



DIGITAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE AND EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA LITERACY INTERVENTIONS FOR PREADOLESCENTS

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Abstract:

The rapid integration of social media into preadolescents' daily lives has redefined patterns of communication, learning, and emotional development. While digital platforms offer opportunities for connection and creativity, they also present risks to mental health, including cyberbullying, anxiety, and social comparison. These challenges underscore the urgent need to understand how digital communication competence and emotional resilience can serve as protective mechanisms that enhance psychological well-being. This study systematically reviews existing scholarship on social media literacy interventions targeting preadolescents, applying the PRISMA 2020 protocol to ensure transparency and replicability. Two major databases Scopus and Web of Science were systematically searched, yielding a total of 31 primary studies published between 2015 and 2025 that met inclusion criteria. Data were extracted, coded, and thematically synthesized. The analysis produced three significant thematic clusters: (1) Digital Communication Competence and Literacy Development (2) Emotional and Psychological Resilience among Adolescents, and (3) Social Media Interventions and Behavioral Outcomes. The review reveals that integrated interventions combining media literacy, emotional intelligence, and participatory communication yield the impacts on adolescents' digital well-being. However, regional gaps persist, particularly in culturally grounded studies within Southeast Asia. The paper concludes that future research should advance a context-sensitive communication framework that unites digital competence and emotional resilience as twin pillars for promoting safe,

ethical, and psychologically adaptive social media engagement among preadolescents.

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Digital Communication Competence, Emotional Resilience, Preadolescents' Psychological Well-Being, Social Media Literacy, Systematic Literature Review (Prisma)



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Introduction

The exponential rise of social media use among preadolescents has transformed the landscape of communication, learning, and socialization in unprecedented ways. Children as young as ten increasingly engage in online interactions that shape their identity, worldview, and psychological development. While digital platforms provide opportunities for creativity and connectedness, they also expose young users to complex risks including cyberbullying, misinformation, social comparison, and digital dependency. These phenomena have intensified global concern about the effects of online engagement on mental health, prompting scholars to emphasize digital communication competence as a critical foundation for safe and meaningful participation in digital spaces (Livingstone et al., 2025; Carretero et al., 2017). However, existing evidence suggests that technical literacy alone is insufficient where is required a holistic model integrates communication competence with emotional resilience to promote sustainable psychological well-being among preadolescents. Preadolescents are defined as children aged around 9–12 years before puberty (García Lara et al., 2018). Adolescents are 13–18 years old who are undergoing physical, emotional, and social changes (Bruni et al., 2015; Izzo et al., 2024).

Theoretically, digital communication competence encompasses the cognitive, technical, and socio-emotional skills necessary to interpret, produce, and negotiate meaning across networked environments (Editors et al., 2013; Ilomäki et al., 2016). Within this communicative framework, emotional resilience derived from developmental resilience theory (Masten, 2014) and coping model functions (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) as the adaptive mechanism that enables young users to withstand online stressors while maintaining psychological equilibrium. Recent interventions rooted in Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura 1986 (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2024) and critical media literacy pedagogy demonstrate that guided social media

education can strengthen empathy, reflective judgment, and safe digital behavior. Despite growing international evidence, much of the existing research remains fragmented, discipline-bound, and concentrated in Western contexts, leaving a limited understanding of how such constructs interact within Asian and multicultural settings.

In Southeast Asia, especially Malaysia, empirical inquiry into digital competence and emotional resilience among preadolescents is still developing. This underrepresentation stems from limited longitudinal studies, uneven digital infrastructure, and scarce cross-cultural validation, which constrain the generalizability of global models to local contexts (Ghfar et al., 2025; Hamid et al., 2024; Mohamed et al., 2022). Most national initiatives emphasize ICT proficiency rather than communicative or psychological readiness for online engagement. This gap underscores the urgent need for a systematic synthesis of global and regional evidence to inform a culturally relevant framework of social media literacy interventions. Therefore, this study systematically reviews existing scholarship to identify theoretical linkages, intervention outcomes, and research gaps that can guide the development of an integrated communication model promoting digital literacy and emotional well-being among preadolescents.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Digital Communication Competence in the Age of Social Media

The concept of digital communication competence (DCC) has evolved as a multidimensional construct that goes beyond technological proficiency to encompass social, cognitive, and ethical dimensions of digital engagement. Early theoretical roots stem from Hymes' (1972) Communicative Competence Theory, which emphasized not only linguistic ability but also the capacity to use language appropriately within cultural and social contexts. This framework later expanded into the digital domain, where scholars such as Editors et al. (2013) and Ilomäki et al. (2016) conceptualized DCC as an integration of digital literacy, media awareness, and interpersonal communication skills mediated by technology. The European Digital Competence Framework (DigComp 2.2) further defines DCC as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable responsible participation in online environments (Carretero et al., 2017). Within this framework, communication competence is positioned as both a technical and ethical construct that requiring individuals to engage critically, collaborate safely, and manage digital identity effectively. This theoretical expansion underscores that in the era of social media, communication competence entails not merely "using" technology but "understanding, interpreting, and co-creating" meaning through it.

