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Use of Podcasts for Leadership and Emotional Intelligence Development: A Review Study

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Abstract

The research aims to analyze the contribution of Podcasts for developing learners' soft skills Leadership and Emotional Intelligence. The systematic literature review uses the Prism methodology to select 65 theoretical and empirical works published between 2000 and 2025 on the fields of Educational Psychology, Technology, and Management available in the databases Scopus, Web of Science, Scielo, and Latindex. The results show that podcasts work as accessible and flexible learning resources that foster learners' Leadership and Emotional Intelligence. Leadership is shown as an adaptation and cooperative process that relies on empathy, flexibility, and group work, meanwhile Emotional Intelligence is known as the foundation for managing emotions, feelings, and building positive interpersonal relationships. It concluded that podcasts are a significant and reliable resource that contribute to learners' leadership and emotional intelligence soft-skills in the contemporary education system, improving students' empathy, resilience, and motivation for learning.

Keywords: Educational Innovations, Emotional Intelligence, Communication, Global Education, Leadership, Podcasts

1. Introduction

Leadership and emotional intelligence become essential skills for achieving success in people's professional and personal lives (Gurr & Drysdale, 2020). Leadership focuses on guiding, inspiring, and motivating learners to utilize effective communication, adaptability, and teamwork (Iannotta et al., 2020; Kjellström et al., 2020). Socio-emotional understanding is essential for forming and sustaining trustworthy work teams and leadership groups. Concurrently, emotional awareness, defined as the skill to identify, understand, and regulate emotions, serves as a

fundamental resource in fostering learners' solid relationships, personal development, and significant progress. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions. It is a vital key tool in building learners' strong interpersonal relationships, development, and major growth.

Both soft skills: Leadership and Emotional Intelligence are crucial for developing positive workplace cultures, intensifying educational outcomes, and addressing the challenges of the current world in permanent evolution (Deng et al., 2023; Saleem et al., 2022). Digital technologies have changed the way people search for technical advances. Thus, podcasts turned into a popular didactic tool to educate, support, and improve users' majors. Their accessibility, flexibility, and conversational tone make podcasts resources for exploring complex topics like leadership and emotional intelligence (Heikkinen & Myyryläinen, 2025). Thus, podcasts provide learners with on-demand and self-directed opportunities to engage with diverse perspectives.

The researchers utilize hermeneutics to determine contemporary perspectives, concepts, and data related to Leadership and Emotional Intelligence. It encompasses both research studies and theoretical articles published in academic journals, industry reports, and reliable online resources worldwide. The review includes information retrieved from academic databases in Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, online repositories Google Scholar, and public or private university e-libraries.

The systematic review conducted used the following keywords: podcast, leadership development, emotional intelligence, soft skills, and their Spanish equivalents. It used the Prisma methodology to select publications to extract key findings regarding: (1) Ways of integrating podcasts into educational and training contexts; (2) The reported benefits and challenges for leadership and emotional intelligence development, and (3) Recommendations for achieving effective learning usage. The results were synthesized thematically, based on the categories (a) the role and (b) effectiveness of podcasts in developing interpersonal soft skills: Leadership and Emotional Intelligence.

The research aims to analyze the contribution of Podcasts in developing learners' soft skills, Leadership, and Emotional Intelligence.

2. Development

2.1. Leadership as a soft skill in the educational context

The soft skill Leadership is vital for university students' effective performance (Aldulaimi, 2018). However, It is completely functional with children or even adults because, the presence of a leader who guides properly the class is quite essential for a perfect teaching session in formal and informal instruction when the main idea is to maintain an educational environment that makes learners feel able to advance with their tasks.

Leadership in education is a relevant soft skill by the influence on teachers' inspiration and learners' commitment (Gurr & Drysdale, 2020). It highlights the central role played by education leadership in shaping the dynamics at the school level. The effective leaders create the conditions to retain teachers as motivated, innovative, and committed to professional growth. Leadership is traditionally associated with many ways to show authority in group. It is widely recognized as a soft skill that activates people to influence, motivate, and guide others to achieve a goal.

