

The Positive and Negative Mental Health Impacts of Social Media and Digital Technology

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Introduction

Over the years, social media and digital technologies have had a huge impact on societies, most notably on young people (Marks, Fleming, Long, & McMillan, 2000). So big has been the effect on the youth that it is now a chief concern amongst researchers who are looking to discover ways to reduce the negative effects and, if likely, help the consumers to positively apply them for their gain (Cunneen & White, 2011). The aim of this research, therefore, is to find out both the [positive and negative effects of social media](#) on Indigenous youth, particularly in Australia. As such, this research will seek to come up with the findings by studying initially recorded research on the topic (Hunter & Harvey, 2002).

Study Variables

This study was intended for native youths living in Australia with the age range between 15 to 35 years, who have the ability to use several social media podiums as well as digital technology, and those who are utilizing them. Also, this study aims to define the length of time spent by social media users and the exact sites and platforms frequently used by the youth.

Hypothesis

The use of social media and digital technologies has both positive and negative impacts on the Australian youth.

Study Population

The study population in our study is specifically the indigenous youths in Australia of an age bracket between 15-35 years. These youths' mental health is considered in analyzing the social media impact as well as digital technology, both negative and positive (Wilson, 2008).

Research Methodology

Research Design

The quantitative research design is the right means of obtaining research on these effects. By definition, quantitative research refers to the empirical investigation of physically tangible phenomena by statistical, mathematical, or computational means (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Quantitative research aims at developing mathematical models, hypotheses, and theories that are connected to a given phenomenon. It is often seen as the direct opposite of qualitative research, which inquires much into particular situations and experiences with an aim to explain the meanings of things through text or visual-based aid (Kazdin, 2003).

Sampling

In carrying out the research, a sample has to be taken to represent the larger population in the entire country (Blagg, 1997). As such a good sampling method has to be sought from among the following depending on its suitability for the study: stratified sampling, Simple Random Sampling, systematic sampling cluster sampling, and finally multistage sampling. That which is to be used must be suitable enough to reduce the chances of error or inconveniences occurring (Singleton Jr, Straits, Straits, & McAllister, 1988).

Methods of Data Collection

There are certain means by which data can be obtained from any kind of research in question. Amongst them, they include questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observations, and secondary means such as documents and records, and ethnographies (Mugenda, 1999). All these can be applied to our study relying on their disadvantages and advantages, which in turn determine the suitability of a method to be used (Johnson & Turner, 2003).

Interviews

Interviews simply involve gathering information orally, asking respondents questions, and recording the responses right there and then (Aguinis & Henle, 2002).

Advantages

There is ease in correcting the speech. It gets easy to clarify oneself because both the interviewee and interviewer are physically together as well as can, easily move step by step with extreme clarity

(Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 1993).

In the process of the interview, a good relationship is created between the respondent and the interviewer, which may increase cooperation and mutual understanding between the two; hence easy to get correct responses because of the frankness of the parties to each other.

Interviews are rated the best in collecting primary first-hand data.

Sufficient and even extra information can be obtained from interviewees, hence increasing clarity even more.

Interviews help save time, and they are not costly concerning finances.

Disadvantages

Data collected may not be properly collected, because the interviewer may get the interviewee out of context (Aguinis & Henle, 2002).

Insufficient concentration by parties may lead to the intended data getting distorted.

It is only less costly when involving one interviewee but tremendously time-consuming and expensive when comprising large populations (Aguinis & Henle, 2002).

A Questionnaires

A questionnaire is simply a list of questions prepared by a researcher and presented to a respondent in a bid to collect some data on a given subject (Aguinis & Henle, 2002).

Advantages

A large amount of data can be collected from quite many few people within a short time, compared to other means of data collection.

It can be carried out by the researchers themselves or even other people to whom the work is designated without affecting the validity or reliability of the information obtained.

It allows easy data analysis that is obtained by a questionnaire more scientifically than other means of data collection(Aguinis & Henle, 2002).

Disadvantages

Unlike interviews, the questionnaire is insufficient for understanding certain other factors like changes in behaviors, emotions, and other things that can easily modify the respondents' answers (Aguinis & Henle, 2002).

It is hard to justify whether or not the respondent was truthful while filling out the questionnaire.

Data collected by questionnaires may greatly lack credibility because it is hard to know how much thought the respondents gave the answers they gave.

The responses obtained may not be exactly as per the expectations of the study, because people understand the questions differently, hence may get out of context.

