

STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF ADOLESCENTS' NEEDS FOR HEALTHY IDENTITY FORMATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The presence of digital technology has brought changes to various aspects of human life, influencing the formation of individual character, particularly among adolescents whose primary developmental task is identity formation. This research employed an exploratory qualitative design to explore perceptions of digital technology and the needs of adolescents in identity formation amid the challenges posed by digital technology. Data were collected through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with 24 participants selected using purposive sampling techniques. The focus groups included adolescents, parents, teachers, and nurses. In-depth interviews were conducted with the Elementary and Secondary Education Curriculum Section of the Banyumas Regency Education Office and the school health program coordinator at the Banyumas Regency Health Office. Data analysis was carried out using the Colaizzi approach. The study found that digital technology offers adolescents with opportunities to socialize, access knowledge sources, develop talents, creativity, and innovation, and boost self-confidence. However, excessive use of digital technology poses risks that threaten physical, emotional, and social well-being, potentially hindering identity formation. Adolescents require to have a strong character, self-regulation skills, and support from various parties working synergistically. These results provide valuable insights for designing appropriate interventions to support adolescent identity formation.

Keywords: *Adolescents; digital era; identity*



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BACKGROUND

Adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood, typically ranging from ages 10 to 19. Individuals within this age group belong to Generation Z and Generation Alpha. Generation Z is often referred to as digital natives, while Generation Alpha is known as screenagers (Jiao et al., 2023). These generations are growing up in a world that is fully integrated with technology, as reflected in their use of gadgets, social media, and the internet. Survey results show that the age group with the highest internet usage is 13 to 18 years old, accounting for 99.16% of users (Indonesian Internet Users Association, 2022). The majority of these users access the internet via smartphones. Adolescents use smartphones to build social networks, communicate with friends and parents, seek information, and play online games (García-Santillán & Espinosa-Ramos, 2021).

The presence of digital technology offers numerous benefits; however, excessive use can adversely affect adolescents' biological, psychological, and social functioning. Empirical studies indicate that excessive smartphone use leads to decreased physical activity and altered sleep patterns (Correa-Iriarte et al., 2023). Additionally, technology also increases the risk of adolescents experiencing bullying through digital media (cyberbullying) (Moral-Garcia et al., 2025). Bullying is a traumatic experience that negatively impacts psychological well-being (Febriana & Rahmasari, 2021). Furthermore, technology contributes to psychological issues such as fear of missing out (Dam et al., 2023).

Fear of missing out (FOMO) causes adolescents to be constantly preoccupied with social media because they worry about missing opportunities when they are offline or not

connected with others (Alutaybi et al., 2020). Social media can trigger FOMO, which in turn can intensify social media use (Bloemen & De Coninck, 2020).

Disturbances in the biological, psychological, and social conditions of adolescents reduce their opportunities for self-exploration. Thorough and meaningful exploration leads to a strong sense of commitment. Both exploration and commitment are essential components of identity formation. The benefits and risks associated with digital technology present significant challenges for adolescents. Those who successfully navigate these crises can achieve a stable identity, whereas failure may result in role confusion (Erikson, 1968).

Erikson identifies identity versus role confusion as a critical stage of psychosocial development during adolescence (Erikson, 1968). The formation of identity in this period serves as the foundation for subsequent developmental stages. Research has found that identity can be an important construct in efforts to reduce risky behaviors among adolescents (Sandhu & Singh, 2024). According to Erikson's theory, identity provides individuals with a structured framework to understand information relevant to them, fostering a sense of consistency, coherence, and harmony among their chosen values, beliefs, and commitments, providing future orientation by offering goals and directions, as well as a sense of personal control (Crocetti, 2018). Therefore, achieving a stable identity is essential for healthy development.

