



AVIKA

Expanding VR Therapy into Mental
Wellness for India's Youth

Group 7 - Acheivers



UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE

SCQA Framework

Situation

Mental health awareness is rising in India, especially among urban youth. Avika offers VR-based therapy as a more engaging and less intimidating alternative to traditional formats.

Complication

Despite this, therapy adoption remains low due to stigma, cost, and limited access—especially in Tier 2 cities. VR therapy is still new, with little data on who's willing to use it or why others hesitate.

Question

Who is open to VR-based therapy? What makes them interested in trying it? And what prevents others—across different social, regional, and economic segments from engaging.

Answer

We used surveys, interviews, a VR trial, and secondary research to uncover user needs. The findings show strong youth interest and position VR therapy as a self-guided, non-clinical wellness tool.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Why Traditional Therapy Isn't Working for Everyone

- Many associate therapy with being "seriously unwell" — stigma still runs deep.
- Face-to-face therapy feels intimidating for first-time users.
- Online therapy is more accessible but lacks emotional connection.
- People prefer to handle emotions privately rather than seek help.
- Gen Z is already comfortable with immersive platforms like VR through gaming and learning.
- Over 40% of Gen Z in India have shown interest in VR for emotional engagement (KPMG, 2022).
- VR can reframe wellness as a calming, guided experience—not a clinical session.

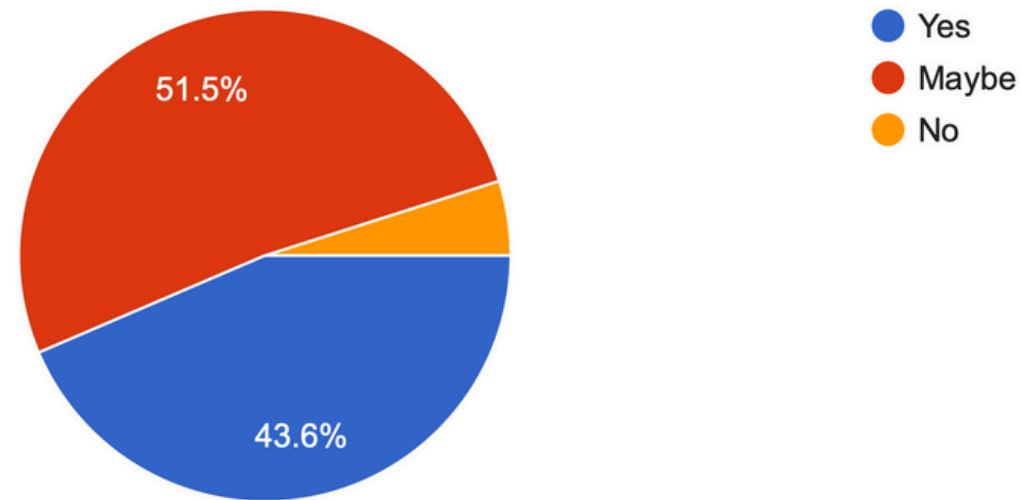


ONLINE SURVEYS



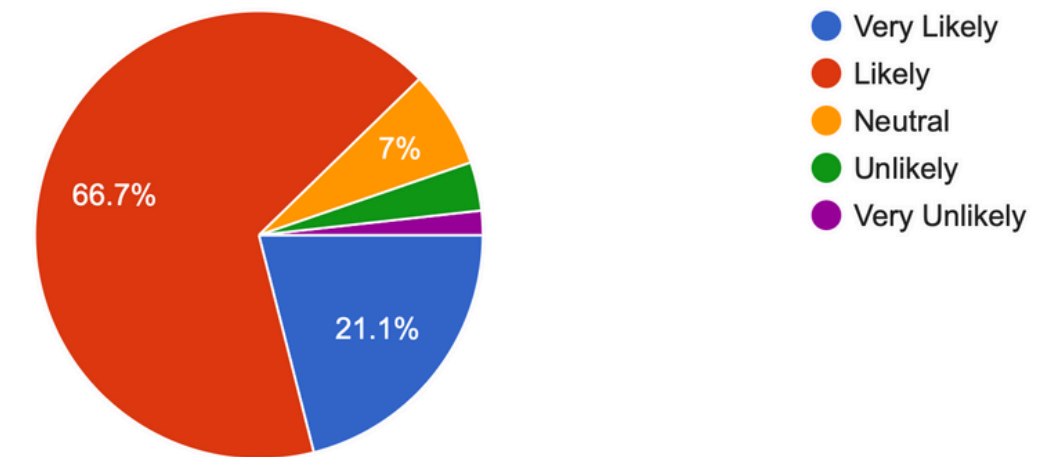
Would you try an experience that uses calming sounds and visuals?