It is worth noting that for whichever method is used in collecting data, problems are likely to occur. Some of the problems include but are not limited to the following:

Inaccessibility to some geographical areas due to such things as poor infrastructure, unfavorable weather conditions, or even political unrest;

In cooperation on the respondents' side, where respondents may not be willing to respond or may respond unwillingly, hence rendering untrue or incorrect information;

There may occur the problem of a language barrier, or if a translator is sought, there are chances of information getting distorted.

Methods of Data Analysis

There are five main analyzing data methods that are obtained from the research ground, i.e. the mean, regression, sample size estimating, hypothesis testing, and standard deviation. All these methods may be used simultaneously or solely relying on the necessity at one given time. They are debated hereunder.

The mean, on the other hand, is known as the average arithmetic or the mean simply is the given commodities total divided by a value of the total items provided. It is helpful when seeking to get the overall trend of a given data as well as is accredited as a very easy in determine the trend.

Standard deviation is a term used to refer to when speaking of the measure of a spread around the mean. While a large deviation indicates that data is widely spread from the mean, a small deviation is an implication of a small spread. It is used in measuring the dispersion of data points.

Regression seeks to show the relationship between the auxiliary /explanatory/ independent variables and the dependent, usually shown on a scatter box, to show the closeness between the variables

(Aguinis & Henle, 2002).

A hypothesis test, on the other hand, refers to the empirical methods used to determine whether or not a given premise is true for a given data set or populace.

Methods of Data Presentation

There are certain data presentation methods, which may be used relying on necessity. Most famous of these include graphical techniques which include pie charts, bar graphs, histograms, and line graphs.

Bar graphs are used to show a summary of a set of given data that is categorically arranged. It displays the data by use of rectangles of the same width and whose length depends on the quantity of a given dataset, such that the longer the rectangle, the more that commodity is. The bars can be arranged horizontally or vertically with a separating gap between them. They are credited with giving a clear and pleasant visual impression and being easy to construct and interpret (Aguinis & Henle, 2002).

Histograms are used in summarising data that is measured on an interval scale that is both discrete and concrete data. It is mainly used in illustrating features of the distribution of data in a more effective and easy form (Aguinis & Henle, 2002).

A pie chart, on the other hand, refers to a circle that is divided in such a manner that a given angle represents a certain percentage of data. The bigger a portion a given data is occupying, the greater the percentage it has. It is credited with being one of the most convenient for creating, interpreting, and illustrating information.

To research the effects of social media on the youth, a questionnaire is to be used. The questionnaire is out to achieve the objectives mentioned above. To make the results comprehensible, graphs will be prepared to depict the findings. As well, interviews will be conducted, and the findings will be recorded in books and tapes for future retrieval. A questionnaire will be the most convenient especially if supplied to the potential respondents who are already using social media, while the interviews have been prepared for those who may not be using social media platforms. To find this second category, a simple question like whether or not they are on social media platforms can be asked orally before the interview proceeds further (Aguinis & Henle, 2002).

Rigour And Limitations Of The Study

Some people may give incorrect information that does not aid in acquiring the correct details leading to wrong data correction.

Accessing the indigenous youth may be tiresome to some extent due to poor infrastructure.

The language barrier may arise in some of the areas leading to hard ways of collecting data that is to be used in an analysis.

Possible Solutions

Keeping the people's privacy assurance for them to give genuine information on the study topic.

Having interpreters in areas where the language barrier is evident.

Ethics

Ethical principles will be observed in the data collection and reports (Baumrind, 1964). It is essential to know in advance the ethical implications of this study before going into the field to avoid problems. As such care must be taken to ensure none of those likely to be asked questions will feel offended or fear that their privacy will be made public. Therefore, it will be necessary to ensure steps are taken to increase the privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of the respondents. This will assure the respondents that the results will have a higher chance of being credible.

Privacy

Maintaining the privacy of the people is an important issue. All people involved in the study will have their privacy preserved, and their consent is highly valued.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the people is highly valued during the research no information should be given out without their consent.

Beneficence

The research will benefit people in that they will understand the effect of social media and technology on their mental health (Alderson & Morrow, 2004).

Autonomy

The research is done for the interest of the community; it aims at advancing their way of living as well as staying mentally healthy (Gregory, 2003).

Preliminary Suppositions And Implications

Though there has been some research in the past on the effects of social media, no research has been done specifically for the Indigenous youth in Australia (Cairnduff, 2001). As such, this research should not be taken lightly; it gives how specific it has been designed for the indigenous Australian youths. Therefore, this research will aid in understanding the clinical effects of social media and technology on Indigenous Australian youths.

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