Field observation conducted at two junior high schools in Banyumas Regency revealed that all students already possess smartphones and have their own social media accounts. Adolescents reported using their smartphones for 3 to 10 hours daily, including before bedtime. They primarily use their devices to search for lesson-related information, communicate with parents and friends, and expand their social media networks. Several teachers reported that the problems faced by adolescents have become more diverse due to smartphones use, including device addiction leading to school absenteeism, exposure to pornography, and negative social interactions on social media. These findings demonstrate that digital technology is significantly transforming adolescents' lives, which will undoubtedly impact the development of their character and identity, but there are different views between adolescents and teachers. There needs to be an in-depth exploration to get comprehensive information by involving parties who understand adolescents' activities and development. Therefore, further research is needed to explore the perceptions of adolescents and stakeholders about digital technology and the needs of adolescents in building adolescent identity amidst the challenges posed by digital technology.

METHOD

Study design

This study employed an exploratory qualitative design to comprehensively explore from the perspectives of adolescents, parents, teachers, nurses, education offices, and health offices, the information regarding adolescents' needs in building a healthy identity in the digital era.

Samples/ Participants

The participants in this study included five junior high school adolescents, five parents, seven Guidance and counseling teachers, five nurses, one person in charge of the school health program from the health office, and one representative

from the Banyumas Regency Education Office. The research sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique. Participants were chosen based on their ability to provide adequate information in response to the researcher's questions and to contribute detailed data necessary to achieve the research objectives. The information obtained from the five adolescent participants effectively addressed the research objective concerning adolescents' needs in identity formation. These five participants represented diverse characteristics, including gender, age, birth order (first, second, or only child), and had parents with various educational and occupational backgrounds.

This study collected data from information sources with diverse characteristics to gain insights from multiple perspectives. The variety in participants' characteristics served as one indicator of saturation used by the researchers. Saturation was also assessed through the analysis of focus group discussions (FGDs) and interview results, where no new information emerged. In this study, saturation was determined based on the entire combined dataset.

Instruments

In qualitative research, the primary instrument is the researcher. To minimize subjective bias in assessing participants' conditions, the researcher employed bracketing. This involved self-reflection prior to data collection. Throughout each data collection session, the researcher maintained a reflective journal. During data analysis, the researcher consciously set aside personal assumptions. Additionally, bracketing was also reinforced through debriefing session with the supervisor. To ensure accurate interpretation, the researcher validated findings with the participants.

The data collection tools included semi-structured interview guides, recording tools, and research notes. The interview guide was designed by the researcher in consultation with a supervisor who is an expert in the relevant field. The guide was pilot-tested prior to its use in focus group discussions (FGDs) and interviews. Additionally, the researcher also used supplementary questions to elicit rich data. The questions posed were: How does digital technology influence the lives of adolescents today? Do you think the digital world affects adolescent identity? What do adolescents need to face the challenges of digital technology?

Data collection

Data collection was carried out using in-depth interview techniques and focus group discussions (FGD) guided by semi-structured interview guidelines. In-depth interviews were held with participants from the health office and the education office. The FGD consisted of four groups: one group of adolescents, one group of parents, one group of teachers, and one group of nurses. The FGDs took place at schools and health centers, lasting between 90 and 120 minutes. Each FGD was held in a private room with a relaxed atmosphere to ensure participants' privacy and comfort. All FGD sessions were guided by the researcher with the assistance of a co-facilitator.

Data analysis

The data analysis was conducted using the Colaizzi method. Information from the FGDs and interviews was recorded using audio and video media. These recordings were transcribed using artificial intelligence (AI) applications. The researchers then verified the AI-generated transcripts by comparing them with original audio and video recordings, and

also incorporating participants' nonverbal responses. Researchers read transcripts repeatedly to capture participants' perceptions accurately. The transcripts were subsequently discussed with the supervisor and validated with the participants. Participants provided written feedback, which the researchers used to make necessary revisions.

The researcher then repeatedly read the transcripts to accurately understand the participants' perceptions precisely from their point of view. Significant statements were identified and separated from other insignificant ones, then entered into a data analysis table. The researcher then formulated the meaning of these statements. To ensure validity of the research data, the results were reviewed and consulted. The researcher grouped formulated meanings with similar or identical meanings into themes. Each theme was fully integrated to provide a comprehensive representation of the participants' perceptions.

