



## 27 **Introduction**

28 Over the past decade, digital technologies have gradually become embedded in everyday  
29 routines, influencing how people communicate, work, and manage daily activities. This shift is  
30 particularly noticeable among young individuals, whose social as well as professional  
31 interactions are closely linked with online environments. In this context, social media platforms  
32 have taken on an important role in communication, self-presentation, and the sharing of  
33 information. Commonly used applications such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, Snapchat,  
34 and YouTube are now part of regular daily use, providing convenience, connection, and  
35 entertainment. At the same time, researchers have raised concerns about excessive or poorly  
36 controlled patterns of use, which are often described in the literature as social media addiction  
37 (Griffiths, Kuss, & Demetrovics, 2014).

38 Social media addiction is commonly understood as a pattern of repeated and difficult-to-control  
39 engagement with online platforms, where individuals continue using social media even when it  
40 begins to create negative consequences. Earlier research links such behaviour with reduced  
41 concentration, lower productivity, disturbed sleep, and symptoms of anxiety or depression (Hou  
42 et al., 2019; Sümen&Evgin, 2021). These concerns may be especially relevant during youth, a  
43 period associated with academic demands, early career decisions, and shifting social  
44 responsibilities. Continuous exposure to online interaction and the expectation of immediate  
45 response can make it challenging for young individuals to maintain clear boundaries between  
46 study or work commitments and their personal lives.

47 Work–life balance is generally understood as the ability of an individual to distribute time and  
48 psychological energy across work or academic responsibilities alongside personal, social, and  
49 leisure activities. Achieving this balance is widely recognised as a key determinant of well-being,  
50 job satisfaction, and long-term performance. However, in the contemporary digital environment,  
51 the distinction between work and non-work domains has become increasingly blurred. Social  
52 media platforms, designed to maximise user engagement through notifications, algorithm-driven  
53 content, and social validation mechanisms, frequently intrude into periods intended for rest or  
54 focused work. Empirical evidence suggests that persistent digital engagement contributes to time  
55 mismanagement, increased stress levels, and emotional exhaustion, thereby undermining work–  
56 life balance (Sharma &Sudhesh, 2018; Zivnuska et al., 2019).

57 Previous research has explored social media addiction in relation to mental health, academic  
58 outcomes, and workplace performance, while a separate stream of studies has examined work–  
59 life balance challenges emerging from technological connectivity. However, research directly  
60 linking social media addiction with work–life balance among youth remains comparatively  
61 limited, particularly in the Indian context. Much of the existing literature also treats students and  
62 employees as separate populations, providing only partial insight into young individuals who  
63 simultaneously negotiate academic demands, emerging careers, and personal life transitions  
64 (Byrne, 2018; Kocak et al., 2023).

65 In response to these gaps, the present study investigates the level of social media addiction  
66 among youth and its implications for work–life balance. The analysis focuses on patterns of  
67 social media use, the degree of behavioural dependence on digital platforms, and the ways such  
68 dependence shapes young people’s capacity to manage academic, professional, and personal  
69 responsibilities. Attention is also given to digital detox practices adopted to moderate excessive  
70 use. By examining these dimensions together, the study seeks to generate insights that may  
71 inform educators, employers, and policymakers in encouraging healthier digital practices and  
72 supporting the broader well-being of youth.

## 73 **Review of Literature**

### 74 *Social Media Addiction and Youth Behaviour*

75 In recent years, the widespread use of social media among young people has become an  
76 important area of academic inquiry, especially because of growing concerns that routine  
77 engagement may gradually take on addictive characteristics. Social media addiction is generally  
78 understood as a behavioural pattern marked by persistent overuse, diminished control over online  
79 activity, and continued engagement despite experiencing negative personal or social  
80 consequences. Research consistently suggests that young individuals are more susceptible to  
81 such patterns due to developmental transitions, social pressures, and psychological needs related  
82 to identity formation, peer acceptance, and validation.

