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How generational mindsets shape perceptions of psychological services: The influence of mental health literacy and stigma across Gen Z and Gen X

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Abstract
This research compares the views of members of Generation Z & Generation X toward psychological services and looks at how stigma and lack of mental health literacy affect those views. Despite the importance of mental health literacy in increasing awareness and access to services, the stigma associated with mental health continues to be a major deterrent to seeking treatment. By comparing different generations, this study hopes to provide light on how people of different ages feel about mental health services and what variables impact people's decisions to seek treatment. To improve access to mental health services for people of all ages, we will conduct surveys to gather data, evaluate it to find gaps, and then implement targeted interventions.

Keywords: Stigma, mental health literacy, psychological services, Generation Z, Generation X, beliefs, help-seeking behaviors, attitudes, comparative analysis

Introduction
The public and academic communities have begun to pay more attention to the issue of mental health in the last few decades as it has grown in prominence across the world. More people are willing to seek out psychological help for their mental health issues now that these problems are officially recognized as real medical conditions. Age, generational disparities, and prevalent society views are some of the variables that contribute to the persistence of obstacles to psychological treatments, even if there has been progress in lowering stigma and increasing mental health knowledge.

In this dissertation, I compare and contrast two generations—Generation Z and Generation X—to see how stigma and lack of mental health literacy affect people's views on psychological treatments. The generations who came before and after Generation X—roughly speaking, those born during the mid-1960s and the early 1980s—and Generation Z—often described as digital natives—represent very different backgrounds when it comes to mental health.

This research aims to provide light on the ways in which ideas about psychological services are impacted by generational cohorts' levels of mental health awareness and the stigma associated with mental health. This study aims to compare Generation Z with Generation X in order to find out whether there are any differences in how each generation views and makes use of mental health services. In order to improve the consumption of mental health services across generations, it is essential to understand these disparities in order to build tailored treatments and support networks.

This introduction lays out the study's justification, gives a rundown of the main ideas (stigma, mental health literacy, perceptions about psychological services), and explains why it's important to look at generational disparities in how people feel about mental health services. This book will help readers better understand the complicated relationship among prejudice, mental health literacy, when generational influences on attitudes toward psychological services by delving into a thorough literature review, methodology, analysis of results, and discussion in subsequent chapters.

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Review of Literature

In recent decades, the United States has seen a dramatic increase in the number of people suffering from mental illness. The National Alliance of Mental Illness reports that 20% of American people will suffer from an emotional disorder in any one year. Mental health stigmas may have had an impact in the past, but it doesn't imply they have to in the future. Now that more people have more information on mental health, researchers are trying to find strategies to reduce stigma by educating the public. What constitutes a society's first step toward mental health literacy is the subject of this research. Participants from the Baby Boomer, Generation X, & Millennial generations were asked to self-assess and show their capacity to recognize mental illness using an online quantitative questionnaire that used quantitative data analysis. Besides the generational cohort, other dependent factors that were evaluated were educational experience to mental illness as well as personal interaction with mental disease. We enlisted 250 people, spanning three generations and a wide age range (18–74), for our research. We used IBM SPSS Statistics to examine the data. In conclusion, participants' shown capacity to diagnose mental illness was significantly impacted by generational differences at the closest closeness to oneself, but unaffected by age, number of encounters, or education. At Georgia Southern University institution's review board gave its approval to this research. (Avera, A. M. 2017).

Methodology
Aim of the study
The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of stigma and mental health literacy on beliefs regarding psychological services among Generation Z (Gen Z 12-27 years) and Generation X (Gen X 44-59 years).

Variables of the study
Independent Variable
Stigma: Stigma, as one of the independent variables, refers to the negative attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes surrounding mental health conditions. It encompasses societal prejudices and discrimination against individuals with mental health challenges, leading to social exclusion, marginalization, and reluctance to seek help. Stigma can arise from cultural norms, misinformation, fear of judgment, and lack of understanding about mental health issues.

Mental health literacy: Mental health literacy, another independent variable, represents the knowledge, awareness, and understanding of mental health conditions, their causes, symptoms, and available treatments. It includes recognizing signs of distress, understanding the importance of seeking professional help, and knowing where to access mental health resources and support. Higher levels of mental health literacy are associated with reduced stigma, increased help-seeking behaviours, and improved mental health outcomes.

Dependent Variable
Beliefs about psychological services: Beliefs about psychological services, as the dependent variable, refer to individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and expectations regarding the effectiveness, accessibility, and appropriateness of mental health services provided by psychologists or mental health professionals. These beliefs encompass factors such as perceived efficacy of therapy, trust in mental health professionals, cultural considerations, and practical barriers to accessing services.

