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## The Impact of Digital World on Our Identity

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### Abstract

Identity means the overall discernment about oneself. It consists of our devotion, conviction, philosophy, attributes, feelings and other likely things. Identity is not somewhat which is innate rather it is wrought up in the hurly-burly of our life. Earlier it had an effect from only countable factors i.e personal and social identity but however with the emersion of social networking sites in the 21<sup>st</sup> century a new-fangled element has been added to the impression of identity formation i.e, digital identity. Here a significant inquiry is “are you the unchanged person in

online or offline mode”? This digital identity had actually become our jiffy self which we modified from time to time in order to take delivery of indulgence that with the upshot we have vanished our genuine self while determining the phony one. We are racing gratuitously while closing the eyes to the veracity that “everything is not everybody’s goblet.” Earlier we had to first put up with something that is palpable for recognition but in the contemporary society individuals are having a prospect to depict themselves speciously for their naming, say it their profession, bonding status, age, likes, dislikes and like supplementary things. As a result, identity is susceptible to identity crises for the reason that people are having added than an identity to present and supervise. People are paying more consideration to the stance of others allied to themselves and in order to present themselves upto the keenness of others so that positive reception will come from all corners. People are all set to cross any limits particularly in case of the teens. The central part of the paper is to bring light the sequel of social media in the formation of identity. This paper will also underline how this identity is subject to deformation with the erroneous impact and badly chosen ways to contract with social media.

**Keywords:** Social media, Personal and Social identity, Digital identity and Identity crises

The great educationist and philosopher, Aristotle has precisely quoted times ago that man is a social animal. A man cannot live in loneliness/segregation. He cannot even endure the absence of satisfaction of his physiological needs. It is not promising for any being to frame oneself in a vacuity and for budding this man needs society so that his individuality will be brushed up glowingly. The development of identity starts from the early period of life. Erik Erikson the distinguished psychologist has defined in one of his illustrious theory named as (psychosocial development) that for framing the identity an individual have to cross eight different stages at different periods of life say from birth to old age. Each stage is having its own challenges and crises and in order to triumph over them, a person should have to take confronts as offerings that will force us to explore for a new center of gravity. So, instead of fighting with them we should find a new way to stand with them and in order to arrive at the next stage it is indispensable for a person to cross the earlier steps productively. A person cannot get in touch with the last step of hierarchy without stepping the steps one by one likewise a person will not be able to cross the next stage without crossing the former one with zeal and zest also it can additionally result to the state of identity crises. It means the indistinctness, vagueness and bamboozled discernment about oneself related to all the three colors of life i.e, what went before (past), in attendance (present) and expectations (future). Although identity crises can transpire at any stage but maximum hit is on the period of adolescence. This period represents an inner emotional cataclysm, a thrash about the eternal human yearning to adhere to the past and the equally powerful wish to get on with the future.

In the theory of Erik-Erikson there is a fifth stage named as “identity v/s role confusion” which initiates in the period of adolescence where identity crises are most high-flying because the sense of independency comes into picture in this stage. The major queries in this stage are “who am I” “what I have to do” “where I have to go” and akin to other. If a person is competent to respond such questions, there are excellent chances that identity will be fashioned in a

constructive comportment. The imperative event in this stage is social relationship where an individual wants adoration, reliance, frankness, devotion and like things. If these things come to an individual then identity will be wrought up in a very upbeat manner. Thus, it plays a central role in the forthcoming phase known as “intimacy versus isolation” and if an individual fails to accomplish these things then he will feel isolated and he will find himself in a state of mystification/seclusion and ultimately in a state of identity crises. The impression of identity crisis instigates in the work of developmental psychologist Erik Erikson, it take place when one initiates to qualm his own identity say for example one is not able to struggle with his academic/ line of work/ love relation and finally one gets nearer with the end result of identity crises. When a person’s countenance continues getting failure in more than one area of his life, eventually he starts to distrust his identity and feels he is of thumbs down worth. Everyone is not enough fortunate to come out from the state of identity crises and those who are not able to do extremely well in this combat of finding identity are at a greater risk of trailing oneself. On the other hand, those who have a self-identity are like blooming picture of themselves which is crammed with love, tranquility, sanguinity, kindheartedness, admiration, regard and inclination for one self and the world around us. The observations of Erikson about identity were extended by Marcia, who described four types of identity statuses in the period of adolescence; Identity Diffusion, Foreclosure, and Moratorium and Identity Achievement.

