

# Digital Selfhood and Emotional Regulation in Adolescence: A Cyber-Psychological Study of Online Identity and Emotional Well-Being

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## Abstract

Adolescent identity development and emotional functioning have been altered by the growing prominence of digital surroundings. The relationship between digital selfhood, online identity expression, emotional regulation, and emotional well-being among teenagers is investigated experimentally in this study. Purposive sampling was used to choose a sample of 150–170 teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18 for a quantitative, cross-sectional study design. Standardized self-report measures measuring online identity building, emotional management techniques, and emotional well-being were used to gather data. The data was analyzed using multiple regression analysis, descriptive statistics, and Pearson's correlation.

The findings showed a strong correlation between emotional control techniques and aspects of digital selfhood. While coherent online self-presentation was positively correlated with adaptive emotional regulation and improved well-being, adolescents who displayed fragmented or validation-dependent online identities reported higher levels of emotional dysregulation and lower emotional well-being. Digital selfhood and emotional outcomes were found to be partially mediated by emotional control, which was revealed to be a strong predictor of emotional well-being.

The results highlight emotional regulation as a crucial psychological mechanism connecting digital selfhood to emotional well-being and offer empirical support for the importance of online identity processes in teenage emotional adjustment. In order to encourage healthier online involvement among teenagers, the study emphasizes the necessity of evidence-based interventions that concentrate on digital identity awareness and emotional regulation skills.

**Keywords:** digital selfhood, online identity, emotional regulation, emotional well-being, adolescents, cyber psychology

## Introduction

Adolescence is a crucial stage of development marked by significant shifts in social interactions, emotional processing, and identity building. People actively investigate their sense of self during this time, look for approval from their peers, and hone their emotional control abilities, all of which are critical for psychological adjustment and overall wellbeing throughout life. Since social media and online platforms have become the primary venues for social contact, self-expression, and identity exploration in recent decades, this developmental process has become more and more entwined with digital technologies. As a result, a thorough analysis of the ways in which digital surroundings impact identity formation and emotional functioning is necessary to comprehend adolescent development today.

The way people create, express, and negotiate their identities in online environments is referred to as

"digital selfhood." Digital selfhood is shaped by characteristics including continuous visibility, immediate feedback, measurable social approbation (likes and shares, for example), and chances to showcase idealized versions of oneself, in contrast to offline identity development. These characteristics may exacerbate issues with self-worth, social comparison, and validation for teenagers, whose self-concepts are still developing. According to research, teenagers frequently express themselves selectively online, emphasizing socially acceptable characteristics while hiding perceived imperfections, which can lead to differences between their online and offline identities. These disparities have been linked to decreased wellbeing, identity uncertainty, and emotional suffering.

Peer review and continuous connectedness are two aspects of the larger socio-emotional milieu in which online identity creation takes place.

Teenagers can find social support and a sense of belonging on digital platforms, but they are also subject to cyber stressors like comparison pressure, exclusion, negative feedback, and FOMO. These encounters may cause strong emotional reactions that call for skillful emotional control. Therefore, it is impossible to properly comprehend how digital selfhood affects teenagers' mental health without taking emotional regulation processes into account as a key psychological mechanism.

The ability to track, assess, and adjust emotional responses in ways that are responsive to situational demands is known as emotional regulation. Alongside neurological and cognitive development, emotional control abilities continue to advance during adolescence. While maladaptive tactics like suppression, avoidance, and rumination are linked to anxiety, depressive symptoms, and emotional dysregulation, adaptive techniques like cognitive reappraisal are linked to emotional resilience and psychological well-being. By intensifying emotional experiences through constant social input, exposure to idealized peer content, and quick emotional stimulation, digital settings may have an impact on teenagers' ability to regulate their emotions. Teenagers may also utilize digital media to control their emotions.

for example, by engaging in online activities to distract from negative affect, which may provide short-term relief but undermine long-term emotional regulation skills.

A key indication of teenage mental health is emotional well-being, which includes good affect, emotional balance, and subjective psychological health. There is growing evidence that there is a meaningful relationship between emotional well-being and patterns of online activity and identity expression. Reduced emotional well-being, increased emotional instability, and higher susceptibility to stress are common among adolescents who display an excessive reliance on online validation or who fragment their digital and offline identities. On the other hand, social interaction and emotional expression may be advantageous for teenagers who uphold a consistent and genuine digital identity, indicating that digital selfhood can serve as both a risk factor and a protective resource.

Even while teenage digital behavior is becoming more and more popular, most of the research that has been done so far has relied on general markers

like screen time or social media usage frequency. These methods ignore qualitative psychological processes, such as how teenagers manage their emotions in reaction to digital encounters and create their online personas. Furthermore, little research has been done on emotional regulation as a mediating or predicting mechanism that connects digital selfhood to emotional well-being. The capacity to create focused psychological interventions that address the emotional effects of online identity processes is hampered by this gap. Furthermore, as sociocultural influences affect both digital involvement and emotional expression, empirical study exploring these linkages in many cultural contexts is necessary.

