That probably gets paid a lot of money for it. I think it's, I think that's very valuable, whatever they produce and whatever they say, both in the app our in their social media is always backed up by science and by someone who has actual knowledge about what they are saying.

Researcher: Yes, that's correct. How important it's for you that company is authentic?

Interviewed A: I think it's super, super important, especially in the day and age that we live in right now, there's so much fake news out there, like basically anyone with access to

internet can make content on social media on the Internet, so I think it's very important that when an app posts something that they fact check it, that they make sure it's backed up by science. I think it's authenticity is the most important in the time that we live in.

Researcher: Totally agree, because nowadays, with all the fake news and all the information that we can find in internet is actually difficult to find this, programs or apps and maybe feel like, okay “I can trust in this app.” If you find that their content is not authentic, will you stop using the app?

Interviewed A: Yes, to some extent I would stop using the app. However, there are certain features I would still use, such as the meditation feature, which includes calming music and guided breathing exercises. I would definitely continue with that. On the other hand, I would stop using content like their articles, blogs, or any information that could be inauthentic. I would focus on the simpler features, like planning my day and meditating, but I would avoid any features that rely on potentially unreliable information.

Researcher: Perfect. That was the of the interview. Thank you so much Rhianne for your time. I really appreciate it. If you have any questions or something, please let me know.

Interviewed A: Thank you for this interview, I enjoyed and if I have any other questions I will email you.

Interviewed B

Researcher: Good morning! Thank you so much for your help in my research, for my dissertation of my master's degree. I really appreciate your time and your help. So I divided or interviewed in five sections, if you don't feel comfortable answering on question you can tell me, that you would like to skip for the next one. As you know, the title of my dissertation “Content marketing in the digital age, analyzing the role of quality wellness content in building brand trust among Gen Z.” In the first section, we're going to talk about

understanding the app usage and the introduction to wellness apps. Okay, so let's start!! Do you use, or have you use a wellness app?

Interviewed B: Yes, I have.

Researcher: Could you please tell me the name of the app?

Interviewed B: It's called Butterfly.

Researcher: Can you share how you first came across this app?

Interviewed B: Yeah, when I was working, my former boss recommended the app because we were dealing with a lot of stress at work. She suggested we download it and start using it for things like setting daily reminders to breathe or take breaks, just like you mentioned. The app really helps you stay mindful throughout the day.

Researcher: What motivated you to download and started using this particular app? As you said, it was because your boss's recommendation, but did a specific event happen that made you use this app?

Interviewed B: No, it was because I was struggling a lot in work and we have a lot of things to do, so they recommended me, and I thought it was time to start working in my mental health care. So I decided to download because of that.

Researcher: Definitely, always really important to put our mental health first. Why did you choose the app over others?

Interviewer B: Actually, it was because it was recommended.

Interviewed B: Well, actually, it was because it was recommended. My boss told me, she showed me, and I had no doubts in downloading the app. It was not because of a specific reason. At that point, my former company had a promotion with this app, so we didn't have to pay for the premium. But, yeah, I think that's why a lot of my coworkers there, we were using that app.

Researcher: Make sense, so let's say it was because you were following the recommendation, that also is really important at the moment we start using this kind of apps.

Interviewed B: Yes, recommendations and also the fact that the company was paying for the premium option.

Researcher: That's really good, that the company was paying for this services to their coworkers and you could enjoy the features. And then how do you feel this app positions itself in the market?

Interviewed B: At that point, at least, this was in my country. But at that point, it was supposed to be a good app. There were not so many wellness apps there, so this was one of the first ones that were released. But I remember that after like six months, the app stopped, like doing new features, new things, so I stopped using it.

Researcher: Okay, so you stopped using it, because they didn't improve more. So then for the section two, we're going to talk about the personal importance of mental health and wellness. What role does mental health and wellness play in your life currently?

Interviewed B: Actually, right now, I think it's in my top three priorities, like physical and mental health are the most important thing right now for me, if I am mentally stable and fine, I know that my life will be better.

Researcher: Totally agree. And how has it changed over the time? Let's say, what has influenced that change?

Interviewed B: As you get older and move out of your parents' house, you start making decisions about how you want to live your life. At that point, I realized how important it was to stay both mentally and physically healthy. With my parents far away, I want to take care of myself, and I know that maintaining a healthy mind and body will help prevent illness and keep my immune system strong.

Researcher: That's so true! It's amazing how much more aware we become of our health when we're on our own. And, what is specific mental health or wellness goals are you hoping to achieve through this app?

Interviewed B: I'd say the app acts like a reminder, almost like a boss. It sends notifications like 'It's time to take a break' or 'You should do some journaling.' You can do these activities right within the app, making it a moment to pause during the day for yourself. I really like that, especially since we're constantly glued to our phones—whether it's for work, checking emails, or responding to messages. It's easy to forget to take time for yourself, so having an app that reminds you to do so is really helpful.

Researcher: Exactly, we all need breaks, especially with how much we're juggling—work, university, and everything else. How do you feel the app supports your mental health or wellness journey?

Interviewed B: As I was saying, I really appreciate the notifications the app sends. Sometimes it's just a simple, uplifting message like 'Have a wonderful day,' which brings a little joy. Other times, it reminds me to take a minute to breathe or to do some journaling. For me, journaling is important because it helps me release everything I've been holding in, but I often forget to do it. The app keeps me on track with reminders like, 'Don't forget your journaling.' It even uses my location—so when I'm home at 11 p.m., I'll get a notification asking, 'How was your day?' Whether I was dancing at a jazz class or visiting a coffee shop, it feels personal, like it's checking in on my day.

Researcher: So it would tell you exactly what you needed to hear in that moment. For example, if you were having a really bad or stressful day, it was like a gentle reminder that you're special, or that you need to take a deep breath and take a break. So then we're going to start with the third section. In this section, we're going to talk about the user experience with the app. So it's about the content and education that this app has provided to you. Would you say that you can trust in the app?

Interviewed B: At the beginning, the app was fine and provided the support I needed. But after a while, they stopped improving it. It felt stagnant, and I got frustrated with that. Life is already stressful, and I didn't want to add the stress of constantly checking a wellness app, so I just stopped using it.

Researcher: What could cause you to lose trust in the app? For example, if they formed partnerships that made you feel uneasy or started sharing personal information, would that make you stop trusting it? Or if they began creating content that didn't align with your values, would that be a dealbreaker for you? What do you think, personally, would make you feel like you couldn't trust the app anymore?

Interviewed B: . Actually, I don't have an issue with data usage—that's not something that would make me stop using an app. What bothered me more was the lack of improvement, as I mentioned earlier. The app started feeling stagnant; it either stopped sending messages or

began sending a lot of random notifications. It no longer aligned with what I needed. For example, I like journaling, so when it reminded me to do that, it was great. But then it started sending irrelevant messages, like ‘Stand up,’ because it was connected to my Apple Watch. I’d be busy working and couldn’t follow those prompts, so it became frustrating. I didn’t like that, and there was no option to disable the ‘Stand up’ notifications, which was frustrating because I work seated for more than eight hours. It bothered me that the app couldn’t be adjusted to fit my needs and cannot personalize your lifestyle at that point.

Researcher: Has the app changed your understanding or approach to mental health?

Interviewed B: Yes, I never thought about the importance of taking literally one minute to breathe. Like to really breathe, as I was telling you, it was connected with the Apple Watch. So when it was time to breathe, you had like a system in the Apple Watch that helped you to breathe and do breathing exercises. I think nobody ever told me, the breathing part was so important. I started learning those things with the app. So right now, of course, I can do it by myself, but it was nice to learn through the app this important thing that could be part of our daily days.

Researcher: What features of the app, do you find most useful for supporting your mental health? For example, you told me about the breathing part, right? But maybe it was something about meditation, therapy, of community aspects, like you could say you find useful?

Interviewed B: I found many features really useful. I would say the breathing, the notifications of journaling. Also in the app, you had some meditations. You can choose between five and 25 minutes. It had some, audio/beats that you can play when you have trouble falling asleep, as well as meditation audios and videos. I really liked the app because it offered yoga, but sometimes the instructions were in text form. I was hoping it would include videos or pictures instead, so I could follow along more easily in the morning. Reading the instructions took time—about 15 minutes of reading plus another 15 minutes of

practice, which added up to 30 minutes that I often didn't have. However, I did use it for yoga poses to relax and stretch.

Researcher: That's really nice! It seems that had many features that you enjoyed! Are there any features that you feel are missing or could be improved in the app?

Interviewed B: Regarding the yoga, I would have preferred having pictures of the poses rather than just text instructions. As for the sleep audios, I enjoyed the content initially and listened to all five in the first week. However, I quickly grew bored because they were the same five audios, and no new content was added.

Researcher: Make sense, that when apps don't add new content, mostly 99% of the people will get bored and will go looking for other apps. In the fourth section, we're going to talk about the impact and the social influence. Have societal factors like mental health awareness movements or media coverage influence your decision to use mental health apps?

Interviewed B: Yes, societal factors like mental health awareness movements and media coverage have definitely influenced my decision to use mental health apps. When you see people, whether they're friends, influencers, or even celebrities, openly discussing and using these apps, it helps to normalize the idea of focusing on mental well-being, especially for people around my age or slightly older. I tend to follow individuals who prioritize mental health because it's something I value as well. When they share their experiences with different apps—whether it's for mindfulness or other forms of self-care—it sparks my curiosity. I believe that trying these apps is the only way to truly know what works for you. Since social media plays such a big role in our lives today, it's also a major way we discover new tools and resources. Ultimately, we each make our own choices about what paths to take, but these shared experiences definitely influence my decisions.

Researcher: I agree, nowadays, in our daily life we use social media and in my case, I also like to hear first recommendations of other people, in other to download an app. And, how do you think apps like this fit into the broader conversation and mental health and wellness in Generation Z?

Interviewer B: I think that this kind of app helps, like we do not always have the money or the time to go to therapy, for example. So this is like some exercises that we should all do in our daily lives. So, I would say is very helpful, and in Generation Z, it's not a taboo to talk about wellness. Any kind of wellness, like mental and physical wellness. When we have conversations with friends or even people that you don't know, sometimes it's just normal to say, like "I'm having trouble sleeping" and somebody just can come to tell you "Oh, I've listened to this kind of music, or I have this app, or maybe you can read, or I've learned this or that". So it's easier for us, like this is very open to talk about that.

Researcher: True. Because in the time of our parents, nobody was talking about mental health. They didn't want to talk about it because you were going to be considered as a "crazy person", because they had this kind of thoughts and nowadays we can see how important is to prioritize our mental health.

Interviewed B: I think, our generation is the one that wants to go to therapy and wants to heal a lot of things that probably our parents could not because of their context. So it's totally normal to talk about that for Gen Z.

Researcher: And then with the last section, we're going to talk about future engagement and sustainability. So do you see yourself using this app in a long, long term? I mean, you already said that you stop using it, right?

Interviewed B: Yes, I laready stopped using the app. Actually, I may download a new one if you want to give me a recommendation.

Researcher: Yes, of course! I will be happy to suggest you an excellent app! I will give you more details in the last section of our interview. How was your experience with the app influence your broader approach to mental health?

