



Identity statuses and involvement of Polish secondary school youth in social media use

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Abstract:

The formation of a person's identity is a continuous and dynamic process, occurring at every stage of our lives, although the most important and crucial period is adolescence, especially its second phase falling between the ages of 16/17-20. In the light of contemporary research, we know that identity is not a fixed construct, but is subject to dynamic transformations not only during adolescence, but also at subsequent stages of adulthood (Brzezińska & Piotrowski, 2017). Identity formation

is subject to various influences, one of which is the use of social media. Therefore an extremely important research task should be the searching for links between young people's identity statuses and their activity on social networks. We know that today's young people use social networks to explore themselves, but also to express themselves. The researchers who undertook this issue were Mannerström et al. (2018). Their studies concerned the dependencies between social media use and identity statuses. There is still not enough empirical research focusing on exploring the relationship between adolescents' engagement in digital activity and their identity formation process. This article presents the results of research into understanding this relationship. In this study was applied a diagnostic survey method. The research consisted of anonymous paper-and-pencil surveys. The study was designed to answer the question of how the identity statuses of the studied adolescents are linked to their excessive use of social media portals. The results confirmed that adolescents who have ruminative exploration identity statuses use social media portals statistically significantly more excessively (harmfully) than students presenting other identity statuses.

Introduction

Identity Statuses

In Erikson's concept of development (1997), a person has to resolve several crises during their life. A specific crisis is attributed to each stage of life and a positive outcome of a given crisis makes further development and moving to the next stages of life possible. The time of emergence of a crisis is different from person to person because Erikson believes that everyone develops at their own pace (Karaś & Ciecuch, 2015; Jarczyńska, 2021). The identity crisis of adolescence is particularly important. During this time, many demands are made of young people which they try to meet. The decisions concerning their own future are also crucial (Liberska, 2002).

Marcia (1966), taking a processed-based approach, developed the thoughts of Erikson and created one of the most popular concepts concerning identity statuses. He believed that two processes are key to its emergence: exploration and commitment. Their presence or absence allows the taken identity status to be determined. Exploration consists of experimenting, searching, and asking questions, while commitment involves selection and choice of goals and combining them into one coherent whole. He identified the following identity statuses: achieved, foreclosed, moratorium, and diffuse (Karaś & Ciecuch, 2015; Jarczyńska, 2021; Brzezińska, 2017; Wieradzka-Pilarczyk, 2019; Brzezińska et al., 2014; Rydz & Głód, 2014).



Waterman (1999) modified and extended identity statuses. The development of identity is dynamic in his model. He believed that it is possible to move on to the next identity status (progress), stop for a certain time (stagnation), and return to an earlier identity status (regression) on the development stage of an individual's identity.

Luyckx et al. (2006) revised Marcia's model and created the Dual-Cycle Model of Identity Formation. In this model, they extended exploration to 3 dimensions: commitment in breadth (looking for one's own space in the worldview dimension), exploration in depth (gathering information about the current involvements of an individual), and ruminative exploration (related to experiencing difficulties in making various decisions) (Brzezińska et al., 2014; Wieradzka-Pilarczyk, 2019; Jarczyńska, 2021; Morsunbul & Cok, 2014). The first cycle of the discussed model, referred to as forming commitments, includes in-breadth exploration and taking on various commitments. The second cycle, called an evaluation of commitments, includes in-depth exploration and identifying with the taken on commitments. In doing so, an individual checks whether or not the choices made in the previous cycle are appropriate for them. In-depth exploration helps an individual understand their needs (Jarczyńska, 2021; Brzezińska, 2017; Mastrotheodoros & Motti-Stefanidi, 2017).

Use of social media by adolescents

Social media is defined as any digital tools or applications that allow their users to interact socially and that can be easily distinguished from traditional media by the fact that their users not only receive their content, but also create it (Moreno et al. 2014). Websites like: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are places that allow young people to foster social bonds and help them find work. Frequent use of the internet and social media portals blurs the distinction between real life and virtual life spheres—and most of young people's lives are lived online (Hejwosz-Gromkowska, 2015).

