# Impact of Social Media on Youth Identity and Social Relationships

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**Abstract:** *The youth has made social media a major aspect of their day-to-day lives, and it has greatly influenced their lifestyles, behavior, and socialization. This paper examines how social media has affected the identity construction and social relationships among the youths (15-25 years old). A quantitative research design was utilized and the research data was gathered using 150 respondents by administration of structured questionnaires. The survey was done on the patterns of social media use, self-perception, peer influence and the quality of interpersonal relationships. Interpretation of the data showed that the social media has a mixed outcome, being both affirming, socially connected and open minded, and causing identity confusion, social comparison, and face-to-face performance. The young (1517 years) participants had high online social bonds and average identity clarity, and the older (2125 years) youth had better identity awareness and lower real-life social ties. The research points out that education and social media literacy programs are imperative to promote responsible social media use. Knowing the multifaceted nature of the connection between online interaction, identity, and social interactions, educators, parents, and policymakers can help youngsters to build positive self-perception and interpersonal relationships in an online-connected world*

**Keywords*:*** Social media, Youth, Formation of identity, Social relationships, Self-perception, Peer influence, Digital literacy

## I. INTRODUCTION

The radical emergence of such social media as Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook, and Snapchat has radically changed how youths communicate, express themselves, and create social connections. These electronic spaces have become part of day to day living and they have offered a platform on which youths socialize as well as shape and negotiate their identities. Adolescence and young adulthood are developmental stages that are typified by exploration, self definition, and social comparison. In this respect, social media serves as a mirror and a stage: it should reflect issues of self presentation among young people and also intensify social norms and expectations by publicizing peer reactions.

Researchers have observed that online interaction is progressively mediating identity formation processes with feedback tools of likes, comments and shares playing the role of strong social cues through which self perceptions and self presentation are formed[1]. Because of the social interactions that define identity development in the traditional offline environment, family, school and community interactions, online spaces allow curated self representations that are not always guided by authenticity, but might instead be driven by popularity and social approval. This has been seen to not only enable the youth to explore various dimensions about their personality but also overemphasize the value of social acceptance, and so end up overemphasizing the role of external confirmation[2].

The power of social media is not restricted to identity, but it reaches to the relationship sphere. This is because digital communication tools enable youth to sustain and create new relationships despite geographical areas and ensure a

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feeling of community and belonging[3]. To the majority of the youth, the internet interactions complement their face-to-face social lives, which offers them a sense of constant connectivity and instant communication. Nevertheless, studies indicate that the quality of such relationships can be dynamic; although certain online interactions are beneficial to the level of social support, others may be shallow and lack depth and emotional richness when contrasted to face to face interaction[4]. Digital communication is not always as intimate as face to face communication and this aspect often results in shallow relationships that do not satisfy the deeper connectedness needs that face to face communication often offers.

The benefits of using social media are that it offers more self expression, peer support and it brings exposure to various opinions. The platforms have the potential to serve as forums of creativity, activism, and exploration of identity, especially to marginalized youth who may not have such support networks elsewhere. Furthermore, digital spaces can be used to seek advice and connect communities around common interests which strengthen social bonding which might be challenging in real life.

Although this may have beneficial effects, social media has been identified to cause many adverse consequences in circumstances where its use is excessive, unregulated, or motivated by social comparison. Another area of concern is the effect it has on mental well being as research suggests that there are links between excessive consumption of social media and elevated rates of anxiety, depression and low self esteem in adolescents[5]. The above psychological effects are usually associated with extensive social comparisons where young people compare their lives to ideal pictures of peers found through the internet. The aesthetic quality of the social media content can build an unrealistic expectation on how someone should look, perform, and social positions, leading to inappropriateness.

Another problem of the digital sphere is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying has the potential to engage many people at the same time unlike traditional bullying, which has a certain context such as school or even in extracurricular activities. Such ubiquitousness of online bullying may increase perceptions of vulnerability among young people and hinder the process of healthy socialization. To other people, bad experiences on the internet can create social phobia, a sense of increased social anxiety or desire not to interact with other people in physical spaces, which can negate the possible advantages of digital connection.

