



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON EDUCATION

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KEYWORDS

Social media
Internet
Education
Teacher training
Learning process
Digital resources
Learning

ABSTRACT

A review has been carried out since the PRISMA Declaration (2020), to determine what social media students are using and what use they are making. N=142 papers were identified to which different inclusion / exclusion criteria were applied, including n=31 of them. The analysis of results shows educational advantages and disadvantages due to inappropriate use. The conclusion is reached of the need for school training for both teachers and students, both in prevention and in the suitable use of social media, through digital and socio-emotional competence.

Received: 20/ 06 / 2025

Accepted: 23/ 08 / 2025

1. Introduction

The purpose of this research is to analyse how social media is integrated into the educational environment, assessing its accessibility, usage patterns and the impact it has on children and adolescents. It also seeks to explore its potential as a didactic tool, while highlighting the need to implement preventive education geared towards responsible use and the development of digital competences, both in schools and in the family environment.

In recent years, social media has evolved to become one of the most influential communication tools, significantly impacting the educational sphere. Its use in the classroom has generated a range of opinions and debates, influenced by the perceptions of teachers, students and families. Despite its theoretical potential to address curricular objectives, its application in the classroom often falls short of initial expectations.

Existing literature highlights that even in the early stages of education, such as pre-school and primary school, many children are already accessing and using social media, which highlights the importance of teaching responsible use from an early age. In this context, the role of teachers is crucial, as they need to understand how students perceive and use these tools. It also requires the active participation of families, who, at home, set limits, timetables and supervise access to these platforms. The incorporation of educational competences with the LOE (2/2006) marked a milestone in methodology, reinforcing the need to integrate digital literacy as an essential competence in learning processes.

2. Objectives

Based on the above, the following objectives have been set:

- To examine the use of social media in pre-university students.
- To identify the impacts by differentiating between positive and negative influences.
- To evaluate the potential of social media as a pedagogical and didactic resource in school contexts.
- To highlight the importance of training in digital competences, both for teachers and for students and families.

The use of social media by children and adolescents has increased significantly, starting at increasingly younger ages. This phenomenon poses an educational challenge that requires innovative responses. The research provides an original approach by analysing not only its potential as a pedagogical tool, but also by highlighting the need for preventive strategies to mitigate derived risks. The study also contributes to making visible the importance of training teachers and families to ensure an informed, ethical and balanced use of these platforms, fostering the development of competences that respond to educational needs in a constantly evolving digital environment.

3. Methodology

The research is developed from an educational perspective, focused on analysing the impact of social media in school education. It addresses benefits, risks and the need for training to ensure responsible use.

The study is a systematic, descriptive and exploratory review, designed to organise and analyse evidence on the use of social media in pre-university education. No formal hypothesis is proposed due to the exploratory nature of the research. The analysis seeks to identify patterns and trends rather than to test specific causal relationships.

The scope of the study includes international academic publications in Spanish and English, published between 2019 and 2023, related to the use of social media in early childhood, primary and secondary education. The search was conducted in April 2024.

The analysis was based on the PRISMA 2020 methodology (Page et al., 2021), with rigorous criteria of quality, language and educational relevance. The selected studies were assessed to ensure validity and reliability of the review, with attention to the abstract, keywords and readability of the articles.

