Identifying Mental Health Issues in the Tech Industry

Brittany Stenekes (bss99), William Xiao (wmx2), and Sami Smalling (ss2676)

Question

What are the greatest catalysts for mental illness in the workplace?

Proposal

Mental health is a serious issue which is garnering more attention given the movement to virtual work and schooling due to the pandemic. The technology industry more specifically is known for being male-dominated with high pressure to perform and compete which can make it difficult for employees to speak out and ask for help. We believe we can provide assistance in the detection and awareness of mental health in the tech industry by investigating survey data from respondents.

Open Source Mental Illness (OSMI) conducts a Mental Health in Tech Survey[1] on an annual basis. In addition to demographic information of the participants, including age, gender, and country, the survey includes details about employment environments. The survey includes questions about discussing mental health concerns with employers, benefits and wellness packages, remote employment, and employee performance consequences. The participant's family history of mental health, and historical mental health treatment that they have or have not sought is also included. This combination of demographic, employment, and personal response data should enable us to explore who is at risk for mental health complications and why.

Investigating mental health in the tech industry could reveal current pitfalls that exist in a company's organizational structure. Moreover, publicizing results could de-stigmatize the conversation about mental health in the workplace and ideally encourage employers and employees to take mental health seriously.

This endeavor of trying to unearth trends in mental health issues in the tech industry will succeed not only because of the availability and amount of data, but also because, as students going into technical fields ourselves, we understand the situation and context that cause this stigma to arise, and can relate more deeply to it. We are first hand witnesses of its detrimental effects, and have strong motivations to come up with a reliable indicator, so we can help identify the problem at its source, and help others heal.

References

1. https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml
2. https://www.valuepenguin.com/average-small-business-loan-interest-rates