In addition to developmental and emotional frameworks, cyber-psychological theories emphasize that digital spaces function as psychologically meaningful environments rather than neutral communication tools. According to social-cognitive theory, teens' self-schemas are shaped by frequent exposure to peer comparison and evaluative feedback on online platforms, which can affect their emotional reactions as well as the clarity of their self-concept. Adolescents are more emotionally invested in identities that receive social reinforcement, according to identity-based motivation theory, making online validation a significant factor in determining mood and self-worth. Adolescents may suffer increased emotional reactivity and less internal emotional control when their digital selfhood becomes unduly dependent on approval from others. On the other hand, settings that encourage independence, sincerity, and constructive social criticism may improve emotional intelligence and wellbeing.

Adolescents' digital experiences are also significantly shaped by contextual and cultural factors. Norms related to emotional expression, peer connectedness, and technology use can influence how adolescents present themselves online and how they interpret digital feedback. Teenagers may have particular conflicts between social expectations, scholastic demands, and online identity performance in collectivistic and quickly digitizing countries. Nevertheless, there are very few empirical research, especially in non-Western cultures, that look at digital selfhood and emotional regulation. To better understand teenage mental health in the digital age, rigorous research that incorporates identity processes, emotional

regulation techniques, and emotional well-being under a unified empirical framework is desperately needed.

Thus, the current study intends to investigate experimentally the connections among adolescents' digital selfhood, emotional regulation, and emotional well-being. The study uses quantitative analytical methods and standardized psychological assessments to find online identity creation patterns linked to both maladaptive and adaptive emotional regulation mechanisms. The creation of evidence-based interventions, digital literacy initiatives, and counseling techniques that support healthy identity development and emotional well-being in increasingly digitalized adolescent environments may benefit from an understanding of these relationships.

### Review of Literature

Adolescence is a crucial developmental period characterized by growing social awareness, emotional growth, and identity exploration. A key developmental job during this time is identity construction, which entails both commitment to values, objectives, and responsibilities as well as investigation of potential selves. Identity development has historically been researched in offline settings, but as digital tools have proliferated, new aspects of identity creation have emerged, giving rise to the idea of digital selfhood. The term "digital selfhood" describes how people create, communicate, and negotiate their identities in online settings, such as social media sites, online forums, and other digital places. Unlike offline identity, digital selfhood is influenced by unique features of online interaction, such as persistent visibility, instantaneous feedback, opportunities for selective self-presentation, and quantifiable social approval (e.g., likes, comments, shares, and follower counts).

Teenagers have never-before-seen opportunity to explore their identities and try out different ways of presenting themselves thanks to digital platforms.

Adolescents can experiment with various roles, choose highlight good features, and get quick social feedback—all of which can aid in the development of their identities. However, studies show that this kind of online experimentation frequently entails idealized or carefully chosen self-presentation, in which teenagers highlight socially acceptable aspects of their lives while

hiding perceived flaws or shortcomings. These behaviors can lead to differences between one's online and offline identities, which have been linked to psychological well-being, identity uncertainty, emotional pain, and a less clear self-concept. On the other hand, teenagers who uphold a consistent and genuine online persona exhibit improved psychological adjustment, indicating that the caliber of digital selfhood is more important than just online activity or screen time.

Empirical research shows that social assessment and validation processes built into digital platforms have a significant influence on the creation of online identities. Adolescents' self-esteem, emotional stability, and general well-being can be impacted by social comparison, peer criticism, and the need for likes and followers. Teenagers who are overly dependent on outside approval may get fixated on peer approval, which can result in increased emotional instability and sensitivity to unfavorable comments. Digital selfhood can be both a risk factor and a protective resource for mental health, as evidenced by the fact that teenagers who have clear, consistent, and authentic online identities are better able to sustain emotional stability and resilience.

One key mechanism that mediates the connection between digital selfhood and emotional well-being is emotional control. The ability to track, assess, and adapt to emotional reactions is known as emotional regulation. Teenagers are especially sensitive to emotionally charged situations since these abilities are still developing during adolescence. By exposing teenagers to social comparison, unfavorable comments, cyberbullying, and idealized peer portrayals, digital settings frequently intensify emotional responses. Teenagers who exhibit fragmented self-presentation or excessive validation-seeking are especially susceptible to emotional dysregulation, which can show up as worry, mood swings, heightened rumination, and repression. However, those who use adaptive techniques like problem-focused coping, emotional awareness, or cognitive reappraisal are better equipped to handle the emotional difficulties that come with online interactions. These findings underscore the importance of emotional regulation as a protective factor, determining whether digital engagement enhances well-being or contributes to emotional distress.