The use of social media by young people is connected with the theory of use and gratification. This theory concerns questions about what people do with media and why they use them. Mc Quail created a classification where he identified 4 needs that are gratified by the media: 1. Information – passing on of knowledge about the world, involving the satisfaction of interests and hobbies; 2. Identity shaping – searching for confirmation of one's own value system; 3. Integration and social interaction – fulfilment of the need to belong; 4. Entertainment – relaxing and distracting attention from problems (Polański, 2017).

While on the topic of social media use by adolescents, Goffman's concept also deserves a mention. This concept was created before the age of internet but its reflection can be found in the use of social media by adolescents. This Author pointed out that the public sphere is a certain kind of stage where specific roles are played out every day. Goffman believed that human interactions are like a theatrical performance during which the actors present themselves to the viewers as best as possible so as to evoke specific reactions in them. He thought that people want to be perceived by others through the prism of an ideal vision of themselves (Hogan, 2010; Andrzejewska, 2021).

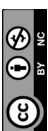
Social media portals are a certain kind of stage on which young people can publish photos and information about themselves. Individuals meet new people and take up activities that will make an impression on others. They engage in discussions, comment posts, and share content. By engaging in all these activities, they try to present themselves as best as possible and make a good impression on others (Andrzejewska, 2021).

In this context, the search for links between young people's identity statuses and their activity on social networks is extremely important, as social networks are nowadays an important tool used to search for one's identity and also to make identity content public.

Current research

When reviewing the available research, we found few scientific findings concerning the topic of interest to us. One example addressing this issue is the article by Bacchini et al. (2017). These Authors were studying the formation of identity in adolescent RPG players engaging in excessive gaming. The general conclusion phrased by them can be reduced to the fact that being a regular RPG player is associated with a more difficult path of the identity formation process.

Finnish research and an article by Mannerström et al. are yet another example of this (2018). These studies concerned the dependencies between social media use and identity statuses. The researchers used the



Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) to study the identity statuses of adolescent school pupils and were looking for the relationships between them and specific online activities. The use of social media was divided into specific areas: digital skills, playing computer games, engaging in activities based on friendship and hobbies, as well as excessive use of social media. The studies showed that people who have various digital skills and abilities usually have moratorium identity or searching moratorium. Persons who get overly involved in computer games have a diffuse identity and a ruminative moratorium (Mannerström et al., 2018). During the course of the research, the hypothesis that persons with achieved identity obtain the lowest results in terms of excessive social media use was confirmed (Mannerström et al., 2018).

Since the research on the relationship between the identity statuses of adolescents and their use of social media are sparse, we decided to explore this topic further in the research presented below.

Method and sample

A diagnostic survey method¹ was applied for the purpose of the research. The research consisted of anonymous paper-and-pencil surveys. The research was carried out on a randomly selected sample for the City of Bydgoszcz of pupils attending public upper secondary schools located in the City of Bydgoszcz in the period from September to November 2017 (N = 1.541). The average age of the respondents was 18.2 (SD = 2.04, age range: 16-20 years).

Being aware of the fact that several years have passed since the research was carried out, we believe that the results and the conclusions drawn from them are still valid, as the world of social media has not changed. The current findings confirm that social networks are still a tool for exploring young people's identities and a space in which they publish their identity data. The process of young people's identity formation is also unlikely to have changed.

Measure

The Dimensions of Identity Development Scale, and The Scale for Assessing Excessive Use of Social Networking (SONKSS-14) for construct validity were used in the study.

Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS)

DIDS was used to measure the dimensions of identity development and to define the configuration (profile) of the types of identity statuses on their basis (Luyckxa et al., 2008) in the Polish adaptation (DIDS/PL) (Piotrowski & Brzezińska, 2017). DIDS allows the position of an individual to be measured on the five dimensions/statuses of identity development: 1. Undertaking commitments (PZ) 2. Identification with commitments (IZ) 3. In-breadth exploration (EW) 4. In-depth exploration (EG) 5. Ruminative exploration (ER).