As Dinibutun (2020) note, Leadership support people to achieve individual and organizational goals by exploring theories. It is an impulse through words or actions developed by a person who expected to instruct a quantity of individuals in a team or a field. In addition, Iannotta et al. (2020) argument that Leadership integrates agile logic and change management practices to align people's diverse interests with the organization priorities. In addition, writers use the words "agile logic" to show that good leadership needs a flexible mind, fast shifting, and readiness to act swiftly. It means that leadership grows naturally from interactions, teamwork, and common aims.

Thus, Kjellström et al. (2020) state that Leadership has multiple definitions requiring closer exploration. Thus, scholars imply that Leadership development is not something that can be understood through a single definition or method but rather involves aspects such as individual abilities, organizational setting, and cultural factors. They point out dimensions going from individual skills and personal characteristics towards organizational, contextual, and cultural factors in terms of how students' leadership can be exercised and developed.

Leadership is known as a soft skill that involves interpersonal relationships and yields group outcomes. It involves relational skills such as communication, emotional intelligence, flexibility, and abilities for inspiring to others. The theoretical analysis situates leadership as an oriented skill that considers itself in inter-personal transactions and is learnable with time through experience, reflection, and practice. In the words of Iannotta et al. (2020), Leadership appears as a naturally occurring soft skill that integrates agile comprehension and change management to plant interests across organizational stages in smart working environments. It highlights that leadership develops naturally via interaction, teamwork, and common objectives within an organization rather than solely coming from a hierarchical position. Thus, the relational and adaptable aspect of leadership by conceptualizing it as a soft talent composed of problem-solving skills, emotional and communicative intelligence, and the ability to motivate and guide others. It became a significant aspect to manage learners' multiple contexts of life.

Thus, Leadership fosters a safe climate of trust to innovate in higher education (Aboramadan et al., 2021). It clarifies that Leadership must be present when the educational goal is to create a proper, clean, and stimulating environment for learning. Nevertheless, pedagogical Leadership must be culturally responsive, recognize students' diverse backgrounds, and staff as assets in the learning process. Leadership considers the students' previous experiences to motivate them to reach their goals properly (Khalifa et al., 2021).

When teachers feel valued and supported, they embrace the pedagogical practices that involve students actively, however, as Bush (2021) mentions, Leadership can improve school staff's culture and learning outcomes. It means Leadership is a key aspect in the delivery of school effectiveness and improvement, emphasizing the decisive role of principals as school leaders. Besides, Saleem et al. (2022) remark that global education is more flexible and distributed when teams attributes on consensual trust. They state that Leadership development is a complex and adaptive process, totally shaped by social circumstances required for the educational collaboration, and Deng et al. (2023) suggest that Leadership supports organizations development running and pushing changes forward. It highlights organizations to be more solid and supporting to evolve themselves.

Leadership is a soft skill completely applicable in different contexts and probably its most significant impact is in education. It can positively influence students dedication since the culture and motivation to learn (Wilson Heenan et al., 2023). Such as affirmation proves the impact that Leadership has on education support in learners' confidence and makes them feel completely capable of solving different management issues. Besides, Heikkinen & Myyryläinen (2025) argue that Leadership turned into primary differentiation in making decisions. It is one of the most requested skills to demonstrate the power of motivation, guide, or energy of people to work. Thus, a leader acknowledges personal limitations to allow for more realistic decision-making and the strategic delegation of responsibilities by identifying individual strengths in every team's members. Consequently, leaders can foster collective growth and create a more balanced and productive working environment.

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Leadership is one of the highly valued skills in organizations of the 21st century, characterized by the participatory construction of organizations. The presence of leadership enhances the legitimacy of initiatives, processes, and projects (García-Sanz et al., 2020). However, Leadership requires high amounts of knowledge, skills, and energy consumption, to the point that it can be a cause of work burnout (Shrivastava et al., 2021). Faced with this demand for talent, organizations should seek to implement rotation systems in leadership positions to achieve higher levels of success (Burki et al., 2020)

Leadership is the sum of human and technical qualities that can be acquired from group or autonomous learning (Calle, 2021). Therefore, leaders need to strengthen and innovate communication skills using methodologies and activities relevant to the context in which they work (Corpas & Romero, 2021). Leaders need to avoid emotional

disturbance in work environments to stay in balance by avoiding negative results for the organization (Kundi & Badar, 2021), and workplace conflicts (Garavan et al., 2022).