Empirical research from Western and Asian contexts has affirmed the critical role of DCC in shaping adolescents' online behavior and psychological well-being. For instance, Livingstone et al. (2018) found that adolescents with higher levels of digital literacy demonstrate better judgment when encountering misinformation and lower vulnerability to online manipulation. Hatlevik and Christophersen (2013) reported that students' self-efficacy in digital communication strongly correlates with their ability to regulate online emotions and engage in constructive discourse. Similarly, Pangrazio and Sefton-Green (2021) argue that critical digital literacy must include reflexive practices the ability to recognize one's role as both consumer and producer of digital content. In East Asian contexts, Boonwattanopas (2025) observed that structured school-based media literacy programs enhance students' awareness of cyber ethics and empathy, highlighting the social dimension of DCC. However, despite these advancements, several studies note that global research often overemphasizes the technical aspects of digital

competence, neglecting the communicative and affective skills essential for relational well-being in online settings (Campbell & Coker, 2025; Ilomäki et al., 2016).

Emotional Resilience as a Mediator of Psychological Well-Being

The concept of emotional resilience originally rooted in developmental and positive psychology, has gained renewed theoretical significance in understanding adolescents' adaptation to digital challenges. According to Masten (2014), resilience is "ordinary magic," referring to the normative human capacity to adapt successfully to adversity through protective processes. In communication and media studies, this concept aligns with Lazarus and Folkman (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which explains that individuals interpret digital stressors such as cyberbullying, exclusion, or misinformation through cognitive appraisal and subsequently employ coping responses that are influenced by both personal capacities and social support systems. The emergence of social media amplifies this process, as adolescents' experiences of connection, comparison, and validation continuously affect their emotional regulation. The Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions from Fredrickson (2004) also provides an interpretive foundation, suggesting that positive emotional experiences in digital environments such as supportive interactions and online empathy can broaden cognitive flexibility and build enduring psychological resources. Thus, emotional resilience in the digital era represents not merely a personality trait but a communicative capacity involving reflection, regulation, and relational negotiation within online spaces.

Empirical evidence strongly supports the role of emotional resilience in mediating the psychological effects of social media use. In Western literature, Best et al. (2014) found that adolescents who possess adaptive coping mechanisms experience less emotional distress and are more capable of transforming online adversity into social learning. Kang et al. (2025) observed that social media engagement can enhance social connectedness and empathy when mediated by emotional awareness and self-reflection. Meanwhile, Valkenburg et al. (2022) introduced Differential Susceptibility to Media Effects Model (DSMM), which explains how individual dispositions (self-esteem emotional maturity) and social contexts (parental mediation, peer norms) determine whether social media exposure yields positive or negative outcomes. Similarly, Chen et al. (2024) demonstrated that resilience moderates the relationship between problematic internet use and depressive symptoms, highlighting the buffering effect of emotional competence. Beyond the individual level, Livingstone et al. (2018) emphasized that collective resilience built through peer networks and parental guidance enhances adolescents' capacity to navigate the emotional volatility of digital spaces. However, most of these studies are cross-sectional, focusing primarily on Western cultural contexts, and therefore lack longitudinal evidence of resilience development in diverse sociocultural settings.

Social Media Literacy Interventions and Behavioral Transformation

Social media literacy interventions represent the practical application of digital communication and emotional resilience theories within structured behavioral frameworks. Drawing from Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, these interventions emphasize observational learning and reciprocal determinism the idea that personal factors, environmental stimuli, and behavioral outcomes influence one another dynamically. In digital contexts, adolescents model behaviors observed online, internalize social norms, and reproduce them across their social media interactions. Therefore, social media literacy interventions aim to reconstruct these learning cycles by embedding reflective, critical, and empathic practices into adolescents' online routines. According to Uri and Hobbs (2020), literacy interventions grounded in critical

pedagogy enable young users to challenge power structures, algorithmic manipulation, and persuasive communication online. Livingstone et al. (2025) argue that effective interventions must integrate not only technical media training but also ethical and emotional learning to cultivate critical participation rather than passive consumption.