163 responses



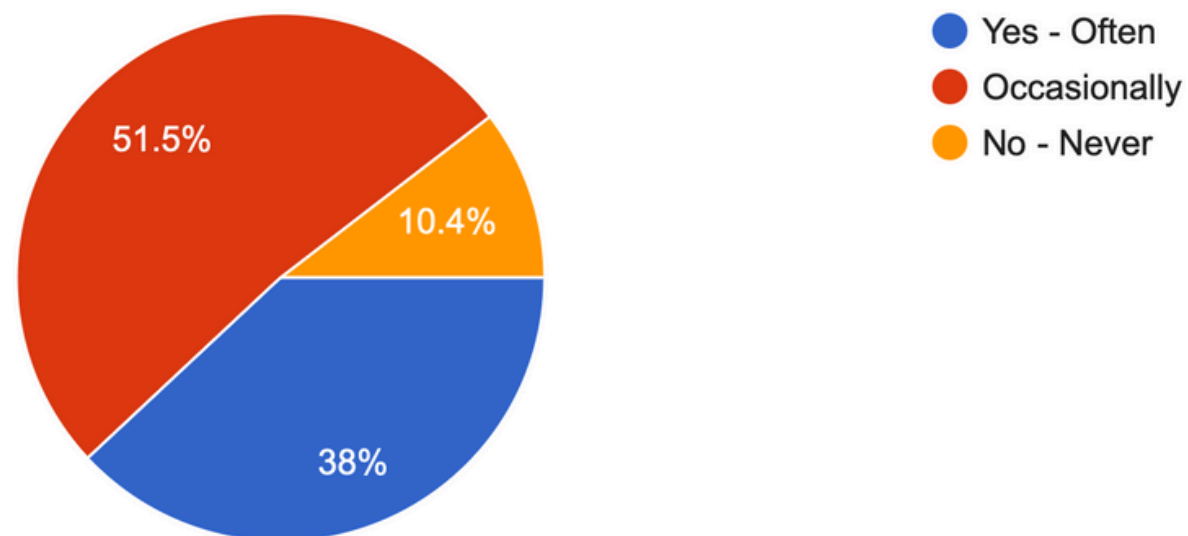
How likely are you to use VR therapy again as a tool for managing stress, anxiety, or emotional well-being?

57 responses



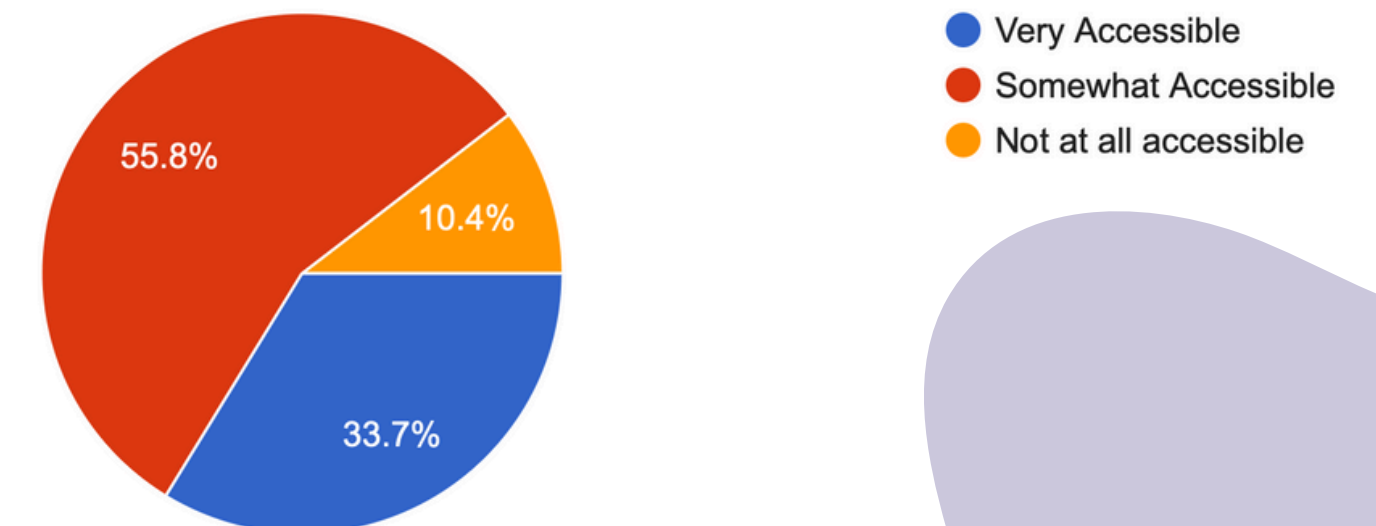
Do you primarily use virtual reality for gaming, work, or other forms of entertainment?

163 responses



How accessible do you find therapy options in your area?