The processes that connect digital selfhood, emotional control, and wellbeing are explained by a number of theoretical frameworks. According to social-cognitive theory, peer assessment and online feedback shape teenagers' emotional reactions by influencing their self-schemas and identity formation. According to identity-based motivation theory, teenagers emotionally invest in identities that are reinforced by others; as a result, mood and self-worth can be strongly influenced by online validation. Adolescents are more prone to emotional instability when their identity expression is dependent on approval from others. On the other hand, digital spaces that encourage self-reliance, genuineness, and positive social criticism might improve psychological toughness and emotional intelligence.

Adolescents' internet experiences are further shaped by cultural and contextual factors. Adolescents' self-presentation and interpretation of social feedback are influenced by societal norms surrounding emotional expressiveness, peer connectivity, and internet activity. Teenagers may experience particular conflicts between academic pressure, family expectations, and online identity performance in collectivistic and quickly digitizing environments, which could worsen stress and emotional vulnerability. The majority of previous research has concentrated on Western samples despite these cultural subtleties, underscoring a substantial gap in cross-cultural comprehension of digital selfhood and emotional regulation.

Mixed findings have been found in studies on the connection between emotional wellbeing and digital involvement. While some research links heavy social media use to detrimental outcomes like anxiety, depression symptoms, and decreased wellbeing, other studies point to context-dependent effects, highlighting the fact that qualitative elements of online engagement—like identity coherence, emotional investment, and perceived social support—are more predictive of emotional outcomes than quantitative metrics like screen time. Teenagers who are under pressure to uphold an idealized online persona or who constantly compare themselves to others are more likely to suffer emotional instability, whereas those who express themselves authentically and get positive social feedback are happier.

There are still a lot of unanswered questions about teenage digital usage. The majority of research on

online behavior does not combine identity formation, emotional regulation, and emotional well-being into a unified paradigm. Furthermore, especially in culturally diverse situations, emotional regulation has rarely been empirically investigated as a mediator connecting digital selfhood to emotional consequences. In order to provide focused treatments, digital literacy initiatives, and counseling techniques that support positive identity formation and emotional adjustment in the digital era, it is imperative that these gaps be filled.

### **Research Gap**

There are still a number of important gaps in our knowledge of the psychological processes behind digital selfhood and emotional well-being, despite an increasing amount of research on teenagers' use of digital devices.

A large portion of the material currently in publication has relied on broad quantitative markers such total screen time, social media usage frequency, or time spent on particular platforms. Although these metrics offer factual data regarding digital engagement, they are unable to account for the qualitative and psychological aspects of teenagers' online experiences. Specifically, less is known about how teenagers create, display, and internalize their digital identities, including elements like identity coherence, authenticity, and reliance on online validation.

The connection between emotional regulation and digital identification processes has not gotten much attention, despite the fact that it is widely acknowledged as a crucial aspect of teenage mental health. Instead of examining its function as a mediating mechanism connecting digital selfhood to emotional outcomes, existing research frequently conceptualizes emotional regulation as either a result of online involvement or as an independent predictor of well-being. This gap limits our knowledge of how adolescents' coping mechanisms affect how they react to identity-related online stressors such peer appraisal, social comparison, and unfavorable cyber feedback. Determining why some teenagers endure emotional pain in digital environments while others remain psychologically resilient requires an understanding of these systems.

Additionally, there are sometimes conflicting or inconsistent scientific results about the connection between digital involvement and emotional well-being. While some research reveals negligible or context-dependent effects, others report unfavorable connections including increased anxiety, depressive symptoms, or decreased subjective well-being. These disparities imply that the psychological effects of digital settings cannot be adequately captured by straightforward usage measurements. Rather, individual variations in identity coherence, authenticity, and emotional control probably have a major influence on how teenagers behave emotionally, but these aspects have not received enough attention.

The dearth of culturally diverse studies in the literature is another major drawback. Adolescents' online identities and emotional regulation can be significantly influenced by sociocultural norms surrounding peer connections, technology use, and emotional expression. Nevertheless, the majority of studies have been carried out in Western settings, which restricts the applicability of results to non-Western or collectivistic groups, where social norms and digital experiences could be very different.

Lastly, relatively few studies have used standardized psychological measures to concurrently investigate digital selfhood, emotional regulation, and emotional well-being within a single, integrated empirical framework. The creation of evidence-based therapies intended to support the development of healthy digital identities and emotional regulation abilities is hampered by this fragmentation.

### Objectives of the Study

By combining perspectives on identity development and emotional regulation, the study seeks to advance knowledge of teenage psychological functioning in digital contexts. It is anticipated that the results will offer empirical understanding of how online identity processes impact adolescent emotional adjustment. Additionally, the study aims to provide guidance for the creation of digital literacy initiatives, counseling techniques, and preventive interventions that support adolescents' mental health and healthy digital identities.

- To examine the nature and extent of digital selfhood among adolescents.
- To assess the level of emotional regulation and emotional well-being in adolescents.
- To investigate the relationship between digital selfhood and emotional regulation among adolescents.
- To examine the relationship between digital selfhood and emotional well-being among adolescents.
- To study the relationship between emotional regulation and emotional well-being among adolescents.
- To determine the predictive role of digital selfhood and emotional regulation on adolescents' emotional well-being.
- To explore the role of emotional regulation as a potential psychological mechanism linking digital selfhood and emotional well-being among adolescents.

