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INTRODUCTION

Technology and its advancement are here to stay, in fact, we all encounter it in some area of our everyday life whether that be at work or in the home. Since its integration of access into the public, America has also seen a rise in mental health issues, yet technology is often overlooked when it comes to its effects on mental health due to its over exaggeration of reliability to the average joe.

In this study I will be taking a closer look at the impact of technology and how it is affecting mental health due to excess in its usage. Technology is no longer used as just an instrument in the industrial business or corporate world. It is now a primary source for socialization, contact, education and much more of what we as humans are known to rely on, and its side effects on society should not be overlooked because it has become a powerful influence on society.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the relationship with the rise in mental health issues and technology?

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

An experimental study examined the social and psychological impact of the internet, Internet paradox: A social technology that reduces social involvement and psychological well-being? (Kraut, R., et al, 1998). Data was collected from participants over the course of 12-24 months. The study focused on the impact of the internet and hypothesized that the internet would change the lives of average citizens just as the telephone and television did. The results in this study found that when it came to family communication the internet was associated with a decline in family interaction. When it came to psychological well-being and internet it found that people who used the internet more reported increases in loneliness. When it came to stress and internet usage the study showed an increase in stress; but it did not find a common route to why stress was increased. When it came to depression internet usage was associated with an increase in symptoms of depression.

In another study that looked at technology usage in early adolescents it found that daily technology usage had a robust association with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder ADHD and conduct disorder (CD) (George, M., 2018). In another study with participants spanning through ages 16-88 it was found that participants with an existing mental health disorder are more likely to become addicted to social media and video games (Andreassen, C., 2016).

There are far too many studies that have been showing the positive correlations with excessive technology usage and adverse effects in mental health. In my study I hope to present enough data to convince people to moderate their screen time usage, and find more organic ways to influence their daily lives.

METHOD

Design

A descriptive measures design will be used to conduct secondary research on systematic review of literature using both qualitative analyses to assess surveys, and cross-sectional studies, as well as rhetorical criticism to measure my operationalized theories and concepts. Using literature review along with rhetorical criticism I was able to answer my research question on how excessive screen time has shown its effects on mental health since its easy accessibility was introduced into the everyday American home. Quantitative analyses will be used to analyze numerical data presented. A survey will be made available on SONA to California State University, Stanislaus (CSU Stanislaus).

Participants

This study will be made up of at least XX students from CSU Stanislaus. Participants will include both undergraduate and graduate students. Extra credit may be given based on professor's approval.

Materials

The study will consist of a demographic survey to identify participants age, gender, ethnicity and year in college. The use of primary and secondary sources helped me to answer my research question on what types of mental health issues have been shown to have a positive relationship with digital technology usage. I used the school's library database as well as google scholar to retrieve relevant studies and research on how technology has impacted mental health since its introduction into the general population in the early 20th century.

Procedure

A cross sectional study will be conducted to measure the frequency of mental health issues reported, and analytics to quantify the exposure of excessive screen time usage, and its impact on psychological well-being. Using previous research, I was able to analyze data concluding that families who had no prior internet access and were given accessibility to technology via the internet that negative outcomes in the family homes were reported such as decline in family interaction, loneliness, increase in stress and an increase in symptoms of depression (Kraut, R., et al, 1998). This research was able to give me background on how screen time effects were displayed initially before technology advanced to where screen time stands today. More current literature review allowed me to investigate how technology, specifically social media, and video game usage, fifteen years led to addictive use and positive associations with anxiety, depression, ADHD, and OCD (Andressaen, C., et al...2016)

SIGNIFICANCE

By contributing more data and recognition to the ongoing mental health crisis we are currently facing as a nation, I hope to bring more awareness on the potential side effects of excessive screen time and how it plays a role in contributing to various mental health conditions. With more awareness, more treatment can be made available.

EXPECTED CONCLUSION

I hypothesize that higher usage of screen time will have positive relationships with various mental health disorders such as, depression, anxiety, ADHD, stress, and emotional regression. With more people turning to technology for their basic human needs to be met such as social interaction, I suspect that like anything else in excess amounts there will be negative consequences.

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