**Identity Diffusion:** It refers to unconcerned state that represents the relative lack of both investigation and pledge. It can overlap with the diagnosis of schizophrenia and like other disorder. An example of this is a person who becomes reclusive after his identity as a star in film industry is destroyed by a serious accident.

**Identity Foreclosure:** It means a person is having some sort of identity associated to them but he has not explored the other possible options. He is having very restricted choice. Here commitment is made without exploring the alternatives. These commitments are mostly based on parental thoughts and viewpoint without asking many questions. Here adolescents are just following the crowd for example a person will be asked by someone why are you following this kind of ideology, he will simply answer that his known ones are doing the same.

**Identity Moratorium:** It is a step in the process for developing one’s sagacity. In this a person isn’t blind follower of anything rather exploring each and everything on his own. It can be described as a state with active investigation and the state with much unpredictable nature of behavior. Now a person is taking a stand of his own stance no matter if that is on the line of their known ones or not.

**Identity achievement:** It is the final stage where things are resolved and all curtains are untied with the result one can clearly see who am I. More specifically one can say that this is the period for the resolution of identity crises.

Nothing is more treacherous than unwilling isolation because it sows the seeds for every psychological problem, be it the doldrums disorder, misapprehension, fantasy, mistrustful, anxiety, depression and like other with the end result our mental health agitates. We are well

aware with the psychological problem known as OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) is related to continual uncontrolled and superfluous thoughts and action say for example a person is repeatedly washing his hands, checking the locked doors and like things which obstruct with their smooth functioning of day to day actions. Our contemporary society with the insertion of social media has added a new story in this. Now OCD is most visible in all individuals predominantly teens who are time after time checking their social media application instead of knowing that if somebody will update them their phone will beep and they would come to know but still they aren't able to be in charge of their own behavior. This is the reason why they are using their mobile phones anywhere and ubiquitously say in their classroom, library, dining table, market, bus or even restroom because they aren't able to manage their voluntary and involuntary behavior. A person in this era is much more fascinated to know what others are updating regarding themselves and how they are responding to their posts. It is approved that it is great to be updated regarding each and everything but not at the cost of the wear and tear of your own performance. Teens aren't able to contemplate on different activities because of the nosiness caused by this disorder. "Knowing others is intelligence but knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength but mastering yourself is true power" (Lao tzu). This state makes us isolated and when a person is occupied in this state he feels that thorny blanket has wrapped him with sadness and melancholy which throws a person into the state of lonesomeness. This loneliness is a dissatisfied vision of yourself as it arises from the crises of identity. Every being in the universe is in the need of identity which means endorsement from oneself or from other living creatures. The great sociologist Charles Horton Cooley has said, "I am not what I think I am, I am not what you think I am, I am what I think, you think I am" which means we give much magnitude to what we think how others are perceiving us and on the basis of that we form our personal identity. Horton Cooley coined this as the "looking-glass self" which means we glimpse ourselves in the mirror by thinking how others are perceiving us and this occurs mostly in this digital age, where social media is used as to epitomize. Social media has added a big twirl in this theory with the result it becomes more complex and multifarious. Social media world like Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn etc. had impacted us in multiple ways while some are encouraging and some are off-putting. Every person wants to be the spotlight and this longing has led to a greater than ever number of "mirrors" with the result of number of new issues about oneself. Social media has added the new term to the identity which is known as 'digital self.' Mary Aiken calls this self as 'cyber self' in which the individual presents herself to a digital platform which is miles apart from the genuine self. It is mostly seen that in cyber self-introversions present themselves as extroversion and vice versa. In social media people show their different identity in different platforms and in most of the cases people have different profiles in different social media applications which means individual is more disposed to identity crises because a person isn't much contented with his identity that is why as per the social approval he keeps changing his identity. Every person in the social media presents himself/herself in such a fabricated manner so that everyone praises and gives positive feedback. People try to catch others attention by posting pictures about each and the whole thing say in their accomplishment, promise, work schedule and like things in the form of selfies, group pictures, pictures of the food and like