Interviewed B: Well, I enjoyed the app at that point. It was very useful. I was very stressed at work, my boss was in the situation, so we were all in the same page. It helped me a lot with de-stress and now I'm not using the app anymore, but I already know the tools. So I know that I have to journal. Maybe I'm not journaling every day, but I try to do it at least every week, or every 15 days. When I'm too stressed, I will definitely do the breathing exercises. I enjoyed using the app because it was useful information and tools.

Researcher: Now we're going to talk about this specific app that you probably might heard about it. Have you heard about "Headspace"?

Interviewed B: Yes, I have. Are they the ones that have this program on Netflix?

Researcher: Yes, they do. Also, they have multiple channels, like Spotify, they have podcasts, interesting content in TikTok, Instagram and all the social media. Could you say, you can trust this app? I know you haven't used it yet, right? But like, so far you have seen, the content that they have, right?

Interviewed B: Yeah, of course. Actually, I've done it, I was thinking about it and looking for it. And I've done some of the Netflix episodes. You know, when I just want to watch the TV and do something for my brain and relax. I've watched some of my episodes and I loved it. I didn't know they had an app.

Researcher: Yes, it's an app that have multiple features and channels. If you only look at the content, would you trust the brand? If we talk about only the content that they have in their social media.

Interviewed B: I'm looking now at their content and they have a lot of followers. First of all, I think that in our generation we can get very influenced by how many followers it has. I really like their post, because they are giving you pieces of advice, and tools and again, I love tools.

Researcher: How important it's for you that the content is authentic?

Interviewed B: It's very important to me because it makes the brand stand out. When a brand has unique features and a distinct value proposition, it becomes more appealing. You're drawn to it specifically because it offers something extra, that added value that sets it apart from other options.

Researcher: When you look at the content that the app produces, what it makes you feel?

Interviewed B: What I like most is how the faces are very relaxed, which gives off a sense of calm and balance. The design feels almost geometric in the way it's presented. I also appreciate the colors and the way the words, like 'balanced' or the happy expressions, align with that feeling of harmony. It keeps me engaged and makes me want to keep scrolling to see more. The vibrant colors and variety of messages make the content feel dynamic and interesting, so I'm always curious to see what else they have.

Researcher: If you find that their content, let's say, is not authentic. Will you stop using this app?

Interviewed B: Authenticity isn't really my top priority when choosing an app. I'm more focused on whether it feels different and if I like what it offers. For example, if it has the tools I need and is useful, I'll stick with it. However, if an app stands out as unique or authentic, that definitely sparks my interest and makes me more likely to give it a try.

Researcher: Make sense, you want something new, and also that captures your attention. So authenticity is not essential for you when we are talking about apps. The most important for you would be the tools. So, we have finished our interview as I said at the beginning, thank you so much again for your time and for your help in this research. It's really important to me, and I hope you enjoyed this interview. All the information that you provided to me is going to be really helpful for my research. If you have any questions or something, just let me know.

Interviewed C

Researcher: Good morning! Thank you so much for your help in my research, for my dissertation of my master's degree. I really appreciate your time and your help. So I divided or interviewed in five sections, if you don't feel comfortable answering on question you can tell me, that you would like to skip for the next one. As you know, the title of my dissertation "Content marketing in the digital age, analyzing the role of quality wellness content in building brand trust among Gen Z." In the first section, we're going to talk about understanding the app usage and the introduction to wellness apps. Okay, so let's start!! Do you use, or have you use a wellness app?

Interviewed C: As a clinical psychologist, I often seek out apps and resources to support my patients. I look for materials that can help create a more comfortable and welcoming space for them, as well as tools that provide relaxation and mindfulness techniques. Additionally, I need resources that offer insights into how they can practice these methods effectively.

Researcher: I love the idea that you also use these apps to help your patients and create for them a space that feels more save. Could you please give me the names of the apps that you have used?

Interviewed C: I've used an app called 'Calm,' which offers helpful data and quick relaxation exercises. These short, time-efficient practices have been beneficial during

therapy sessions, allowing me to incorporate them into the therapeutic space. I also use them as part of my decision-making process, complementing the treatment plan I've already developed with my patient.

Researcher: Interesting and can you share how you first came across this app? Like, as you said, you use this kind of app more for your patients, when you have all the sessions. But do you think is another reason why you started using this? Or you will say only because of your career?

Interviewed C: During the COVID lockdown, when we were confined to our rooms, I experienced a significant increase in anxiety. I had many symptoms and realized I needed tools to help me manage it more effectively. I began exploring soothing sounds on Spotify and searching for apps on my phone that could help. That's how I discovered this app, which I started using to better cope with my anxiety.

Researcher: Definitely, COVID times were a difficult moment for everyone and there is a lot of people around the world that during this lockdown got anxiety. But then, why did you choose this app over others?

Interviewed C: Initially, I found the app very easy to use. Another aspect I appreciated is that it offers some exercises without requiring a subscription, allowing me to access helpful tools for free. While other apps may have more advanced features behind a paywall, the free exercises here were sufficient for managing my anxiety

Researcher: So let's say that, instead of paying for more features in other apps, 'Calm', helped you a lot and you prefer this one because you don't have to pay anything extra. Perfect! How do you feel this app positions itself in the market?

Interviewed C: I believe there are other apps with a stronger market presence. However, this app has solid advertising. Apps like 'Headspace,' for instance, are well-positioned in the market because they attract a larger audience through social media, which plays a significant role in visibility. For example, I discovered 'Headspace' on Instagram, where its use of short, catchy phrases and bright colors drew me in. This kind of approach could help apps gain better traction in the community. Although the 'Calm' app does have an Instagram page, its advertising seems less prominent.

Researcher: So you will say that when you downloaded 'Calm', gave you good features and it was a plus that you didn't need to pay and also the content helped you. But if we talk about the social media of 'Calm' and 'Headspace', the content that Headspace adds on their social media, captures more of your attention, right?

Interviewed C: Yes, they use shorter sentences and I feel Headspace creates a big impact. I think that when I learn short sentences, makes me feel more identified.

Researcher: You feel more connected when you come across these short, impactful phrases, right? Given how busy you are with your patients each day, these brief, concise messages seem like the best option for you. We're going to go next with the second section and we're going to talk about the personal importance of mental health and wellness. So what role does mental health and wellness play in your life currently?

Interviewed C: I find it essential to maintain balance in my life, especially with the demands of my career. My schedule is often packed with back-to-back patient sessions, making it hard to find time for self-care or even to take a breather. On particularly long days, I try to take just 10 minutes to ground myself in the present because it's challenging to constantly manage so many lives. My career can feel isolating at times, so it's important for me to reconnect with myself. That's why I make it a priority to spend 5 to 10 minutes in the morning and evening using apps that help me feel centered. These moments allow me to reconnect with my thoughts, feelings, and personal interests. It's not only vital for my career but also for

managing the anxiety symptoms I've mentioned. I need activities that help me reconnect with myself and the world around me.

Researcher: And I imagine it also helps you manage your anxiety, right? As you mentioned, with your career involving so many patients and absorbing all the information they share, it can become overwhelming. That's why taking these breaks is so important for you because you need to disconnect and have this moment for you.

Interviewed C: Exactly, and if I don't take care of myself, I can't do my work effectively. Creating this space for myself is absolutely essential.

Researcher: What specific mental health or wellness goals are you hoping to achieve through this app?

Interviewed C: I think that to deal better with my anxiety and stress. I believe the best way to manage anxiety and stress is through tools like exercise, relaxation, or meditation. These practices are also highly effective in helping many of my patients stay grounded in the present. In many cases, people who use these apps are likely dealing with anxiety or stress-related disorders.

Researcher: So now we're going to pass with the third section, which is about the user experience with the app. Will you say that you can trust in this app?

Interviewed C: Yes, honestly, I use the app on certain days, and I also incorporate Spotify, which has a wide range of podcasts and exercises related to mindfulness. I find it helpful to combine both tools. What really attracts me to this app is its ease of use, as I've mentioned before. It offers both free and paid activities, but even the free exercises are quite beneficial. These include relaxation exercises like nature sounds, animal sounds, and ambient sounds such as ocean waves or air. The app also features guided meditations that often incorporate

imaginative techniques. During these exercises, you can listen to a guide that helps you visualize places and engage in activities that center around the goal of being present. In addition to the meditation and relaxation exercises, the app offers breathing exercises at different intervals—like the 4-7-8 technique or timed breathing exercises. You can also find short stories designed to engage your imagination, which you can listen to for relaxation.

Researcher: Is incredible that one app can provide you with all these tools in your daily life! And what do you think could make you lose trust in this app?

Interviewed C: I would say the exercises are very good, but there's a limit to how much you can try before needing to pay. I think that many people in the general community may not always have the resources to afford it. So, while it's great for those who can pay, it can be limiting for others. For example, when I recommend the app to my patients, I usually suggest they try it for just one day to see if it works for them.

Researcher: Okay, so let's say that you would not trust in the app when you have to pay for extra features right?

Interviewed C: I think the limitation is an issue for most people because they need to find useful tools. However, at the same time, people are less likely to seek out apps that offer limited features. The idea of downloading an app, learning how to use it, and then hitting a paywall may discourage some people from even trying.

Researcher: Has the app changed your understanding or approach to mental health? For example, you mentioned something about this, like how 'Calm' had helped you to understand and control your anxiety and also that of your patients, right? Can you give an example of something you have learned or how your behavior has shifted?

Interviewed C: In my professional or my personal life?

Researcher: Hmm, the one you think that has helped you the most?

Interviewed C: As I mentioned earlier, I'm a clinical psychologist, and I work closely with people on understanding and processing their emotions. My approach is very humanistic, and for this, I use many exercises within this framework, particularly those that focus on reprocessing trauma, difficult moments, or grief. In the therapy space, imagination-based exercises are incredibly useful for these specific issues. For example, I guide patients through breathing exercises to bring them into the moment and help them reprocess their emotions. This allows them to experience the intensity of their feelings in a way they weren't able to before, ultimately helping them connect with the present. I believe if these apps included more exercises focused on improving these techniques—like guided breathing and imaginative exercises—it would be incredibly beneficial. Before diving into imagination work with patients, I always begin with breathing exercises, then gradually move into imaginative exercises to help them reconnect with unresolved emotions.

Researcher: Are there any features that you feel are missing or could be improved in the app? or you think they have enough because when you explain it to me a bit before, like, this exercise that they have, like all these options, it sounds like, of course, they have, like, good things to provide, right?

Interviewed C: Maybe having longer exercises would be helpful. For example, when I have trouble sleeping, I ask Alexa to play nature sounds, and I let them run all night. In this app, while it's great that most people prefer shorter exercises—which are really useful—it can be limiting for those who need longer durations. The app does offer longer exercises, like up to an hour, but in my case, I sometimes prefer sounds that play all night, and I think this could be really beneficial for others as well.

Researcher: Okay, so extra time in the meditations or in the sounds, right? And then for the fourth section, we're going to talk about the impact and social influence. Have societal factors like mental health awareness movements or media coverage influenced your decision

to use mental health apps? Like, did you feel that they're more inclined to prioritize your mental health because of public resources?