The concept of a distorted self image is also present when it comes to the effects of social media on the youth. The digital platforms tend to promote image centric communication in which photographs, videos and aesthetic presentation are given preference over other modes of expression. The active use of appearance oriented content may solidify thin beauty ideals and encourage a tendency to feel dissatisfied with ones body especially when its used by adolescent girls and young women. Although young people may be aware that online depictions are unrealistic, the constant exposure to such information may have a negative effect on their self image and value systems.

Moreover, attention and concentration may also be interrupted by the presence of social media on all occasions, which has consequences in academic performance and face-to-face social interactions. The obsessive checking of the notification and feeds can interrupt the attention pattern, decreasing the chances of meaningful thought and long-term interpersonal communication. Teens who spend a lot of time on the Internet can be unable to balance the use of the Internet and the rest of the developmental priorities, including academic success, personal interests, and face-to-face friendship.

The fact that educators, parents, and policymakers are struggling with these complex effects makes it apparent that social media is not entirely positive or bad. Instead, its impact is multifaceted and depends on other variables and factors that include the way it is used, the temperament of the individual, social environment, and the quality of the offline relationships. The issue of the influence of social media on identity and social relations needs to be thoroughly studied that takes into consideration both opportunities and threats that digital interactions pose. The current research is part of that undertaking because it systematically analyzes such dynamics in the youth between the ages of 15 and 25.

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**Research Questions**

1. What is the impact of social media taking by the youths between the ages of 15 and 25 on their identity development?
2. How does social media use relate to the quality of peer relationships among young adults and adolescents?
3. What is the relationship between various patterns of social media use (frequency, type of platform, and purpose) and youth psychological well-being?
4. What are some of the positive attributes of social media with respect to identity formation and social connectedness among the youth?
5. What is the moderating influence of both age and the stage of development on the effect of social media on identity and social relations?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Past studies indicate the advantages as well as the disadvantages of using social media among the young people:

### 1. Identity Formation

One of the contexts through which identity is explored by adolescents and young adults has become the social media. There is no family, school, and peer interaction in online space, unlike offline space where identity formation is usually carried out; therefore, the online space enables young people to explore various selves, determine their self-worth, and their social selves. The applications such as Instagram, Tik Tok, and Snapchat allow teenagers to create personal profiles, express interests, and get an immediate response in the form of likes, comments, or shares. This is a personal branding process which lets the youth to emphasize on the attributes that they appreciate giving them a boost of confidence. It has been found out that positive peer feedback improves the clarity of identity and the continuation of a consistent self concept whereas negative or no feedback may create self doubt and insecurity[6]. Moreover, social media allows exploring identity through experimentation that may not be easy in the real world, such as demonstrating marginalized identity or testing new social roles. Nonetheless, the high focus on the external validation can impose some stresses that disrupt the genuine self-expression because teenagers can make a major focus on popularity or compliance more than on personal preferences[7]. This interaction renders identity creation in the digital era not only a possibility but also a challenge. The adolescents are bound to balance individual exploration and social acceptance, social media is a multi-faceted and focal point of personal and social identity formation.

### 2. Social Relationships

Young people have adapted social relationships in social media through the establishment, maintenance, and the experience of social relationship through the social media. The application of WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook to enable around-the-clock communication allows adolescents to be in contact with friends regardless of geographical location. Social connectedness can be strengthened through online interaction, which has the potential of generating peer support, common experiences and group belonging[8]. In fact, youths tend to organize, swap tips or give emotional assistance virtually and this brings a sense of social unity. Nevertheless, there are instances where these online interactions might at times cost some relationship expertise in the offline world. Studies have shown that teenagers who communicate extensively using digital media can become less socially competent in face to face social interactions, such as conflict management and nonverbal communication, which are essential to healthy relationships[9]. Also, feelings of inadequacy, social comparison, and even loneliness can be the results of being exposed to edited images of lives of

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peers. Online time could replace in-person communication, which might lower the level of relationship and emotional reciprocity. Nevertheless, in spite of these difficulties, social media provide some exceptional chances to keep long-distance friendships, get in touch with the participation in various social groups, and communities of common interest. Therefore, as much as online interaction is capable of improving connectedness, it is important that it be accompanied with face-to-face interaction to ensure high-quality social relationships.