83 Evidence from earlier studies indicates that excessive social media involvement can influence  
84 both cognitive functioning and emotional well-being. Higher levels of use have been linked with  
85 reduced attention, difficulties in concentration, and declining academic or professional

86 performance. For instance, Savci and Aysan (2017) observed that stronger tendencies toward  
87 social media addiction are associated with lower social connectedness in real-life contexts,  
88 implying that intensive online interaction may weaken offline relationships. In a similar vein,  
89 Hou et al. (2019) reported that problematic social media use among students adversely affects  
90 mental health and academic outcomes, with self-esteem acting as an important mediating factor.

91 Scholars have also emphasised the reinforcing psychological design of social media  
92 environments. Interactive features such as likes, comments, and continuously updated content  
93 function as reward-based stimuli that encourage repeated checking and sustained engagement.  
94 Hawi and Samaha (2017) demonstrated that greater dependence on social media is linked to  
95 lower self-esteem and diminished life satisfaction, highlighting the close connection between  
96 compulsive digital behaviour and emotional regulation. Together, these findings suggest that  
97 social media addiction extends beyond simple screen time and reflects deeper psychological  
98 processes influencing youth behaviour and well-being.

#### 99 ***Social Media Addiction and Mental Health Outcomes***

100 The connection between social media addiction and psychological well-being has been widely  
101 discussed in contemporary research. Patterns of excessive and poorly regulated use are  
102 frequently linked with symptoms such as anxiety, depression, heightened stress, and emotional  
103 fatigue. Griffiths, Kuss, and Demetrovics (2014) note that problematic engagement with social  
104 networking platforms shares core features with recognised behavioural addictions, including  
105 mood alteration, tolerance development, withdrawal experiences, and relapse tendencies.

106 Research findings further indicate that constant exposure to carefully curated digital content may  
107 intensify processes of social comparison, often resulting in diminished self-esteem and feelings  
108 of personal inadequacy. Haand and Shuwang (2020) reported a positive association between  
109 social media addiction and depressive symptoms among university students. In addition,  
110 disrupted sleep patterns have become an important concern, particularly where late-night usage  
111 and persistent notifications interfere with normal rest cycles (Sümen&Evgin, 2021). While social  
112 media environments can provide emotional support, access to information, and opportunities for  
113 connection, an emerging consensus in the literature suggests that uncontrolled or habitual use  
114 carries meaningful risks for mental health. These concerns highlight the importance of balanced

115 engagement, improved digital awareness, and the development of healthier usage practices  
116 among young users.

### 117 *Social Media Addiction and Work–Life Balance*

118 Work–life balance has traditionally been examined in organisational contexts, but the spread of  
119 digital technologies has extended its relevance to students and early-career individuals. It broadly  
120 refers to the ability to manage academic or professional responsibilities alongside personal and  
121 social life without persistent role conflict. Increasingly, problematic social media use is  
122 recognised as a factor that weakens boundaries between structured work time and personal  
123 life. Empirical research indicates that frequent engagement with social media during study or  
124 work hours can reduce productivity and intensify role interference. Sharma and Sudhesh (2018)  
125 noted that continuous online interaction complicates the organisation of responsibilities, while  
126 Byrne (2018) linked habitual use with poorer work performance and imbalance among young  
127 employees. Drawing on conservation of resources theory, Zivnuska et al. (2019) argued that  
128 excessive social media involvement depletes emotional and cognitive resources, thereby  
129 increasing burnout and work–family conflict. Recent studies further highlight mediating  
130 mechanisms such as decisional procrastination and role conflict that connect addictive digital  
131 behaviour with everyday functioning (Kocak et al., 2023).

132 Evidence from earlier research links social media addiction with outcomes such as mental health  
133 concerns, academic difficulties, and workplace strain. Yet these studies usually examine students  
134 and employees separately, even though many young people must navigate education, emerging  
135 careers, and personal development at the same time. When these overlapping roles are  
136 considered, the connection between social media addiction and work–life balance appears less  
137 clearly understood, particularly in the Indian context where empirical work remains limited. A  
138 more integrated investigation is therefore necessary to understand how these dimensions interact  
139 in the lived experiences of youth.

