

Title: Social Media: Friend or Foe?

Presenter: Christian Zamorano, Mt. San Antonio College

Mentor: Misty Kolchakian

Over the past decade, along with the boom of social media, anxiety and media addiction have also grown. In recent years, researchers have devoted more time to examining the correlation between social media and anxiety and addiction. Numerous studies have shown an increasing association between heavy media use and mental health problems (Becker, Azahabi, & Hopwood, n.d.). Researchers conclude that the first step to identifying addiction is to determine the foundation for the emotional and mental attachment (Cabral, 2011). The purpose of this study is to analyze the research on social media use and its possible links to anxiety and depression to determine if social media is as harmful as some believe. Many benefits are often overlooked, including personal, medical, and business-related. Barnhart (2019) discussed the numerous benefits of social media and concluded that it improves most aspects of small businesses, specifically marketing and branding. Moorhead et al (2013) found many uses and benefits of social media for health communication. Studies have shown that people are becoming more aware of detrimental mental health effects of overuse of social media, and some decide to go through periods of purging of social media to rejuvenate their mental health. Society needs to be more aware of the impacts of their usage, and future researchers should examine how the social media purging affected mental health outcomes. In conclusion, evidence exists on both sides of the social media debate, and users must use social media judiciously while avoiding the traps of social media addiction.

References

- Barnhart, B. (2019 July). The 9 most overlooked benefits of social media. Retrieved from <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/benefits-of-social-media/>
- Becker, M.W., Alzahabi, R., & Hopwood, C.J. (2013, Feb). Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking. Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2012.0291>
- Cabral, J. (2011). Is Generation Y addicted to social media? *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 1, 5-14.
- Moorhead, S.A., Hazlett, D.E., Harrison, L, Carroll J.K., Irwin, A.,& Hoving, C. (2013). A New Dimension of Health Care: Systematic Review of the Uses, Benefits, and Limitations of Social Media for Health Communication, *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 15(4):e85.
- Shensa, A., Sidani, J.E., Dew, M.A., Escobar-Viera, C.G., & Primack, B.A. (2018, March). Social media use and depression and anxiety symptoms: A cluster analysis, *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 42(2), 116-128.