Trustworthiness

The validation was conducted based on four criteria: credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability. Credibility was maintained by collecting data thoroughly through FGD with groups of parents, teachers, community health center nurses, teenagers, as well as in-depth interviews with the Banyumas District Health and Education Offices. Confirmability was maintained by giving back the interview results to the participants and asking them to verify their statements. Research dependability was ensured by verifying the research steps with the involvement of external reviewers. Transferability was done by presenting the results

clearly and systematically, so that readers can easily understand and apply the research findings.

Ethical considerations

This research was conducted with an ethics permit obtained from the Ethics Commission of the Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Indonesia, under the number KET-158/UN2.F12.D1.2.1/PPM.00.02/2025. The researchers provided informed consent to prospective participants a few days before the FGDs and interviews. The information included study's objectives, benefits, and research procedures. The involvement of adolescent participants in this study was secured with parental consent. Participants voluntarily took part in the research and comfortably went through all activities until the end.

RESULT

This section displays the characteristics of the participants and the study's findings.

1. Participant Characteristics

The findings of this study were derived from FGD analysis and interviews with 24 participants. The participants were divided into two age groups, namely adolescents and adults. The adolescent participants were between 12 and 14 years old and were students. The adult participants ranged in age from 29 to 59 years. The majority were women, held a bachelor's degree, and worked as teachers. Participant data are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics (n=24)

Code	Age (years)	Gender	Education	Jobs	Information
O1	47	Male	Senior High School	Civil servant	Key informant
O2	52	Female	SD	Housewife	Key informant
O3	43	Female	Junior High School	Housewife	Key informant
O4	37	Female	Vocational School	Housewife	Key informant
O5	49	Female	Senior High School	Self-employed	Key informant
G1	59	Female	Bachelor	Teacher	Key informant
G2	50	Female	Bachelor	Teacher	Key informant
G3	53	Female	Bachelor	Teacher	Key informant
G4	36	Female	Bachelor	Teacher	Key informant
G5	32	Male	Bachelor	Teacher	Key informant
G6	55	Male	Bachelor	Teacher	Key informant
G7	48	Female	Bachelor	Teacher	Key informant
P1	49	Female	Bachelor	Nurse	Key informant
P2	49	Female	3-year diploma	Nurse	Key informant
P3	29	Female	3-year diploma	Nurse	Key informant
P4	31	Female	Bachelor	Nurse	Key informant
P5	30	Female	3-year diploma	Nurse	Key informant
DK	40	Female	Master's degree	Civil Servants of the Health Service	Key informant
DP	56	Male	Master's degree	Civil Servants of the Education Office	Key informant
R1	13	Male	Junior High School	Students	General informant
R2	13	Male	Junior High School	Students	General informant
R3	13	Female	Junior High School	Students	General informant
R4	14	Female	Junior High School	Students	General informant
R5	12	Female	Junior High School	Students	General informant

2. Research Findings

This research identified 4 (four) themes and 2 (two) subthemes. Two subthemes emerged from the first theme.

Information about the themes and subthemes is presented in Figure 1.