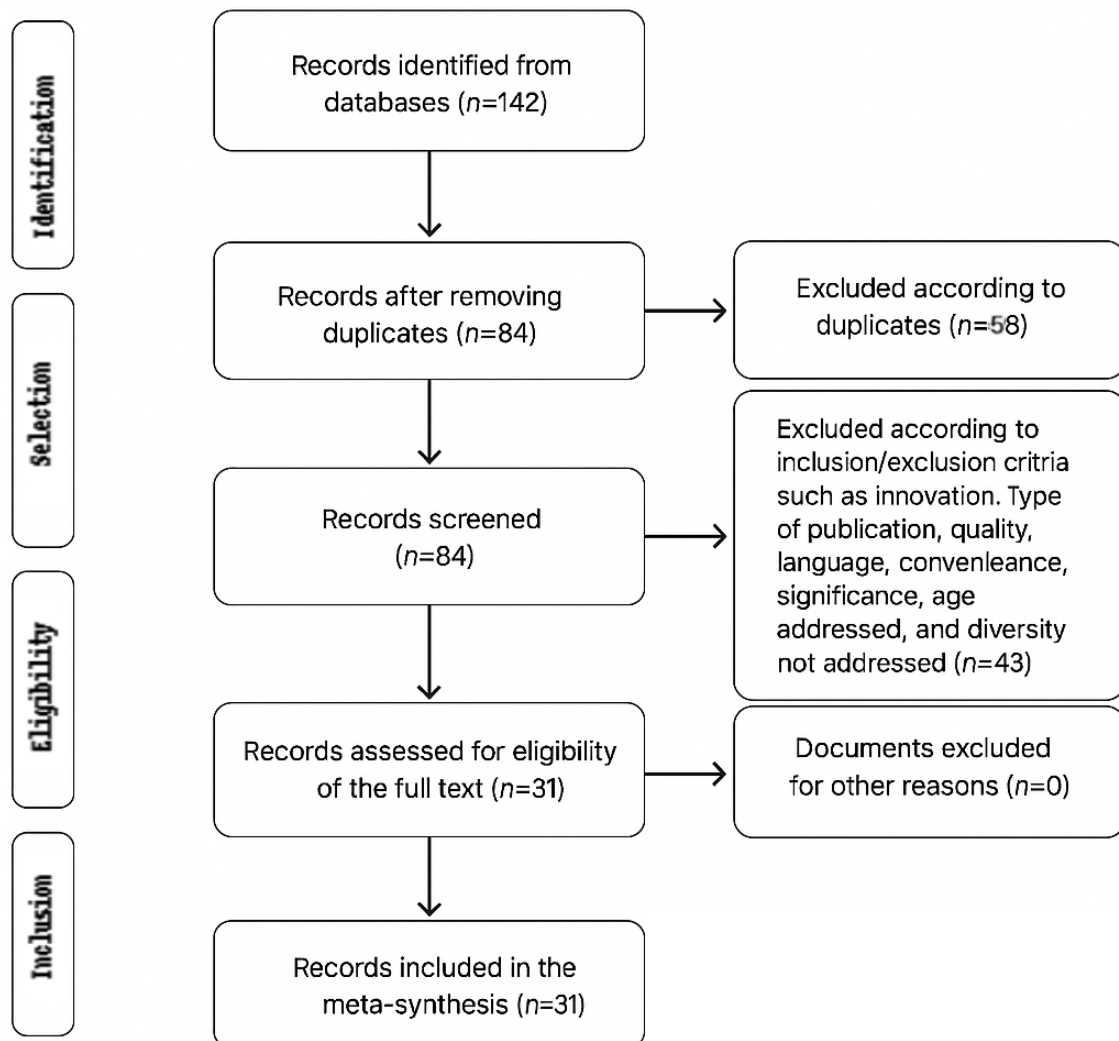
In terms of sampling, 142 publications were identified through searches in Scopus, WoS and Google Scholar, using keywords such as "social media", "education" and "teaching" and the "and" operator. After

removing duplicates and applying inclusion/exclusion criteria, shown below, 31 relevant studies were selected.

1. Innovation. Publications in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2021, 2022, 2023 / Publications prior to 2019.
2. Type of publication. Article type publications, doctoral thesis / Other type of publications.
3. Quality. Publications indexed in Scopus, WOS, Google Scholar or bearing the FECYT seal of quality / Publications not indexed in Scopus, WOS, Google Scholar or not bearing the FECYT seal of quality.
4. Language. Publications in Spanish and English / Publications in a language other than Spanish or English.
5. Suitability. It is / It is not limited to the field of education.
6. Significance. Allows / Does not allow the analysis of social media in the field of education.
7. Age. Enables / Does not enable analysis in childhood and adolescence.
8. Diversity. Does / Does not pay attention to diversity.

On the basis of all of the above, research and reviews focused on the field of technologies and social media in the educational environment were used, and 49 records were excluded. After this screening process, the development of this work was made possible, responding to the scope of the established objective (see figure 1).

Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart



Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the application of the PRISMA Declaration (2020).

4. Data Analysis

As a result of the review and analysis carried out, a table summarising the studies used for this study is presented below, showing the position number, the author and date of publication and the reason why a particular article was chosen, the table being arranged in order from most to least current (see table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of the selected studies

Author and year of publication	Title of publication	Usefulness for analysis	Scope / context	Category
1. Barreiro et al. (2023)	The Family Context in Cybervictimisation: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis	Importance of ICT in childhood and adolescence, the risks involved: cyberbullying and cybervictimisation and the preventive role of family and school	Families	C3, C5, C7
2. Caldeiro and Yot (2023)	Uses of TikTok in education. Systematic review of the didactic applicability of TikTok.	New active forms of teaching and learning with the use of social media. Analysis of the application of <i>TikTok</i> in the classroom.	Classroom / didactics	C2, C5, C6
3. Cebollero and Bautista (2023)	Learning to live in cyber coexistence: teacher training needs from the perspective of secondary school students.	School cyber coexistence and digital competence. Educational measures in this respect	Teachers	C4
4. Denoni and Cebollero (2023)	Online and offline emotional competences and their relationship with hope as a way of facing educational challenges in future teachers.	Quality education linked to online emotional competences.	Teachers	C1, C3
5. Lozano et al. (2023)	Social media and its influence on young people and children	Consequences of the social relationships that children establish with <i>influencers</i> on social media.	Childhood and adolescence	C1, C2, C3
6. Acevedo et al. (2022)	Digital social media in higher education: <i>TikTok</i> as a teaching tool	Alternative methodologies in Early Childhood Education using <i>TikTok</i> .	Higher Education	C5
7. Cebollero et al. (a2022)	E-competences and collective intelligence. Proposals for emotional development in online interactions.	Risk situations developed by young people as a result of online interactions and the link with emotional management online.	Young people	C2
8. Cebollero et al. (b2022)	What training do future teachers need to acquire to prevent cyberbullying in the classroom?	Teacher's role in cyberbullying prevention training	Teachers	C6
9. Lozano (2022)	Problematic uses of the Internet in childhood and adolescence	Problematic uses of the Internet in childhood and adolescence and the propensity to suffer addiction on the part of the minor.	Childhood and adolescence	C3, C5, C6

10. Rivera and Salazar (2022)	Social media as a promoter of the teaching-learning process in Ecuador: a systematic review	Communication and social interaction potential of social media in learning activities.	Classroom / didactics	C3
11. Tejedor et al. (2022)	Challenges of using TikTok as an educational platform: A multi-thematic network where humour trumps debate	Analysis of the educational content of Edutok	Classroom / didactics	C5
12. Toro et al. (2022)	Effectiveness of treatment programmes for cyberaddiction in children and adolescents: systematic review and meta-analysis	Evaluation of treatment programmes for cyberaddiction in children and adolescents.	Childhood and adolescence	C3, C7
13. Espejel et al. (2022)	TikTok in the teaching of Spanish LE/L2: telecollaboration and digital competence	Possibilities of TikTok as a Spanish language teaching and learning tool	Classroom / didactics	C5
14 Aparisi et al. (2021)	Relationship between cyberbullying, motivation and learning strategies, academic performance, and the ability to adapt to university	Relationship between cyberbullying, motivation and learning strategies, academic performance, and the ability to adapt to university.	Classroom / didactics	C3
15. Bautista (2021)	How does the educational community deal with bullying? Comparison between pupils, teachers and families on the use of different strategies	Comparison of the use of strategies of different school and family environments to the problem of bullying.	School and family	C7
16. Blasco (2021)	The impact of social media on individuals and on society: social media, back to the social fold, or spider's web?	Functions of social media and the consequences of its use in today's society.	Society	C1
17. Cebollero and Bautista (2021)	Educational innovation with ICT: digital emotional competences in Primary and Secondary Education students.	Study of digital emotional competences in Primary and Secondary School pupils.	Childhood and adolescence	C3
18. Cebollero et al. (a2021)	Internet abuse and adolescents: gratifications, family supervision and responsible use	Implications of family supervision and responsible use on Internet abuse	Adolescence and families	C7
19. Cebollero et al. (b2021)	Educational applications for students to work in a cyber-safe environment	Application of educational strategies favouring a cyber-safe environment	Classroom / school	C7