The Polish adaptation of DIDS (DIDS/PL) (Brzezińska & Piotrowski, 2010) comprises 25 statements. Each dimension of identity development is measured using five items that are assessed on a scale of 1 (definitely not) to 6 (definitely). The higher the result, the higher the intensity of exploration or commitment, respectively. The results are written up for each dimension separately, without calculating a general result.

The diagnosis of identity consists of identifying the intensity of each of its dimensions and creating an individual identity profile on the basis of which the status of its development can be defined. The tool allows the following identity statuses to be identified: 1. Identity achievement; 2. Identity foreclosure; 3. Moratorium identity is also referred to as ruminative; 4. Identity diffusion, also known as identity disturbance or diffused diffusion; 5. Ruminative identity exploration.

DIDS/PL has a confirmed five-factor structure. It was acceptable in the studied sample [confirmatory factor analysis (CFA): $\chi^2(242) = 1400.38$; CFI = .90; RMSEA = .07], Cronbach's alpha coefficient for given scales

¹ The research results presented in this article are a description of a fragment of extensive research that was carried out as part of the research project: The phenomenon of lifestreaming as a way to search for and build the identity of young people. Research on the identity statuses and styles of young people and their excessive use of social networks was carried out in the period from 2 January 2017 to 31 December 2018 (Agreement with KBPN No. 163/HBK/2018 and 165/HBK/2018). The research was co-financed by the Fund for Solving Gambling Problems under the Minister of Health.



across the whole sample came to: .72, .67, .82, .90, and .82, respectively. The Authors of the Polish adaptation of the tool state that it is reliable and has foreseeable relevance to such factors as self-evaluation, depressive symptoms, anxiety, reflectivity, and susceptibility to rumination (Brzezińska & Piotrowski, 2010).

The Scale for Assessing Excessive Use of Social Networking (SONKSS-14)

The Scale of Excessive Use of Social Networking Sites (SONKSS-14) was used to measure the excessive use of social media portals by youth. SONKSS-14 was developed by Izdebski and colleagues² in 2013-2014. The scale allows the intensity of the phenomenon to be assessed and the percentage of the respondents in the risk zone for excessive social media use to be determined. SONKSS-14 comprises 14 diagnostic questions covering addiction and pathological gambling criteria, modified appropriately to social media. The responses to the questions are given on the 5-point Likert scale, where 1 means definitely disagree with the statement, and 5 definitely agree. The tool was used in nationwide studies carried out in Poland among school pupils. The scale has satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.94), and is a single-factor scale.

Statistical Analysis

The basic statistical analyses were carried out using STATISTICA version 12, post-hoc analysis and cluster analysis were performed using SPSS version 25, whereas confirmatory analysis (carried out while assessing the psychometric properties of the tool) was done using AMOS version 25³.

Results

Dimensions of identity development presented by the studied adolescents

The highest value in the studied group of persons ($n = 1410$) was obtained for the subscale measuring the in-breadth exploration (EW) dimension; a similar result was obtained for the in-depth exploration (EG) dimension subscale, and then for the two subscales: undertaking a commitment (PZ) and the identification with commitments (IZ) subscale. The lowest mean value was obtained in the studied group of persons for the subscale investigating the ruminative exploration (ER) subscale (Table 1).