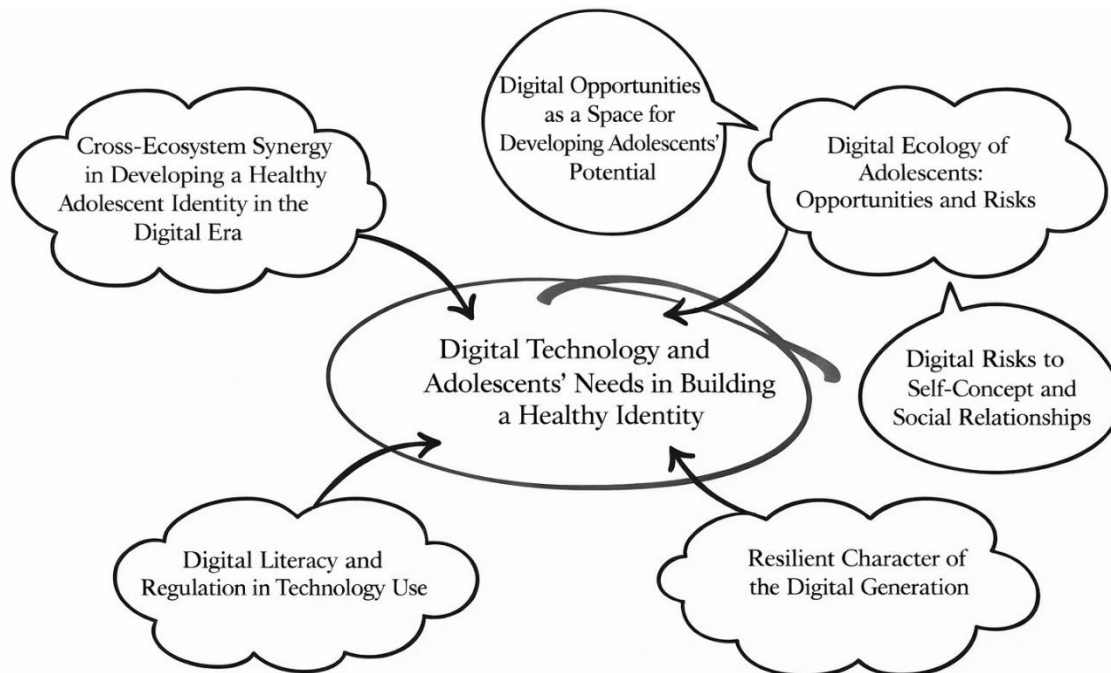


Figure 1. Relationship between themes and subthemes

Theme 1: The digital ecology of adolescents: opportunities and risks

Adolescents today live in a world where technology has already advanced, making contact with digital technology inevitable. The existence of digital technology provides adolescents opportunities to develop their potential. Digital technology offers adolescents opportunities for open sources of information. Here is one of the quotes:

"You can get more information by reading articles or news on the internet." (R2)

The opportunities that digital technology provides to adolescents are also observed by nurses during health counseling sessions, where adolescents appear more confident during presentations and discussions. Here is what the nurses reported:

"More confident when presenting material, not embarrassed to ask questions during discussions." (P5)

Digital technology also offers adolescents opportunities to develop their talents and potential. Many adolescents expressed interest in engaging in activities they observed in reels or videos.

"Watching cooking reels makes me want to cook." (R5)

The teacher assessed that adolescents today are capable of using technology creatively. One teacher participant stated:

"They are good at using digital technology creatively." (G4)

In the competition held to commemorate Mental Health Day, junior high and high school students participated enthusiastically. The person in charge of activities from the Regency Health Office stated that the works produced by the participants were highly innovative. Here is an excerpt:

"Young people have innovations that we don't think about." (DK)

In addition, digital technology also opens up opportunities for adolescents to expand their social networks. Parents reported that by playing online games, their children develop a broad range of social connections.

"My child's social circle is wide because he plays online." (O1)

Digital technology offers numerous opportunities that support adolescent development, but inappropriate use can pose risks to their physical, emotional, and social well-being. Adolescents reported that there were physical complaints caused by excessive use of gadgets.

"If I play on my phone for too long, I get dizzy and tired from lying down too much." (R4)

Parents reported that there were differences in the emotional states exhibited by their adolescents.

"Adolescents tend to be stubborn, moody, and sassy when asked to do things, all because of their phones." (O3)

Adolescents experience social changes, as described, in the following statement:

"Not socializing, friends sometimes flirt, but I never respond." (R2)

The teacher noticed a decline in manners among his students, which he/she expressed in the following statement:

"I was entrusted by the parents, but their child just barged in." (G2)

Parents also say that adolescents now often procrastinate when given commands:

"In the past, if I was told to do something immediately, now every time I am told to answer later... later." (O4)

Theme 2: Resilient Character of the Digital Generation

The challenges faced by adolescents in the digital technology necessitate internal protection. This research found the desired characteristics of resilient adolescents: good health, strong morals and ethics, the ability to make discerning choices, and intelligence.