20.Fernandez (2021)	Evaluation of a student with ADHD after an intervention using technological resources	Educational intervention to improve attention, memory, social skills and organisation in students with ADHD.	Classroom / didactics	C3
21. Hernández (2021)	Historical knowledge pills in TikTok. Exploring a new way of teaching in the network era	Knowledge transmission through historical knowledge pills in <i>TikTok</i> .	School and society	C5
22. Lozano and Val (2021)	TikTok in education: An approach to language stimulation in early stages of of language stimulation in early stages of development through social media.	Benefits of social media in early stages: language stimulation.	Classroom / didactics	C5
23. Ojeda et al. (2021)	Use of social media and risk of suffering from eating disorders in young people	Research to assess the relationship between the use of social media and the risk of developing an eating disorder.	Adolescence	C1
24. Boerman (2020)	The effects of the standardised Instagram disclosure for micro- and meso-influencers	Influence of social media advertisements on recipients	Society	C2
25.Castillo et al. (2020)	Kid influencers in Spain: Understanding the themes they address and preteens' engagement with their <i>YouTube</i> channels	Analysis of ten YouTube channels popular with children	Childhood	C2
26.Cebollero (2020)	Educating in social media: cyberbullying in adolescence	Keys to education in positive competence in the use of networks	Adolescence	C4, C5
27. González et al. (2020)	Joint association of bullying and cyberbullying in health-related quality of life in a sample of adolescents.	Impact of cyberbullying on psychosocial and health problems.	Adolescence	C3
28. Varela and Valenzuela (2020)	Use of information and communication technologies as a transversal competence in initial teacher training.	Teachers' promotion of cross-cutting competence in the use of ICT in future primary school teachers	Teachers	C2, C3, C4, C6
29. De-Bérail et al. (2019).	The relations between YouTube addiction, social anxiety and parasocial relationships with Youtubers: A moderated-mediation model based on a cognitive-behavioural framework.	Identifying the determinants of YouTube addiction through social anxiety, parasocial relationships and YouTube addiction	Society	C2
30. Lin et al. (2019).	Toward an Understanding of	Families' views, knowledge and use of social media	Families	C1

	Parental Views and Actions on Social Media Influencers Targeted at Adolescents: The Roles of Parents' Social Media Use and Empowerment.			
31. Pilgrim and Bohnet (2019)	Selling health and happiness, how influencers communicate on Instagram about dieting and exercise: mixed methods research	Health outcomes in young people who make extensive use of social networking sites	Society and adolescence	C1

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on the 31 selected articles, 2024.

Data extraction was carried out manually by reading and analysing the articles. Afterwards, they were grouped into thematic blocks, as shown in table 2.

5. Results

The analysis of 31 studies allowed us to identify various thematic categories related to the impact of social media on society and education. Table 2 below specifies the relevance and categories for the systematic review of the different articles selected.