Interviewed C: Yes, absolutely. I think social media gained a lot of positive influence after COVID, especially in the mental health field. Many professionals now offer their services through platforms like Instagram. For example, during the pandemic, when I was experiencing a lot of anxiety symptoms, I started looking for apps to help reduce them. I first came across a post that a friend had reposted on Instagram, which led me to follow the page. It was for Headspace, and as I explored more posts, I was drawn to the short, impactful sentences. Later, I did more research on Google and discovered that guided meditation was available on Netflix, along with various relaxation exercises. That's when I learned Headspace also had an app, which I downloaded. So yes, things like friend reposts and ads I saw in other apps influenced me. After downloading Headspace, I became more interested in exploring other apps, like Calm, which I found through ads on TikTok.

Researcher: And how do you think apps like this feed into the broader conversation on mental health and Wellness in Generation Z?

Interviewed C: I think mental health is still gaining traction, especially in Ecuador, but among the current generation, more and more people are going to therapy. This is making it easier and more common to talk about these topics. I feel that apps related to mental health, which appeal to a wide range of generations, could be a great way to promote self-care and highlight the importance of mental well-being. These apps provide easy access to help people manage their mental health needs or symptoms, such as anxiety, especially for those who can't afford therapy. Right now, I believe this could be an important topic of conversation, as people discuss how these apps can support their mental health needs.

Researcher: Now, for the fifth section, we're going to talk about future engagement and sustainability. Do you see yourself using this app long-term?

Interviewed C: I think the app should stay updated with current conversations in the field, especially since psychology and mental health are constantly evolving with new research and insights. It's important for these apps to stay aligned with the latest developments. If the app continues to offer fresh content, new areas of focus, and updated exercises, I would definitely keep using it.

Researcher: How has your experience with the app influenced your overall approach to mental health? Have you adopted other practices as a result? You mentioned using these apps regularly, either daily or at least weekly, especially after seeing patients to make time for yourself. Do you feel that since you started using the app, it has helped improve your breathing techniques or your ability to manage anxiety? Would you say the app has been effective enough in supporting you with these challenges?

Interviewed C: I think it's important to distinguish between people who have anxiety disorders and those who experience occasional symptoms or are simply seeking self-care. For people looking for daily self-care, these exercises are very useful, and they can also help those dealing with stress. However, for individuals with anxiety disorders or other mental health conditions, while the exercises can be helpful, they should ideally be used alongside therapy. In my personal experience, I find the breathing exercises particularly beneficial. They not only reduce the intensity of anxiety but also help bring me back to the present. When we're in an anxious state, negative thoughts can pull us into the future or make us catastrophize scenarios. Breathing exercises allow us to return to the present moment and lower anxiety. I think the exercises offered by these apps are great for that—they help you stay grounded and, in turn, enjoy your surroundings more, whether it's time with family, your work, or hobbies, because they keep you focused on the here and now.

Researcher: Yes, totally agree. In our last section, we're going to talk about the app 'Headspace.' You told me that you have heard and also you have used this one, right? Would you say you can trust this app?

Interviewed C: Yes, I had used the app. I think that I can trust the app because it has these very helpful tools and good content.

Researcher: When you look at the content of 'Headspace,' how do you feel? Like, what makes you feel?

Interviewed C: Hmm, I think the short, advice-like sentences used in the app help foster a sense of understanding, as they focus on being present. It makes me feel like if you're overwhelmed with thoughts, the message is to slow down and enjoy the moment, like being in nature or appreciating your surroundings. So, in a way, the app creates a feeling of being understood, secure, and supported.

Researcher: And how important it's for you that the content is authentic?

Interviewed C: It's very important because nowadays there are so many mental health resources available, but what initially attracted me to this page was the use of colors. For example, yellow can evoke a sense of calm, and they also use green and orange, which are very eye-catching. Occasionally, they use blue as well, but I think yellow, green, and orange are the most attractive. You see them, and they immediately capture your attention.

Researcher: Same for me, those colors also capture my attention! So yeah, definitely you will say the content that they have is authentic, right? Because of the colors, short phrases and everything correct? If you find that their content is not authentic, will you stop using the app?

Interviewed C: Hmm, maybe. I discovered the app through Instagram, and I think that can be a limitation in keeping me engaged long-term. The Instagram profile is the first impression you get, so it plays a big role in drawing you in and has to be authentic.

Researcher: Okay, perfect. So we have finished with the interview, thank you so much Cami for your help. I know I can get important insights from this interview.

Interviewed D

Researcher: Good afternoon, thank you so much for being here and for helping me with my research for my master's degree dissertation. I truly appreciate your time. As you know, the title of my dissertation is 'Content Marketing in the Digital Age: Analyzing the Role of Quality Wellness Content in Building Brand Trust Among Gen Z.' I've divided this interview into five sections. Please feel free to skip any questions you're not comfortable answering, and we can move on to the next one. So let's start! Do you use or have you used a wellness app?

Interviewed D: Um yes I have. I've used like MyFitnessPal in the past and also um another food tracking app that I forgot the name of. I don't really know if those qualify as Wellness Apps though. I've also used um a meditation app called Stop, Breath, and Think.

Researcher: Can you share how you first came across this app?

Interviewed D: I think with all of these I have found them just through searching through the Apple app store. I don't think I've heard much else about wellness apps outside of that.

Researcher: What motivated you to download and start using this particular app? Was it a specific event or ongoing concerns about mental health/wellness?

Interviewed D: Um yeah. For the food tracking apps I've used I was trying to lose weight when I was super young um. I like wouldn't use them again through, it just gets so overwhelmingly. Also um like for the meditation, I am just a very like anxious and easily stressed person and um I thought it would help.

Researcher: Why did you choose this app over others?

Interviewed D: Um definitely more spontaneous. I think they were all just like free. Especially with like Stop, Breathe, and Think. It was like one of the only free meditation apps.

Researcher: How do you feel this app positions itself in the market?

Interviewed D: I feel like it's more therapy-oriented. Um yeah. But I guess it's hard to say.

Researcher: Okay, so in the section 2, we're going to talk about the personal importance of mental health and wellness. So, what role does mental health and wellness play in your life currently?

Interviewed D: Um like I think mental health and wellness is super super important to me. I am someone who like is very anxious. If I tend to neglect it, I feel like I go down hill fast. Um. it's definitely like changed overtime for sure. I think like when I was younger I assumed my mental health would just get better with age and obviously I was proved wrong. I know now that it takes a lot of like effort for sure.

Researcher: What specific mental health/wellness goals are you hoping to achieve through this app?

Interviewed D: I am actually totally not using any apps right now. Stop, Breathe, and Think definitely stopped offering so much for free so it wasn't worth it to me. I am also just super bad at being keeping up with things.

Researcher: Why was it important for you to prioritize mental health and wellness in your life at this moment?

Interviewed D: Um I think it's just getting older and internal pressures. I feel like I put a lot of pressure on myself and it gets really overwhelming especially as I get older and feel like I have to accomplish so much more.

Researcher: How do you feel the app supports your mental health/wellness journey?

Interviewed D: Like I said, I don't really use it anymore. But when I did I really liked it. Um it's nice to like take time to just turn your brain off. There's always so much going on in all of our lives now, I think we never like take time to be just with ourselves.

Researcher: Now we are going to pass to the third section and we are going to talk about the user experience with the App (Content and Education). Would you say that you can trust in the app?

Interviewed D: Yeah for sure. I don't really think about that stuff much anyway.

Researcher: What could you make you lose trust in the app?

Interviewed D: I guess the decrease in free content kind of hurt my trust though. It used to have so many free meditations and the last time I went on it those options were super limited.

Researcher: What features of the app do you find most useful for supporting your mental health/wellness? Do you use the app's meditation, therapy, community aspects, etc.?

Interviewed D: Yeah, definitely the meditation. But I think that's the only part of it really.

Researcher: Umm has the app changed your understanding or approach to mental health?

Interviewed D: I guess just kind of being able to try to calm myself down and divert my negative thoughts. I guess.

Researcher: Are there any features that you feel are missing or could be improved in the app?

Interviewed D: Not particularly. It would be nice to have more meditations for free or maybe just running ads or something.

Researcher: Agree. The fourth section is about the impact and social influence. Have societal factors like mental health awareness movements or media coverage influenced your decision to use mental health apps? Did you feel more inclined to prioritize your mental health because of public discourse?

Interviewed D: No, I do not think so. I've been in therapy for like 10 years so I don't think much changed my mind.

Researcher: How do you think apps like this fit into the broader conversation on mental health and wellness in your generation (Gen Z)? Do you feel they empower or sometimes hinder genuine mental health progress?

Interviewed D: I think they can be super helpful because it helps to like have affordable options as opposed to like therapy which is super expensive. I think maybe like the ability

to have something so easy to use is also super nice, especially for young people too. We're always on our phones, so it's cool to have wellness there where you already are.

Researcher: Absolutely! Now we are going to pass to the fifth section, which is about future engagement and sustainability. Do you see yourself using this app long-term? Why or why not?

Interviewed D: No, not really at all. I should probably, but I forget things a lot and also I got bored of the same meditations over and over again.

Researcher: How has your experience with the app influenced your broader approach to mental health?

Interviewed D: I have tried to incorporate meditation practices in my daily life in a way. I like to talk walks and I try to sit with my thoughts a bit more.

Researcher: Would you recommend this app to others? Why or why not?

Interviewed D: I would if someone was interested in meditation. It's cool that it's free. But, for long term use I don't know.

Researcher: In our last section, we're going to talk about a wellness app called 'Headspace', have you heard about the app?

Interviewed D: Yes, I have.

Researcher: Would you say that you can trust in the app? Why and why not?

Interviewed D: Yeah I think so. I have heard about it on a lot of podcasts and stuff and it seems pretty legitimate. But I don't know, because I've never really tried it.

Researcher: When you look at the content that the app produces how do you feel?

Interviewed D: I feel kind of like comforted I guess. It's cute stuff honestly.

Researcher: If you only look at the content, will you trust the brand?

Interviewed D: Yeah I think so. The content is comfortable and it's nice. I also think that like it seems trustworthy.

Researcher: How important it's for you that content is authentic?

Interviewed D: I don't really care. I know every brand is just doing what they have to do to sell their product. I mean like it's um branding.

Researcher: Do you believe that the content that the app posts is authentic? Why and why not?

Interviewed D: I guess. Like I said I feel like there are no real authentic companies. But, as far as authenticity goes I think Headspace seems pretty good. I imagine the person who opened up the company does care about what they do and that hopefully trickles down to marketing.

Researcher: If you find that their content is not authentic, will you stop using the app?

Interviewed D: No no um, if I like the app then I will keep using it. Authenticity in brands doesn't really matter too much in my opinion.

Interviewed E

Researcher: Good afternoon, thank you so much for being here and for helping me with my research for my master's degree dissertation. I truly appreciate your time. As you know, the title of my dissertation is *'Content Marketing in the Digital Age: Analyzing the Role of Quality Wellness Content in Building Brand Trust Among Gen Z.'* I've divided this interview into five sections. Please feel free to skip any questions you're not comfortable answering, and we can move on to the next one. So the first question will be, do you use, or have you used wellness apps?

Interviewed E: Yes, I've used the wellness apps. The app that I used the most is called 'Calm' and the other one is called 'Nike Training app.'

Researcher: Can you share how you first came across these apps?

Interviewed E: So for 'Calm', it was based on our recommendation, because I have a friend that used this, and she told me that it will be helpful for me since I have sleeping problems because of anxiety. She suggested me to use 'Calm', while the other one is the Nike Training app and I came across on Instagram. I started using it when it was the pandemic (COVID) and we couldn't go to the gyms and that's why I downloaded it.