Table 1. Analysis of differences between the identity development dimensions—Friedman's Anova ($n = 1410$)

DIDS	Mean rank	Total ranks	M	SD
EW	3.64	5126.0	3.93	0.75
EG	3.24	4567.5	3.76	0.82
ER	2.17	3066.5	2.97	1.04
IZ	2.92	4116.0	3.60	0.93
PZ	3.03	4274.0	3.64	0.99

² Information about the procedure of developing SONKSS-14 can be found at: <http://mf-arch.mf.gov.pl/documents/764034/3143156/17.+Walidacja+skali+oceny+nadmiernego+korzystania+z+sieci+spo%C5%82eczno%C5%9Bciowych+%28SONKSS%29.pdf>

³ Before the statistical analyses were carried out to select the appropriate tests, the Shapiro-Wilk test was performed and the distribution measures were analysed to check whether the distribution of the analysed variables is similar to normal distribution. None of the analysed variables had a normal distribution ($p < 0.05$), hence, further analyses were carried out using non-parametric tests. When analysing the quantitative data, the following were carried out: an analysis of differences concerning the comparison of the dimensions of identity development on DIDS (Friedman's Anova); cluster analysis using the K-mean method to identify the clusters of the so-called identity development profiles; a comparison of clusters in terms of SONKSS-14 (Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variances), and a correlation of variables. The strength of the relationship between the studied variables (identity styles used by the studied pupils and excessive use of social media networks) was measured on an ordinal scale. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was used to test all hypotheses. In order to assess the statistical significance of the relationship, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used.



These results indicate that the studied youth are obtaining much higher results in the identity development dimensions that are recognised as adaptive and facilitate the correct shaping of their identity than in the maladaptive dimension of ruminative exploration.

In order to assess the differences between the dimensions of identity development presented by the studied adolescents, Friedman’s test (Friedman’s Anova) was carried out. Its result of $\chi^2(4) = 689.2; p < 0.001$ ($n=1410$) indicates the occurrence of a statistically significant difference between comparable dimensions of identity development. The post-hoc tests carried out using the Dunn-Bonferroni method confirmed the occurrence of statistical differences between persons presenting the ER dimension and the IZ dimension ($p < 0.001$), the ER and the PZ dimension ($p < 0.001$), the ER and the EG dimension ($p < 0.001$), the ER and the EW dimension ($p < 0.001$), the IZ dimension and the EG dimension ($p < 0.001$), the IZ dimension and the EW dimension ($p < 0.001$), the PZ dimension and the EG dimension ($p = 0.005$), and the EG dimension and the EW dimension ($p < 0.001$). No statistically significant differentiation was found, only between the IZ dimension and the PZ dimension ($p = 0.599$).

There is no difference between persons presenting the PZ dimension and the IZ dimension. There are no differences between both those who made important choices in the scope of their plans for the future, thus, undertook identity commitments in this area and those who identify with them, acknowledging them in their evaluation as significant, allowing for self-realisation. The results of the research clearly indicate that the studied pupils presenting these two dimensions of identity development were statistically different from those presenting the ER dimension.

Types of identity development statuses in the studied group of adolescents

DIDS/PL allowed the types of identity statuses occurring in the studied group of adolescents to be determined. Initial centres were then applied as the starting points for k-means cluster analysis⁴ which, according to the assumptions of the Dual-Cycle Model of Identity Formation by Luyckx and colleagues, allowed five clusters to be identified.

Five subgroups of adolescents with varied profiles (intensity and configuration) of the studied dimensions of identity development were identified (Figure 1). These subgroups were named in a manner that characterises their identity statuses: 1) Diffused identity status, referred to as unformed or as diffused diffusion. 2) Ruminative identity status also known as ruminative moratorium. 3) Ruminative exploration identity status, termed as non-differentiation. 4) Formed identity with identity foreclosure status. 5) Formed identity with moratorium status. (Brzezińska, 2017; Piotrowski & Brzezińska, 2017).