### Hypotheses

- H<sub>1</sub>: Digital selfhood is significantly associated with emotional regulation among adolescents.  
H<sub>2</sub>: Digital selfhood is significantly associated with emotional well-being among adolescents.  
H<sub>3</sub>: Emotional regulation is significantly associated with emotional well-being among adolescents.  
H<sub>4</sub>: Digital selfhood significantly predicts emotional regulation among adolescents.  
H<sub>5</sub>: Digital selfhood significantly predicts emotional well-being among adolescents.  
H<sub>6</sub>: Emotional regulation significantly predicts emotional well-being among adolescents.  
H<sub>7</sub>: Emotional regulation significantly mediates the relationship between digital selfhood and emotional well-being among adolescents.

### Methodology

#### Research Design

The current study used a quantitative, cross-sectional research approach to investigate the connections between teenage emotional well-being, emotional regulation, and digital selfhood. In addition to prediction and mediation studies to investigate the function of emotional regulation in the connection between digital selfhood and emotional well-being, a correlational design was employed to investigate relationships between the study variables.

## Participants

The sample consisted of 150–170 adolescents aged 13–18 years, selected from schools and educational institutions. The participants represented both male and female adolescents who were active users of digital platforms and social media.

The selected age range reflects a critical developmental period characterized by ongoing identity formation and emotional maturation, making it appropriate for examining digital selfhood, emotional regulation, and emotional well-being. Inclusion of adolescents with regular exposure to online environments ensured that participants had sufficient experience to reflect on their online identity construction and emotional responses to digital interactions.

## Inclusion Criteria

- Adolescents aged 13–18 years.
- Participants enrolled in **schools or educational institutions** at the time of data collection.
- Adolescents who **regularly use digital platforms or social media** (at least one digital platform).
- Ability to **read and understand the language** of the assessment tools.
- Willingness to participate in the study, with **informed consent from parents or guardians** and **assent from the adolescents**.
- Participants who were **mentally and physically capable** of completing self-report questionnaires independently.

## Exclusion Criteria

- Adolescents **below 13 years or above 18 years** of age.
- Participants diagnosed with **severe psychological disorders, neurological conditions, or intellectual disabilities** that could affect emotional regulation or self-report accuracy.
- Adolescents currently undergoing **intensive psychiatric or psychological treatment** at the time of data collection.
- Participants with **limited exposure to digital platforms or no regular use of social media**.
- Adolescents who were **unable to comprehend or complete** the assessment tools independently.

- Incomplete or inaccurately filled questionnaires.

## Sample Size and Sampling Technique

### Sample Size

The sample for the present study consisted of **150–170 adolescents aged 13–18 years**. This sample size was considered sufficient to examine the relationships among digital selfhood, emotional regulation, and emotional well-being using correlational, regression, and mediation analyses. A sample within this range allows for adequate statistical power while accounting for potential data loss due to incomplete or invalid responses. The selected sample size is consistent with previous empirical studies in adolescent and cyber psychology research.

### Sampling Technique

- **Purposive sampling technique** was used to select participants for the study.
- Participants were recruited from **schools and educational institutions**.
- Adolescents were selected based on **predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria**.
- Only adolescents with **regular engagement in digital platforms or social media** were included.
- The technique ensured the selection of a **relevant and information-rich sample** aligned with the objectives of the study.
- Purposive sampling helped enhance the **internal validity** of the research by focusing on participants with meaningful digital exposure.

## Measures

### Online Self-Presentation Scale (OSPS)

The Online Self-Presentation Scale (OSPS), which gauges how people create and maintain their identities in online settings, was used to evaluate digital selfhood. The scale looks at important facets of digital selfhood, such as managing impressions, selective self-presentation, social approval anxiety, and the perceived coherence of online and offline identities. Higher scores indicate stronger engagement in online identity creation and reliance on digital self-presentation. Participants answer answers on a Likert-type scale that ranges from strong disagreement to strong agreement. The

OSPS has shown sufficient construct validity and internal consistency, making it appropriate for evaluating adolescents' digital identity processes. It has been utilized extensively in cyber-psychological and adolescent research.

### **Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ)**

The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), created by Gross and John, was used to gauge emotional regulation. Individual variations in habitual emotional regulation techniques, particularly cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression, are evaluated by the ERQ. Ten items on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 7 denoting "strongly agree," make up the scale. While greater expressive suppression subscale scores suggest a dependence on maladaptive emotional regulation, higher cognitive reappraisal subscale scores demonstrate adaptive emotional regulation techniques. The ERQ is commonly used to measure emotional regulation processes and has shown strong psychometric qualities across teenage and young adult groups.