Table 2. Themes and relevance

Category	Subject	Author and date	Relevance
C1	Social media in today's society	Lozano et al., (2023); Denoni and Cebollero (2023); Ojeda et al., (2021); Blasco (2021); Pilgrim and Bohnet (2019); Lin et al., (2019)	Social
C2	The use of social media by students	Lozano et al., (2023); Caldeiro and Yot (2023); Boerman (2020); Castillo et al. (2020); Varela and Valenzuela (2020); De-Bérail et al. (2019)	Out-of-school use
C3	The use of social media in education	Denoni and Cebollero (2023); Rivera and Salazar (2022); Lozano (2022); Cebollero and Bautista (2021); Lozano and Val (2021); Varela and Valenzuela (2020); Fernández (2021); Lozano et al., (2023); Cebollero et al., (2022); Ojeda et al., (2021); De-Bérail et al., (2019); Toro et al., (2022); Barreiro et al., (2023); Cebollero and Bautista (2023); Gonzalez et al., (2020); Aparisi et al., (2021)	Positive and negative influence; addictions; cyberbullying
C4	ICT in the classroom	Cebollero & Bautista (2023); Varela & Valenzuela (2020); Cebollero (2020)	Use of ICT in the E-Learning process
C5	The appropriate use of social media in the classroom	Barreiro et al., (2023); Lozano (2022); Hernández (2021); Caldeiro and Yot (2023); Acevedo et al. (2022); Tejedor et al. (2022); Espejel et al. (2022); Lozano and Val (2021); Cebollero (2020)	Possibilities of TikTok as a didactic resource
C6	Teacher training	Caldeiro and Yot (2023); Lozano (2022); Varela and Valenzuela (2020); Cebollero et al. (2022)	Digital and socio-emotional competences
C7	The family context	Barreiro et al. (2023); Toro et al. (2022); Cebollero et al. (2022); Cebollero et al.	Importance in prevention and appropriate use

(2021); Bautista (2021); Moreno et al.
(2019)

Source: Own elaboration based on data analysis, thematic and relevance for the analysis, 2024.

5.1. Social Media in Today's Society

The development of smartphones and wireless internet connection has facilitated access to applications and, since the 1990s, to social media, which allows communication and exchange of information almost instantaneously (Blasco, 2021). These platforms have given rise to "influencers", figures who, according to Blasco (2021), manipulate public opinion based on unscientific sources and personal opinions, with great impact on young people in the process of cognitive development.

Lin et al. (2019) highlight that children and adolescents are the main recipients of this content due to their limited reflective capacity and tendency to accept information without questioning it. Pilgrim and Bohnet (2019) reinforce this idea, pointing out that these platforms not only drive consumption, but also create false beliefs and promote impulsive actions to the detriment of critical reflection.

This influence is especially evident in Generation Z (1994-2010) and Generation Alpha (2010-2024), who, according to Lozano et al. (2023), possess advanced digital self-learning skills, but lack critical thinking, which facilitates the spread of fake news.

However, Denoni and Cebollero (2023) recognise that, along with telework and online education, social media and ICT have become key pedagogical tools. Applications such as Facebook, X (Twitter), YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram and TikTok are widely used to obtain information, although they present associated risks, as Ojeda et al. (2021) warn.

5.2. Students' Use of Social Media

According to Lozano et al. (2023), social media has configured a digital ecosystem parallel to the real world, where children and adolescents consume information without questioning its veracity, simply because it is public and widely disseminated. This content can become a trend when it is massively shared, satisfying socialisation needs and acting as a showcase for ideal and visually attractive lifestyles, especially in areas such as beauty and fashion (Boerman, 2020). Moreover, influencers exert a strong influence by projecting aspirational lifestyles.

One aspect highlighted by Castillo et al. (2020) is the impact of gender on the platforms: while on YouTube men predominate as gamers, women excel at sharing personal lifestyles. Lozano et al. (2023) point out that YouTube offers subjective content, aimed mainly at minors who develop parasocial relationships with the creators, reinforced through likes. This emotional attachment, according to De-Bérail et al. (2019), may reflect socialisation difficulties or loneliness.

In contrast, Caldeiro and Yot (2023) highlight the popularity of TikTok, a platform launched in 2016, which allows the immediate creation and sharing of videos, attracting young users. According to Valera and Valenzuela (2020), these applications, together with educational tools such as CmapTools, Genially or ClassDojo, foster digital skills and facilitate communication and socialisation among students, consolidating their relevance in educational contexts.

5.3. The Influence of Social Media in School Education

Social media facilitates global communication and collaborative tasks, promoting group belonging (Cebollero and Bautista, 2021). Its integration in the educational environment could motivate student participation and develop digital competences (Lozano, 2022; Rivera and Salazar, 2022). Applications such as Instagram and YouTube favour cooperative activities and active learning (Denoni and Cebollero, 2023), while their proper use improves social relations and family-school communication (Valera and Valenzuela, 2020).