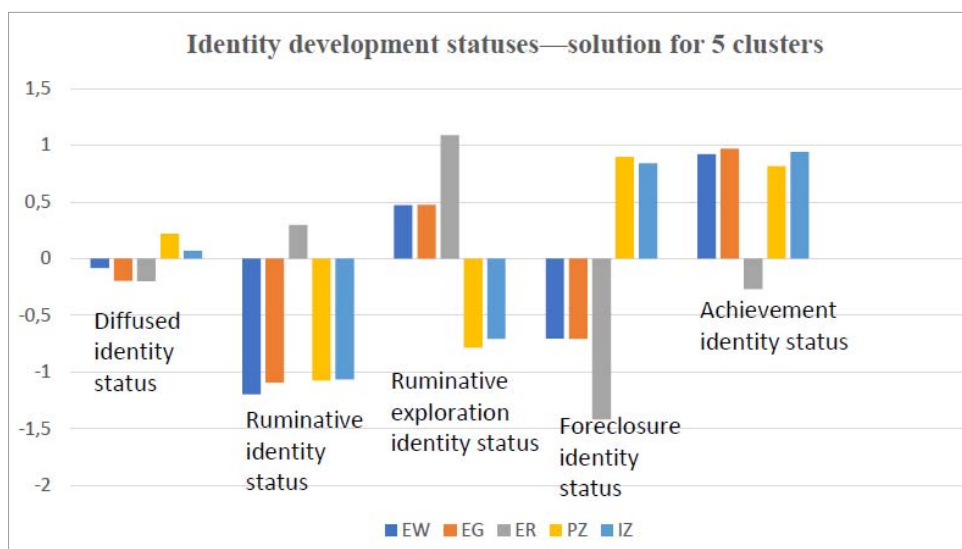


Figure 1. Identity development statuses—solution for 5 clusters

⁴ Brzezińska (2017) writes about the use of such a procedure, that is, the identification of initial cluster centres as the starting points for k-means cluster analysis, to create clusters (a relatively homogeneous subgroup). She states that this is a recognised procedure that is commonly used by researchers.



Table 2 shows the number and percentage of pupils of a given identity status in each of the five compared groups.

Table 2. Number and percentage of observations in each of the clusters ($n=1374$)

Cluster—Identity Statuses	<i>n</i>	%
1. Identity diffusion	363	26.42
2. Moratorium identity	238	17.32
3. Ruminative exploration identity	292	21.25
4. Identity foreclosure	163	11.87
5. Identity moratorium	318	23.14

The highest percentage of respondents were persons with identity diffusion, referred to as diffused diffusion. Such pupils achieved low results in all five dimensions of identity development, which means that they do not yet engage in identity searches. The next group constituted pupils with achieved identity statuses (a formed identity in achieved form), in other words, a status that is recognised as the most adaptive and associated with a high quality of life during adulthood. These respondents have a formed identity. They achieved higher results on the scale of identity development dimensions when it came to the in-breadth and in-depth exploration dimension, and in undertaking commitments, as well as identifying with them. The smallest group were persons with the foreclosure form. This status is also considered as adaptive for the psychosocial functioning of an individual. A similar percentage compared to the percentage of pupils with an achieved identity status also constituted adolescents with a ruminative identity exploration status. The next group of pupils in study subject percentage terms were adolescents with a diffused identity status, referred to as ruminative moratorium. On the identity development scale, these persons achieved higher results in three dimensions: in-breadth exploration, in-depth exploration, and ruminative exploration, while also achieving lower results in the remaining two dimensions of identification with commitments and undertaking commitments. These pupils make attempts to resolve the identity crisis, extending their searches, considering who they would like to be in the future and what they could do, but they seldom engage in choice- and decision-making behaviour.

Excessive use of social media portals by the studied youth

We sought to answer the following questions: *How does the studied youth use social media portals? and particularly What percentage of the studied persons excessively use them?* In order to assess the percentage of persons meeting the criteria of excessive social media portal use, the following coding method was adopted: 1 point was given to a person who upon being asked a diagnostic question related to the presence of a given symptom dependency gave answers of the following kind: *I rather agree* with the given statement or *I definitely agree*. Such a method of coding allowed the persons whose declaration indicated the fulfilment of the excessive use of social portal criterion to be identified. The results reveal that 13% of the studied youth meet this criterion. The vast majority of pupils—as many as 84%—is not threatened by an excessive use of social portals.