Scholars as Garreta-Bochaca and Llevot-Calvet (2022) argue that training centers should have programs aimed at strengthening soft skills such as planning, communication, and interaction expecting women and men leaders obtain collaboration of their work or study teams. They need to use technological means as they are tools that facilitate the population's access to collaborative processes (Bernate & Fonseca, 2022; Rodriguez & Fernández, 2022) and dynamize the exchange of information among people who make up the organizations (Llor et al., 2022). Therefore, the quality of communication can be influenced by rural or urban contextual elements, people's levels of education, and culture or time that people have available (Hernández-Prados & Álvarez-Muñoz, 2023). Therefore, when leaders implement various processes, interventions, and social relations, they must consider all situations of vulnerability and risk involving their collaborators in decision-making (Villalobos & Espinoza, 2023). According to Armijos et al. (2023a), leaders in training must strengthen the capacities to analyze, discern, infer, reflect, criticize, and question based on arguments and norms. Meanwhile, Armijos et al. (2023b); Rivera (2024) argue that positive coexistence within organizations is the result of the responsible participation of the people who make it up (Cañaza, 2024). While Kayode (2024) states that leaders with high emotional intelligence are better prepared to manage interpersonal dynamics and foster employee engagement. They are able to achieve higher levels of productivity and collaboration. They found that teenagers' flexible parenting style and self-esteem, for both fathers and mothers, influence on the new generations' leadership ability.

The possible barriers faced by Latin American leaders are the lack of achievable policies in the short term at the socio-economic, educational, and technological levels (Camargo, 2024). For their part, Marin et al. (2024) state that a barrier that must be worked on from leadership is the low commitment of employees about the events that occur in organizations. For this reason, leadership must work to improve the internal and external communication of organizations (Sánchez & Rivadeneira, 2025; Callahan et al., 2025).

To Rifo & Moreno (2025), twenty-first century leadership articulates multiple dimensions that allow to appreciate, perceive, and experience the threats surrounding the organization, especially those linked to public policies and the socio-economic situation of the surrounding context. Thus, cultural competence and ethical considerations are added as vital elements in moving towards transformative leadership. Finally, De Amicis (2025) states that leadership promotes creativity and the way leaders have to influence human groups in organizations.

2.2. Emotional Intelligence

A person with emotional intelligence excels in four key aspects: recognizing feelings, utilizing feelings, comprehending feelings, and managing feelings (Mayer & Salovey (1997). Societies are constantly changing, and this impacts individuals who must develop their abilities to manage the emotions that overwhelm them (Aremu et al., 2019). Thus, emotional intelligence is a soft skill that helps people optimize organizational processes and environments, maintaining composure in disruptive situations.

There are four branches in emotional intelligence: identifying, using, understanding, and regulating emotions. It is important to identify the process to understand your feelings and how to regulate them in different situations. People can learn to identify, express, and manage their emotions to create meaningful and fulfilling lives (Brackett, 2020).

According to Shrivastava et al. (2021), people with high emotional intelligence reported fewer symptoms of burnout than their counterparts with lower emotional intelligence, while Burki et al. (2020) indicate that high emotional intelligence contributes to reducing work-related stress and employee turnover. According to Miao et al. (2021), when people possess high emotional intelligence, they manage to reduce the impact of negative professional setbacks and are able to effectively manage emotional labor, fostering better service quality.

Emotional intelligence allows for more frequent and legitimate empathy with people. Its origins lie in the way parents treat their children (Nordin et al., 2022). Having high emotional awareness improves leaders'

communication skills, making them more conscious of their contributions to an organization. However, studies by Sadovyy et al. (2021) have shown that low emotional intelligence can be detrimental to leaders, reducing their ability to think critically in stressful situations and even leading to unethical behavior.

For their part, Filice and Weese (2024) argue that emotional intelligence focuses on the knowledge and management of emotions, self-motivation, and the management of interpersonal relationships—conditions that significantly contribute to achieving goals (Hsu et al., 2024).