Two adolescent participants stated:

"Healthy because health is paramount." (R4)

Teachers and parents prioritize morals and ethics as key characteristics that adolescents should develop. Here is one statement:

"I want my child to have morals and good manners." (G1, G2)

One parent stated that adolescents need the ability to discern and choose what is good.

"We live in the technological era, and we can't rule out the presence of good and bad; it is up to our children to learn how to handle it. From the beginning, when I spoke to the children, I emphasized that they must be able to distinguish between good and bad. Good is fine, but negative is the risk." (O1)

Adolescent participants and their parents stated that adolescents also need cognitive skills, particularly intelligence.

"Smart" (R3)

"Nowadays it is really the era of technology, including being open-minded, a lot of information." (O1)

"He likes watching YouTube videos about car manufacturing. Like cars, and also the early stages of airplane construction-- basically stuff like that, the early stages of making planes or whatever." (O2)

A participant from the Education Office stated that the expected character traits were outlined in 8 graduate profiles, as follows:

"So, last year, we framed children's character development using six Pancasila student profiles. Now, with eight graduate profiles, we are guiding them, so that our children will also be guided in that direction." (DP)

Theme 3: Self-regulation in the use of digital technology

Adolescents' protection needs extend beyond character development to include self-control in the use of digital technology. They exercise self-control by setting time limits, which serve as benchmarks to reduce excessive use. Three out of five adolescent participants expressed concerns about these time limits. One participant stated:

"I play with gadgets too much; I need to limit my gadget use." (R4)

Self-control is also achieved by limiting content and access, as the internet offers a vast array of information accessible to all groups. Adolescents report:

"Limited by apps, there are usually many sites that contain hoaxes and pornographic content." (R2)

Adolescents can also take control by engaging in helpful diversion activities. Four out of five adolescents identified

activities that can be done to replace mobile phone use, including helping parents, reading books, studying, and exercising.

"Helping mothers at home, doing homework, studying, and exercising are many things that can be done besides playing on cellphones." (R4)

In addition to the need for internal protection, adolescents also need external support to strengthen the character that shapes their identity.

Theme 4: Cross-ecosystem synergy in building healthy adolescent identities in the digital era

The research found the need for synergy among families, peers, schools, communities, and policymakers to foster healthy adolescent identities in the digital era. The family serves as the first and foremost environment for adolescents. Teacher participants perceive that adolescents' morals and character are primarily shaped within the family, as conveyed in the following statement:

"The family factor is the very determinant of all the characters of a child. Morals, discipline, and manners, it's all right from home." (G7)

Some parties believe that peers have a great influence on adolescent development. Here is one of his statements:

"Student usually listen more to their friends." (P4)

Teachers believe that the success of adolescent identity formation is influenced not only by the role of the family but also by the lessons and habits developed at school. The statement was reinforced by the education office in the following statement:

"For the character development of children, last year was a Pancasila student profile; now there are eight graduate profiles. We are guiding students in that direction." (DP)

The neighborhood where adolescents live also plays a role, particularly through a community-managed forum, such as those in Pasir District.

"Our education is not complete if it comes only within the school; then the family, but the community is also important." (G6)

The school program runs under policy issued by the governing authorities, including the principal, the education office, the local government, and the ministry. Central policies are implemented by regional policy holders and subsequently communicated to the subordinate units responsible for execution, as explained by the person in charge of the junior high school program at the District Education Office in the following statement.

"The Ministry of Education exists, included in the curriculum in which there are intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities." (DP)

DISCUSSION

1. Participant Characteristics

This study involved 24 participants from diverse backgrounds. The youngest participant was a 12-year-old adolescent attending junior high school. The Ministry of Education sets the minimum age for entering elementary school at 7 years, but generally schools allow an age

tolerance of 6 years, so some 12-year-olds are already enrolled at the junior high school level. The adolescent participants represented various birth orders, including firstborn, second-born, and last-born. Adult participants included parents, teachers, nurses, and representatives from the education office and health office responsible for the program at junior high school program. Among the parents, housewives predominated, as mothers typically have more free time than fathers. The educational backgrounds of adult participants varied, ranging from elementary school to master's degrees, with the majority holding a bachelor's degree.