### 140 **Theoretical Framework**

141 The growing concern surrounding excessive social media use among youth is closely connected  
142 to broader questions about how individuals manage their time, attention, and emotional energy  
143 across different areas of life. Earlier discussion in this study has shown that persistent

144 engagement with digital platforms may influence concentration, well-being, and everyday  
145 functioning. To understand how such engagement translates into disturbances in work–life  
146 balance, it is useful to view these behavioural patterns through a broader explanatory  
147 perspective.

148 One helpful way of interpreting this relationship is offered by the **conservation of resources**  
149 **(COR) perspective**, which views individuals as striving to preserve important personal  
150 resources such as time, psychological energy, emotional stability, and attentional focus. When  
151 these limited resources are repeatedly drawn toward a single activity, fewer resources remain  
152 available for other responsibilities and roles. In the context of social media use, continuous  
153 checking behaviour, emotional involvement in online interaction, and sustained cognitive  
154 attention may gradually reduce the energy required to manage academic, professional, and  
155 personal commitments in a balanced manner.

156 This perspective also indicates that imbalances may arise more strongly when social media use  
157 involves persistent psychological engagement rather than simple exposure or duration of use.  
158 When individuals become emotionally or cognitively preoccupied with social media, the effects  
159 may continue even outside active usage, creating ongoing pressure on attention and self-  
160 regulation. Such processes can make it increasingly difficult to maintain clear boundaries  
161 between different life roles, thereby shaping perceptions of work–life balance among young  
162 users.

163 These considerations are particularly relevant during youth, a period often marked by  
164 simultaneous educational demands, emerging career responsibilities, and evolving social  
165 relationships. The gradual depletion of psychological and emotional resources in this phase may  
166 therefore carry meaningful implications for everyday balance and well-being.

167 In this context, the relationship between social media addiction and work–life balance can be  
168 interpreted as a process of resource reallocation across competing life roles. When sustained  
169 digital engagement intensifies psychological strain or role-related pressures, individuals may  
170 experience increasing difficulty in maintaining boundaries between academic, professional, and  
171 personal responsibilities. This theoretical perspective provides a foundation for examining how  
172 different dimensions of social media addiction influence perceived work–life balance among  
173 youth.

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## 176 **Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses**

177 Building on the preceding theoretical discussion, the present study conceptualises social media  
178 addiction through two dimensions: internal addiction factors and external addiction factors.  
179 Internal factors reflect psychological and behavioural consequences of excessive engagement,  
180 while external factors capture situational and functional pressures associated with digital  
181 connectivity. These dimensions are proposed to influence perceived work–life balance among  
182 youth.

183 Accordingly, the conceptual model positions internal and external addiction factors as  
184 independent variables and work–life balance as the dependent variable.

185 **Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

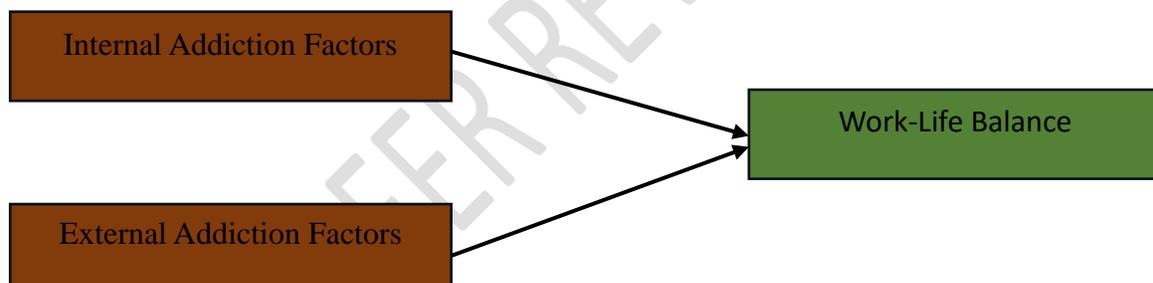
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191 Based on the theoretical reasoning and prior empirical evidence, the following hypotheses are  
192 proposed:

193 H1: Internal addiction factors negatively influence work–life balance among youth.

194 H2: External addiction factors negatively influence work–life balance among youth.

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## 196 **Methodology**

197 This study adopts a descriptive and analytical design to examine the relationship between social  
198 media addiction and work–life balance among youth. The analysis is based on primary data  
199 collected through a structured survey.