An analysis of the statements creating the scale reveals which of the symptoms of excessive social media portal use occurs in the studied group of adolescents (Table 3).

Table 3. Distribution of respondent responses to the items on SONKSS-14 ($n= 1449$)

SONKSS-14 Items	Yes <i>n</i> (%)	No <i>n</i> (%)	No available data <i>n</i> (%)
Q.1 Trouble falling asleep due to social media use	180 (12.69)	1188 (83.78)	50 (3.53)
Q. 2 Experiencing failures leads to wanting to use social media portals	180 (12.69)	1188 (83.78)	50 (3.53)
Q. 3 Others indicate and complain that they spend too much time on social media site use	171 (12.06)	1197 (84.41)	50 (3.53)



SONKSS-14 Items	Yes n (%)	No n (%)	No available data n (%)
Q. 4 Use of social media portals to 'recharge their batteries'	161 (11.35)	1207 (85.12)	50 (3.53)
Q. 5 Giving up sleeping time for the sake of social media portal use	172 (12.13)	1196 (84.34)	50 (3.53)
Q. 6 Difficulties with limiting time of use of social media portals	369 (26.02)	999 (70.45)	50 (3.53)
Q. 7 Spending time on social media portals as a favourite pastime	136 (9.59)	1232 (86.88)	50 (3.53)
Q. 8 Negative impact on relationships with close friends and relatives due to social media portal use	126 (8.89)	1242 (87.58)	50 (3.53)
Q. 9 Giving up favourite pastimes/hobbies for the sake of social media portal use	66 (4.65)	1302 (91.82)	50 (3.53)
Q. 10 Going on social media portals to make them feel better	319 (22.50)	1049 (73.98)	50 (3.53)
Q. 11 Feeling the need to return to social media portals after a completed session	71 (5.01)	1297 (91.47)	50 (3.53)
Q. 12 Arguing with people 'from the real world' because of social media portals	67 (4.72)	1301 (91.75)	50 (3.53)
Q. 13 When feeling bored, imagining what one could do on social media portals	86 (6.06)	1282 (90.41)	50 (3.53)
Q. 14 Lying to close friends and relatives about the daily time spent on social media use	115 (8.11)	1253 (88.36)	50 (3.53)

In order to identify persons excessively using social media portals, another re-coding of data was carried out. Questions concerning a specific criterion of dependency on social media portals were combined into three sets. This led to the creation of 5 sets (*Absorption*: Question: 7, 11, 13; *Loss of control*: Question: 6, 14; *Neglect*: Question: 5, 9; *Experiencing negative consequences*: Question: 1, 3, 8, 12; *Escaping/Mood modification*: Question: 2, 4, 10). It was found that for the Absorption Set and the Experiencing Negative Consequences Set, as well as the Escaping/Mood Modification Sets, the criterion is met if the respondent gets 2 or more points. The criterion is met for the Loss of Control Set and the Neglect Set if the respondent gets 1 point. After the re-coding of data, the results obtained according to this key (Table 4) indicate that among the persons who meet 3 or more criteria of the 5 taken into account in the study, 109 respondents meet the addiction criteria, which constitutes 7.7% of the studied sample. All five criteria are met by 1.9% of the studied sample of adolescents.