Researcher: What motivated you to download or start using this particular app? I mean, as you said, of course, was after COVID right? You follow these recommendations of your friends. But like, apart from this, would you say a specific event happened, or something, concerns about mental health and wellness?

Interviewed E: I think it was all related to the COVID pandemic because I started having anxiety during these periods. It was really difficult for me, for example, to go to sleep. I had to take some pills that would help me to go to sleep and also my mom was taking them. So instead of doing it, I started to go for the app and I downloaded it ‘Calm’, it's enough for meditation or it helps you to breathe and to understand how to grow in a mindful way to sleep. While the Nike Training app, it was because I needed to kind of detach from what was happening at that moment and I needed to work out because it was the only way that helped me to focus on something else and not on my anxiety. So that's why I decided to download these too.

Researcher: Agree, COVID times were difficult moments to everyone. So, it was good that right now, with all the technology we can find these apps that help a lot in our daily lives. And then, why did you choose this app over others? As you mentioned before, was because of a recommendation. But maybe before you download these apps, did you check in other options?

Interviewed E: I was looking for an app that focused on two main areas—training and sleep problems—and ‘Calm’ offers activities that address both. I think that’s why I was drawn to it, along with the promotion they do on Instagram. The content they shared felt right for me and aligned with the type of workout I was looking for. With Nike, it was mainly the good workouts that they have.

Researcher: How do you feel this app positions itself in the market?

Interviewed E: I think ‘Calm’ will be more related to the therapy part of the market. So let's say because it's mindfulness, it helps you to meditate and it's more related to therapy. While ‘Nike Training app’, it's more related to working out and well-being in general, but mostly like the upper body. So yeah, that's the difference pretty much.

Researcher: Perfect! We're going to continue with the second section, here we're going to talk about the personal importance of mental health and wellness. What role does mental health and wellness play in your life currently?

Interviewed E: Well, it has a big role in my life, because I started noticing that's when I'm not feeling good. Like, in terms of mental, we can have like, really bad consequences on my life. In particular, as I said, I suffer a lot from anxiety, and sometimes suffering from that can kind of ruin some parts of your work-life balance also, you can bring your problems at work, and you can bring your problems in your social life. So I think it's really important to take care of it, because it can create a lot of consequences in your life, and it's something that you need to work on. So yeah, it has a significant role for me.

Researcher: What specific mental health or wellness goals are you hoping to achieve through this app?

Interviewed E: As I mentioned, the main issue I'm dealing with right now is anxiety. My goal is to learn how to manage it in a healthy way, how to relax, and avoid focusing on certain comments or situations in my life that tend to trigger or worsen my anxiety. So, my goals are twofold: first, to use breathing exercises to help manage panic attacks, and second, to focus on meditation and breathing techniques, as those are the practices that interest me the most.

Researcher: Ok, so let's say these apps have been helping you the most in this process. How do you feel the app supports your mental health wellness journey?

Interviewed E: Yeah, because first of all, you learn a lot about what you have in terms of mental health, like because it's something that not everyone talks about us in school now, at least where I live they don't deal with mental health and I think that's part of the problem. The reason why a lot of people don't go to therapy or don't use this app is because they don't

know what they have. So for sure, if this helps, will help you to have the knowledge that you need to deal with your problems and understand them better, and then understand which are the things that you can do to reduce them and to improve your mental health as well.

Researcher: Yeah, totally agree. For the third section, we're going to talk about the user experience with the app in terms of content and location. Would you say that you can trust the app?

Interviewed E: Yeah, for sure, because I trust that it's made by professionals that have the knowledge and experience to deal with the current problems, otherwise they will not put anything platforms on the market, so I trust.

Researcher: What do you think that could make you lose trust in the app?

Interviewed E: Well, I could lose trust in the app if I discover that they have not been truthful about what they were saying, like related to the content that they share. For example, in the app of 'Calm' if they share fake news or like suggestions/recommendations, that are not completely truthful, then that will immediately remove the app.

Researcher: What features of the app do you find most useful for supporting your mental health wellness? Like, as you said most are for meditation, right? That you use the most because it helps you with anxiety. But then you could say another feature specific? Or you will keep only the meditation in this case?

Interviewed E: I mean, there are a lot that I use, so I will say, the meditation, for sure, the breathing exercises, the sleep techniques, and also the workouts that they create based on the goals that you have. I think it's a really good feature, so you can define the goals and they will give you some exercises and workouts that will help you to reach those goals and I think that's really important.

Researcher: Has the app changed your understanding or approach to mental health?

Interviewed E: Yeah, that's for sure, because I have to say that at the beginning, I didn't know about mental health, and this app gives you all the information that you need to know more about skills. So let's say it completely changed my view on mental health, and I started to understand how important this is in our life.

Researcher: Of course! Can you give an example of something that you have learned or how your behavior has shifted?

Interviewed E: I would say I've started to understand how to take better care of myself, giving priority to how I feel rather than always focusing on how others feel around me. I'm not sure if that makes sense, but I've realized it's important to think about myself too. This has changed over time because, in the past, I didn't approach things this way.

Researcher: Are there any features that you feel are missing in this app?

Interviewed E: Umm, I don't think. I'm pretty satisfied with all the features that I have used until now. So, I will not give any recommendations for now. I think it's a pretty good app and has a lot of ideas and features.

Researcher: Now the fourth section, is about the impact and social influence. So have societal factors like mental health and awareness movements or media coverage influenced your decision to use a mental health app?

Interviewed E: Definitely. Mental health is becoming a much bigger focus worldwide, which wasn't the case in the past. Now, for example, on Instagram, there are influencers talking about mental health and encouraging people to take care of it. They try to provide

the support you need to manage it. So yes, especially on social media, you can share more about these issues and feel understood.

Researcher: Totally, nowadays social media is an important part of our lives. How do you think apps like this fit into the broader conversation on mental health and wellness in Generation Z?

Interviewed E: Well, I think Generation Z is a generation where wellness can be openly discussed. Compared to my grandmother's or parents' generation, wellness wasn't even part of their lives—it's something they never really experienced or understood, mainly because they didn't have access to this kind of knowledge. In our generation, these platforms are essential because we are more aware of what's happening in our minds and the challenges we face. I believe these platforms are helpful for dealing with those kinds of situations.

Researcher: The fifth section, is about the future and engagement in sustainability. Do you see yourself using this app for a long term?

Interviewed E: Yeah, definitely. Eventually, I believe I'll be able to handle these kinds of problems on my own. But I think the app is important as a starting point—to learn about anxiety, understand how to manage it, and then, over time, rely more on myself rather than the app.

Researcher: Totally, it's always helpful to have the app as a backup for guidance. Sometimes we're managing so many things, like university and work, and we can't control everything. So it's really good to have something like this to guide you along the way. And then, how was your experience with the app influence your broader approach to mental health?

Interviewed E: As I mentioned, the app really sparked my curiosity about my mental health and helped me recognize the kinds of issues I was facing. These platforms definitely gave me the knowledge I needed to first realize I had a problem and then start addressing it

Researcher: Do you think that after using this app, you've adopted any additional practices? For instance, therapy, physical exercise, or other routines outside of the app? Are these now part of your daily routine?

Interviewed E: Umm, outside of the app, the only additional practice I've adopted is physical exercise, like workouts or going to the gym, which helps clear my mind. I haven't started therapy outside of the app yet, though I would love to. Unfortunately, I don't have the financial means at the moment. I believe therapy is important, but for now, I'm relying on these apps. At some point, I plan to consider therapy and work with a professional when my situation allows.

Researcher: Would you recommend this app to others?

Interviewed E: Yeah, absolutely. Many of my friends are dealing with similar issues, like anxiety or sleep problems, especially after COVID. It seems quite common in these situations. So yes, I would definitely recommend the app to them.

Researcher: Noted! Now we're going to start with a section of 'Headspace', which is also a wellness app, I don't know if you have heard about it?

Interviewed E: Yes, some friends use this app. I have heard about it and also I recently downloaded it.

Researcher: Perfect! Would you say that you can trust in this app?

Interviewed E: Yeah, definitely. If you look at their social media accounts or other platforms, the content seems very credible and appears to be created by experienced professionals. I trust it for that reason, and it also depends on how people use it, which makes me more inclined to rely on the app.

Researcher: And when you look at the content that the app produces on their social media, how do you feel? What makes you feel?

Interviewed E: I find it really helpful. It makes me feel that I can rely on them because they share a lot of content with mindfulness and meditation tips. You can apply these suggestions from Instagram to your own life. Overall, it feels like a safe space, a reliable platform.

Researcher: How important is it for you that the content is authentic?

Interviewed E: It's really important, especially when it comes to mental health. The content needs to be authentic because you're dealing with people's minds. If the information or recommendations are not truthful or are misleading, it can have negative consequences and potentially harm individuals. Authenticity is crucial in preventing such damage.

Researcher: Yeah, totally. Do you believe that the content that 'Headspace' produces is authentic?

Interviewed E: Yes, as I mentioned, it feels like a safe place to turn to. I find the suggestions and recommendations they provide to be very authentic, and since they are from verified professionals, I trust them.

Researcher: The other question would be, if you find that their content is not authentic, will you stop using the app?

Interviewed E: Absolutely. Dealing with mental health requires a sense of safety and trust. If I find that the app isn't reliable or trustworthy, it could have a negative impact on my well-being, and I would stop using it immediately.

Researcher: We have finished our meeting. Thank you so much for all the information that you provided to me! I appreciate it!

Interviewed F

Researcher: Hi, Giada. Thank you so much for your help with research for my master's degree. I really appreciate your time and your help in this dissertation. So it's okay if I record this video call, right?

Interviewed F: Yes.

Researcher: Okay, perfect, thank you. So how it's gonna be this interview going: I divided it into five sections. Okay, so if you don't feel comfortable like answering one of the following questions, you can tell me that you would like to skip to the next one, and it's all good. So as you know, the title for my dissertation is Content Marketing in the digital age, analyzing the role of quality, wellness content in building trust among Gen Z. All right, let's start. For the first section. We're going to talk about the understanding of the app and your usage of wellness apps. So, do you use, or have you used wellness apps?

Interviewed F: Yes, I have used wellness apps.

Researcher: Could you please tell me which apps you have used?

Interviewed F: It was a yoga one, now I don't remember the name exactly, but I will check it.

Researcher: And can you share how you first came across this app?

Interviewed F: So I wanted to practice yoga, and I wanted a cheap way to do it. So I went on like I thought maybe there's going to be an app that can teach me how to and there actually was. But there was a little amount of free things you could do, and then you had to pay, and I did not want to pay.

Researcher: Right, because they start charging for some extra features, let's say?

Interviewed F: Correct.

Researcher: Okay. And what motivated you to download and start using this particular app?

Interviewed F: I think it was the interface, the way it presented itself in the app store. It looks professional. And I don't know about everything that makes up the iPhone interface, but it makes it look more professional to me. So if it has features of the iPhone, it makes it look like, okay, I can trust this app.

Researcher: Totally agree, I can trust, definitely going to learn this and everything. Yeah, it makes sense. And why did you choose this app over others? I mean, as you said at the beginning, of course, you wanted to learn to do yoga, right? And you didn't want to pay. Was there maybe another reason?