Empirical studies show strong evidence of the effectiveness of such interventions in improving adolescents' digital behavior and well-being. For instance, Lei et al. (2019) found that social media campaigns focusing on digital empathy and cyber-kindness significantly reduced instances of online aggression. Vaquero et al. (2025) demonstrated that arts-based digital programs foster creativity and emotional regulation, serving as therapeutic and educational tools simultaneously. Likewise, Ayesha et al. (2025) showed that influencer-led interventions promoting healthy body image achieved higher engagement and self-acceptance among adolescent girls, indicating that credibility and relatability enhance message impact. In Asian contexts, Lee (2010) highlighted that peer-to-peer media education improved moral reasoning and critical thinking, while Lwin et al. (2021) in Singapore emphasized the role of parental mediation in sustaining behavioral transformation. However, a recurring limitation in these studies is the short-term nature of outcomes many interventions produce temporary attitude shifts but fail to track longitudinal changes in emotional resilience, media habits, and psychosocial adaptation. This limitation underscores the need for sustained theory-driven evaluation models that integrate behavioral analytics and emotional intelligence metrics into program design.

Emerging Gaps in Regional Digital Well-Being Research

In the Malaysian and Southeast Asian context, the discourse on digital communication competence and emotional resilience among preadolescents remains fragmented and underdeveloped. Although initiatives such as Malaysia's Digital Education Policy (2021–2025) emphasize technology integration, most school-based digital literacy programs continue to focus narrowly on ICT skills rather than the communicative, ethical, and psychological dimensions of online engagement (Hamzah et al., 2023; Pauh et al., 2025). Empirical evidence on how preadolescents construct meaning, identity, and emotional safety within social media environments is still limited, reflecting a lack of contextually grounded frameworks that integrate communication competence with psychological resilience. While international models such as DigComp and the 21st Century Skills Framework (Carretero et al., 2017) have advanced global standards for digital literacy, their adaptation to collectivist cultures in Southeast Asia, where relational and moral values are central, remains minimal.

Research on digital emotional resilience in Malaysia is also relatively small-scale and often conflated with general discussions of adolescent mental health. Existing studies reveal that young users face increasing digital stressors, including cyberbullying, online shaming, and social comparison (Azeqa & Abdullah, 2024; Kunhao et al., 2024), yet few interventions explicitly cultivate resilience as a communication skill. Although Malaysia's National Mental Health Strategic Plan (2020–2025) acknowledges the importance of emotional well-being, it lacks detailed guidelines for embedding resilience into digital education. Regional examples such as Singapore's Digital for Life and South Korea's Smart Media Education Policy demonstrate how emotional literacy and resilience can be systematically integrated into the national curriculum. Furthermore, research on social media literacy interventions in Malaysia remains in its infancy, with most efforts limited to awareness campaigns that lack theoretical and evaluative rigor (Mohammad et al., 2025; Lim et al., 2024).

Material and methods

Identification

In this study, key steps of the systematic review process were utilized to gather a substantial amount of relevant literature. The process began with the selection of keywords, followed by searching for related terms using dictionaries, thesauri, encyclopedias, and prior research. All relevant terms were identified, and search strings were created for the Web of Science, and Scopus databases (refer to Table 1). This initial phase of the systematic review yielded 882 publications pertinent to the study topic from the two databases.

Table 1: The Search String

Scopus	<p>TITLE-ABS-KEY (("social media" OR "social networking sites" OR "social networks" OR "online platforms" OR "digital media" OR "virtual communities" OR "internet use" OR "interactive media" OR "online communication" OR "media technology") AND ("psychological well-being" OR "mental health" OR "psychological resilience" OR "mental wellness") AND ("preadolescents" OR "early adolescents" OR "tweens" OR "young adolescents" OR "children" OR "middle childhood" OR "school-aged children") AND ("communication" OR "information exchange" OR "message delivery" OR "social interaction" OR "digital communication" OR "discourse" OR "interpersonal communication" OR "media communication")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2023) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2024) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2025)) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "SOCI") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "ARTS") OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , "PSYC"))</p> <p>Date of Access: Nov 2025</p>
WOS	<p>("social media" OR "social networking sites" OR "social networks" OR "online platforms" OR "digital media" OR "virtual communities" OR "internet use" OR "interactive media" OR "online communication" OR "media technology") AND ("psychological well-being" OR "mental health" OR "psychological resilience" OR "mental wellness") AND ("preadolescents" OR "early adolescents" OR "tweens"</p> <p>Date of Access: Nov 2025</p>