things because their craving is contented only when their psychological arena is delighted more than their physiological arena. Positive comments have a good impact on mental health whereas trolling affects us in a negative manner and drifts us to lonesomeness and like situations. This unwilling isolation is like a darker side of our life which is filled with all negativities and leads to identity crises. The concept of identity is somehow identical with the concept of self. Carl roger has said that, “self is composed of three things one is self image another is self esteem and last one is ideal self”

**Self image:** It means how we perceive ourself. Where we put ourselves in the gamut like am I a good person /friend/teacher/mate or vice versa. By and large, it deals with questions who am I? And those who are able to counter such questions are the most triumphant in their life and those who fail are having greater vulnerability towards the crises.

**Self esteem:** It means how much worth we give to ourself .What kind of mind-set we have about oneself like do we consider oneself as an angel or as a rascal .The person who consider oneself as an angel values his own thoughts and decision with the result they feel contented with oneself while as those who consider themselves as mischief disrespect their self and with the result they fall into the quarry of suicide attempts because the most important thing in this world is the respect for oneself. If you respect yourself then only you will give respect to others.

**Ideal self:** It means what you want to be. Is there someone whom you view through rose-tinted glasses and wants to be like that. If there is a significant mismatch between your ideal and real self, incongruence comes in picture.



**Congruence:** It means that there isn't a much difference between what you are and what you want to be and with the outcome a person will be much more accustomed and pleased with his life.

**Incongruence:** It takes place when there is a notable difference between what you are and what you want to be with the upshot person suffers from maladjustment which give rise to most psychological problems.

Different psychologists, sociologists and educationists have given their different viewpoints regarding the impression of identity. Carl Roger the notable psychologist have mentioned mainly two types of identity i.e, (personal and social identity) .Former means the perception about yourself while as the latter means the viewpoint of others about yourself. Where as in the case of digital self/cyber self nevertheless, conversion of the social self with these digital platforms are not all the times steeped in such negative inferences. A study published in the *Journal of Social Media and Society*, explains the number of positive

conclusion that crop up from the digital looking-glass self. When people are interviewed about their digital content-creation practices and its impact on their sagacity of self, they presented a wide range of positive responses. Such as:

- A sagacity of gained confidence
- Better originality
- Triumph over the major social stumbling block
- Greater than before sense of self-worth
- A strengthened specialized figure
- Feelings of unselfishness through their content

## Conclusion

Social media has impacted us in innumerable ways while some ways are optimistic and some are pessimistic and accordingly our identity is shaped and structured. With the impact of social media our social relations are pretentious because words have lost their meaning. There is a much disparity between the connotation and denotation of words in 21<sup>st</sup> century. This mismatch had created lots of puzzlement with the result identity is in the menace. Earlier if somebody was saying I love, like or hate you they were thinking thrice before making this obligation because these are very high words but in digital media such words are like punctuation marks which people mostly take easy with the result a person's individuality is in the danger because a person is in the state of quandary that whom to count as admirer and whom to count as rival? Here everybody is preoccupied with his identity, but perceiving only from others point of view. Our social media posts divulge the condition of our heart more than our longest and most eloquent prayers. One should be answerable to each and everything that one will post because everything one posts is a reflection of one's true self. Everybody should be well aware with the fact that the time which we are spending online is something which is most priceless to us among all the things because we can't buy the time even it isn't possible to pause or rewind it. Thus, we should be very choosy in this that whom we have to give this and from whom we have taken this.

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