

## **The Impact of Social Media on Adolescent Identity (300 words)**

**Theory:** Erving Goffman's Impression Management

Social media has transformed the way adolescents construct and present their identities. Goffman's theory of impression management explains how individuals consciously perform certain roles to shape how others perceive them. On platforms like Instagram and TikTok, teens curate their profiles, carefully selecting images, posts, and captions to project a desired self-image. This often leads to a discrepancy between online presentation and offline reality, creating stress and social anxiety.

Research shows that adolescents who prioritize social media validation may develop self-esteem issues, as they measure their worth through likes, shares, and comments. This reflects Goffman's idea that social interaction is performative, and individuals continuously monitor others' reactions to adjust their behavior.

Moreover, social media amplifies peer comparison, reinforcing norms around beauty, popularity, and lifestyle. Teens internalize these social cues, which influence their offline behavior, from clothing choices to social interactions. By applying Goffman's theory, it becomes clear that online platforms are not merely communication tools, they are stages where identity is negotiated, validated, or challenged.

In conclusion, understanding adolescent social media behavior through the lens of impression management highlights the structural pressures shaping identity formation and underscores the psychological impact of online performance on real-world interactions.



COLLEGE ESSAY