## 3. Psychological Effects

Social media use among adolescents has involved a lot of psychological impacts especially as its usage becomes more intensive and more frequent. Research has continually found the increased use of social media to be associated with high rates of anxiety, depression, and body image dissatisfaction[10]. A major mechanism that explains such outcomes is social comparison, as adolescents compare their appearance, their achievements, and social status with idealized images of peers and influencers on the Internet. Such comparisons have the potential to lower the self esteem and increase the emotional distress. Furthermore, social feedback can be more immediate and permanent (in the case of likes, comments, or reposts), and it can increase the sensitivity to perceived social rejection or exclusion. The level of body image dissatisfaction is especially high among teenagers who are exposed to content based on images that often reinforce thin and unrealistic beauty ideals[11]. Continued stress to look good online and to be attractive can make individuals susceptible to mood disorders and more so in adolescence where people are so self-conscious. Nonetheless, these psychological influences are all subject to moderation by individual differences (resilience, offline support, and purposeful use of social media). The subtle interaction between digital interaction and mental health is one of the key factors to be grasped when creating an intervention that will promote responsible, careful, and healthy social media use in the young population.

## 4. Positive Engagement

Social media has a number of opportunities to engage positively to facilitate the growth of the youth although there are fears about the risks involved. Learning communities created on the platforms offer a chance to exchange knowledge, work collectively on a project, and find academic or creative assistance [12]. Peer support groups, especially those where members have common issues like mental struggles or minority groups, might offer empathy, advice, and coping mechanisms that might be unavailable online. Civic engagement, activism and community participation is another way social media enhances participation among the youth in organizing themselves around social causes and becoming leaders[13]. Cultural awareness, empathy and social understanding may be encouraged by exposure to different views through digital networks. Furthermore, employed purposefully, i.e. by joining interest-based groups or having a meaningful conversation, social media may lead to the increase in relations satisfaction, self-confidence, and identity coherence. All these positive results demonstrate that the impact of social media is not universal and varies greatly depending on how people use it and what is the purpose. Through positive and goal-oriented communication on the internet, social media would become a beneficial instrument of personal development, social growth and identity exploration; it would not substitute any offline experience but supplement it.

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## III. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

**Aim:** To investigate the impact of social media on youth identity and social relationships.

**Objectives:**

1. Examine how social media influences youth self-perception.
2. Assess the effect of online engagement on peer relationships.
3. Identify patterns of social media usage and their correlation with social connectedness.

## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Research Design**

The research design used in this study is the quantitative, cross-sectional survey study, which will analyze the effect of social media on youth identity and social relation. The cross-sectional method would enable gathering the information about the participants at one moment in time and obtain the picture of the existing trends in using social media, self-perception, and relationships with peers. The uses of variables like daily hours of use, identity clarity, quality of relationships, and peer influence, Skills can be measured quantitatively and statistically analyzed and compared between age groups. This design is suitable in determining the correlations and trends among the youth population of the age group 15-24 years[14].

**Population and Sample**

The target population will be youths between the age of 15-24 years, the age group that is important in identity formation and social development. A sample of 150 participants was selected through stratified random sampling to give representative coverage in the sample that represents various age groups. In this approach, the population is sorted into specific groups e.g. age group and a random sample is selected within each group so as to reduce selection bias and enhance the generalizability of results. Stratified random sampling, in particular, is the most appropriate in the context of the investigation of age variations in the use of social media, identity clarity, and social relationships[15].

**Data Collection Tool:** Likert-scale items in a structured questionnaire that will measure:

**1. Identity Formation**

Identity formation is a process whereby adolescents gain a sense of self, which is coherent, such as self-esteem and self-expression. Social media offers an opportunity to the youth to develop individual interests, experiment with self-presentation, and get feedbacks of their peers affecting the development of confidence and the self-concep[16].

**2. Social Relationships**

Social relations involve peer relationships and friendships of quality, both online and offline. Online systems enable young people to stay in touch, interact frequently and bond socially. Nevertheless, excessive use of the internet can lead to lack of social skills in the real world and the richness of personal relationships[17].