Screening

During the screening phase, potentially relevant research items were assessed to ensure alignment with the predefined research questions. This step involved selecting studies based on the implementation and theoretical approach of social media literacy interventions that promote digital communication competence and emotional resilience among preadolescents. Duplicate records were removed at this stage. Initially, 772 publications were excluded, leaving 110 articles for further evaluation according to the established inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 2). The first inclusion criterion focused on scholarly literature, as it serves as the primary source of empirical and theoretical insights, including reviews, meta-syntheses, meta-analyses, books, book series, chapters, and conference proceedings not covered in recent

studies. The review was restricted to English-language publications published between 2023 until 2025 to ensure the inclusion of contemporary and relevant evidence. Overall, 16 publications were excluded due to duplication before proceeding to the eligibility stage.

Table 2: The Selection Criterion of Searching

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Timeline	2023- 2025	<2023
Document Type	Article	Non-Article
Source Type	Journal	Conference, Book, Review, Conference Proceeding
Language	English	Other Language
Subject area	Psychology, social sciences, art and humanities	Others

Table 3: The Quantity And Information Regarding The Database Of Primary Studies (PSs)

No.	Author	Title	Year	Scopus	WoS
1	Gallemit & Mordeno (2025)	Prevalence and risk factors of common mental health symptoms among left-behind emerging adult children amid the COVID-19 pandemic	2025	/	
2	Cohn-Schwartz et al (2025)	Sexual Orientation and Internalized Homophobia of Middle Aged and Older Gay and Lesbian Adults: The Role of Social Relationships	2025	/	
3	la Rose & Mule (2025)	Behind closed doors: Sousveillance in mandated social welfare interventions	2025	/	
4	Bourke-Taylor et al (2025)	Health, Wellbeing and Empowerment E-workshops for Mothers of Children with Disabilities: A Non-randomised Comparison Study	2025	/	
5	Chen et al (2025)	Effectiveness of digital game-based GISCC program on cyberbullying prevention among Chinese adolescents	2025	/	
6	Meiksin et al (2025)	Social norms relating to gender and dating and relationship violence in English secondary schools: Exploring student, staff and parent/carer accounts	2025	/	
7	Mader et al (2025)	The effect of social media use on adolescents' subjective well-being: Longitudinal evidence from Switzerland	2025	/	
8	Nevard et al (2025)	Socially Oriented Approaches To Working with Children of Parents with Severe and Enduring Mental Illness: Expert Perspectives	2025	/	
9	Goksal et al (2025)	District Functional Unit for Adolescents 2022: a pilot project in Italy to detect mental health strengths and difficulties among youth	2025	/	
10	Rečka et al (2025)	Challenges of Adolescents in War: a Report from Ukraine's Frontline Territories; Виклики підлітків на війні: репортаж з прифронтових територій України	2025	/	
11	Tarantino et al (2024)	"We followed their lead": Exploring relational change and support among caregivers of transgender and gender diverse youth	2024	/	
12	Wefers et al (2024)	Understanding and Deterring Online Child Grooming: A Qualitative Study	2024	/	
13	Zhang et al (2024)	Mediation and interaction of problematic internet use in the relationship between sexual minority status and depressive symptoms: Gender-based analysis	2024	/	