Population data from Banyumas Regency indicate that the majority of the productive-age population are elementary school graduates, followed by high school graduates (BPS Banyumas Regency, 2023). The higher proportion of participants with a bachelor's degree (S1) is attributed to the research being conducted in urban and sub-urban areas, where public awareness of education is greater. The adult participants belong to productive age group and have varied working hours (Ministerial Regulation of PANRB, 2024). The age differences among participants suggest a wide range of experiences in parenting and interacting with adolescents. This diversity in participants' characteristics provided multiple perspectives that enriched the research findings.

2. Research Findings

Digital technology provides valuable opportunities for adolescents to develop their potential. These opportunities include accessing sources of knowledge, increasing confidence, facilitating talent development, increasing creativity and innovation, and building social networks. Several studies highlight similar opportunities. Adolescents can identify reliable information sources and engage in both formal and non-formal education. They can use smart devices as auxiliary tools, connect with social networks, find comfortable spaces to spend their free time, create alternative worlds, and pursue opportunities for self-development (Geckova et al., 2023).

Opportunities to expand knowledge are increasingly accessible, as adolescents can obtain information more easily through clear and understandable explanations (Zain et al., 2022). Digital technology can facilitate positive personal growth, enhance self-perception, and promote mental well-being in adolescents. Their presence of in the online world can also support positive adaptation during development and socialization periods (Geckova et al., 2023). Additionally, the internet serves as a valuable tool for helping adolescents complete schoolwork, develop skill competencies, as well as improve creative thinking skills (Haddock et al., 2022). Game applications on digital devices also provide adolescents with opportunities to experience various identities and situations virtually, encouraging self-exploration and goal achievement (Haddock et al., 2022). These opportunities collectively support adolescents in exploring themselves in ways that support identity development.

On the other hand, digital technology poses risks to adolescent development. Excessive use of gadgets can lead to physical problems for adolescents, such as red eyes, dizziness, muscle stiffness, and fatigue easily due to lack of movement, and involuntary hand motor movements. Adolescents are also at risk of experiencing emotional problems, indiscipline, and difficulties in social relationships. Several studies have examined the effect of digital technology, especially gadgets, on adolescents.

Continuous use of gadgets negatively impacts health, as well as social, physical, and mental development (Zain et al., 2022), and leads to decreased physical activity (Xiao et al., 2022). Adolescents who use devices for more than 2 (two) hours per day experience reduced sleep duration, increased sleep disturbances, fatigue, eating disorders, psychological symptoms, and back pain (Doruk et al., 2023). Adolescents often use gadgets for entertainment, such as playing video games. Excessive video game use can lead to aggressive behavior and affect adolescent personality development. Adolescents dependent on gadgets exhibit symptoms including restlessness, anxiety, irritability, and difficulty controlling emotions (Wahyuni et al., 2019; Komang et al., 2024).

Adolescents are often so distracted by gadgets that they lose track of time and neglect their tasks and responsibilities at home and at school (Dalmacio et al., 2023). The risks associated with gadget use can be mitigated through promotive and preventive measures. According to the 2023 Health Law, promotive interventions include providing education about healthy lifestyles, risk factors, and related health issues, while preventive interventions involve early detection and timely interventions.

The opportunities and risks presented by digital technology pose significant challenges. To navigate these situations effectively, adolescents must develop the ability to protect themselves. The first form of protection they need is to form a strong sense of self. Health is a priority for adolescents and should be understood comprehensively, encompassing physical, mental, and social well-being.