163 responses



INTERVIEWS

- The Avika Capstone project's interviews played an important role in understanding the emotional and cultural considerations that contribute to Indian youth's mental health. 50 in-depth interviews among students were undertaken for evaluating individual attitudes towards therapy and technology-based wellness solutions.
- The interview results showed an appreciable number of young adults between the ages of 18–24 years being open to new mental health modalities like virtual reality while being apprehensive about traditional therapy due to its presumptive formality and stigma against it.
- The qualitative findings indicated a strong shift towards informal, confidential, and non-diagnostic wellness approaches, typically articulated in terms of self-care and not treatment.
- The participants highlighted the appeal of immersive and calming experiences, and they endorsed visual over verbal interaction. These findings reinforce the need for culturally relevant, emotionally safe, and technology-based methodologies in dealing with mental well-being for Generation Z consumers



VR TRIALS

50 students participated in the VR experiment. We used calming and exposure-based environments to capture emotional responses and adoption intent.

- 60% of participants reported feeling significantly calmer and more emotionally regulated after the session.
- 24% experienced moderate improvement, citing mood uplift and temporary relief from stress or overthinking.
- 16% did not find the session effective but still showed curiosity about future VR-based wellness experiences.

Positioning it as “self-care” or “mental reset” increases adoption vs. calling it “therapy”



VR EXPERIENCE

Two of the videos we used during the VR experiment were selected to induce calm and serene feelings, helping participants unwind and relieve stress through immersive nature-based visuals and ambient soundscapes.



[https://youtu.be/Lcg2wf5YSbs?
si=VuPg1MWJmJRPVRVO](https://youtu.be/Lcg2wf5YSbs?si=VuPg1MWJmJRPVRVO)



[https://youtu.be/VQQ8pCnrQdU?si=1py2y-
ppNrXI7FD4](https://youtu.be/VQQ8pCnrQdU?si=1py2y-ppNrXI7FD4)

SECONDARY RESEARCH

- Limited VR Adoption in Tier 2 Cities: Digital health growth here is largely mobile-first; VR adoption is slowed by cost, low awareness, and lack of local content (Express Healthcare, 2023).
- Cultural Fit is Crucial: Emotional safety and user trust improve when VR experiences are localized in language, tone, and visuals (Confluence Journal, 2022).
- VR in Mental Health is Clinically Promising: Effective for anxiety, phobias, and PTSD—especially when used in exposure therapy. However, experts stress the need for professional supervision.
- Generational Divide in Tech Familiarity: Tier 1 youth are more comfortable with VR due to prior exposure in gaming and education, while Tier 2 users need onboarding support (KPMG India, 2022).

INSIGHTS

Therapy is still seen as intense & judgmental

- Cultural stigma leads users to avoid formal therapy
- Many prefer to handle emotions privately
- Therapy is associated with "serious problems," deterring first-time users

Gen Z shows strong interest in VR

- 80% of 18–24-year-olds are open to VR wellness tools
- Older users (32–50) showed only 15–20% interest
- Gen Z's prior exposure through gaming and social media builds comfort with VR

Users want self-guided, calming experiences

- Nature visuals (e.g., starry skies, beaches) preferred
- Minimal narration > voice-based prompts
- Users feel safer with tools that offer privacy and personal pacing



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Translate experiences into regional languages and use culturally familiar visuals to build emotional connection, especially in Tier 2 and semi-urban areas.
- Introduce users to wellness through mobile-first formats like guided breathing, AR filters, or 2D videos to ease them into VR gradually.

- Partner with licensed psychologists to create VR content that is emotionally safe, therapeutic, and aligned with user wellness goals.
- Use low-cost VR kiosks in schools, colleges, and wellness cafés to reduce hardware barriers and increase exposure.