14	Becker et al (2024)	Digital Media-related Problems Contributing to Psychiatric Hospitalizations Among Children and Adolescents Before and After the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic	2024	/	
15	Gajalakshmi & Meenakshi, (2023)	Understanding the psycho-social problems of vulnerable adolescent girls and effect of intervention through life skill training	2023	/	
16	Mukherjee & Beresford (2023)	Factors influencing the mental health of autistic children and teenagers: Parents' observations and experiences	2023	/	
17	Stabler et al (2023)	'I probably wouldn't want to talk about anything too personal': A qualitative exploration of how issues of privacy, confidentiality and surveillance in the home impact on access and engagement with online services and spaces for care-experienced young people	2023	/	
18	Satchell et al (2023)	Examining How Regular Users of Marijuana Communicate with Their Children About Marijuana Use: Lessons Learned from Facebook and Instagram Recruitment	2023	/	
19	Ma & Sheng (2023)	Internet use time and mental health among rural adolescents in China: A longitudinal study	2023	/	
20	Curtin et al (2023)	Assessing parent interaction with deaf infants: A quantitative survey of UK professional practice	2023	/	
21	McDonald et al (2023)	'She didn't know how to go back': School attendance problems in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic—A multiple stakeholder qualitative study with parents and professionals	2023	/	
22	Becker et al (2024)	Digital Media-related Problems Contributing to Psychiatric Hospitalizations Among Children and Adolescents Before and After the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic	2024		/
23	Rodman et al (2024)	Within-Person Fluctuations in Objective Smartphone Use and Emotional Processes During Adolescence: An Intensive Longitudinal Study	2024		/
24	Vaquero et al (2025)	Studying the effects of digital arts-based interventions on teenagers' social media usage, brain connectivity, and mental health: study protocol of the SMART project	2025		/
25	Satchell et al (2023)	Examining How Regular Users of Marijuana Communicate with Their Children About Marijuana Use: Lessons Learned from Facebook and Instagram Recruitment	2023		/
26	Paraskeva et al (2024)	An exploration of having social media influencers deliver a first-line digital intervention to improve body image among adolescent girls: A qualitative study	2024		/

27	Tamplain et al (2023)	#DCD/Dyspraxia in Real Life: Twitter Users' Unprompted Expression of Experiences With Motor Differences	2023		/
28	Tan et al (2025)	Is ostracism deadly? The relationship between different types of ostracism and adolescent suicide	2025		/
29	Christensen et al (2025)	Digital maturity of young people - unfolding dependencies between core dimensions and national context as external factor by using a machine-learning approach	2025		/
30	Gilmore et al (2024)	Building Community and Identity Online: A Content Analysis of Highly Viewed #Autism TikTok Videos	2024		/

Eligibility

In the third stage, referred to as the eligibility phase, a total of 94 articles were shortlisted for detailed assessment. At this stage, the titles, abstracts, and key content of each article were critically reviewed to ensure that they met the established inclusion criteria. Each article was examined to verify its methodological rigor, relevance to the research focus, and empirical foundation. Subsequently, 63 studies were excluded as they did not meet the eligibility standards. The reasons for exclusion included being outside the research domain, titles or abstracts lacking direct relevance to the study objectives, or the absence of full-text access supported by empirical evidence. Following this rigorous screening, 31 primary studies were retained for comprehensive analysis and thematic synthesis in the final review stage.

Data Abstraction and Analysis

An integrative analytical approach was employed in this study to examine and synthesize findings across diverse research designs, including both qualitative and quantitative studies. The primary objective of this phase was to identify key themes and subthemes related to digital communication competence, emotional resilience, and social media literacy interventions among preadolescents. Data abstraction began with a systematic extraction of relevant information from the 31 selected studies, focusing on study aims, methodologies, participant characteristics, intervention strategies, and major findings. As illustrated in Figure 1, each article was meticulously reviewed to identify statements, evidence, or discussions aligned with the study's conceptual focus. The authors collaboratively analyzed and coded the extracted data to develop initial categories, which were subsequently refined into higher-order themes through iterative discussion and comparison.

To ensure analytical rigor, a detailed audit log was maintained throughout the process, recording analytical decisions, interpretive insights, and reflections relevant to data interpretation. Any discrepancies in thematic coding or interpretation were resolved through discussion among the research team until consensus was achieved. The thematic synthesis produced three major clusters (1) Digital Communication Competence and Literacy Development, (2) Emotional and Psychological Resilience among Adolescents, and (3) Social Media Interventions and Behavioral Outcomes. The reliability and validity of the thematic framework were further strengthened through expert review involving three experts, two from media and communication and one from adolescent psychology. These experts evaluated the clarity, coherence, and domain relevance of each subtheme. Their feedback informed final adjustments to ensure conceptual consistency and analytical validity.

The final phase of synthesis addressed the two central research questions guiding this review:

1. How do existing social media literacy interventions enhance digital communication competence among preadolescents, and what specific communicative, cognitive, and ethical skills are emphasized across these programs?
2. In what ways do social media literacy interventions foster emotional resilience and positive behavioral transformation among preadolescents, and what theoretical or contextual factors influence their effectiveness?