Adolescents' physical health is supported by a good lifestyle, such as adequate nutrition and hydration, adequate quality sleep, and regular exercise (Smith & Coleman, 2021). This aligns with the "7 Habits of Great Indonesian Children" program (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2025). Mental health is equally important; as stated in Health Law Number 17 of 2023, mentally healthy individuals can develop physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially, enabling them to realize their potential abilities, overcome pressure, work productively, and contribute to their communities. Another expected character is smart or intelligence, which pertains to adolescents' cognitive abilities. These abilities include abstract thinking, realistic reasoning, and problem-solving skills (Keliat et al., 2023). The challenges posed by digital technology require adolescents' ability to think critically and analytically. Cognitive intelligence must be balanced with strong moral values to help them make sound decisions that support their personal development and future success.

The second aspect of self-protection is the ability to control gadget use in a balanced manner. Adolescents exercise self-control by limiting the use of gadgets use, restricting content and access, and engaging in beneficial alternative activities to balance online and offline activities. These activities include helping parents, reading books, studying, and participating in sports. Proper gadget use requires self-control. Self-control is negatively correlated with gadget addiction, the greater the self-control possessed; the lower likelihood of adolescents to experience gadget addiction (Mumbaasithoh et al., 2021). Strategies that adolescents employ to enhance self-control include effective time management, engaging in activities other than gadget use, and receiving parental supervision during remote learning (Mumbaasithoh et al., 2021).

In adolescents who have experienced gadgets addiction, exercise interventions can help reduce dependency. Each exercise session lasts between 30 and 60 minutes and is conducted for a minimum duration of three weeks (Li et al., 2023). This intervention aligns with the sports habits enforced in schools, which are among the seven habits of great Indonesian children.

The formation of adolescent identity is influenced not only by internal factors but by external factors. Family, school, peers, and society play a major role in shaping adolescent identity. The family is considered crucial in building the foundation of adolescents' morals and character. Parents have a substantial role in shaping their children's character by providing protection, positive guidance, and encouragement, as well as minimizing the negative impact of digital technology (Ilmi et al., 2024).

The character that develops during adolescence becomes a core aspect of the adolescent's identity. Proper parenting and positive relationships play a crucial role in supporting the achievement of adolescent identity (Crocetti et al., 2017; Ramdhanu et al., 2019; Becht et al., 2021). Authoritative parenting produces adolescents who are confident, friendly, self-controlled, polite, cooperative, and highly curious (Santrock, 2017). This parenting style facilitates adolescents' attainment of identity achievement status (Enright in Santrock, 2018). On the other hand, authoritarian parenting tends to produce children who are fearful, anxious, lack initiative, and have poor communication skills (Baumrind in Santrock, 2018). Adolescents raised by authoritarian parents are more likely to experience identity diffusion (Ramdhanu et al., 2019). Because authoritarian parents exert full control, their children often grow up less confident and hesitant in decision-making. Therefore, families should adopt appropriate parenting styles to support adolescents in achieving their identity.

School is the second most influential environment for adolescents after the family. Adolescents spend a significant portion of their time actively engaged at school. There, they participate in learning activities, join organizations, and take part in extracurricular activities that help develop their talents and potential. Extracurricular activities play a crucial role in shaping adolescents' character within the school setting. The cultivation of students' character values is achieved through modeling good behavior, integrating moral messages into lessons, teaching manners, promoting literacy activities, encouraging participation in extracurriculars, and fostering positive habits (Hulu et al., 2025). Additionally, schools implement the values of Pancasila through activities like group prayers (Aprilia & Nawawi, 2023). An individual's habit of praying or worshiping is closely related to their disciplinary behavior (Rahmah et al., 2023).

Extracurricular activities provide opportunities for adolescents to discover their talents and interests (Salsabila et al., 2023). Activities such as yoga, horseback riding, sports, dance, music, and various indoor and outdoor activities can improve academic performance, leading to better grades, more regular attendance, and improved self-concept. In junior high schools in Banyumas Regency, participation in Scouts is a mandatory extracurricular activity. Scout activities boost adolescents' discipline and independence among adolescents (Ahmad et al., 2024). The Scout Oath, which every member takes, instills values that help shape adolescents' character and identity. Additionally, adolescents who participate in the Youth Red Cross

extracurricular program develop a strong sense of social care (Fitriani & Rusman, 2024).