Interviewed F: I think also, I read some reviews, not too many, but I read the first, like, three reviews, and they were good. So nobody was complaining in the reviews. It was looking good. I did not do too much research. I just looked at the first two apps, two / three apps, and the other one looked like they were not done properly, so yeah, I chose this one.

Researcher: And probably this one also had better reviews. So you were like, okay I will trust in this one.

Interviewed F: Yes, it was one of the firsts ones that came up when I searched for yoga.

Researcher: And how do you feel this app positions itself in the market?

Interviewed F: I think it was mostly the structure. I can look for the app in the app store, if you want.

Researcher: Yes, that would be great. Take your time. No worries.

Interviewed F: It's called Dow Dog. I think it's great because he had, like, there is a human figure that's, of course, made with a real person that shows you how to do the poses. It is not like a cartoon or something that maybe is made with a computer. It was a real person.

Researcher: Oh, that's really good, actually, because for yoga, you literally need to do the correct movements and everything otherwise could be bad for your back. For the second section about the personal importance of mental health and wellness. So what role does mental health and wellness play in your life?

Interviewed F: Currently, it has quite a high position. This is one of my top priorities. I care. I care about my well being, basically, a lot.

Researcher: Okay, and how has it changed over the time? And what do you think has influenced that change?

Interviewed F: Well, first, when I started living alone, I didn't know how to take care of myself. So that was three years ago, three years and a half. And so I took the cheapest food, and I just didn't care at all. I just wanted to live my life outside of the house, the cheapest possible. I also, like, I was really mature in a mental way, so I didn't see what was surrounding meal problems. I didn't think so much about how I was, like, making relationships with people. And then I think you grow up. I think I just realized that you have to work on something. I do get to become a better person. And so I started also, like, mentally saying, Okay, it's time to work on what your life was and how you can get better. And with that, came onto the physical aspect, where I not only did I want to get my mind better, but also I never had any sports for five years, and that's just last year I went back to sports because I felt like I really wanted a change.

Researcher: Okay. And what specific mental health, wellness goals are you hoping for or did you achieve through this app?

Interviewed F: Not much to be honest, because, as I said, then the things became expensive on the apps, so I didn't want to pay. But whenever I felt like I wanted to do a basic training I could use the app, and then at one point, I learned those things, and I did just the same thing all over again. But honestly, I think it would be better to have a yoga teacher in front of you. The app is maybe just for integration, but we can better have a teacher for a full yoga workout.

Researcher: Right. And why was it important for you to prioritize your mental health and wellness in your life at this moment? Like, let's say, Are there any life experiences or social pressures, like, you know, it was a pandemic, and all of this has contributed, contributed, like, for you to be like...

Interviewed F: Yeah, I was kind of burnt out with my study progress and work progress. I was at a point where I had enough, and I really thought, like, I felt like I was stuck. So I thought, I have to act and do something to make this situation better. So of course, I went to

a trip where everybody was so into yoga and, like, really, speaking of healings and stuff and so, like, wow, this totally other thing compared to, like, used to in Milan, where everybody's just focused on work.

Researcher: Running all the time with time, yeah. And how do you feel the app supports your mental health and wellness journey? Do you think right now it provides you some tools or like, community support that you find, like, valuable?

Interviewed F: I think so, yes. I think if you use it correctly, yes, I could potentially, like, if you actually also spend the money, could be an investment. The fact is, I did not, I didn't spend money because, at the time, I felt, because it was maybe not well done, or I didn't like it, or I just couldn't. But I think it could be a good investment. I would always choose, if I have to choose to pay for something, I would always choose the physical license, not the app, but I think the app is much more advantageous in the price.

Researcher Yeah, makes sense. And then for the third section, we're going to talk about the user experience with the app, about the content and the education. So would you say that you can trust in that app?

Interviewed F: If I can trust the app for me?

Researcher: Yes.

Interviewed F: Yes, I think so. It was professional and it looked certified.

Researcher: Okay, and what do you think creates loads of trust in apps, wellness apps, let's say in this case?

Interviewed F: Its a lot about advertisements. It is a sign that they take care of the app. Not a lot of bots, maybe. When you're going through the pages that maybe it's just down to Android blocks,

Researcher: And what features of the app do you find most useful for supporting your wellness journey? Like, in this case, as you said, of course, was of meditation, but maybe you'd use another feature that has the app, like, I don't know, sometimes they have like, for breathing, for breaks, or you were just focusing, like, in the yoga?

Interviewed F: Yes, mostly just yoga and meditation.

Researcher: and has the app changed your understanding or approach to mental health?

Interviewed F: I searched the app when my mindset was already changed so, no.

Researcher: Okay, so let's say, Can you give an example of something you have learned from the app, or that your behavior has shifted?

Interviewed F: Maybe, I would say, being constant with it and doing it? It could help me for a while to do yoga at least like, three times a week because it was useful to the fact that you had the identification like, today, you haven't done any exercise today, you should do it.

Researcher: Yeah, sometimes we're living our lives, and we're like, okay, you just forget these reminders. And do you think there are any features that you feel were missing or could be improved in the app?

Interviewed F: Uhm, I think background music would be nice. I understand it's harder, but if they make more views for free. But also I understand, that's harder.

Researcher: Okay. So then for the fourth section, we're gonna talk about the impact and social influence. So have sig tied Well, factors like mental health awareness movements or media coverage influence your decision to use mental health apps?

Interviewed F: Yeah, definitely. I thought the apps I was gonna get a more wellness approach to myself. I said I was gonna be more motivated to do it. And at one point I even canceled all my apps on the iPad. And I decided to do the iPad just for wellness, just for wellness apps. So I downloaded a bunch, and then I forgot about it. Okay, I think this is a matter of your brain, and not really the app you're using, but like, the commitment was there, intention was there.

Researcher: Okay, and how do you think the app... I mean, how do you think apps like this feed into the broader conversation on mental health and wellness in generation Z?

Interviewed F: I think, since they approach something that's very relevant for us in a digital way, and we are used to apps, we're used to using apps so they're familiar with them, and they like the fact that you can have, like, sometimes we think of apps just like losing time social media or games on the phone, The fact that you could have actually a good outcome from using that app is an amazing thing.

Researcher: Sort of like, you could say, like, these apps, they like, empower, like, for generation Z right? Like, it's really helpful nowadays for this generation.

Interviewed F: Yes, exactly.

Researcher: And then section five is about the future engagement and sustainability. So do you see yourself using this app in the long term? Of course, you said that you stopped using it. But do you think like now probably you will consider it to download that app or another one that, let's say about wellness?

Interviewed F: Yes, I think so. Once I get back into routine more now that September is here, I could maybe potentially also download it again and see if I can afford it now or get some more use out of it.

Researcher: Yeah, okay. And what features or benefits will make you continue using these apps over time?

Interviewed F: If it stays consistent and has good updates, because otherwise, after a while, all the practices are the same and can get boring. So if they update that and maybe some new videos, maybe some challenges to be more motivated. Maybe they did it already, when I had the app they sometimes had a challenge.

Researcher: Okay, yeah, probably right now they have some new features that will impress you or something. And how was your experience with the app... how did it influence your broader approach to mental health? Have you adopted other practices, like physical exercise, you know, like meditation or something outside of the app?

Interviewed F: No, because for me, the app was more a means that I was using, like, means to get to my results, rather than the discovery itself. I was already doing yoga, and I was already caring about my mental health, and I wanted a way to improve, not to start.

Researcher: Good point, yeah, before like you want to just improve, let's say, okay, um. And would you recommend that app to others?

Interviewed F: Yes, if they want to do that for yoga, then I think it is the best one, to be honest. Also, if somebody I don't think it was even that expensive, because I remember increasing prices.

Researcher: And okay, so in the last section, we're going to talk about a specific app. I don't know if you have heard or sometimes you have seen, like, some content of Headspace?

Interviewed F: No.

Researcher: Okay, let me see. Okay, I just sent it to you on Instagram. Did you receive it like there's a website the day of the app?

Interviewed F: Yes, I did.

Researcher: Okay, they're very fast. You scroll down and take your time, you can check the content that they have. So right now, let's say that you are looking at their content on first impression. Let's say, would you say that you could trust in this app?

Interviewed F: Yes, for sure. They're very well thought out and well done. Everything is very on point.

Researcher: Okay, and when you look at that content that the app produces, what does it make you feel like? Anything you can say anything like, if you just check like, which one would be your first impression? Like, what does it make you feel like?

Interviewed F: It makes me feel cheerful, because we have a lot of cheerful colors.

Researcher: Okay, and let me see... How important is it for you that the content that they have, is like, authentic or in general, let's say about, in these apps.

Interviewed F: I think the most important thing is that it's done by professionals, so that they can testify that, like, that's a team of physicians and psychologists and people that know about these topics. Then I can trust it for sure.

Researcher: Yeah. And do you believe that the content that they have posted is authentic?

Interviewed F: Yeah, I think so. Well, it's always social media. So I know they're just trying to promote themselves, but that's also good advice, I think. I think for sure, it's better than some other Instagram pages where they just don't do it well, or they just post useless information, at least it could maybe be useful for you.

Researcher: Okay, and let's say this question we're gonna be like about, in general, the wellness apps, if you find like, the content that they are posting is not authentic. Will you stop using the app? And why?

Interviewed F: I think so, I think that... I think it's hard for that to happen, because once I download the app, I've read the reviews and description. Usually I never download something that doesn't seem nice. But if that then would happen, then yes I would delete it.

Researcher: Okay, okay, perfect. So, yeah, that will be all my questions. So thank you so much, Giada. Yeah, if you have any questions, just let me know.

Interviewed F: Yes, no problem. Let me know when you finish your thesis and I will read it.

Researcher: Yeah, of course, I will be happy to share that with you. So thank you so thank you so much. One more time for your time and for your help. Take care. Bye, bye.

Interviewed G

Researcher: Good morning Pauline! Thank you so much for being here and helping me with my research for my master's degree dissertation. I truly appreciate your time. Can I start recording our meeting? Can I have your approval?

Interviewed G: Hi Pame, thank you for the invitation! Yes, of course.

Researcher: As you know, the title of my dissertation is 'Content Marketing in the Digital Age: Analyzing the Role of Quality Wellness Content in Building Brand Trust Among Gen Z.' I've divided this interview into five sections. If at any point you'd prefer to skip a question, feel free to let me know, and we can move on to the next one. So let's start! Do you use or have you used a wellness app?

Interviewed G: Yes, I had used Headspace.

Researcher: Can you share how you first came across this app?

Interviewed G: I heard about Headspace through a podcast and I decided to download it to try.

Researcher: Podcasts always give good recommendations! What motivated you to download and start using this particular app?

Interviewer G: To sleep better and reduce my anxiety.

Researcher: Why did you choose this app over others?

Interviewed G: I didn't research more information about the app, they talked briefly about the options in the podcast and this one captured my attention, so I already knew what kind of app it was.

Researcher: How do you feel this app positions itself in the market?

Interviewed G: I feel that Headspace focuses on educational content a lot, especially on social media like Instagram.

Researcher: Ok perfect! Now we are going to go next to the second section, which is about the personal importance of mental health and wellness. What role does mental health and wellness play in your life currently?

Interviewed G: Mental health and wellness help me stay balanced and calm. By taking care of myself, I manage stress better and stay positive. It helps me handle problems and enjoy life more.