**3. Social Media Usage**

The use of social media incorporates the frequency of use, platform type and level of engagement, indicating the extent and intention of internet use. These are the factors that affect the interaction of the youths, their expression and perception of relationships, their identity development and social results[18].

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## V. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected will be evaluated with the help of descriptive statistics to summarize the tendencies of centrality, variations, and trends across such variables as social media usage, identity clarity, and social relationship quality. Correlation analysis will be used to test the direction and strength of relationships among variables and establish the possible associations. Besides, bar graphs and line graphs will be used to visualize the data to enable easier interpretation and comparison among the age groups. These techniques offer a holistic way of relating and comprehending trends[19].
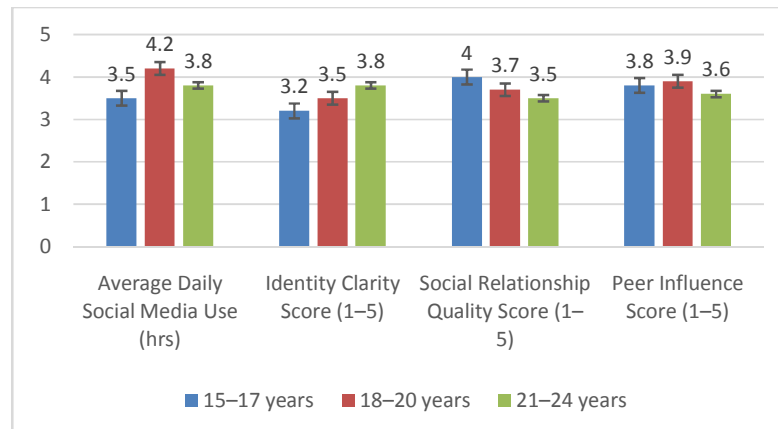
**Table: Social Media Usage, Identity Clarity, Social Relationship Quality, and Peer Influence Across Youth Age Groups**

| Participant Group | Average Daily Social Media Use (hrs) | Identity Clarity Score (1–5) | Social Relationship Quality Score (1–5) | Peer Influence Score (1–5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15–17 years | 3.5 | 3.2 | 4.0 | 3.8 |
| 18–20 years | 4.2 | 3.5 | 3.7 | 3.9 |
| 21–24 years | 3.8 | 3.8 | 3.5 | 3.6 |

**Explanation:**

- **Identity Clarity Score:** Higher scores indicate stronger self-perception.
- **Social Relationship Quality Score:** Higher scores indicate better peer relationships.
- **Peer Influence Score:** Higher scores indicate stronger influence of peers online.
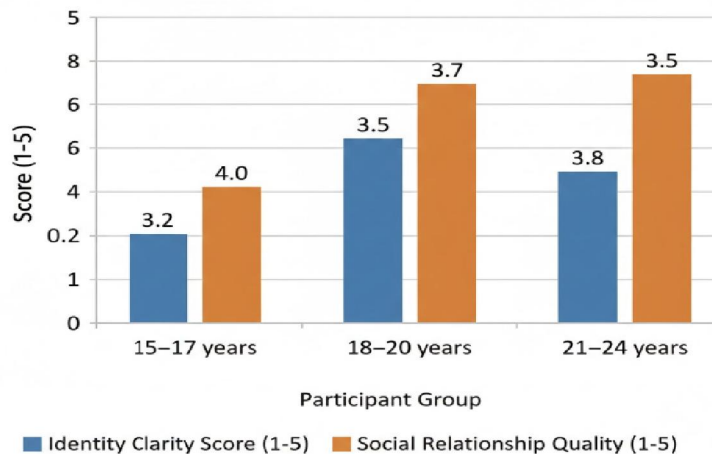
**This table can be visualized as:**