Objective
- To examine the various belief on psychological services among Gen Z Vs. Gen X.
- To examine the impact of stigmas and Mental health literacy on beliefs about psychological services among Gen Z Vs. Gen X.
- Examine the complex relationship between stigma and Mental health literacy on beliefs about psychological services among Gen Z Vs. Gen X.

Hypothesis
- There is no significant impact of stigmas and Mental health literacy on beliefs about psychological services among Gen Z.
- There no significant impact of stigmas and Mental health literacy on beliefs about psychological services among Gen X.

Participants of the study
Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, and the sample size is 200 people. The sample includes both male and female participants. The participants in the sample fall into one of two generations: Generation X (those aged 44–59) and Generation Z (those aged 12-37).

Data Collection Instruments
The "Self Stigma of Seeking Help Scale, Mental Health Literacy Scale, and Beliefs about Psychological Services Scale" together with the demographic form will be used to collect the data for the study.

Data Collection Procedure
Three questionnaires, the "Self Stigma of Seeking Help Scale, Mental Health Literacy Scale, and Beliefs about Psychological Services Scale," were used to collect the data. Participants were given questionnaires with information on the study, privacy issues, the researcher's contact information, and other measures after the study's objectives were explained. Participants were then asked to participate in the study. It will take ten minutes to go through the instruments.

Self-Stigma of seeking help scale
Description and scoring of the scale
A psychometric test called the Self-Stigma of Seeking help Scale (SSOSH) is used to assess a person's inclination to internalize unfavorable attitudes and beliefs about getting treatment for mental health problems or emotional pain. The scale was created in the context of psychological research and evaluation with the intention of shedding light on the degree to which people could encounter self-stigma, which can act as a deterrent to seeking help from professionals when necessary. Vogel and colleagues developed this scale. The Likert-type scale is five-point dimension, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree." Four items have the reverse scoring (4, 6, 9, 10). Higher scores signify increased degrees of self-stigma.

Reliability
The total scale's internal consistency coefficient, or Cronbach's alpha, was calculated to be 0.90. Due to its high

value, the scale's items appear to have a great internal reliability, suggesting a high degree of correlation between them. The coefficient of stability, which is 0.82, shows how reliable or consistent the scale is throughout time. A relatively high degree of stability is indicated by a score of 0.82, which means that when the scale is used frequently throughout time, the findings are consistent.

Validity
The degree to which the scale corresponds with a criteria tested concurrently is shown by the concurrent validity coefficient, which is measured at 0.71. When compared to another relevant measure that is administered concurrently, the scale's result of 0.71 indicates a moderate to good level of concurrent validity, meaning that it measures what it is supposed to assess.

Mental health literacy scale
Description and scoring of the scale
The scale is designed to assess your knowledge of several facets of mental health. With regard to mental health knowledge and attitudes, this scale attempts to assess a variety of cognitive and emotional components that make up mental health literacy. O'Connor, M., and Casey, established this scale in 2015. All items' ratings are added together, accounting for reverse-scored items, to determine the final score. Respondents on a 4-point Likert scale score 1 for "extremely unlikely/unhelpful" and 4 for "very likely/helpful." Responses on a 5-point scale go from 1 representing "strongly disagree/definitely unwilling" to 5 representing "strongly agree/definitely willing" for questions. Items numbered 10, 12, 15, and 20–28 are reverse-scored. Possible scores range from 35 to 160, with 160 serving as the minimum.

Reliability
The MHLS has an internal consistency reliability of 0.640 to 0.706 and a test-retest reliability of 0.720.

Validity
The content validity test yields positive findings, with I-CVI scores ranging from 0.7 to 1.0 and S-CVI values of 0.87, 0.90, and 0.99 for the knowledge, attitude, and help-seeking behaviour questionnaires.

Beliefs about psychological services scale
Description and scoring of the scale
The BAPS was developed to measure attitudes toward approaching psychologists for psychological support. The statements were intended to address stigma and labeling associated with seeking psychological help, the likelihood of undergoing psychotherapy, the traits of psychologists, and people's perceptions of the results of psychotherapy. There are 11 favorably and 7 negatively phrased entries in the BAPS. Prior to analysis, the negatively phrased items must be reverse-scored. Items that were negatively scored were 5, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, and 17. Three variables compose the BAPS: expertise, stigma tolerance, and intent. The process of scoring involves squaring the total number of items by the sum of the values for each item on a subscale. The range of scores is 1-6. A more favorable opinion of psychologists and their services is reflected in higher ratings. In other words, higher scores correspond to higher levels of readiness to ask for help when necessary, more tolerance for

stigma, and stronger beliefs in the benefits of psychological services owing to psychologists' expertise. Stefanı´a Ægisdo´ttir and Lawrence H. Gerstein created this scale back in 2009.