200 The target population comprised individuals aged 16–27 years, a group characterised by  
201 intensive digital engagement while simultaneously managing academic and early career  
202 responsibilities. A total of 100 respondents were selected using convenience sampling, with  
203 representation from students, salaried employees, and working professionals.

204 Data were collected using a structured questionnaire covering demographic characteristics, social  
205 media usage patterns, behavioural indicators of addiction, perceived work–life balance, and  
206 digital detox practices.

207 Social media addiction was operationalised through two dimensions: internal addiction factors  
208 and external addiction factors. Internal factors capture psychological and behavioural  
209 consequences of excessive engagement, including burnout, reduced self-esteem, fatigue, and  
210 motivational strain. External factors represent situational and functional aspects such as work  
211 distraction, blurred role boundaries, networking exposure, and professional information access.  
212 Each construct was measured using five items rated on a five-point Likert scale, and composite  
213 scores were calculated by averaging the respective items. The measurement items were  
214 developed specifically for this study based on established theoretical perspectives on social  
215 media addiction and role balance. Content validity was ensured by aligning the statements with  
216 behavioural and psychological dimensions identified in prior literature. Work–life balance was  
217 measured using a multi-item scale assessing respondents’ perceived ability to manage academic  
218 or professional responsibilities alongside personal life domains. The work–life balance items  
219 were developed to reflect perceived coordination between academic, professional, and personal  
220 responsibilities within digitally mediated contexts.

221 The internal consistency of the constructs was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha, as presented in  
222 Table 1. The internal addiction factor demonstrated satisfactory reliability ( $\alpha = 0.755$ ), while the  
223 external factor showed acceptable reliability for exploratory research ( $\alpha = 0.619$ ).

224 **Table 1: Reliability Statistics**

Construct	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Internal Addiction Factors	5	0.755
External Addiction Factors	5	0.619

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226 Following data collection, responses were coded and analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics  
 227 summarised respondent characteristics and usage behaviour. The Kruskal–Wallis test examined  
 228 occupational differences in platform preference, MANOVA assessed demographic influences on  
 229 addiction indicators, and regression analysis evaluated the effect of addiction dimensions on  
 230 work–life balance.

231 Participation was voluntary and anonymous. While convenience sampling and self-reported  
 232 responses may limit generalisability, the approach is appropriate for exploring behavioural  
 233 patterns within the defined population.

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## 235 **Results and Discussion**

### 236 *Profile of the Respondents*

237 Table 2 summarises the demographic profile of the respondents. The participants are fairly  
 238 balanced in terms of gender and are primarily concentrated within the 19–27 age categories. A  
 239 large majority remain unmarried and report either undergraduate or postgraduate educational  
 240 attainment. In occupational terms, students form the largest segment of the sample, followed by  
 241 working professionals and salaried employees. Taken together, these characteristics reflect a  
 242 group of young individuals positioned within academic or early career stages, making them  
 243 suitable for examining patterns of social media dependence and its possible influence on work–  
 244 life balance.

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**Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
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Gender	Male	53
	Female	47
Age	16-18	15
	19-21	26
	22-24	33
	25-27	26
Marital Status	Married	10
	Unmarried	90
Education	Highersecondary	11
	Under Graduation	45
	Post-Graduationand Above	44
Occupation	Student	45
	SalariedEmployee	18
	WorkingProfessional	31
	Others	6
Monthly Income	Up to 10000	15
	10001-20000	10
	21001-40000	25
	Above 40000	18
	None	32

247 *Source: Primary data*

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### 249 ***Social Media Usage Intensity and Behavioural Patterns***

250 Information presented in Table 3 highlights the extent and regularity of social media engagement  
 251 among the respondents. A substantial proportion report long-term use, with nearly three-fourths  
 252 having used social media for five years or more, and a comparable share spending at least three  
 253 hours per day on these platforms. Frequent checking behaviour is also common, as most  
 254 respondents indicate that they access social media several times throughout the day.