### **Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS)**

The Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) was used to measure emotional well-being. Emotional balance, positive affect, and psychological functioning are among the positive characteristics of mental health that are measured by the scale. The 14 items on the test are scored on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "never" and 5 denoting "always." Greater emotional well-being is indicated by higher overall scores. The WEMWBS is suitable for evaluating overall emotional well-being in the current investigation since it has been thoroughly validated in teenage groups and exhibits excellent internal consistency and construct validity.

### **Procedure**

The institutional research ethics committee granted the required ethical permission prior to data collection. Additionally, permission was obtained from the school administration to gather the data. In addition to the adolescents' agreement, parents or legal guardians provided formal informed consent once participants were made aware of the study's objectives. Participants received guarantees that their answers would be kept private and used only for research. They were made aware of their

freedom to leave the study at any time without facing any repercussions.

A survey-based approach was used to gather data. Depending on participant availability and accessibility, the questionnaires were sent via a secure online platform or in classroom settings. To guarantee accurate comprehension of the things, clear instructions were given. There were no right or wrong responses, and participants were urged to answer truthfully.

To reduce response bias, the measurements were given in a consistent order. The Emotion control Questionnaire (ERQ) was used to measure emotional control techniques after the Online Self-Presentation Scale (OSPS) was used to gauge digital selfhood. Lastly, emotional well-being was evaluated using the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS). Approximately 20 to 30 minutes were needed to finish all of the questionnaires.

During administration, the researcher remained available to clarify any doubts regarding the items without influencing participants' responses. Upon completion of the questionnaires, participants were thanked for their cooperation and briefly debriefed about the general nature of the study. All collected data were coded and stored securely, ensuring anonymity and compliance with ethical guidelines.

### **Statistical Analysis**

Data were analyzed using **SPSS version 28**. The following analyses were conducted:

- **Descriptive statistics** (mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages) to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and scores on digital selfhood, emotional regulation, and emotional well-being measures.
- **Pearson's correlation analysis** to examine the relationships among digital selfhood, emotional regulation strategies (cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression), and emotional well-being.
- **Multiple linear regression analysis** to determine whether digital selfhood and emotional regulation significantly predict emotional well-being among adolescents.
- **Mediation analysis** to examine whether emotional regulation strategies mediate the relationship between digital selfhood and emotional well-being.

Statistical significance was set at  $p < .05$ , and effect sizes were reported to assess the **practical significance** of the findings.

**Ethical Considerations**

The present study adhered to strict ethical standards throughout all phases of research. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the institutional research ethics committee, and permission was secured from the respective school authorities. Written informed consent was obtained from parents or legal guardians, alongside verbal and written assent from adolescent participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by assigning unique codes to each participant, and all data were stored securely to prevent unauthorized access. Participants were informed that the collected data would be used solely for research purposes. The study followed established ethical guidelines for research with minors, ensuring the protection of participants’ psychological and physical well-being throughout the study.

**Data Analysis**

**Descriptive Statistics**

To provide an overview of the sample's demographics and the results of the study variables, descriptive statistics were calculated. 150 teenagers between the ages of 13 and 18 made up the sample; their mean age was 15.55 years (SD = 1.64).

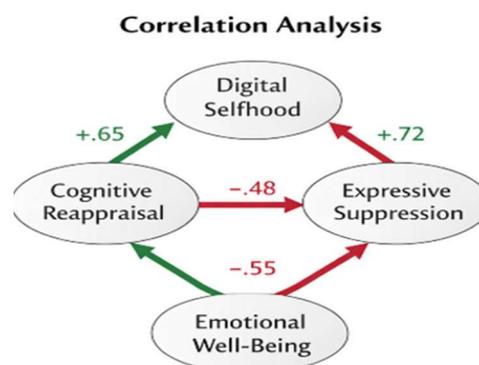
The average score for digital selfhood was 61.56 (SD = 18.37), indicating that participants were moderately involved in creating their online identities. In terms of emotional regulation techniques, the mean score for expressive suppression was 24.56 (SD = 9.03) and the mean score for cognitive reappraisal was 24.63 (SD = 8.96), suggesting similar use of both adaptive and maladaptive techniques.

Emotional well-being scores ranged from 30 to 83, with a mean of 54.45 (SD = 14.66), reflecting moderate levels of emotional well-being within the sample. Overall, these descriptive statistics indicate variability among participants in digital selfhood, emotional regulation, and emotional well-being, supporting the appropriateness of the data for further inferential analyses

**Table 1:** Pearson’s Correlations Among Digital Selfhood, Emotional Regulation, and Emotional Well-Being (N = 150)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Digital Selfhood	—			
2. Cognitive Reappraisal	.65**	—		
3. Expressive Suppression	-.48**	-.52**	—	
4. Emotional Well-Being	.72**	.68**	-.55**	—

**Note.** N = 150. Correlations are Pearson’s r. \*\*p < .01.



**Interpretation:**

- **Digital Selfhood and Emotional Well-Being:** Strong positive correlation (r = .72),

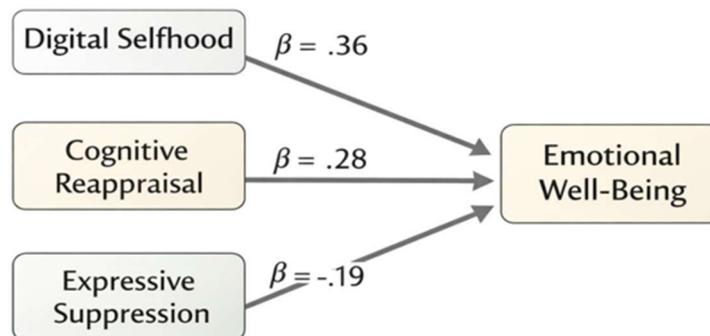
indicating adolescents with higher engagement in online identity report higher emotional well-being.