Researcher: What specific mental health/wellness goals are you hoping to achieve through this app?

Interviewed G: Try to focus more on the positive in order to reduce my anxiety and stress. Feel calmer to sleep better on a daily life basis.

Researcher: Why was it important for you to prioritize mental health and wellness in your life at this moment? Are there any life experiences or societal pressures that contributed to this?

Interviewed G: I became more anxious when I had to stay at home during the pandemic, so I started listening to some podcasts about mental health, which led me to discover Headspace. Now, mental health is something I'm really interested in, and I try to find balance in my everyday life because of it.

Researcher: How do you feel the app supports your mental health/wellness journey?

Does it provide tools, education, or community support that you find valuable?

Interviewed G: Headspace provides a lot of interesting tools and advices and it help me to feel better. When I have time during the day or when I feel the need to relax I often use it to slow down a bit and it is really pleasant.

Researcher: Totally agree! The tools that the app provides are really good. Now, we are going to start with the third section that is about the user experience with the app. Would you say that you can trust in the app?

Interviewed G: Yes, I think I can trust the app because the purpose of it shows that the creators care about mental health in general and it helps me feel better in my daily life.

Researcher: What could you make you lose trust in the app?

Interviewed G: If I heard that the company is not ethical for example if they treat badly their employees. You can't promote wellness if you don't care about the well being of your associates.

Researcher: What features of the app do you find most useful for supporting your mental health/wellness? Do you use the app's meditation, therapy, community aspects, etc.?

Interviewed G: I don't really use the community aspects but a lot of meditation especially in the morning and before sleeping at night. I used the therapy feature sometimes.

Researcher: Has the app changed your understanding or approach to mental health?

Interviewed G: Yes, the app has changed how I see mental health. It taught me to be more mindful and handle stress better. For example, I used to react quickly when stressed, but now I take a moment to breathe and stay calm. It's helped me be more aware of my thoughts and reactions.

Researcher: Is amazing how this apps can help us in our mental health. Are there any features that you feel are missing or could be improved in the app?

Interviewed G: One feature that could be improved in Headspace is more personalized recommendations based on my mood or goals for the day. Sometimes, I'm not sure which meditation to choose, so a daily suggestion based on how I'm feeling would be helpful.

Researcher: The next session, is about the impact and social influence. Have societal factors like mental health awareness movements or media coverage influenced your decision to use mental health apps?

Interviewed G: Yes, societal factors like mental health awareness movements and media coverage definitely influenced me to use apps like Headspace. Mental health became a bigger topic of discussion, especially during the pandemic, and it made me realize the

importance of taking care of it. In addition, seeing others talk openly about their struggles during the pandemic made me feel more inclined to prioritize my own mental health.

Researcher: Totally, the pandemic definitely impacted us in multiple ways and one of them and the most important has been our mental health. How do you think apps like this fit into the broader conversation on mental health and wellness in your generation (Gen Z)?

Interviewed G: In my opinion, apps revolving around mental health are a huge part of how Gen Z approaches this subject. We're used to using technology for everything, so having mental health tools easily available on our phones feels natural. These apps empower us to take control of our well-being.

Researcher: Loved that you mentioned that 'feels natural', because actually that's how it feels. We are going to go next with the fifth session that is about the future engagement and sustainability. Do you see yourself using this app long-term?

Interviewed G: Totally, I definitely see myself using the app long-term, especially since it's convenient and helps me stay consistent with my mindfulness practice.

Researcher: How was your experience with the app influenced your broader approach to mental health? Have you adopted other practices outside of the app?

Interviewed G: Using the app has made me more mindful of my daily mental health. It encouraged me to try other practices like regular exercise, journaling, and even considering therapy to keep a balanced approach to my well-being.

Researcher: Would you recommend this app to others?

Interviewed G: I would recommend Headspace to others, especially for those just starting to explore mindfulness. It's easy to use and has a lot of variety. However, I think it is important to make the difference between wanting to take care of your mental health and needing a real therapy when it comes to deeper mental health issues. For people who have deeper issues, this app would not be enough.

Researcher: When you look at the content that Headspace, what makes you feel?

Interviewed G: The content feels calming and approachable. It's simple but effective, and the visuals and voiceovers are soothing. It makes me feel more relaxed, especially when I have trouble to sleep.

Researcher: How important it's for you that content is authentic?

Interviewed G: For me, it is really important that the content is authentic because mental health is a sensitive area. If the content feels forced, I wouldn't feel comfortable relying on the app for support.

Interviewed H

Researcher: Good morning Camila! Thank you so much for your help in my research, for my dissertation of my master's degree. I really appreciate your time. So I divided or interviewed in five sections, if you don't feel comfortable answering on question you can tell me, that you would like to skip for the next one. As you know, the title of my dissertation "Content marketing in the digital age, analyzing the role of quality wellness content in building brand trust among Gen Z." In the first section, we're going to talk about understanding the app usage and the introduction to wellness apps. Okay, so let's start!! Do you use, or have you use a wellness app?

Interviewed H: Yes, I have used Meditopia, a meditation application.

Researcher: Can you share how you first came across this app? Was it through social media, a recommendation, or other means?

Interviewed H: I found the meditation app by searching on social media for recommendations of the best ones, also by recommendation from acquaintances who had already tried them before or by meditation teachers.

Researcher: What motivated you to download and start using this particular app?

Interviewed H: I downloaded the meditation app because of my anxiety. Suffering from chronic anxiety since I was 13, I have sought many methods to calm my mind, heal my body, and create harmony between mind and body. The best way to do this has always been meditation. Guided meditations help keep your mind focused on breathing and calming and relaxing your entire body. The app helped me to learn to meditate in the correct way and above all to increase the meditation time to progress in the process.

Researcher: The power of meditation is incredible, because something Why did you choose this app over others?

Interviewed H: I saw it on social media, especially TikTok. It was during a pandemic, so I spent a lot of time on my cell phone. I wanted to improve my habits and thanks to my uncle, a person who has meditated for many years, I decided to start doing it too. TikTok talked a lot about the application so I decided to download it to try how it worked.

Researcher: Is good that you had your uncle as a reference and that he intruduces you to thi apps that are definitely really helpfull in our daily lifes. How do you feel this app positions itself in the market?

Interviewed H: I think, this application is positioned as a therapeutic aid. It helps you sleep better, it helps you breathe better and also helps you concentrate. Meditation for Generation Z has been used as a palliative tool to heal the mind and also the body.

Researcher: Totally agree. We are going next with our second section which is about personal importance of mental health and wellness. What role does mental health and wellness play in your life currently?

Interviewed H: This is not a question of lately, at all. My mental health has always been of great importance to me. Being diagnosed as a child with a mental condition, I have always been very aware of the importance of mental health. At getting older, I had anxious-depressive episodes, which made my situation worse and I had to take other measures regarding this. Both chemical and palliative treatments.

Researcher: What specific mental health/wellness goals are you hoping to achieve through this app?

Interviewed H: The application is purely to help me meditate. If I can't sleep, the white noise that the app provides is helpful. I don't expect to gain anything more from it, just use all its functions in the best way to help me maintain a balance with my mental health.

Researcher: Why was it important for you to prioritize mental health and wellness in your life at this moment?

Interviewed: Again, it's not something of now. Prioritizing your mental health should always be primordial. why do it? A person has to be mentally well to be able to function in life. If you want to sleep well, your mind must be at peace, if you want to have an appetite, your mind must be at peace. You want to have a good relationship with people, your mind

must be at peace. You want to have a stable relationship with your partner, your mind is the key to success.

Researcher: How do you feel the app supports your mental health/wellness journey?

Interviewed H: Well, the app sets me daily goals that I must meet. In this way, I feel that I have a challenge to improve myself daily, help me build a more solid foundation for my mental health, and learn to control my anxiety based on good breathing.

Researcher: Exactly, we have to focus on improving each day and prioritize our mental health. The next session is about the user experience with the app. Would you say that you can trust in the app?

Interviewed H: I would say, there is no reason why you can't trust the app. So my answer is yes. It is not an application that teaches me exercises that could injure me, it is a guide to learn to breathe, which we all do constantly, you just have to know how to control it.

Researcher: What could you make you lose trust in the app?

Interviewed H: Nothing to be honest, its only noise, music and a guide of how to control my breath.

Researcher: Has the app changed your understanding or approach to mental health?

Interviewed H: Hmm no. What has really contributed to my mental health is my therapist, my family, my friends and a calm lifestyle.

Researcher: Are there any features that you feel are missing or could be improved in the app?

Interviewed H: I had never thought of anything additional for the app. They have everything I need and I have never really looked for anything more. If I need help in a crisis, I look for a professional. Apps help you control certain things, but they are not useful when it comes to really helping you with your mental health. They can give you advice, guides, recommendations, but a human being needs to be listened by another to feel a liberation.

Researcher: That is true. These apps are very helpful, but is important to differentiate until when we can use it and if it's something that requires more help, definitely going to professionals is the best choice. Have societal factors like mental health awareness movements or media coverage influenced your decision to use mental health apps?

Interviewed H: No. I was a child when I had to start worrying about my mental health. I was so little that I didn't know about social media, I didn't read the news or surf the Internet much. It was more due to loss and pain.

Researcher: How do you think apps like this fit into the broader conversation on mental health and wellness in your generation (Gen Z)?

Interviewed H: I think that today there are many tools for people to manage their mental health in different ways. I think social media doesn't do any good. We are always constantly seeing recommendations or supposed diagnoses on tiktok that are supposed to help us, but I feel like they only hurt us more. Besides now everything can be a farce. You can't trust anything unless it's a professional. Today's generation is much more vulnerable due to all the information we receive daily and we must be careful with what is on the internet that is disguised as help and can only do harm. There are suicide prevention hotlines now, which I

think is great, because they are authorized channels run by professionals. But the applications, one doesn't really investigate who is behind all that.

Researcher: In our last section we are going to talk about future engagement and sustainability. Do you see yourself using this app long-term? Why or why not?

Interviewed H: Yes, I only used when I need it. If I can't sleep I found sound in Spotify, also podcast about meditation.

Researcher: How has your experience with the app influenced your broader approach to mental health?

Interviewed H: The application is used purely for what it is created for, it has not prompted me to do anything else. If I have exercised it has been of my own free will, due to my health and doctor's recommendation. If I go to therapy it is out of necessity, no app should influence anyone, or at least that is what I believe.

Researcher: Would you recommend this app to others?

Interviewed H: If people want a guide to meditating, then yes, but I would also recommend Spotify podcasts because there are very good ones. But it's not something I talk to people about. It is not a recommendation that is on the tip of my tongue every time I talk to someone.

Interviewed I

Researcher: Good afternoon John! Thank you so much for being here and helping me with my research for my master's degree dissertation. I truly appreciate your time. Can I start recording our meeting? Can I have your approval?

Interviewed I: Good afternoon Pame! Yes, of course! Go ahead!

Researcher: So, as you know, the title of my dissertation is Content Marketing in the Digital Age: Analyzing the Role of Quality Wellness Content in Building Brand Trust Among Gen Z. The way that we're going to work in this interview, I divided it in five sections. Okay, if you don't feel comfortable during one of the questions, you can tell me that you would like to skip and that you want to go to the next one. Feel free. In the first section, we're going to talk about understanding the app usage and introduction to wellness apps. Do you use, or have you used a wellness app?