Reliability
Internal consistency and item analysis were used to evaluate the BAPS (Brief Attitudes Toward Psychological Services) for reliability. The whole scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88, indicating good internal reliability. The entire scale was strongly influenced by each item, and the item-to-total correlations ranged from 0.29 to 0.69. Moreover, the item analysis revealed strong internal consistency for all three factors/subscales (Intent, Stigma Tolerance, and Expertness), with Cronbach's alphas of 0.82, 0.78, and 0.72 for each, respectively.

Validity
Using an ANOVA analysis, the BAPS (Brief Attitudes toward Psychological Services) showed validity related to the known-groups criteria. The relationship between sex and previous counseling experience did not interact ($F (1, 231) = 0.01$, $p > 0.05$). But for sex ($F (1, 231) = 41.63$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.15$), and previous counseling experience ($F (1, 231) = 20.43$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.08$), significant main effects were found. Compared to males, women scored higher ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 0.63$) and showed more favorable views about psychological services ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.66$). In the same manner, those who had counseling experience performed better than those who had not ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 0.66$ vs. $M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.67$). These findings support the known-groups criteria validity of the BAPS by indicating that it successfully distinguishes between various groups according to sex and counseling experience.

Statistical Analysis
For this study SPSS software will be used. Descriptive statistics test Regression analysis as well as Pearson Correlation was used to prove the hypothesis.

Results and Discussion
This chapter delves at the complex relationships that exist between stigma, mental health literacy, and beliefs toward psychological services between two different generational groups: Generation X (those aged 44–59) and Generation Z (those aged 12-27). As society changes, so do attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about mental health and the use of psychological services. Understanding the variables that influence these views across generations is critical for directing targeted interventions, reducing the stigma campaigns, and the promotion of mental health throughout the lifetime.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of all variables (GENZ 12-27 years)

	Stigma	Mental health literacy	Beliefs about psychological services
Mean	30.65	122.74	68.03
Standard deviation	2.739074	18.086	12.02477
N	100	100	100

The above table shows descriptive statistics for three variables among young adults aged 12-27 years: Stigma, Mental Health Literacy, and Beliefs about Psychological

Services. The data shows low stigma (mean = 30.65, SD = 2.74), high mental health literacy (mean = 122.74, SD = 18.09), and positive beliefs about psychological services (mean = 68.03, SD = 12.02) within this age group.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of all variables (GENX 44-59 years)

	Stigma	Mental health literacy	Beliefs about psychological services
Mean	20.87	73.23	36.54
Standard Deviation	7.057706	31.38675	16.34009
N	100	100	100

The above table shows presents descriptive statistics for individuals aged 44-59 (GENX) across three variables: Stigma (mean = 20.87, SD = 7.06), Mental Health Literacy (mean = 73.23, SD = 31.39), and Beliefs about Psychological Services (mean = 36.54, SD = 16.34). The data indicates moderate levels of stigma, varying levels of mental health literacy, and moderate beliefs about psychological services accessibility within this demographic.

Discussion
The analysis conducted in this chapter delved into the complex relationships existing between stigma, mental health literacy, and beliefs regarding psychological services among two distinct generational groups: Generation Z (aged 12–27) and Generation X (aged 44–59). As societal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors regarding mental health evolve over time, understanding the variables influencing these views across generations becomes crucial for directing targeted interventions, reducing stigma, and promoting mental health throughout the lifespan.

The examination of demographic data revealed differences in gender distribution and educational attainment between the two generational cohorts. For Generation Z, the majority of respondents were female, with a higher proportion holding Bachelor's degrees, while for Generation X, there was a more balanced gender distribution and a larger percentage with graduate and postgraduate qualifications.

Descriptive statistics provided insights into the levels of stigma, mental health literacy, and beliefs about psychological services within each generational group. Among Generation Z, low stigma, high mental health literacy, and positive beliefs about psychological services were observed. Conversely, Generation X exhibited moderate levels of stigma, varying levels of mental health literacy, and moderate beliefs about psychological services accessibility.

Regression analyses further elucidated the impact of stigma on beliefs regarding psychological services and mental health literacy within each generational group. For Generation Z, significant impacts of stigma on both beliefs about psychological services and mental health literacy were observed, suggesting that stigma influences their perceptions and understanding of mental health-related issues. In contrast, while stigma significantly influenced beliefs about psychological services among Generation X, it did not significantly affect mental health literacy in this cohort.