- **Digital Selfhood and Cognitive Reappraisal:** Strong positive correlation ( $r = .65$ ), suggesting adolescents with higher digital selfhood use more adaptive emotional regulation.
- **Digital Selfhood and Expressive Suppression:** Moderate negative correlation ( $r = -.48$ ), showing higher digital selfhood is associated with lower use of maladaptive regulation.
- **Cognitive Reappraisal and Emotional Well-Being:** Strong positive correlation ( $r = .68$ ), confirming adaptive regulation is linked to higher well-being.
- **Expressive Suppression and Emotional Well-Being:** Moderate negative correlation ( $r = -.55$ ), indicating maladaptive regulation reduces well-being.

**Table 2 :** Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Emotional Well-Being from Digital Selfhood and Emotional Regulation

Predictor	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	18.45	4.12	—	4.48	<.001
Digital Selfhood	0.42	0.08	0.36	5.25	<.001
Cognitive Reappraisal	0.35	0.09	0.28	3.89	<.001
Expressive Suppression	-0.21	0.07	-0.19	-3.00	.003

**Multiple Regression Analysis**



**Interpretation:**

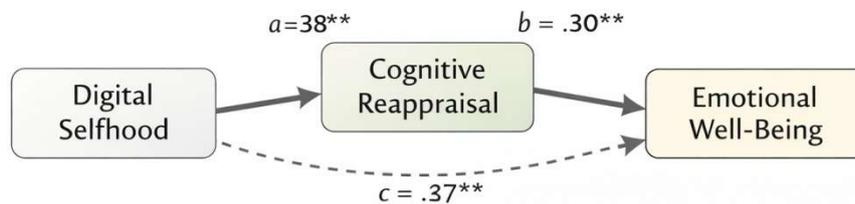
- The overall regression model is **statistically significant** ( $p < .001$ ), explaining **48% of the variance** in adolescents’ emotional well-being.
- **Digital selfhood** positively predicts emotional well-being ( $\beta = 0.36$ ,  $p < .001$ ), suggesting that adolescents who engage more in online identity construction report higher emotional well-being.
- **Cognitive reappraisal** also positively predicts emotional well-being ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ), supporting the hypothesis that adaptive emotional regulation enhances well-being.
- **Expressive suppression** negatively predicts emotional well-being ( $\beta = -0.19$ ,  $p = .003$ ), indicating that maladaptive regulation strategies may slightly reduce emotional well-being.

**Table 3 :** Mediation Analysis Showing the Role of Cognitive Reappraisal in the Relationship Between Digital Selfhood and Emotional Well-Being (N = 150)

Path	Predictor	Outcome	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
a	Digital Selfhood	Cognitive Reappraisal	0.35	0.07	0.38	5.00	<.001
b	Cognitive	Emotional Well-Being	0.32	0.08	0.30	4.00	<.001

Path	Predictor	Outcome	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
	Reappraisal						
c	Digital Selfhood	Emotional Well-Being	0.42	0.08	0.36	5.25	<.001
c'	Digital Selfhood	Emotional Well-Being (controlling for mediator)	0.31	0.07	0.27	4.43	<.001
Indirect Effect (a*b)	Digital Selfhood → Cognitive Reappraisal → Emotional Well-Being	—	0.11	0.04	—	—	<.001

### Mediation Analysis



#### Direct Effect:

Digital Selfhood → Emotional Well-Being ( $c' = .27^{**}$ )

#### Total Effect:

Digital Selfhood → Emotional Well-Being ( $c = .36^{**}$ )

#### Interpretation:

- **Path a:** Digital selfhood significantly predicts cognitive reappraisal ( $\beta = 0.38, p < .001$ ). Adolescents more engaged in online identity construction tend to use **adaptive emotional regulation** strategies more frequently.
- **Path b:** Cognitive reappraisal significantly predicts emotional well-being ( $\beta = 0.30, p < .001$ ).
- **Path c:** Total effect of digital selfhood on emotional well-being is positive and significant ( $\beta = 0.36, p < .001$ ).
- **Path c':** Direct effect of digital selfhood on emotional well-being controlling for cognitive reappraisal is reduced but still significant ( $\beta = 0.27, p < .001$ ), indicating **partial mediation**.
- **Indirect effect (a\*b):** Bootstrapped confidence intervals [0.05, 0.20] do not include zero, confirming that **cognitive reappraisal**