However, its misuse can foster unrealistic ideals, low self-esteem and psychosocial risks (Cebollero et al., 2022b; Lozano et al., 2023). Cyberaddiction and cyberbullying are growing problems that affect academic and emotional well-being (Toro et al., 2022; Barreiro et al., 2023) and are constantly repeated and intentional aggressive actions (Aparasi et al., 2021). Behaviours such as the dissemination of denigrating content or digital social exclusion aggravate these dynamics (González et al., 2020).

Family and school intervention is required to mitigate these risks, promote responsible use and ensure a safe and educational digital environment (Barreiro et al., 2023).

5.4. The Application of ICT in the Classroom

The social and educational reality drives teachers to foster digital competence in students, which has led to a more frequent use of technologies in the classroom for pedagogical purposes (Valera and Valenzuela, 2020). Among the most common resources are laptops, interactive whiteboards and internet access. Tools such as blogs, wikis, social media, Genially, Canva and other Microsoft applications (Cebollero, 2020) are used by teachers and students. However, there is still some resistance to their integration into the teaching-learning (E-L) process, partly attributed to the lack of teacher training and education, which hinders their effective implementation (Cebollero and Bautista, 2023). Although not indispensable for E-Learning, these technologies facilitate and enrich student learning and participation (Valera and Valenzuela, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to strengthen teacher training, especially in the face of the growing incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) in education.

5.5. The Appropriate Use of Social Media in the Classroom

In education, social media should be used as a learning resource and for the creation of final products (Barreiro et al., 2023). Digital literacy and ethical responsibility in their use are fundamental (Lozano, 2022). TikTok, one of the most popular among students, fosters creativity and oral competence, allowing students to express themselves freely through videos, which is motivating (Acevedo et al., 2022; Lozano and Val, 2021). Its intuitive use makes it easy to record, edit and broadcast content from mobile devices (Tejedor et al., 2022).

Although designed to entertain, TikTok is being adopted as an educational tool, improving content comprehension, body language and digital competence (Caldeiro and Yot, 2023; Espejel et al., 2022). This favours effective learning and increases academic performance. Despite concerns about its possible negative impacts, its responsible use can contribute significantly to the formation of key competences in today's society, preparing students as future digital citizens (Caldeiro and Yot, 2023; Cebollero, 2020a).

5.6. Teacher Training in Digital Competence

The analysis of emerging technologies in education is crucial to assess their potential, considering advantages and risks such as exposure to inappropriate content (Caldeiro and Yot, 2023; Lozano, 2022). According to Varela and Valenzuela (2020), teachers face gaps in technological skills that hinder their integration in the classroom, while institutions need to promote innovative training and transversal skills from the initial stage.

Limitations such as low connectivity and lack of educational software aggravate inequality in the teaching-learning process (Varela and Valenzuela, 2020). To address these challenges, Cebollero et al. (2022) propose developing socio-emotional e-competences, which combine practical skills and attitudes to manage emotions and positive relationships in digital environments, enabling ethical and effective interaction.

5.7. The Importance of the Family Context in Education and Prevention

Cyberbullying arises from obstacles in social and emotional development, as well as stressful contexts (Bautista, 2021). In this context, the family plays a crucial protective role, enhancing children's well-being (Barreiro et al., 2023). Positive communication in the family nucleus, with assertive and understanding behaviours, also protects victims (Moreno et al., 2019).

Cebollero et al. (2021) point out that the family is the first socialisation environment, where values and life practices are learned. However, limited knowledge about the Internet and technological devices hinders parental accompaniment. Toro et al. (2022) highlight that educational sessions improve Internet use, fostering psychosocial competences and reducing problems such as anxiety.

Cebollero et al. (2022) stress that collaboration between family and school is essential to develop digital competences through technological tools in everyday education. However, Spain has low family mediation, with little supervision of children's digital use and few conversations about online activities (Cebollero et al., 2021), evidenced by the 52% of young people who perceive this absence.

6. Conclusions and Discussion

This systematic review shows that the advent of the internet and rapid access via a smartphone has brought with it a new reality that could be defined as a third reality.