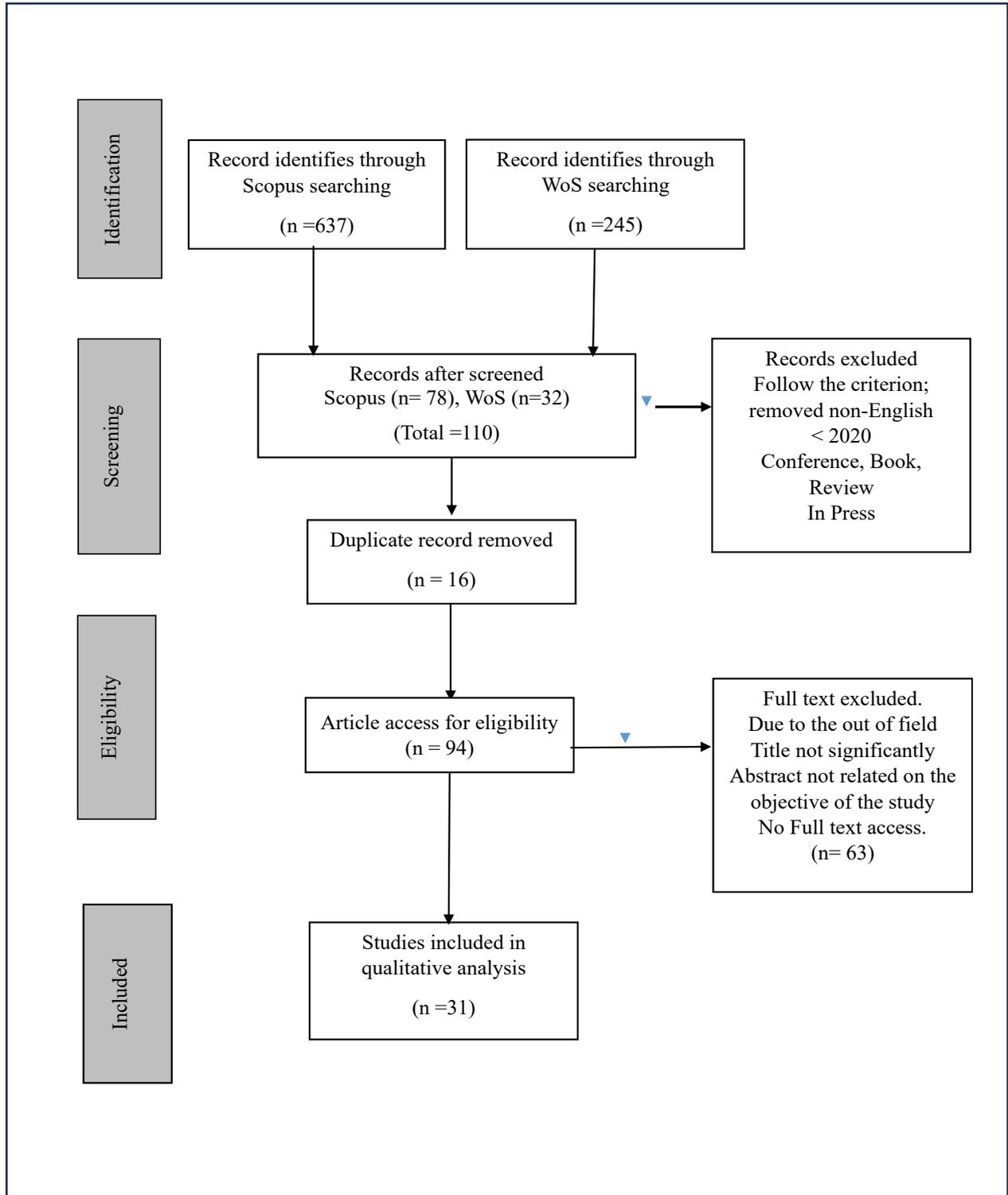


Figure 1 : Flow Diagram of The Proposed Searching Study

Result and Finding

Digital Communication Competence and Literacy Development

The main output of studies under Theme 1 emphasizes how digital communication competence and social media literacy function as essential protective factors for preadolescents navigating an increasingly complex online environment. Across the analyzed abstracts, including those by Bourke-Taylor et al. (2025), Chen et al., (2025), Vaquero et al. (2025), and Paraskeva et al., (2024) a consistent outcome emerges regarding the effectiveness of structured digital interventions such as e-workshops, gamified programs, and arts-based modules. These initiatives improve young users' ability to interpret, evaluate, and respond to online information critically. Beyond technical proficiency, such interventions cultivate reflective judgment, empathy, and safe online interaction. The empirical evidence highlights that communication competence is not simply a cognitive ability but an integrated psychosocial skill that connects digital expression, social responsibility, and ethical media engagement. Moreover, the studies collectively underscore the importance of school-based and parent-supported programs as key contexts for nurturing these skills, reinforcing the notion that digital literacy should be developed within a guided and participatory ecosystem rather than through isolated exposure.