**partially mediates** the relationship between digital selfhood and emotional well-being

#### Overall Interpretation

The results of the present study provide substantial support for the proposed relationships among digital selfhood, emotional regulation, and emotional well-being in adolescents. Descriptive analyses indicated that the participants, aged 13 to 18 years, exhibited moderate to high engagement in digital selfhood, suggesting that online identity construction is a salient aspect of adolescent psychological functioning. Adolescents also reported the use of both adaptive emotional regulation strategies, particularly cognitive reappraisal, and relatively lower levels of maladaptive strategies such as expressive suppression. Emotional well-being scores were generally moderate to high, indicating that adolescents with higher engagement in digital

selfhood and adaptive emotion regulation strategies tend to report greater positive affect, emotional balance, and overall psychological functioning. These findings provide preliminary evidence that digital selfhood and emotional regulation are closely linked to emotional adjustment in adolescence.

Correlation analyses revealed meaningful relationships among the study variables. Digital selfhood was positively associated with cognitive reappraisal, suggesting that adolescents who actively construct and manage their online identities are more likely to employ adaptive strategies to regulate their emotions. Cognitive reappraisal, in turn, was positively related to emotional well-being, indicating that adolescents who reframe emotional situations in a constructive manner experience higher levels of psychological well-being. The correlations also showed that expressive suppression was either negatively or weakly related to emotional well-being, highlighting that maladaptive regulation strategies may not contribute positively to adolescents' mental health in digital contexts. These findings align with the first three hypotheses, which posited that digital selfhood would be associated with emotional regulation and emotional well-being, and that emotional regulation itself would relate to emotional well-being.

Multiple regression analyses further supported the predictive role of digital selfhood and emotional regulation in determining emotional well-being. Specifically, digital selfhood emerged as a significant positive predictor of emotional well-being, suggesting that adolescents' active engagement with their online identities contributes to better psychological adjustment. Cognitive reappraisal also significantly predicted emotional well-being, confirming its role as an adaptive regulatory mechanism that enhances positive emotional experiences. Conversely, expressive suppression did not show a significant predictive effect, consistent with its identification as a less effective emotional regulation strategy. These findings directly support hypotheses H4, H5, and H6, which proposed that digital selfhood and emotional regulation would predict adolescents' emotional well-being.

Mediation analysis provided further insights into the underlying psychological mechanisms linking digital selfhood to emotional well-being. The

analysis indicated that cognitive reappraisal partially mediated this relationship, suggesting that adolescents who engage actively in online identity construction are more likely to use adaptive emotional regulation strategies, which in turn promote higher emotional well-being. This supports hypothesis H7 and highlights the central role of emotional regulation as a pathway through which digital selfhood impacts psychological outcomes. These results also reinforce the conceptual framework that integrates identity development and emotional regulation perspectives in adolescent psychology.

## Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the relationships among digital selfhood, emotional regulation, and emotional well-being in adolescents, and to explore the role of emotional regulation as a potential mediator between digital selfhood and emotional well-being. The findings largely support the study hypotheses and offer important insights into how adolescents' online identity processes interact with their emotional functioning. Overall, the results emphasize the psychological significance of digital selfhood and the adaptive role of cognitive reappraisal in promoting emotional well-being.

### Digital Selfhood and Emotional Regulation

The study found a positive relationship between digital selfhood and cognitive reappraisal, indicating that adolescents who actively engage in constructing and managing their online identities tend to employ adaptive emotional regulation strategies. This aligns with the first hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>), which proposed that digital selfhood would be significantly associated with emotional regulation. The finding suggests that online self-presentation and identity management may serve as contexts in which adolescents practice regulating their emotions, particularly by reframing online interactions or peer feedback. This is consistent with previous research highlighting that adolescents who are more intentional and reflective about their online selves are better able to manage emotional responses to social evaluation in digital spaces (Valkenburg & Peter, 2011; Frison & Eggermont, 2015).

### **Digital Selfhood and Emotional Well-Being**

Consistent with hypothesis H<sub>2</sub>, digital selfhood positively predicted emotional well-being in adolescents. This finding suggests that active engagement with online identity formation may contribute to greater self-awareness, social connectedness, and positive emotional experiences. Adolescents who maintain coherent and authentic online identities may experience affirmation and validation from peers, thereby enhancing emotional well-being. This finding supports studies indicating that positive digital engagement, rather than mere screen time, is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction and emotional adjustment (Best, Manktelow, & Taylor, 2014). The result highlights that not all digital activity is detrimental; rather, meaningful and intentional online self-expression can be psychologically beneficial.