The educational curriculum in Indonesia, which supports exploratory activities, has been implemented since the independent curriculum. This curriculum emphasizes differentiated learning methods, which are learning approaches tailored to students' characters. Students are also exposed to practical learning through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Program (P5). In the P5 program, students learn using a project-based learning method, selecting themes based on the needs of their schools. They are encouraged to gather in-depth information about their chosen project themes, followed by field observation activities or practicums. In the current curriculum, these activities continue but are integrated with different program but employ an in-depth learning approach, applying the principles of awareness, enjoyment and meaning (Ministry of Education and Education, 2025). These activities are in high demand among many students; learning is more enjoyable and offers new insights. Schools not only provide activities that support identity formation, but also serve as places where adolescents can interact with their peers.

Adolescents form social relationships with peers through physical activities such as outdoor play, which helps build confidence (Dalmacio et al., 2023). The support and appreciation they receive from peers motivate adolescents to realize their potential. Peers have important roles as facilitators, mediators, and motivators. They provide social, moral, and emotional support and teach a variety of skills.

Relationships with peers also teach various positive character, such as tolerance, cooperation, affection, communication, empathy, caring, responsibility, and helpfulness (Utomo & Pahlevi, 2022). Adolescents' identification with classmates and friend groups strengthens their stronger commitment and exploration of interpersonal identity, while also allowing them to reassess lower levels of commitment (Alberello et al., 2018). The presence of peers at school can be a support system for the formation of adolescent identity.

The success of school activities is closely linked to the role of policymakers. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education has introduced seven habits that students in Indonesia are encouraged to adopt. These habits include waking up early, praying, eating nutritious foods, exercising, loving to learn, participating in the community, and getting enough sleep (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2025). This program is highly relevant to various aspects of adolescent development, encompassing biological, cognitive, language, emotional, moral, social, spiritual, talent, and creativity aspects (Keliat et al., 2023). Waking up early fosters discipline from a moral perspective, while praying stimulates spiritual development. Eating nutritious foods, exercising, and getting enough sleep can optimize adolescent biological development. The habit of loving to learn not only enhances cognitive development but also cultivates language skills, talent, and creativity. Lastly, community involvement encourages social development, which is a complex process wherein teenagers will learn language through verbal and written communication, engage in social interactions, understand emotions through encounter with interactions with diverse personalities, and internalize within social life. Schools monitor the implementation of these 7 habits by regularly evaluating journals filled out by students. These habits are integrated as activities that support the formation of adolescent identity.

The community within the participants' residential environment also contributes to build the positive identity and character of adolescents. Adolescents use the "madin" as a place to learn about religion and socialize with their peers. Additionally, some adolescents participate in recital activities organized by religious institutions in the community. A community-building model integrates Islamic values into daily activities, successfully enhancing the consistency of daily worship, promoting more polite social interaction patterns, and strengthening community solidarity (Trianjasmara & Batubara, 2025). Martial arts schools within the community also have a positive impact by broadening social relationships and increasing self-confidence (Wibowo & Satwika, 2019). Youth organization is a forum for village adolescents to channel and develop their potential talents. This youth organization also serves as a forum or place of learning for adolescents, both in religious and in social contexts. However, the interest among adolescents in joining the organization remains low (Kanda, 2024). The community plays a crucial role in strengthening the adolescent identity through various activity platforms. Family, school, peers, policymakers, and the broader community provide essential social support for adolescents. The synergy among these supporters enhances adolescents' protective factors, aiding them in successfully achieving their identity.

This study reveals the presence of digital technology in adolescents' lives in the form of opportunities and risks it brings, the need for teen character development to face technological challenges, and strategies for its use. The research also highlights external needs, like social support working together to help shape adolescent identity. The role of policymakers is a new finding from this study. The study focuses on gathering information from various sources, but the number of adolescents and non-adolescents participants is somewhat disproportionate.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The presence of digital technology in adolescents' lives creates an internal need for resilient adolescents' character and strategies for using technology to maximize opportunities and avoid risks. External needs include social support from family, school, peers, the community, and policymakers working together. It's important to gather information from a broader range of adolescents.

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