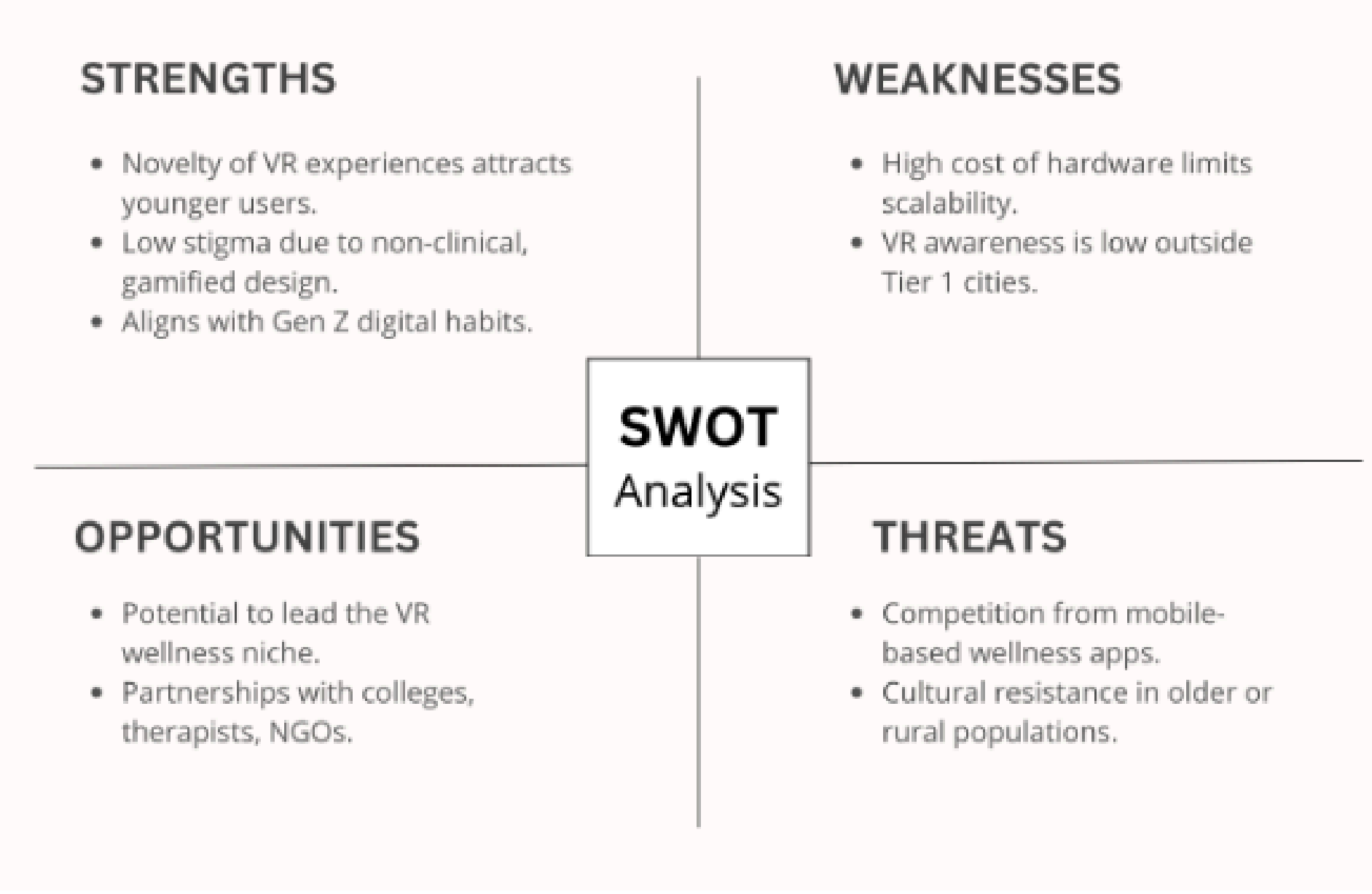
- Include pre- and post-session check-ins on mood or stress to track impact, and refine content based on engagement and feedback.
- Position the experience as a calming, private “mental reset” rather than therapy, to reduce stigma and increase adoption.



OUTPUTS

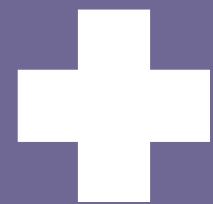
SWOT ANALYSIS

Adoption Barriers Framework



Factor	Tier 1 Cities	Tier 2 Cities
Awareness	High (especially among students)	Moderate to low
Tech Familiarity	High (VR via gaming/learning)	Low to moderate
Cost Sensitivity	Medium	High
Preferred Format	Self-guided & private	Mobile-first, familiar, regionalized

OUTPUTS



Business Model

Product: Custom-designed, guided VR wellness experiences focused on emotional regulation, stress relief, and exposure-based support. Experiences are developed in collaboration with mental health professionals to ensure emotional safety and cultural relevance.

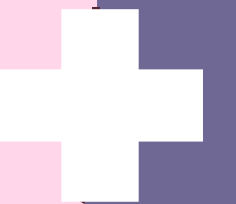
Pricing: A freemium model, where core experiences are offered free, and advanced modules are available through paid subscriptions. Custom pricing bundles can be offered to educational institutions, wellness hubs, or corporate partners.

Distribution Channels

- Campus activations and demo booths in colleges and universities to drive early adoption.
- YouTube previews and short-form content to showcase VR modules and generate awareness.
- Influencer collaborations with wellness creators and mental health advocates to build trust and reach Gen Z audiences.

Strategic Partnerships

- Educational institutions to integrate VR into student wellness programs.
- Wellness cafés, libraries, and co-working spaces to offer headset-based experiences in shared settings.
- Therapy networks and digital health platforms to position VR as a complementary self-guided tool.



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**THANK
YOU**