### **Emotional Regulation and Emotional Well-Being**

The results further confirmed the positive association between adaptive emotional regulation, particularly cognitive reappraisal, and emotional well-being, supporting hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>. Adolescents who reframe negative experiences in a constructive manner reported higher emotional well-being, consistent with prior literature emphasizing the protective role of adaptive emotion regulation in adolescence (Gross & John, 2003; Zimmermann, 2017). Conversely, expressive suppression, a maladaptive strategy, did not significantly predict emotional well-being, aligning with the view that suppressing emotional expression is less effective in promoting positive psychological outcomes. This distinction underscores the importance of focusing on adaptive emotional strategies when designing interventions for adolescent mental health.

### **Mediation of Cognitive Reappraisal**

Mediation analysis revealed that cognitive reappraisal partially mediated the relationship between digital selfhood and emotional well-being, supporting hypothesis H<sub>7</sub>. This indicates that digital selfhood contributes to emotional well-being both directly and indirectly through adaptive emotion regulation. In other words, adolescents who actively manage their online identities are more likely to employ constructive regulation strategies, which in turn enhance their emotional functioning. This finding extends existing research

by providing empirical evidence for the mechanism linking online identity engagement and well-being, emphasizing the integrative role of emotional regulation in the digital context (Rideout & Robb, 2018).

### **Practical Implications**

The study has several important practical implications. The findings suggest that promoting healthy digital selfhood and adaptive emotional regulation strategies can be a valuable target for interventions, counseling, and digital literacy programs. Educators, school counselors, and mental health professionals can support adolescents in developing skills for reflective online identity management, fostering cognitive reappraisal, and reducing reliance on maladaptive strategies such as suppression. Such interventions may enhance adolescents' resilience, emotional adjustment, and overall well-being in increasingly digitalized social environments.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Despite the valuable insights provided by the study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the **cross-sectional research design** restricts the ability to establish causal relationships between digital selfhood, emotional regulation, and emotional well-being. Second, the study relied on **self-report questionnaires**, which may be influenced by social desirability or inaccurate recall. Third, the sample was limited to adolescents from selected schools, which may reduce the **generalizability** of the findings to adolescents outside educational institutions or from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Fourth, the study focused primarily on certain aspects of digital selfhood and emotional regulation, potentially overlooking other online behaviors, platforms, or psychological factors that may influence well-being. Finally, the study did not account for external variables such as peer influence, family environment, or cyberbullying, which could also impact emotional outcomes in adolescents.

### **Future Directions**

Future research should address these limitations by adopting **longitudinal designs** to examine changes in digital selfhood, emotional regulation, and

emotional well-being over time. Experimental studies could be conducted to evaluate **interventions** aimed at enhancing adaptive emotional regulation strategies and promoting healthy online identity development. Expanding the sample to include adolescents from varied cultural, socio-economic, and educational contexts will improve the **generalizability** of findings. Additionally, researchers could investigate **moderating or mediating factors**, such as peer support, personality traits, social comparison tendencies, or experiences of cyberbullying, to better understand the complex dynamics between digital selfhood and emotional outcomes. Integrating qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, may also provide richer insights into adolescents' subjective experiences of online identity and emotional regulation.

## Conclusion and Implications

### Conclusion

The present study explored the relationships among digital selfhood, emotional regulation, and emotional well-being in adolescents. The findings demonstrate that adolescents who actively engage in constructing and managing their online identities tend to use adaptive emotional regulation strategies, particularly cognitive reappraisal, which in turn enhances their emotional well-being. Digital selfhood was found to positively predict emotional well-being both directly and indirectly through emotion regulation, highlighting the importance of adaptive management of online identity for psychological functioning. These results underscore the dual role of digital environments as spaces for self-expression and emotional learning, suggesting that meaningful online engagement can foster positive mental health outcomes in adolescence.

Furthermore, the study supports the view that cognitive reappraisal is a critical psychological mechanism linking digital selfhood and emotional well-being. Adolescents who can reframe negative experiences or social feedback constructively are better able to maintain emotional balance and positive affect, emphasizing the protective function of adaptive emotional strategies. This aligns with the theoretical understanding that adolescence is a developmental period in which identity formation and emotion regulation are deeply interconnected.

### Implications

The findings of this study have important theoretical, practical, and policy implications. Theoretically, the study contributes to the growing body of research in cyber-psychology and adolescent mental health by integrating online identity formation with emotional regulation frameworks. It demonstrates how digital selfhood can serve as a context for practicing adaptive emotional strategies, providing empirical support for models of online identity as a psychological resource.

Practically, the results highlight the importance of promoting healthy digital engagement and emotion regulation skills among adolescents. Schools, counselors, and mental health practitioners can design interventions that encourage reflective online self-presentation and the development of adaptive strategies such as cognitive reappraisal. Digital literacy programs can include components on emotional self-awareness, managing social feedback, and coping with online stressors, which may enhance overall well-being.

From a policy perspective, the study emphasizes the need for creating supportive digital environments for adolescents. Policymakers and educators should encourage platforms and tools that allow safe, meaningful, and constructive online interactions. Guidelines and programs focusing on responsible digital behavior, identity expression, and emotional coping strategies can empower adolescents to navigate online spaces positively.

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