**Comparative Analysis of Social Media and Psychological Metrics by Age Group**

This bar chart assesses four major variables, namely, Averagedaily Social Media Use, Identity Clarity, Social Relationship Quality and Peer Influence, among three age groups, 1517, 1820 and 2124 years. The 18 20 age group with the highest consumption of social media at 4.2 hours and Peer Influence (3.9). On the other hand, Identity Clarity and Social Relationship Quality improve as age advances to a maximum of 3.8 at the 2124 group and 4.0 respectively. These tendencies indicate that with changes in the usage of social media, there is a stabilization in individual identity, and the perception of relationship quality decreases slightly as age advances.
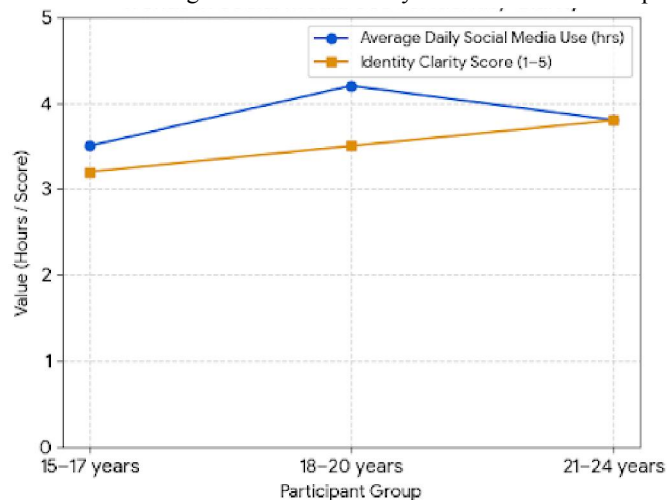
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[19]Field, A. (2018). Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics (5th ed.). Sage Publications.

**Compare Identity Clarity and Social Relationship Quality across age groups**

The bar chart gives a narrowed out comparison involving personal and social measures in three stages of development.Inverse Relationship Trends: There is an evident negative correlation in the two measures; as Identity Clarity scores get larger as age (3.2 to 3.8), Social Relationship Quality scores decrease consistently (4.0 to 3.5). Youngest Group (1517 years): This is the group with the highest Social Relationship Quality (4.0) and the least Identity Clarity (3.2). Oldest Group (2124 years): It is the group with the greatest self-understanding in terms of Identity Clarity score of 3.8 but least satisfied with social relationships with a score of 3.5. Mid-Range Stability (1820 years): Middle range gives moderate scores in these two categories with an Identity of 3.5 and Relationship Quality of 3.7.



**Line graph: Show trends in average daily social media use versus identity clarity.**

The graph presented below shows the trend of social media use and personal identity in three age groups. Average Daily Social Media Usage is a bell-shaped distribution with 3.5 hours in the 15 -17 group, a maximum of 4.2 hours in the 18 -20 group and then levels off to 3.8 hours. Conversely, Identity Clarity presents a linear trend and this trend entirely increases with age with the highest score of 3.8 by the time participants are 35 years. This shows that although interactions on social media may vary in the process of growing out of age, the clarity of self concept is likely to improve over-time.

**Source of Data (Social Media Platforms)**

The data employed in this research will be of primary nature, which will be gathered using structured response sheet/questionnaire given to the youth respondents. The questionnaire has obtained the data about the patterns of use

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and perceived impact of the popular social media platforms that are frequently used by Indian young people and which include Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter (X), and Snapchat.

Respondents were asked to indicate:

- The platforms they use most frequently
- Average daily time spent on each platform
- Perceived influence of these platforms on identity formation and peer relationships

**Table: Platform-wise Social Media Usage Among Youth Respondents**

| Social Media Platform | Percentage of Respondents (%) | Primary Purpose of Use |
|---|---|---|
| WhatsApp | 92% | Messaging & group interaction |
| Instagram | 85% | Self-expression & content sharing |
| Facebook | 48% | Information & social networking |
| Twitter (X) | 32% | Opinion sharing & public discourse |
| Snapchat | 40% | Informal peer communication |

Source: Primary data collected through response sheet (2025–26)

### Explanation

The most popular one is WhatsApp, which means that this application is the most common to keep the communication with peers and social connection. Instagram takes the second position, emphasizing on the use of visual content to express identity. The younger age groups have a relatively lower use of Facebook as a fact of transition to newer platforms. The use of Twitter (X) is mostly regular among older youth in sharing opinions and identity positioning, whereas Snapchat is still popular among the youth in the case of casual and short interactions. This pattern based on platforms have quite a considerable influence on identity clarity, peer influence and perceived relationship quality among the youth.

## VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The effect of social media on youth identity and social relations is different in various age groups depending on the developmental differences and trends in utilizing the opportunities of social media. In the case of adolescents aged between 15 and 17, the information shows that identity clarity is moderate, which implies that such younger users are yet to define their self-concept and personal values. Nevertheless, peer relationships are very prevalent, which indicates the purpose of social media as an instrument to preserve the friendship and social connectivity. Such apps as Instagram, Snapchat, or WhatsApp give such teenagers a chance to interact often and allow them to maintain relationships even when they cannot be physically close.

In the age group 1820, the use of social media is more frequent with more intensity. Although there is more interactivity between these users over the internet, social relationships suffer a slight degradation. This tendency can be explained by the fact that due to too much interaction with digital devices, people can be distracted by spending their time either on browsing, content creation, or social comparison at the cost of offline friendship and attention.

Individuals in the age group of 2124 show better clarity of identity which represents more self-aware and confident in self-presentation. Nevertheless, their social relationship score goes down a step, which indicates that excessive attention paid to online identity exploration might disrupt the richness and quality of face-to-face communication.

All in all, the results are indicative of a two-sided impact of social media: it has a lot of potential in self-expression, social networking, and peer support, but it also may cause difficulties in sustaining meaningful and high-quality offline relationships. This highlights the significance of both considerate and thoughtful interaction in order to receive maximum benefit and minimize the possible social disadvantages.

## VII. SUGGESTIONS

### 1. Market Digital Literacy Programs.

In order to guide the youth in responsible use of social media, schools and community groups need to institute detailed digital literacy programs. The programs may educate adolescents to understand how to critically filter online

information, how to detect misinformation, how to control privacy settings and how to be mindful of maintaining a healthy balance between online life and offline life. The learning can be practical and interactive through interactive sessions involving case studies and discussions, and role-playing. Digital literacy training is not only helpful to minimize exposure to online harassment and harmful materials but also to develop self-awareness, which will enable young people to express themselves naturally on the Internet. Providing such skills to adolescents at an earlier age, these programs encourage positive identity development, enhance social relationships on the internet, and help young people to make informed and conscious decisions in more and more digitalized settings.

## 2. Promote an Online and Offline Balanced Interaction.

On the one hand, social media provides the chance of establishing connections and self-expression; however, on the other hand, overuse of the Internet can undermine in-real life relationships. Unless the digital interactions are discouraged, parents, educators, and youth organizations need to promote offline peer interactions. The group projects, sports, community volunteering, and recreational clubs offer the adolescents practical experiences that help them to acquire empathy, communication skills, and conflict-resolution skills. Online and offline social activities will help the youth to keep significant relationships, social build-ups, and emotional intelligence. The implementation of structured programs that combine both digital and real-life social experiences would make sure that the adolescents can access the benefits of social media without letting it substitute the face-to-face communication, thus enabling their overall personal growth and development of social competence.

## 3. Institute Mental Health Awareness Programs.

The social media has the capacity to influence psychological health, which contributes to anxiety and depression as well as low self-esteem among the youth. There is a need to establish mental health awareness programs in schools and community centers targeting the possible dangers of excessive use of social media. Strategies to deal with stress, online criticism, and social comparison pressures can be offered in the form of programs. Adolescents can be led in knowing when someone is distressed (and when others are) by workshops and counseling. The healthy online habits and promotion of positive coping mechanisms assist youth in being emotionally balanced. Awareness programs in mental health establish a conducive atmosphere in which adolescents can freely interact over the Internet, and care about their psychological well-being, their identity, and relationships with others.

## 4. Enable Learning Community and Peer Support.

Positive social interaction amongst adolescents online can be encouraged through the involvement of peer-led learning and support groups. Interest groups, study groups and advocacy communities create forums of collaboration, common problem solving and knowledge sharing. With the help of these interactions, identity exploration, social connectedness, and skill development are strengthened. It is important to organize a moderation of online communities, making them safer, more inclusive and supportive, minimizing the cyberbullying or the harmful content exposure. Through encouraging peer-support programs, the young people will be able to find the positive side of social media, including belonging and empowerment, and learn communication, leadership, and collaboration skills that would reap benefits in the realms of social success, both online and offline.