Emotional intelligence can be understood as the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and those of others (Kayode, 2024). She is a key factor contributing to the construction of a positive organizational culture, but she can also mask power imbalances and a lack of equity, hindering agile decision-making, especially in cultures that value authority. The positive emotions that teachers experience in the classroom significantly improve their professional performance and job commitment, two key elements for effective professional development. Enhanced job involvement serves as a link that associates favorable emotions with improved job results, indicating that when educators experience positive emotions during instruction, they become more efficient and dedicated. Therefore, cultivating uplifting emotional experiences is essential for avenues that promote teachers' abilities and career advancement (Karimi, 2025).

Thus, positive feelings such as enthusiasm and satisfaction are essential to strengthening educators' professional self-esteem, increasing their engagement, and fostering perseverance, which in turn improves job retention and professional development (Chen et al., 2025). The author focuses on positive emotions and how this helps teachers feel more connected and committed to their role, which motivates them to stay engaged and persist through challenges. Emotional background plays a vital role in fostering a more robust and steadier professional persona, increasing the chances that educators will progress in their careers and uphold a lasting dedication to their teaching roles. People have different kinds of emotions, such as positive and negative emotions. The author told us that these feelings have a direct effect on teachers' perceptions of their professional identities, shaping whether they experience assurance, enthusiasm, difficulty, or uncertainty (Brackett, 2020).

Thus, the work of Nordin et al. (2025) found significant relationships between parenting style, emotional intelligence, and students' vocational self-efficacy. Therefore, to improve vocational self-efficacy, parenting style and emotional intelligence must be strengthened through government initiatives and within families. In the case of leaders, this soft skill allows them to identify negative situations in their team members and help them understand and manage these affective states (Zulqurnain & Aqsa, 2026).

Exposure treatments assist in lowering anxiety by methodically facing anxiety-provoking triggers within a secure setting, allowing the mind to create fresh, non-anxious connections. This means that exposure therapy operates slowly and consistently confronting objects or scenarios that provoke fear or anxiety. This process occurs in a safe, nurturing environment where real threats are absent, enabling the individual to encounter the feared item without risk.

2.3. Communication and Podcast

Active listening appears to be a significant predictor of academic performance in the community college classroom (Eggenberger, 2019). Thus, Chen and Ben-Atar (2025); Deogaonkar et al. (2025) argue that podcast creation is a multifaceted process that articulates knowledge of techniques, deep understanding of content, and pedagogical reflection. The process of planning, scripting, and producing a podcast presents students with challenges such as synthesizing complex ideas, critical thinking, and mastering content. In addition, the reflective process of podcast creation offers a unique avenue for developing social-emotional learning skills. These include self-awareness, empathy, social interaction, self-management, and informed decision-making. Thus, podcasts have high flexibility and diverse content. Listening involves complex brain processes, activating multiple regions associated with memory, emotions, and past experiences. Thus, effective learning occurs when audio and images complement each other without redundancy. Stage anxiety, self-confidence, and audience perception are critical factors that

influence communication (Marinaro, 2025). Besides, Devies (2025) states that podcasts are an important option for program designers looking for contemporary connections with leadership learning.

Podcasts are not just on the radio or tv, podcasts are on the internet, you will find many options where you can download and joy of your favorites podcast. They offer greater versatility, as listeners can listen to them anytime, on the platform or device of their choice, making them accessible and engaging learning tools (Armijos et al., 2023a). Thus, Podcasts are a tool that can be used to improve your personal growth and potentiate the development of your soft skills.

Podcasts focused on emotional intelligence are accessible tools that help listeners develop their emotional awareness and regulation, two essential elements for their personal and professional development (Dascombe et al., 2025). A podcast has different benefits for listeners; it can be used for personal growth or to get information on different topics. One of the most important topics is emotional intelligence; Podcasts can help people understand what they feel and how to manage emotions.