Critically, the findings suggest a significant shift from access-oriented digital education to competence-based empowerment. Several studies report that digital communication competence enhances resilience against misinformation, cyberbullying, and emotional manipulation in online settings. For instance, Chen et al. (2025) show that a digital game-based GISCC program increases engagement and retention of safety knowledge, while Paraskeva et al. (2024) highlight the role of influencers as relatable agents in promoting positive body image and self-regulation. These insights reveal that successful literacy interventions must evoke emotional engagement and contextual relevance to sustain behavioral change. However, a key limitation identified across studies is the uneven digital readiness among educators and parents, which risks widening the competency gap. This finding indicates a need for coordinated multi-stakeholder efforts to strengthen capacity building so that adults, institutions, and policy frameworks evolve concurrently with adolescent digital development.

From a broader interpretive perspective, the collective outputs of Theme 1 redefine digital literacy as a strategic form of communication defense that supports psychological safety in the digital age. The studies demonstrate that communication competence in online contexts goes beyond functional technology use and instead involves cultivating discernment, empathy, and critical dialogue. By embedding emotional intelligence into literacy frameworks, these interventions bridge the gap between technological skill and human sensitivity. Consequently, the comprehensive outcome of this thematic cluster represents the conceptual advancement of digital literacy as a holistic construct that strengthens both cognitive understanding and the psychological as well as ethical resilience of preadolescents in digital ecosystems.

Emotional and Psychological Resilience among Adolescents

The primary outcome of studies under Theme 2 focuses on how emotional resilience mediates the relationship between social media use and adolescents' psychological well-being. The abstracts of studies such as Gallemitt and Mordeno (2025), Zhang et al. (2024), Tan et al. (2025), Garaigordobil (2025), and Christensen et al. (2025) collectively indicate that online interaction produces a dual effect by facilitating social connection while at the same time increasing the risks of anxiety, depression, and loneliness. A key finding across these works is that emotional

resilience, which includes self-regulation, coping mechanisms, and perceived social support, serves as a moderating factor that transforms potentially harmful digital experiences into opportunities for emotional growth. The collective output therefore identifies resilience not as a fixed personal trait but as a dynamic communicative process cultivated through peer interaction, parental mediation, and supportive online communities. These studies further reveal that adolescents who can reinterpret online stressors through reflective dialogue are better able to sustain emotional equilibrium despite constant exposure to digital pressures.

The reviewed works also show that the development of emotional resilience is deeply intertwined with the communication ecology in which adolescents articulate and negotiate their online experiences. Garaigordobil (2025) demonstrates that problematic internet use and cyberbullying heighten emotional vulnerability, while effective emotional communication reduces negative impacts. Zhang et al. (2024) highlight gender-based variations in how social media influences depressive symptoms, suggesting that digital experiences are shaped by cultural and social expectations. These findings call for a re-examination of digital well-being frameworks, emphasizing that resilience cannot be achieved through technological restrictions or regulations alone. Instead, it must be nurtured through empathy, inclusion, and opportunities for expressive autonomy. Across the studies, resilience consistently emerges through guided self-expression that enables adolescents to share emotional challenges within safe and supportive communication spaces.

Overall, the output of Theme 2 reframes emotional resilience as a communicative and relational resource rather than a purely psychological defense. The studies show that resilient adolescents do not simply withstand online adversity but transform it into social learning through conversation, reflection, and empathetic networks. The implications for both theory and practice are substantial. Digital well-being initiatives should treat resilience communication as a pedagogical foundation by integrating emotional literacy, peer empathy, and digital coping strategies into school curricula and family programs. Through such integration, digital resilience functions simultaneously as a preventive and transformative mechanism that equips adolescents to navigate the psychological complexities of social media with confidence, balance, and adaptive emotional intelligence.