## 5. Hold responsible self-expression Workshops.

Teenagers need to be coached on how to apply social media as a self-expression tool and not as a way of seeking approval. Young users can be taught in workshops how to curate content that is authentic in terms of interests, values, and experiences to preserve privacy and safety. Examples of activities might be digital storytelling, profile-building activities, and discussion of online etiquette. Through these programs the youth are challenged to critically evaluate the role played by their online identity on their identity and peer relationships. Workshops can build confidence and self-awareness and social skills in the adolescents by encouraging responsible self-love, where social media can be used as a source of empowerment and not a source of comparison or social pressure.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

The use of social media has become a primary part of the life of adolescents and young adults that significantly affects the shaping of identity and socialization. The results of this research are that online platforms provide a special chance to express oneself, communicate with peers and discover personal interests, which give young people an opportunity to

experiment with their identity, which was not available previously. To younger adolescents, social media is useful to sustain connections with friends and establish social connectedness, whereas to older youth, it is used to reflect on personal values and explore identities. Nevertheless, the advantages of social media are strictly connected to the use, and it is important to be aware of the balanced and mindful use.

Social media overuse or unregulated use may have difficulties with it, such as more social comparison, less face-to-face interaction, and more susceptible to anxiety, depression, or body image issues. In the case of older juveniles, the whole-scale application of the Internet in terms of self-disclosure can have an unintended impact on the richness and quality of the real life social relationships. These observations highlight the fact that social media is neither bad nor good, but its effect varies depending on how the individual uses it, the situation in his or her social life, and the capacity to balance the online and offline lives.

In order to reap the most out of the opportunities presented by the social media and reduce risks, educators, parents, and policymakers need to focus on the digital literacy programs encouraging the responsible and thoughtful use of them. These measures can make the young people acquire the ability to be only aware of themselves, be critical of what they see on the internet, and be able to communicate efficiently, making sure that social media can make them grow as individuals and not destroy real-life relationships. Promoting the moderation of online activities, creating positive online social spaces, and tracking usage habits are all critical measures toward ensuring that the young people can perceive online space as a healthy and safe environment. Finally, social media can be deployed as a source of empowerment, education, and social interaction when utilized with purpose and care.

## IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Organize healthy social media behaviour workshops.

The awareness of youth about the online behavior including its influence on relationships and identity can be developed with the help of workshops devoted to healthy social media habits promotion. The issues like screen time management, awareness of the negative patterns (e.g. over-comparison), familiarity with privacy settings and finding the ways to be responsible in posting should be discussed in these sessions. The learning outcomes can be improved with the use of interactive activities, role-playing situations, and real-life case studies. These workshops will empower adolescents and young adults to use social media in a balanced way, minimize the exposure to the risk of anxiety or low self-esteem, and promote positive online habits.

### 2. Promote face-to-face peer interactions to supplement the web interaction.

Although social media offers channels through which people can have a sense of connectivity, offline peer socialisation is critical in the process of building profound social abilities and emotional intelligence. Group activities, team projects and recreational events can be structured at schools, community centers and by the parents which promote face to face communication. Participation in group offline activities assists young people to enhance empathy, problem-solving, and real relationship-building. Balancing between digital interactions and real life experiences, teenagers will be able to hold substantial friendships and alleviate social isolation, as well as improve their self-confidence. Social media should not substitute personal development and social growth, but by promoting offline activities, the social media enhances such growth.

### 3. Introduce online literacy classes in schools to minimize the bad influences on the internet.

Schools can train digital literacy so that young people will learn the dangers and advantages of social media and act responsibly in the online space. Topics to be discussed in the curriculum should cover online content critique, misinformation and how to be safe online, how to prevent cyberbullying as well as how to behave mindfully to present yourself. Students can be instructed in practical exercises on how to balance screen time, set limits and healthy online-offline balance. Digital literacy programs enable young people to make quality decisions, limit their exposure to negative online influences and harness the full potential of social media as a learning tool, identity-forming experience and social network by enabling critical thinking and self-awareness.

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