Table 4. Distribution of responses of the respondents in view of the fulfilled addiction criteria—SONKSS-14 ($n=1418$)

SONKSS-14 No. of fulfilled criteria	N	%
0 (none of the criteria were met)	850	59.94
1	259	18.27
2	150	10.58
3	61	4.30
4	21	1.48
5	27	1.90
Missing data	50	3.53

Identity development statuses of adolescents and their excessive use of social media portals

During the analyses, we checked how the identity statuses of the studied youth are linked to their excessive use of social media portals. *Since the distribution of the variable Excessive use of social media portals (SONKSS-14) did not resemble normal distribution, we decided to do a non-parametric analysis. Single-variant analysis was*



carried out for the Kruskal–Wallis ranks. A result of $H = 34.08$ $n_2 = 0.024$; $p < 0.0001$ $n = 1339$ signifies a statistically significant difference between the compared groups of adolescents presenting various statuses of identity development in view of the SONKSS-14 values obtained by them. Next, multiple comparisons (post-hoc tests) were done on the analysed groups. Their results demonstrated that statistically significant differences in terms of excessive use of social media portals occur between:

- 1) The group of persons presenting a diffused identity status (diffused diffusion), and the group of respondents characterised by the ruminative exploration identity style (undifferentiated) ($p < 0.05$);
- 2) The group of persons with an achieved identity style, and the group of persons with the ruminative exploration identity style (undifferentiated) ($p < 0.05$);
- 3) The group of adolescents with identity foreclosure and the group of respondents with the ruminative exploration identity style (undifferentiated) ($p < 0.0001$).
- 4) The group of respondents presenting identity foreclosure and the group of persons with the moratorium identity style (ruminative moratorium) ($p < 0.001$);
- 5) The group of adolescents with identity foreclosure and the group of persons with the identity diffusion identity style (diffused diffusion) ($p < 0.05$);
- 6) The group of respondents with identity foreclosure and the group of persons with the achieved identity style ($p < 0.05$).

An analysis of the mean rank values obtained by these groups of persons on SONKSS-14 (Table 5) indicates that the respondents presenting the identity foreclosure status obtain higher results on SONKSS-14, which means that they are characterised by a lower intensity of excessive use of social media portals than pupils with other identity development statuses.

Table 5. Identity development statuses and the level of excessive social media portal use: significance of differences between pupils with different identity statuses ($n = 1339$)

Identity development statuses	SONKSS-14	
	Mean rank	M
Identity diffusion ($n = 351$)	664.71	24.81
Ruminative exploration identity ($n = 283$)	755.70	26.64
Identity moratorium ($n = 233$)	687.80	25.44
Achieved identity ($n = 311$)	653.34	24.46
Identity foreclosure ($n = 161$)	537.32	21.95

The results of the analyses have confirmed that pupils who have ruminative exploration identity statuses use social media portals statistically significantly more excessively (harmfully) than pupils with a shaped identity of the foreclosure and achieved identity form, as well as pupils who have the moratorium identity status (ruminative moratorium), rather than pupils with foreclosure identity.

Discussion and conclusions

Analysing the results obtained by the youth in the identity dimensions, it is possible to conclude that the result indicating that the lowest value was obtained for the ruminative exploration dimension in the studied group of adolescents is a positive outcome. This dimension is considered to be the most maladaptive dimension for an individual's development. It is associated with the adolescents experiencing anxiety, a sense of uncertainty, and of being lost more strongly (Luyckx et al., 2008), which results in them having difficulties in specifying their plans for the future and setting themselves priorities.

In turn, when analysing the identity statuses held by adolescents, it can be concluded that the studied group of pupils is strongly polarised in terms of presenting both the most adaptive and maladaptive identity style. The studies have shown that there is a similar percentage of persons who present an achieved identity style and a ruminative exploration identity style. Researchers point out that an achieved identity status is connected with the psychological well-being of the individual and, in the case of young people, constitutes an



important predictor of the identity of an adult (perceiving themselves as an adult) and a sense of finding one's own place in the world of adults (Piotrowski, 2015).

The status of ruminative exploration identity is, in turn, treated as a risk factor in the development of identity because its high intensity usually lowers the strength of the remaining (adaptive) dimensions of identity development, constituting a threat to its development (Rękosiewicz, 2013). It is associated with experiencing difficulties in taking decisions, hence, also in undertaking commitments and identifying with them. Researchers emphasise that particularly youth who do not have the right personality traits or support from others and are left to cope on their own with the difficult reality surrounding them are in the group of persons particularly at risk of this kind of identity taking shape (Brzezińska & Piotrowski, 2009; Brzezińska et al., 2012; Brzezińska, 2017; Piotrowski & Brzezińska, 2017; Rękosiewicz, 2013).