Social Media Interventions and Behavioral Outcomes

The main output of studies under Theme 3 centers on the effectiveness of social media-based interventions in shaping adolescents' behavioral, cognitive, and emotional outcomes. The abstracts of studies such as Satchell et al. (2023), Mader et al. (2025), Tamplain et al. (2023), and Ma and Sheng (2023) show that social media platforms, once regarded primarily as high-risk spaces, are increasingly being utilized as tools for behavioral transformation, mental health promotion, and social skill enhancement. These interventions, which include online awareness campaigns, digital arts programs, and structured mentoring initiatives, demonstrate that platforms often associated with risk and exposure can be reimaged as spaces of empowerment. The studies collectively reveal that adolescents respond more positively to interventions delivered through familiar digital environments, particularly when these approaches combine creativity, peer modeling, and emotional reflection. The key outcome across these studies is the recognition that contextual authenticity and cultural relevance strengthen the credibility of interventions and enhance their potential for sustained behavioral change.

From a critical perspective, the reviewed studies highlight the complex relationship between algorithmic influence and intentional engagement. Paraskeva et al. (2024) demonstrate that social media influencers, when ethically engaged, can deliver meaningful interventions that promote healthy body image, digital empathy, and positive self-expression. Similarly, Mader et al. (2025) report that prolonged exposure to prosocial digital content is associated with higher levels of subjective well-being and reduced instances of online aggression. These findings emphasize that digital behavior is not merely determined by screen time but is socially constructed through communicative modeling, peer reinforcement, and reciprocal interaction. Nevertheless, a recurring issue across studies is the sustainability of behavioral outcomes. Many interventions yield temporary attitude changes without long-term validation or follow-up. This limitation underscores the importance of integrating behavioral analytics and digital literacy indicators into the design of social media interventions to ensure continuity and measurable impact.

The overall implication of Theme 3 is that social media interventions can function as transformative communicative ecosystems where learning, empathy, and identity development intersect. The studies reposition adolescents not as passive recipients of online influence but as active co-creators of digital norms and communities. This shift in perspective recognizes that social media, when strategically harnessed, can facilitate civic participation, emotional regulation, and digital empathy concurrently. As a result, Theme 3 reframes social media from being primarily a site of behavioral risk to a platform for behavioral development and empowerment. Ultimately, the findings suggest that sustainable digital well-being among adolescents arises not through avoidance of online spaces but through mindful, participatory, and emotionally intelligent engagement within them.

Discussion and Conclusion

The synthesis of the three thematic clusters, namely Digital Communication Competence and Literacy Development, Emotional and Psychological Resilience among Adolescents, and Social Media Interventions and Behavioral Outcomes, reveals a coherent and evolving body of knowledge on how digital communication influences psychological well-being among preadolescents. Collectively, these themes demonstrate a progressive shift in research focus from understanding the risks of digital media exposure to developing empowerment-oriented frameworks that integrate communication, cognition, and emotional intelligence. The reviewed studies affirm that adolescents' engagement with digital platforms is a central determinant of social development, identity formation, and emotional stability. This synthesis underscores that digital literacy and resilience should not be treated as isolated constructs but as interdependent competencies that jointly strengthen adolescents' well-being within an increasingly networked society.

The findings highlight the importance of adopting ecological and multi-dimensional approaches that connect digital communication competence with emotional resilience. Evidence from the reviewed studies shows that participatory interventions such as game-based learning, influencer-led initiatives, and e-workshops can effectively promote positive behavioral change and digital empathy. However, most existing studies are limited by short-term designs and context-specific approaches, resulting in insufficient evidence of long-term psychological impact. Future research should move beyond assessing immediate intervention outcomes to explore how digital competencies are internalized and sustained over time. A key challenge also lies in the uneven level of digital preparedness among educators and parents,

which limits the scalability of interventions. Addressing this issue requires interdisciplinary collaboration among communication scholars, psychologists, educators, and policymakers to co-develop inclusive and culturally relevant digital well-being curricula that reflect local values and socio-cultural realities.

In conclusion, the integration of digital communication competence and emotional resilience emerges as the foundation for sustainable digital well-being among preadolescents. Advancing this field requires longitudinal and mixed-method approaches, cross-cultural comparisons, and the integration of adaptive technologies such as artificial intelligence–based literacy tools and emotion-sensitive learning systems. By redefining digital literacy as a form of strategic communication defense and emotional resilience as a relational and socio-communicative skill, scholars and practitioners can contribute to a transformative model of adolescent development. This model envisions digital engagement not as a source of vulnerability but as a medium for fostering psychological growth, ethical awareness, and social empathy. Future scholarship should therefore focus on establishing empirically validated and culturally grounded frameworks that connect communication competence, emotional resilience, and behavioral transformation to prepare preadolescents to become emotionally intelligent, ethically responsible, and socially resilient digital citizens.

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