These findings underscore the importance of addressing stigma and enhancing mental health literacy to foster positive beliefs and attitudes toward psychological services,

especially among younger generations. Tailored interventions should consider generational differences in attitudes and perceptions to effectively promote mental health and well-being across the lifespan. By targeting stigma reduction and improving mental health literacy, interventions can work toward dismantling barriers to accessing psychological services and ultimately contribute to better mental health outcomes for individuals across generations.

Conclusion
In conclusion, the examination of the impact of stigma and mental health literacy on beliefs regarding psychological services among Generation Z (aged 12–27 years) and Generation X (aged 44–59 years) revealed several significant findings and implications. Throughout the analysis, it became evident that societal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors concerning mental health vary significantly across generations. Generation Z exhibited lower levels of stigma, higher mental health literacy, and more positive beliefs about psychological services compared to Generation X. These differences could be attributed to evolving societal norms, increased awareness campaigns, and advancements in mental health education and accessibility over time.

The regression analyses provided further insights into the specific influence of stigma on beliefs about psychological services and mental health literacy within each generational group. Among Generation Z, stigma significantly impacted both beliefs about psychological services and mental health literacy, highlighting the critical role stigma plays in shaping perceptions and understanding of mental health-related issues in younger populations. In contrast, while stigma significantly influenced beliefs about psychological services among Generation X, it did not significantly affect mental health literacy in this cohort, indicating potential differences in the way older generations perceive and engage with mental health services.

These findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions aimed at reducing stigma and improving mental health literacy, particularly among younger generations. By addressing these factors, we can foster more positive attitudes and beliefs toward psychological services, ultimately enhancing access to and utilization of mental health resources across generations. Tailored interventions should take into account the unique characteristics and preferences of each generational group to effectively promote mental health and well-being throughout the lifespan.

In summary, the analysis highlights the complex interplay between stigma, mental health literacy, and beliefs regarding psychological services among Generation Z and Generation X. By understanding and addressing these factors, we can work towards breaking down barriers to mental health care and fostering a society where individuals of all ages feel empowered to prioritize and maintain their mental well-being.

Recommendation
- **Education and Awareness Campaigns:** Implementing comprehensive education and awareness campaigns targeting both Generation Z and Generation X could significantly reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues. These campaigns should focus on debunking myths, providing accurate information about mental

health conditions, and promoting the efficacy of psychological services.

- **Integration into Education Systems:** Incorporating mental health education into school curricula at both secondary and tertiary levels can enhance mental health literacy among Generation Z. By providing young individuals with knowledge about mental health from an early age, it helps normalize discussions and reduces stigma.
- **Tailored Messaging and Outreach:** Recognizing the unique preferences and communication styles of each generation is crucial. Tailoring messaging and outreach efforts to resonate with both Generation Z and Generation X can increase engagement and receptiveness to mental health services.
- **Community-Based Support Programs:** Establishing community-based support programs that offer accessible and stigma-free environments for individuals to seek mental health support can be beneficial. These programs could include peer support groups, community counseling services, and mental health awareness events tailored to the preferences and needs of each generation.
- **Promotion of Digital Mental Health Resources:** Given the digital nativity of Generation Z, promoting and increasing access to digital mental health resources such as online counseling platforms, mental health apps, and virtual support groups can be effective in reaching this demographic. Similarly, providing user-friendly online resources tailored to the needs of Generation X can facilitate their access to mental health support.
- **Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusivity:** Recognizing and addressing cultural factors that influence attitudes towards mental health is essential. Efforts should be made to ensure that mental health services are culturally sensitive and inclusive, taking into account the diverse backgrounds and experiences within Generation Z and Generation X.

Limitations of the study
- **Sampling Bias:** The sample population might not have been fully representative of the entire Generation Z and Generation X cohorts due to specific demographics or recruitment methods, which could have limited the generalizability of the findings.
- **Self-Reporting Bias:** Participants might have provided responses based on social desirability or may not have accurately reported their beliefs and attitudes towards psychological services, leading to biased results.
- **Limited Scope of Mental Health Literacy:** The study might not have comprehensively measured all aspects of mental health literacy relevant to beliefs about psychological services, potentially overlooking certain crucial factors that could influence perceptions.
- **Cross-Sectional Design:** The cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to establish causal relationships between stigma, mental health literacy, and beliefs about psychological services. Longitudinal studies would be more appropriate to determine the direction of causality.
- **Measurement Challenges:** The tools used to measure stigma, mental health literacy, and beliefs about psychological services might not have been sufficiently validated or reliable, which could have affected the accuracy of the findings.
- **Age Group Homogeneity:** While the study focused on Generation Z and Generation X, within each generation, there may be diverse subgroups with differing cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds. Failing to account for these differences might limit the study's applicability to broader populations.

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