Podcasts have become an increasingly popular medium for education and professional growth, offering learners the opportunity to access knowledge in a flexible and engaging way. Their conversational format and wide availability make them particularly effective for exploring complex topics such as leadership and emotional intelligence. Rodríguez Reséndiz (2022) describes the podcast as “a born-digital sound document” that captures not only the immediacy of spoken communication but also the creativity and critical reflection of its producers. Seen in this way, podcasts become more than just a channel for delivering information; they stand as cultural artifacts that embody artistic expression, intellectual thought, and social commentary within contemporary society. This perspective positions podcasting as both a technological innovation and a meaningful medium for dialogue and knowledge sharing. Rime et al. (2022) define podcasting as an audio material produced to generate an experience highlighting its accessibility and adaptability to different contexts. This definition underlines the simplicity with which podcasts can be created and the ease with which audiences can consume them, making the medium highly versatile. Furthermore, by stressing innovation and interactivity, the authors suggest that podcasting is more than just a technological tool it is a dynamic form of communication that evolves alongside the needs and preferences of its listeners Persohn and Branson (2024) argue that scholarly podcasts “offer asynchronous access to new concepts,” which underscores their value as flexible resources for learners. Unlike traditional academic formats that often require synchronous participation, podcasts allow individuals to engage with new ideas at their own pace and convenience. Hernández-López and Mendoza-Jiménez (2025) found that “student-created podcasts significantly improved subject understanding, peer connection, and academic performance.” This finding highlights the active role students can take in their own learning process when they engage in podcast production. By planning, creating, and sharing content, learners not only consolidate their grasp of academic subjects but also strengthen collaboration and communication with their peers. Savall et al. (2025) argue that Podcasts promote independent learning and enrich students' educational experience, even when formal institutional support is limited. They offer accessible and flexible resources that help students develop their emotional intelligence, manage stress, and improve their social and academic skills, thereby contributing to increased engagement and resilience. This perspective draws attention to the empowering role of podcasts as tools that encourage learners to take control of their own educational journey. Even in contexts where institutional resources or formal backing may be scarce, podcasts provide an accessible and motivating platform that enriches the learning process. Besides, Celaya et al. (2020) concluded that Podcasts are practical and engaging tools that facilitate flexible learning anytime, anywhere. They improve listening skills, comprehension, and critical thinking, and offer diverse content for all subjects and ages. Through podcasts, teachers benefit from ongoing professional development and new teaching ideas. This conclusion illustrates the versatility of podcasts as a medium that transcends traditional classroom boundaries. Their adaptability makes them valuable not only within structured academic settings but also in less conventional contexts where learning occurs through personal exploration or community engagement. Persohn and Branson (2024) state that Podcasts foster personal and collective transformation by facilitating self-directed learning, building communities, expanding access to knowledge, and reshaping academic communication and discourse. They offer flexible and engaging content that encourages reflection, collaboration, and inclusion, enriching educational experiences and empowering students. This statement emphasizes the multidimensional influence of podcasting, showing that its role extends beyond

individual learning. On a personal level, podcasts foster autonomy by allowing learners to manage their own educational processes, while on a collective level they strengthen community ties and collaborative engagement.

3. Conclusion

The results of the systematic review highlighted a notable convergence between existing research, economic analyses, and the growing adoption of podcasts as creative teaching tools. Academic studies consistently highlight interconnected skills that foster personal and professional growth. Podcasts, as engaging and versatile audio formats, offer exceptional avenues for developing these skills, both in academia and the workplace.

As various authors emphasize, the concept is beyond simple authoritarian command; rather, it is identified as a relational skill that relies on communication skills, empathy, and flexibility. Research conducted by Iannotta et al. (2020) and Deng et al. (2023) illustrates the importance of effective cooperation, trust, and shared goals in leadership. This evolution requires a relational and adaptive understanding, particularly relevant in the wake of the pandemic, where the rise of digital technologies and hybrid learning systems requires skills to foster collaboration and mental safety.

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in this evolution, enabling individuals to acquire awareness and control their emotions and interpersonal interactions. The foundational framework proposed by Goleman (1995), as well as subsequent research by Brackett (2020) and Chen et al. (2025), found the need to rethink and manage intense emotions, motivation, resilience, and professional identity. For teachers, global intelligence has become an essential tool for creating inclusive, engaging, and empathetic learning experiences, directly impacting student well-being and performance.