255 Such patterns point to social media use becoming an integrated part of everyday life rather than a  
 256 purely occasional or leisure-oriented activity. Earlier research has similarly linked prolonged  
 257 daily exposure and repetitive checking behaviour with habitual and potentially addictive forms of  
 258 engagement (Griffiths et al., 2014; Savci& Aysan, 2017). In this context, the observed trends  
 259 offer a relevant empirical basis for further examining the relationship between social media

260 dependence and its broader behavioral consequences.

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**Table 3: Social Media Usage Intensity among Youth**

<b>Usage Indicator</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Years of Social Media Use</b>	Up to 1 year	4
	2–4 years	22
	5–7 years	43
	More than 7 years	31
<b>Daily Time Spent on Social Media</b>	Less than 1 hour	3
	1–2 hours	23
	3–4 hours	39
	More than 5 hours	35
<b>Frequency of Checking Social Media</b>	Once a day	4
	Twice a day	11
	Only during free time	18
	Several times a day	67

*Source: Primary data*

#### ***Occupation-wise Preference for Social Media Platforms***

The Kruskal–Wallis analysis presented in Table 4 reveals that occupational background is associated with differences in the use of certain social media platforms. Facebook shows a statistically significant variation across groups ( $\chi^2 = 13.539$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), with students displaying higher mean ranks than salaried employees and working professionals, suggesting comparatively stronger engagement within the student category. A clearer distinction is visible in the case of WhatsApp ( $\chi^2 = 26.954$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), where working professionals record the highest mean ranks, consistent with the platform’s role in routine and work-related communication.

For Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and YouTube, the observed differences across occupations do not reach statistical significance, implying relatively similar usage patterns irrespective of employment status. Taken together, these findings indicate that the influence of occupation on

social media behaviour is selective rather than uniform, and appears to depend on the functional purpose associated with each platform.

**Table 4: Occupation-wise Preference for Social Media Platforms**

Platform	Students	Salaried Employees	Working Professionals	Others	$\chi^2$	p-value
Facebook	<b>61.90</b>	43.25	39.11	45.58	13.539	<b>0.004*</b>
Instagram	54.46	49.44	49.00	31.75	3.695	0.296
Twitter	56.22	53.75	40.74	48.25	5.697	0.127
Snapchat	50.38	45.50	48.89	74.75	5.293	0.152
YouTube	45.09	52.75	56.18	55.00	3.168	0.366
WhatsApp	35.20	55.94	<b>68.63</b>	55.25	26.954	<b>0.000*</b>
Others	45.36	50.78	59.42	42.17	5.410	0.144

*Note:  $p < 0.05$  indicates statistical significance.*

*Source: Primary data*

#### **Demographic Effects on Social Media Addiction**

To examine whether demographic characteristics influence social media addiction dimensions, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. Internal addiction factors and external addiction factors were treated as dependent variables, while gender, occupation, and years of social media use were included as fixed factors. Preliminary assessment using Levene's test confirmed that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was satisfied ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 5: Multivariate Analysis of Demographic Effects on Internal and External Addiction Factors**

Factor	Wilks' Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	p-value	Partial Eta Squared
Gender	0.956	2.097	2	91	0.129	0.044

Occupation	0.933	1.074	6	182	0.380	0.034
Years of Social Media Use	0.927	1.174	6	182	0.322	0.037

**Note:** Dependent variables: Internal addiction factors and External addiction factors. Significance level set at  $p < 0.05$ .

The multivariate results reveal that none of the examined demographic variables exerted a statistically significant effect on internal and external addiction factors. Gender, occupation, and years of social media use did not demonstrate meaningful multivariate differences, as indicated by non-significant Wilks' Lambda statistics ( $p > 0.05$ ). The associated effect sizes were small, suggesting limited practical impact.