Plato's writings stated that there were two different realities that coexisted at the same time. A first immaterial reality where innate ideas, abstract concepts, the soul and mathematical entities resided. This reality was eternal, intelligible and never changing because it was perfect and immutable with the passage of time. For Plato, this reality was the true and only reality that exists, although we cannot know it directly, and that survives death. Hence, he used the metaphor of the myth of the cave to explain it. The second reality was material. A non-perfect copy of the immaterial world, of the world that could be perceived through the senses and which, as explained in the myth of the cave, is a reality in itself, but not the true reality because it does not survive death.

The third reality is virtual reality which has brought with it, on the one hand, the opportunity to improve communication and the exchange of information quickly and over long distances, and on the other hand, it has also brought a remarkable change in the attitude and behaviour of society as a whole and of individuals. Today's society prefers to flee from true reality and embrace virtual reality, even if its inappropriate use harms their mental or psychological health because, if you are not on the social media, you do not exist. A mantra that is causing more harm than good, as people stop enjoying lived experiences of pleasurable moments in order to record these experiences and share them on social media as memorable moments of, I was here. However, there is a fourth reality where reality and fiction are mixed as a social construction of memories and identity. Conway et al., (2014) points out that this reality is in the brain of each person who reconstructs reality by means of mental representations. Consequently, there is not just one reality, but as many as there are people. Bergen (2013) calls this same fact an embodied simulation of reality because language is understood as a cognitive simulation of meaning.

Focusing on the third reality, the change in habits and customs manifests itself in many situations. Digital natives do not know how to live without screens and without the recommendations of influencers (better known as social manipulators) who sell them a way of life that is not real and that generates a significant impact on minors, who are easily influenced by their limited capacity for critical thinking.

A responsible and critical use of education is therefore necessary in order to deal with the aforementioned situation, with fake news and with the hoaxes that may surround the environment of minors, since there are more and more educational experiences that integrate technological resources such as ICT into their classrooms, where the use of the Internet in its various aspects comes into play and GenIA. Thus, from an early age, social media and digital applications are used in the educational system to complement and improve the teaching and learning process.

However, depending on the use made of social media, it has been shown that in the educational sphere they facilitate the teaching-learning process in the transmission of curricular content and in the development of communication skills and digital competence, both for teachers and for pupils and their families. In reference to the latter, the use of social media increases their motivation in the task, which also benefits collaborative work in teams. Also, as mentioned above, they allow quick access to information and break down physical or cultural barriers, thus enabling the act of communication.

The review confirms that the use of social media in education facilitates communication, motivates learning and develops digital competences. However, it also generates risks such as cyberbullying, internet addiction and emotional problems, especially in children. Teacher and family training in digital and socio-emotional skills is essential to take advantage of the benefits and mitigate the risks.

Social media is a useful tool in education when used responsibly and appropriately. It improves the transmission of content, motivation and interaction, but requires supervision to avoid risks such as disinformation or psychological problems. Continuous training of teachers and families is crucial to maximise their positive impact.

In line with Bhatia (2018) and Lozano et al. (2023), emotional bonding with influencers reinforces normalised behaviours, but Hartmann (2016) warns that this may reflect loneliness and dependency. On cybervictimisation, Kowalski and Limber (2007) highlight its relationship with age, while Álvarez et al. (2018) downplay the relevance of gender. Furthermore, Livazović and Ham (2019) stress the importance of family supervision to prevent cyber-victimisation, in line with Ortega et al. (2018) and Willems et al. (2023) warn that lack of family control increases digital exposure, aggravating risks.

The study is limited to recent publications, excluding historical analyses that could provide additional context. It also lacks representative data from rural settings and low-income countries, which may bias the results. Research on new social media, such as Twitch, among others, and their educational impact is scarce, which restricts the scope of the findings.

Future research should include longitudinal studies on the mental impact of social media and explore the use of new platforms and video games in education. It would be useful to analyse the evolution of social relationships and contextual variables in current and future childhood. Furthermore, the integration of video games, computational thinking and artificial intelligence could enrich educational practice, offering an innovative perspective in the pedagogical field.

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