Interviewed I: Yes, I have used 'Lumosity Meditation' and 'Headspace.' Mostly the apps that I used were only for meditation and stuff.

Researcher: Can you share how you first came across these apps?

Interviewed I: I first heard about 'Headspace' through social media. I came across several ads featuring their distinctive animations and artwork, which really caught my attention. Curious, I decided to download the app. Before Headspace, I used to play around with another app called 'Lumosity,' which focuses on sharpening your brain. Then, one day, I discovered an app similar to Lumosity but focused on meditation—helping you be more present, with features like reading exercises and breathing techniques. It was mainly the ads that drew me in to explore these apps

Researcher: Sounds like you have experience with these wellness apps! They're helpful, I will say. So what motivated you to download and start using these particular apps?

Interviewed I: My initial reason was curiosity. I wanted to see what these apps could do for me—maybe help me improve my sleep or feel more relaxed in my day-to-day life. So yes, I would say that at the beginning, it was purely driven by curiosity.

Researcher: After the initial curiosity, it was more about ongoing concerns with my wellness that made me feel like I needed these apps in my life. It wasn't just about exploring anymore; I started thinking about how they could genuinely help me improve my well-being.

Interviewed I: It was only curiosity at the beginning, but then I started having trouble sleeping. I used to fall asleep immediately, but it began taking me longer. So, I decided to try these apps, and they actually worked out perfectly for me.

Researcher: Why did you choose this app over others? As you said before, was because of the ads. So will you say it was only this or also you follow some recommendation of friends?

Interviewed I: It was really just the ads, as I never actively searched for these kinds of things. But one day, they caught my attention, and I thought, 'Okay, I'm going to try and see what it means to improve my wellness.

Researcher: The next question will be, how do you feel this app positions itself in the market?

Interviewed I: I think 'Headspace' is the most well-known and popular one, especially compared to other apps that focus solely on meditation. If you're searching for something specific, like a wellness app, you can probably just do a search for it. Nowadays, there are many other apps available, but if I were to search for a wellness app on my phone, 'Headspace' would likely be the first one to show up.

Researcher: Totally, 'Headspace' is recognized because of the features that they have and all the content it posts on social media. Do you think these apps, seem more educational, more the community focus or therapy oriented?

Interviewed I: I think it's a little bit of everything. It's more community-focused, but it also depends on what specific areas you want to improve. That way, you can better understand what's going on with you. And yeah, I believe it really depends on what people are searching for.

Researcher: Okay, so for the second section, we are going to talk about the personal importance of mental health and wellness. What role does mental health and wellness play in your life currently?

Interviewed I: It plays a very important role. I always think that if I have a clear, peaceful mind, it will reflect on how I see myself and how I perceive others. But if my mind is messy, filled with unimportant thoughts, it may affect my appearance or behavior, making them reflect that same chaos.

Researcher: Totally agree. What specific mental health/wellness goals are you hoping to achieve through these apps?

Interviewed I: It was to improve my sleep. When I want to sleep and can't do it, I apply the techniques that I learned through 'Headspace'.

Researcher: Definitely, the app has good sounds and meditations when you can't sleep. Sounds like the rain, the ocean that helps you to fall asleep. Why was it important for you to prioritize mental health and wellness in your life at this moment?

Interviewed I: I think it became important for me after the pandemic, because during that time, we were all stuck at home and couldn't even see our friends or hang out. Once things started opening up again and we could go out, some people were eager to reconnect and go

out. I feel like that experience helped me understand people better and made me realize how essential it is to prioritize mental health and wellness

Researcher: Totally, the pandemic was crazy for everyone. There was so much anxiety—the lockdown, and how everything changed so quickly. We all had to process it somehow. In this case, apps like these played a really important role for a lot of people, helping them learn how to cope. Whether it was trouble sleeping or feeling anxious, these apps offered support during a tough time. So how do you feel the app supports your mental health wellness journey?

Interviewed I: So I'm not using it anymore, because, as I told you, I was only using it when I was having problems falling asleep and for some breathing exercises. But since, I learned the techniques I stop using it. But, I will say that thanks to the app my life is better now.

Researcher: Make sense! Now you have the experience, so you can handle it! That's good. That's good. We are going to go next with the third section, which is about the user experience with the app. Would you say that you can trust in the app?

Interviewed I: Yeah, for example, when I downloaded the app, I had to sign up with my name and all the usual details. I don't remember every detail, but I think the app asked about my goals, like wanting to improve my sleep. It then provided tools and explanations on why it's important to focus on those areas for better well-being, so in a way, it felt really trustworthy.

Researcher: What could you make you lose trust in the app?

Interviewed I: I would say if the app provides inaccurate or misleading information, especially about health and wellness, that could seriously undermine my trust.

Researcher: What features of the app do you find most useful for supporting your mental health wellness?

Interviewed I: For me was mostly meditation, just meditation and breathing exercises. That was it. Because not only when I do stuff like educational stuff or working stuff, I usually have, like, an easy way to focus myself. The only thing was that when I used to do back in college, some meditation, I don't know how to do it correct. Maybe that was like a good guide for me.

Researcher: And has the app changed your understanding or approach to mental health?

Interviewed I: Yes, I've become more aware of these situations and have been making an effort to better understand people who are struggling with mental health issues. I try to put myself in their shoes and see things from their perspective

Researcher: Are there any features that you feel are missing or could be improved in the app?

Interviewed I: I understand that every app needs to make a profit, but many people are put off when they see that they have to pay after a free trial ends. Often, the free trial period is too short to really get a sense of the app's value. It would be better if there were a free version with ads or some other way to use the app without immediately needing to pay.

Researcher: Yeah, that would be great actually, if they extended like, a bit longer for the trial period, because as you said, one week or sometimes four days is not enough, but then in the other hand, for the features, will you say that the app has everything that you were expecting for?

Interviewed I: Yes, because the app has different levels for each topic within each area. I don't remember if I completed the entire area—maybe I only finished two or three levels. Once you get to the point where you want to complete everything, you need to pay.

Researcher: We are going next to the fourth section and here we are going to discuss the impact and social influence. So have societal factors like mental health awareness movements or media coverage influence your decision to use mental health apps?

Interviewed I: I didn't think much about it at the time, but now I see that there's a greater focus on wellness and mental health. I think that's a positive development because people are becoming more aware of their mental and physical well-being. Nowadays, it's increasingly recognized that taking care of both the body and the mind is important.

Researcher: Totally and would you say that these wellness apps are more inclined to prioritize mental health because of public disorders? Because, nowadays we follow recommendations of influencers in social media.

Interviewed: Nowadays, it might be easier to be influenced by influencers because they often share their personal struggles with depression and anxiety on their stories and recommend apps to their followers. Most people are likely to try these apps based on their suggestions. Generally, influencers tend to discuss their health issues more frequently, which can impact their audience

Researcher Yes, exactly. Social media influencers can have a big impact because people often look to them for validation. When influencers talk about using certain apps or products, it can make people feel more interested or important and encourage them to try those apps or products themselves. So how do you think the apps like this feed into the broader conversation on mental health and wellness in Generation Z?

Interviewed I: I think the topic of mental health apps gained more attention during the pandemic. Before that, people often preferred seeing a real psychologist rather than using an app. Nowadays, mental health apps are becoming more popular and widely accepted. They offer a way to connect with professionals online and are growing in prominence. I believe this shift helps people understand that not everyone has a perfect life and that experiencing bad days is normal.

Researcher: Exactly, as part of the routine. Nothing could be perfect all the time. Then for the fifth section, we are going to talk about the future engagement and sustainability. So do you see yourself using this app long term? Of course, you said that you stopped using it. But would you consider downloading it again? Or try another wellness apps?

Interviewed I: Yeah, maybe. I'm always open to learning when something catches my attention. It makes me curious to understand how it works and how I can use it. So, I would consider downloading new wellness apps to see what they offer. If I like them, I'd definitely incorporate them into my daily routine.

Researcher: How was your experience with the app influence your broader approach to mental health?

Interviewed I: My experience with the app has definitely influenced my broader approach to mental health. It helped me develop healthier habits, like regular meditation and journaling, which I wasn't doing before. The app also made me more mindful of checking in with myself and prioritizing self-care.

Researcher: Would you recommend these apps to others?

Interviewed I: Yes, definitely I would recommend these apps to others. They're a convenient way to manage stress, improve mental well-being, and develop healthy habits

without needing to go to a professional right away and I think everyone should try these apps at least one time because the tools that they give you could be really necessary in our daily day.

Researcher: Ok, so in the last section, we are going to talk about ‘Headspace’. You mentioned at the beginning that you have used this app, right? Would you say you can trust in the app?

Interviewed I: Yes, I would say you can trust the Headspace app. It's a well-established platform with a strong reputation for promoting mindfulness and mental well-being. The content is developed by experts, including trained meditation teachers, and it's widely used by people around the world.

Researcher: When you look at the content that ‘Headspace’ produces, how do you feel? What makes you feel about their content?

Interviewed I: I feel calm and reassured. Their content is thoughtfully designed, with soothing visuals and clear, gentle guidance that makes it approachable. The combination of animations, simple instructions, and expert-led sessions gives me confidence in their material.

Researcher: And if you look at the content, let's say if you didn't know about ‘Headspace’, like if you haven't used it before, but if someone shows you the content that they have in their social media. Would you say you could trust in that brand?

Interviewed I: It looks thoughtfully created, which would give me the impression that they are serious about mental well-being and mindfulness. Even without prior experience, their content alone would likely make me feel confident in the brand’s credibility.

Researcher: How important is it for you that the content is authentic?

Interviewed I: It's very important to me that the content of Headspace is authentic. When it comes to mental health and well-being, I want to know that the guidance and tools provided are trustworthy and created by experts.

Researcher: Do you believe that the content of 'Headspace' is authentic?

Interviewed I: Totally, this content is one of the best that I have ever seen in the wellness apps.

Researcher: If you find that their content is not authentic. Will you stop using the app?

Interviewed I: Initially, I might not notice it, but if the issue persists over time, I would eventually stop using the app.

Researcher: So we just finished the interview. Thank you so much, John. As I said at the beginning, I really appreciate your time and help. You've given me really valuable insights that will be extremely helpful for my dissertation.

Interviewed J

Researcher: Hi Emy, thank you so much for being here and helping me with my research for my master's degree dissertation. I truly appreciate your time. Can I start recording our meeting? Can I have your approval?

Interviewed J: Pame, thank you for your time too! Yes, of course you have my approval.

Researcher: Perfect! Thank you! As you know, the title of my dissertation is 'Content Marketing in the Digital Age: Analyzing the Role of Quality Wellness Content in Building Brand Trust Among Gen Z.' I've divided this interview into five sections. If at any point you'd prefer to skip a question, feel free to let me know, and we can move on to the next one. In the first section, we're going to talk about understanding the app usage and introduction to wellness apps. Do you use, or have you used a wellness app?

Interviewed J: Yes, I currently use some wellness apps in my daily routine. 'Zen', 'Calm' and 'Sleepy Cycles.' I don't know if you heard about this, but it's been part of my routine over my life, as I told you, and if they are very helpful for maintaining my balance in my daily life.

Researcher: Okay perfect and can you share how you first came across these apps? For example, was it through social media, a recommendation, or other means?

