“What does it mean? What can I do?” Social networks and identity experimentation in adolescence

# Details

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## Topics

## Sample

126 users of a discussion forum (from 10 discussion threads)

# Abstract

This article investigates the relationship between experimentation on identity and use of Internet Forums in a sample of 126 Italian adolescents, who took part in 10 discussions. Data analysis combines quantitative methodology from Social Network Analysis and qualitative methodology from Thematic Analysis. Main objective of the research was to investigate whether participation in online social networks can be a resource for experimentation on adolescent identity and for the discussion of topics regarding the fulfilling of central developmental tasks in adolescence.

Qualitative analyses showed that the most recurrent themes addressed in the topics were: breakdown of significant relationships, definition of friendship, definition of love, positive and negative emotions, and coping strategies. Quantitative analyses showed that mean age of the participants is associated with a greater presence of contents relating to the breakdown: in the threads in which the mean age is lower, the mean of the contents of the breakdown is 14.33 vs. 2.40 for the discussions in which the mean age is higher (t = 4.14; p