

Running Head: IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

Social Media Impact on Identity Construction

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Because being an adolescent is not hard enough, the 21st century has made this time more stressful through the creation of social technologies that allow for exploration through communication with many different people from all over the world. Through this communication, technology has provided an array of opportunities for adolescents to explore and develop their own identities in unique online settings and with many influencers. Developing an identity in the 21st century is highly influenced by social media and online communications. For some adolescents, these technologies have been extremely helpful in overcoming social anxiety, while for others technology has been helpful in developing social anxiety. Adolescents use and experience of social media and online communications vary, but these tools play a role in the development of identity with either positive or negative effects. Use of social media and online communications can influence already consolidated identities as well as influence identities that are just beginning to take shape. It is important to research technology's role in adolescent identity development to better understand the adolescents of today, how they are interacting with one another and the world, and to understand what identities they are taking on for themselves as future members of society. In researching adolescent identity formation, three areas of interest were noted in the literature: identity construction, self-experimentation, and social competence. These three areas provide an understanding of adolescent's identity formation as they interact with technologies like social media and chat rooms which are in prevalent use today. Through these findings, more information can be gathered on and analyzed to help educators, parents, and other professionals understand the difficult time period that is adolescence and how technology has come to affect that time period in both positive and negative ways.

Body

Section 1: Identity Construction

- Identity Synthesis/Diffusion
 - Born Digital Article
- Adolescent use of social media and chat rooms affects the formation of their identity.
- Facebook used to create a social identity where the individual is identified by his or her friends and social actions.
- How tools influence the presentation of real or false identities (i.e. online dating vs. World of Warcraft).

Section 2: Self-experimentation

- Research on adolescents use of online communication tools to experiment with their identity (i.e. different gender, age, personality).
- Adolescent use of online multiplayer games to create widely different personas and interact with others through that character.

Section 3: Social Competence

- Impact (positive or negative) of identity construction and experimentation on adolescent social competence.
- Does the use of social media and online communication tools help socially awkward people to be less awkward or does the use of these tools perpetuate the awkwardness?
 - Findings for both positive and negative effects
 - Implications for future look of technology and online identity

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