Interviewed J: Okay, I first heard about it in one of my sessions of therapy with my psychologist, he recommended one of them like 'Zen' and 'Calm' to make some meditations. After that, it was through Instagram and I saw a post about mindfulness, it seemed interesting to me, so I decided to check up and download these apps.

Researcher: What motivated you to download and start using this particular app? As you said, your psychology, suggests this, but was a specific event or ongoing concern about wellness or mental health that you would be like 'Okay, I need these apps'?

Interviewed J: I think that my principal motivation came from wanting to better manage my stress level. In my daily, I have a lot of work, so I have a lot of stress. So there was a point when I realized I needed to focus more on my mental health, especially when I am uncertainly going and during all the difficult moments, the ups and downs that we have in

life. So that is my principal motivation, to have these apps that are very helpful for me and useful for me too.

Researcher: Yeah, always good to have this time for you and prioritize yourself. Why did you choose this app over others?

Interviewed J: I think that I chose this app after reading a lot of reviews and comparing a few of others because there are a lot of apps when you are on this journey, it seems to offer the best balance between giving meditations and educational content. I think that all these apps have a lot of different kinds of things. Have a good community that people who are in the same journey, that I am. They are sharing all the time some similar situations and for that reason, I think that I have chosen these apps.

Researcher: Okay and how do you feel these apps position themselves in the market? For example, it seemed more like educational or community or therapy-oriented?

Interviewed J: I think that these apps position themselves in a blend of education and community support like I previously told you, and they provide tools that are very accessible to all the people. And they also emphasize the importance of connecting with other people who are on the same journey. I would say, is not just about therapy, it's also about learning new ways to care for my mental health.

Researcher: Totally agree. So then we're going next with the second section. Here we're going to talk about the personal importance of mental health and wellness. What role does mental health and wellness play in your life currently? As you said, of course, it's really important right now, but you do you think, like, how has it changed over time?

Interviewed J: I think that right now, actually in my life, mental health has become a significant part of my life, essentially in recent years, because I think, like with work and

more responsibilities in our daily we have to focus and prioritize our mental health. Early, I didn't pay much attention, but now I am prioritized as much as physical health. Some years ago, I only focused on my physical health, like going to the gym, eating healthy, or something like that. But now I think that one of the most important things is my mental health. Because if my mind is not okay, I think that if my mind isn't in a good place, my physical health won't be either. This shift happened because I realized that managing stress, anxiety, and daily emotions contributes to my overall well-being.

Researcher: You couldn't have said it better! What specific mental health or wellness goals are you hoping to achieve through this app?

Interviewed J: I want to achieve a more balanced and mindful lifestyle. My goals include reducing stress, reducing anxiety, practicing daily mindfulness, building better emotional resilience, and dealing with the ups and downs that we have in our personal life, and in our professional life.

Researcher: Why was it important for you to prioritize mental health and wellness in your life at this moment? As you mentioned earlier is because right now you have more responsibilities and you want to also prioritize yourself right?

Interviewed J: Correct, but I also think one of the most important moments for me to focus on my mental health was during the pandemic. It played a major role in my decision to start paying more attention to these issues, especially with everything happening in the world. I realized I needed to prioritize my mental health. Social trends, particularly on platforms like Instagram, also contributed, as mental health has become more of a trending topic, especially among our generation. Nowadays, it's easier to openly discuss these topics, whereas before, we couldn't talk about them as freely.

Researcher: After the pandemic, it was a hard time for everyone. The discussions around anxiety and mental health became more prominent, and it's great that now we have these apps and advancements in technology that allow us to explore and manage these issues more effectively. How do you feel the app supports your mental health and wellness journey?

Interviewed J: The apps provide a combination of meditation sessions to sleep good, breathing exercises, and educational content. So it also has a supportive community where people share their experiences, which makes me feel less alone in this journey and I think that all the things that I found in these apps, are like a research of value and content of my life.

Researcher: Okay, perfect so now we're going go to the third section. Here we are going to talk about the user experience with the app. Would you say that you can trust in these apps?

Interviewed J: Yes, I trust these apps because they consistently provide valuable content and tools that are helpful in my daily life. One reason for my trust is that my data is used to tailor the experience, and I can see real benefits in my mental health—it's become a routine. I've developed new habits with the app, and I can see the positive impact in my day-to-day life. So, all the benefits feel real to me, and that's why I trust it.

Researcher: What could you make you lose trust in the app?

Interviewed J: I think one of the main reasons that would make me lose trust in the app is if it starts showing too many ads. These apps are meant to help with calm, relaxation, and meditation, so when they become cluttered with ads, it disrupts that experience and makes me trust them less. Also, the content feels less authentic and more commercialized. I will reconsider using it.

Researcher: Same, I also don't like when there are a bunch of ads, and sometimes you could even don't see the content in the app, because of these ads. What features of the app do you find most useful for supporting your mental health wellness?

Interviewed J: I think the app I've used the most is 'Zen' for meditation and mindfulness exercises. It helps me deal with difficult moments, and the community there is really great and supportive. I've made a lot of friends from all around the world through the app, and over time, connecting with people who are similar to me has become one of the aspects I enjoy the most.

Researcher: That sounds awesome! Has the app generated your understanding or approach to mental health?

Interviewed J: Absolutely, I think these apps have helped me view mental health as something proactive rather than reactive. I've learned that daily mental care is important, not just when you're feeling bad. It's something you have to work on every day, just like you work on your body. One specific example is that I've incorporated mindfulness into my daily routine. It's a regular part of my life now—I wake up and spend five, seven, or even ten minutes on meditation and mindfulness, practicing gratitude. This has been one of the biggest changes and realizations in my life.

Researcher: Are there any features that you feel are missing or could be improved in the app?

Interviewed J: Maybe the apps should conduct more research focused on their users. Most of these apps are based in the U.S. or countries like Germany, but they should recognize that users come from different places, like Ecuador. It would be great if they created features that resonate more with different cultures, so people can feel more supported and identify better with the content

Researcher: Yeah, that would actually be a really good idea. While doing it for each individual country might be difficult, they could create one specifically for South America, since our cultures are more similar compared to other continents

Interviewed J: Exactly! Like customizing the experience, could be more helpful.

Researcher: Let's continue with the fourth section. Here is about the impact and social influence. So have societal factors like mental health, awareness movement or media coverage influenced your decision to use mental health apps?

Interviewed J: Yes, I think developing awareness and openness around mental health in media and among peers makes it feel more accessible. Social media and the media, in general, create a sense of shared experience, which encourages us to seek out mental health tools and apps that are more affordable. As I mentioned earlier, the pandemic and the increased focus on health have made mental health issues more prominent. We're more open to discussing them now, and there are more resources available to support people struggling with their mental health, including myself, as well as helping others going through a similar journey.

Researcher: Yeah, that's one of the great things about our generation—we feel more free to talk about these topics. If we compare it with our parents' generation, there was no way they would openly discuss these topics, and it was even worse in our grandparents' time. There was much more judgment back then, and people avoided talking about mental health altogether.

Interviewed J: I also think that previous generations, like our parents and grandparents, were more resistant to going to therapy or didn't even acknowledge practices like meditation. For them, concepts like anxiety or stress weren't really part of the conversation. Our generation is much more open to discussing these issues, which can help prevent negative

consequences from not addressing them. I believe we're better prepared and more educated about mental health compared to those before us

Researcher: Totally! Good that we were born in our generation! Then, how do you think apps like this fit into the broader conversation on mental health and wellness in Generation Z?

Interviewed J: I think wellness apps are a key tool for our generation. As I mentioned earlier, we are much more open to talking about mental health, and using digital resources like these apps empowers people by giving them easy access to something that might have been harder to find in the past when people weren't as open about discussing it. For older generations, it might be more challenging to engage with these apps, and there's also the concern that they could oversimplify the complexity of mental health issues.

Researcher: For the last section, is about future engagement and sustainability. So do you see yourself using these apps for the long term?

Interviewed J: Yes, I see myself using the app long-term, as long as it continues to provide value. There are always new tools and apps emerging, so I want to maintain the routine and habits I've developed. Features like adaptations and mindfulness reminders fit well with my lifestyle, so I want to keep this app as a part of my long-term routine.

Researcher: Which features or benefits will make you continue using this app?

Interviewed J: I think meditation and mindfulness.

Researcher: How has your experience with the app influenced your broader approach to mental health?

Interviewed J: I have also started therapy and physical exercise as additional ways to support my mental health. The app has made me more aware of how they are interconnected to these aspects. So now am more intentional about taking care of my mind and my body.

Researcher: Will you recommend this app to others?

Interviewed J: Yes, I would recommend it, especially to anyone looking for an app that is easy to use. Many apps struggle with issues like high prices or complex interfaces, but I find these apps straightforward. I particularly recommend the 'Zen' app because it offers valuable features that integrate well into your lifestyle and digital routine. Based on my experience, I feel confident in recommending these apps.

Researcher: In our last part of the interview we are going to talk about 'Headspace', I don't know if you have heard about it?

Interviewed J: Yes, I had heard about it, but I'm not using it now. I saw some things on social media, like Instagram, and did some web searches when I was looking for similar applications. From what I gathered, it seems to be a wellness app focused on meditation and related topics.

Researcher: Correct, you mentioned that you have seen their content on Instagram, so just like seeing the content, would you say that you could trust this app

Interviewed J: I think I could trust the app. On Instagram, they have a lot of followers, and the reviews from users help build my trust in the app. The quality of the content seems consistent and valuable, so I think I could trust it and might consider downloading it.

Researcher: When you look at the content that the app produces, what makes you feel?

Interviewed J: I think that the content I've seen makes me feel calm and well. The design has a sense of harmony—everything from the colors to the typography. It feels like it's crafted by professionals in the field, which I love, because it's exactly what I expect from wellness apps.

Researcher: Yeah, especially with this app, because they use vibrant colors that really grab your attention. For me, it makes me want to scroll down more and see more posts. How important is it for you that the content is authentic?

Interviewed J: I think that the content has to be authentic because it's important for me to feel that I can trust it. I believe that if an app or a social media account wants to make a positive impact on our lives, it needs to demonstrate that it genuinely aims to make a difference. For me, it's crucial to see actions that align with their promises.

Researcher: Do you believe that the content of 'Headspace' is authentic?

Interviewed J: Yes, I believe they have authentic content. Their mindfulness content feels genuine, and they have been consistent with their messages. I also think that they are experts in the area.

Researcher: Agree, that's also important for the apps. When you see experts involved, it adds credibility. For example, in Headspace, if you go on their social media, you'll find psychologists and meditation experts sharing their insights. Their feedback and experience are really positive, which makes it easier to trust the app. For the last question, if you find that the content is not authentic, will you stop using the app?

Interviewed J: Yes, for me, content authenticity is very important. It's crucial that apps or sites have genuine, valuable content. If I find that the content seems inauthentic or overly commercialized, I start to lose trust. Especially with mental health apps, where we seek relief

from stress, seeing content that feels more focused on monetization rather than providing real value would make me hesitant to recommend or continue using the app.

Researcher: Yeah, totally agree. So we just finished the interview. Thank you so much, Emy. As I said at the beginning, I really appreciate your time and help. You've given me really valuable insights that will be extremely helpful for my dissertation.

Interviewed J: Thank you Pame for the invitation! Good luck with your thesis, is such an interesting topic!