The results of the author's own research on the percentage of persons identified as excessively using social media portals as well as those who meet the addiction criteria are similar to the results reported by other researchers. For instance, the studies by Tomczyk (2019) on the problematic use of the internet (PUI) and social media portals among Polish youth have shown that 2.2% of adolescents present all the factors of PUI, and approximately 8% manifest half of them.

The most important conclusion from the author's own research related to the use of social media portals by adolescents is the fact that they do not confirm the media reports and stereotypic thinking that the number of young people addicted to digital media is growing because youth spend all their free time on being online. Although the results of research carried out on all populations of Poles (children, youth, and adults) reveal that children and adolescents are particularly at risk of excessive use of new technologies, they do not confirm a growth tendency in the case of the percentage of young persons who are dysfunctionally, that is, harmfully, using the internet. On the contrary, they indicate that most young people use new media in a functional way.

These results indicate that a statistically significant relationship exists between the identity statuses presented by adolescents and the excessive use by them of social media portals. Excessive use of social media has a positive correlation with the ruminative exploration status and, to a lower degree, with the in-depth exploration status. This means that excessive use of social media portals is associated with an identity status called ruminative exploration that is of a non-adaptive nature and is associated with the individual experiencing decision-making difficulties, hence, with undertaking commitments and identifying with them, and to a lesser degree with the in-depth exploration status. Adolescents who have a moratorium identity (ruminative moratorium) status and a ruminative exploration status significantly more excessively (harmfully) use social media portals than those with a foreclosure identity status. Negative correlations were also observed between the excessive use of social media portals by adolescents and the status of undertaking commitments and identifying with them. The more excessively adolescents use social media, the less they identify with undertaking commitments and the less often do they undertake them. The obtained results are consistent with the reports of Finnish scientists (Mannerström et al., 2018), who demonstrated that the strongest statistically significant positive correlations were confirmed with the dimension of ruminative exploration ($r = 0.24$) and in-depth exploration ($r = 0.18$).

When analysing the obtained results in the context of the knowledge on risky adolescent behaviours and their relationship with the shaping of identity, it is their developmental significance that should first and foremost be pointed out. Young people often undertake them to achieve important developmental goals thanks to which they try to cope with developmental tasks (Ostaszewski, 2003; 2014, 2017; Jankowiak, 2017) and the basic task during adolescence is building one's own identity. From this point of view, risky behaviours facilitate the development of identity, particularly those that consist of manifesting one's own independence, adulthood, crossing boundaries, exploring new experiences, shaping a sense of control in dangerous situations, coping with problems, and escaping from reality (Ostaszewski, 2003, 2014, 2017; Szymańska, 2012). They are also a form of adaptation to the existing reality, they can help in defining oneself, one's place in the world and among peers and adults, and they can also be a form of self-creation. The functions of different types of risky behaviours during adolescence are strictly related to each other because they refer to building an autonomous identity of an adult (Ostaszewski, 2014; Jankowiak, 2017).

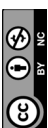
In this context, persons with an unformed identity who have problems with actively searching for their Self, finding answers to the question of who they are, who they would like to be, where their place in the world is, what plans they have for the future and, as a result, experiencing discomfort, can more willingly



than persons with a shaped identity get involved in harmful use of social media portals and, at the same time, demonstrate a greater intensity of problems related to their excessive use. It can be assumed that the absence of a shaped mechanism of self-control in them, a greater the sense of uncertainty, of being lost, a smaller self-confidence and, therefore, a threatened sense of security can contribute to spending more time on social media use. Social media sites can be valuable instruments for them to satisfy important needs and a way to fulfil the developmental task of defining their identity.

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