These findings suggest that internal and external addiction tendencies are relatively consistent across demographic categories within the sampled youth population, suggesting that addiction tendencies do not differ substantially across demographic categories within the sample. The absence of significant demographic differences suggests that social media addiction tendencies may be relatively uniform across youth groups, implying that digital well-being interventions should adopt a broad rather than narrowly targeted approach.

### ***Impact of Social Media Addiction on Work–Life Balance***

Table 6 presents the regression results examining the influence of internal and external addiction factors on work–life balance among youth. The model is statistically significant ( $F = 22.817$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and explains 32 per cent of the variance in work–life balance ( $R^2 = 0.320$ ), indicating moderate explanatory power.

Both internal and external addiction factors are significantly associated with lower levels of work–life balance. Internal factors exhibit a stronger influence ( $\beta = 0.383$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) compared to external factors ( $\beta = 0.241$ ,  $p = 0.026$ ). This suggests that psychological and behavioural consequences of excessive social media engagement contribute more substantially to reductions in perceived work–life balance than situational or functional aspects of use.

The findings support the proposed hypotheses and are consistent with theoretical expectations that sustained digital engagement reallocates cognitive and emotional resources, thereby intensifying role interference and weakening boundary management across life domains.

**Table 6: Regression Analysis of Social Media Addiction and Work–Life Balance**

Variable	$\beta$	t-value	p-value
Internal Factors	0.383	3.585	0.001*
External Factors	0.241	2.257	0.026*
Model Statistics			
R <sup>2</sup>	0.320		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.306		
F-value	22.817		
Model Significance	0.000		

*Note:*  $p < 0.05$  indicates statistical significance.

**Source:** Primary data.

### *Digital Detox Practices*

Despite a generally high level of awareness about digital detox practices, only a smaller proportion of respondents appear to translate this awareness into consistent behavioural change. Among those who reported adopting such practices, the primary motivations were related to reducing stress and improving sleep quality. Some variation was observed across gender in the use of particular detox strategies, whereas other practices showed broadly similar patterns of adoption. Taken together, these observations suggest that awareness by itself may not be sufficient to encourage meaningful behavioural regulation, highlighting the importance of structured guidance and targeted interventions to support healthier digital habits among youth.

### **Theoretical Contribution**

This study contributes to the literature by distinguishing between internal and external dimensions of social media addiction in explaining reduced work–life balance among youth.

The findings suggest that psychological and behavioural strain associated with excessive engagement plays a more substantial role than situational or functional aspects of use. By integrating social media addiction into discussions of work–life balance, the study extends resource-based and boundary-oriented perspectives to digitally mediated environments. The results underscore the importance of self-regulatory processes in maintaining role balance within increasingly connected contexts.

## **Conclusion and Implications**

The growing presence of digital interaction in everyday life makes it increasingly important to understand how sustained engagement with social media influences the balance between personal responsibilities and professional or academic demands among young people. Evidence from the present analysis shows that social media use within this group is not occasional but routine, reflected in extended daily exposure and repeated checking behaviour throughout the day. Differences in platform preference across occupational categories further indicate that patterns of use are shaped by functional requirements rather than simple popularity.

A more substantive concern emerging from the findings is the measurable effect of addictive engagement on work-life balance. Both internal and external dimensions of social media addiction are associated with reduced work-life balance, although psychological attachment, reduced self-regulation, and compulsive interaction exert a comparatively stronger influence than situational usage pressures. This pattern highlights the importance of cognitive and emotional resource management in sustaining role balance within digitally connected environments.

The implications extend beyond theory into educational, organisational, and policy contexts. Encouraging reflective and disciplined technology use, integrating digital well-being awareness into learning and workplace environments, and promoting realistic disengagement practices may help mitigate the risks associated with excessive online involvement. At the same time, the interpretation of results should remain cautious because the analysis relies on cross-sectional and self-reported information, limiting causal explanation. Subsequent investigations could strengthen understanding through longitudinal observation, behavioural usage tracking, or examination of mediating psychological variables. Supporting healthier relationships with digital technology, rather than rejecting it entirely, appears central to sustaining balanced development and functioning among youth.

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