The integration of podcasts into this development framework reflects a remarkable advancement in teaching methods. As explained by Persohn and Branson (2024) and Dascombe et al. (2025), podcasts combine accessibility with in-depth content, fostering reflective and self-guided learning paths. Their conversational style and adaptability encourage listeners to approach complex topics such as emotional management, leadership strategies, and professional ethics in an accessible manner. Authors agree with the position of Hernández-López and Mendoza-Jiménez (2025), who argue that professional development, podcasts promote lifelong learning and remove spatial and temporal barriers. Thus, podcasts facilitate the dissemination of knowledge, allowing professionals from diverse backgrounds to develop their understanding and awareness independently. Podcasting improves both cognitive understanding and socioeconomic advancement among students. In the field of professional development, podcasts promote lifelong learning and remove spatial and temporal barriers, helping individuals balance work and personal commitments, remaining aligned with contemporary thought processes and emotional intelligence practices.

Nevertheless, despite the considerable benefits of podcasts, some challenges remain. The research reviewed highlights the need for structured integration of podcasts into formal educational settings. Furthermore, the assessment of learning outcomes resulting from the use of podcasts remains underexplored. Future research can study the effective articulation of podcasts with interactive teaching strategies to enhance experiential learning outcomes.

Overall, this review suggests that podcasts are highly adaptable tools for improving listening skills and emotional intelligence. When deliberately integrated into educational and organizational settings, they can revolutionize learning experiences, orienting them toward greater independence, empathy, and reflective practices.

3.1. Leadership: An Adaptive and Essential Skill

Leadership goes far beyond simply issuing orders or wielding power. Effective leadership involves inspiring, motivating, and guiding individuals toward shared goals. Professionals define it as a relational skill that thrives on emotions and effective communication rather than being tied to specific tasks. It develops naturally within groups, fueled by collaboration and collective goals, and is essential at all levels of organizations.

In today's workplace, leadership skills are crucial. Organizations are looking for leaders who can adapt quickly, demonstrate flexibility, and help their colleagues navigate change. This demand has skyrocketed, particularly following the global crisis, which has highlighted the need for leaders who can cultivate trust and foster positive and resilient environments. A strong leader is not always the one with the highest level of expertise; rather, they must be aware of their own strengths and limitations, as well as those of their team. This awareness allows leaders to effectively allocate responsibilities and develop stronger teams.

In the world of education, leadership influences school climate, teacher motivation, and student performance. Educational leaders must be honest, fair, and encouraging, always ready to clarify their decisions. These findings underscore the importance of cultural sensitivity, emphasizing that teachers and leaders must respect the diverse backgrounds of students and staff. Instructional leadership is considered a crucial factor in the success of some schools, particularly when principals adopt a positive attitude and support their teachers.

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3.3. The Importance of Podcasts: Education and Professional Development

Research recognised podcasts as contemporary resources for fostering personal and professional development. They allow learning in diverse locations and at any time, whether listening to audio content or viewing images online. As noted in the references, podcasts are valuable, allowing students to interact with new concepts at their own pace while promoting independent or self-directed learning.

In education, podcasts can help students better understand subject matter, foster peer relationships, and even improve academic performance. Both teachers and students can use podcasts to develop skills such as emotional awareness by observing how others express their emotions or learning different methods of personal development. The article highlights that podcasts are particularly beneficial for improving interpersonal skills for businesses and institutions. Furthermore, they remove barriers by providing broad access to knowledge and help create communities where listeners and producers exchange ideas.

3.4. Professional Development and Interpersonal Skills

Another important aspect is the need for continuing professional development. Research found that acquiring new skills is required in a changing work environment. For teachers and other professionals, this includes not only acquiring technical knowledge but also developing self-confidence, emotional resilience, and collaborative skills.

Investing in employee professional development, such as workshops, training sessions, and training. It causes job satisfaction and company loyalty, improving interpersonal communication, leadership, and emotional awareness. Employees become more attractive to employers and are better prepared to meet professional challenges. At the same time, Brackett (2020) states that emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, express, and build resilience. Finally, Dascombe et al. (2025) argued that the educational impact of podcasts is their accessibility. Podcasts help learners to explore leadership and emotional intelligence topics autonomously. Their conversational and flexible nature facilitates the internalization of key soft skills through real-world examples and empathetic narratives.

Overall, this review study concludes that podcasts are an effective bridge between theory and practice. Offering a transformative medium for developing leadership and emotional intelligence. Integrating podcasts into educational and organizational contexts can foster empathy, communication, and resilience. Future research should assess podcast-based learning outcomes and their long-term impacts on emotional and professional development.

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