

# International Journal of Human Sciences Research

## THE ROLE OF INSTAGRAM IN THE IDENTITY BUILDING PROCESS IN ADOLESCENCE

---

*Camila Espíndula da Silva*

Centro Universitário IDEAU

Bagé/RS

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/4228891583842024>

*Edinara Bellini Taetti*

Centro Universitário IDEAU

Bagé/RS

*Josemara dos Santos Rodrigues*

Centro Universitário IDEAU

Bagé/RS

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/7009930818386273>

*Andreia Quadros Rosa*

Centro Universitário IDEAU

Bagé/RS

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/1698927753200654>

*Lenise Alvares Collares*

Centro Universitário IDEAU

Bagé/RS

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/2803493672095505>

*Stefânia Martins Teixeira Torma*

Centro Universitário IDEAU

Bagé/RS

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/3286788699256784>

*Suzana Catanio dos Santos Nardi*

Centro Universitário IDEAU

Bagé/RS

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/8395586506063530>

All content in this magazine is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution License. Attribution-Non-Commercial-Non-Derivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).



**Abstract:** The present work aims to understand the role of Instagram in the process of building the identity of teenagers, given the current scenario in which social networks are one of the main influencers in social daily life. The method used in the research has a descriptive perspective, with a quali-quantitative approach. Data were collected through an online questionnaire containing 08 questions. The sample consisted of 81 adolescents, aged between 12 and 18 years. With the results of the questionnaire associated with the theoretical foundation, it was observed that in adolescence, it is natural that they seek their identity, their way of being, their desires, there are doubts and indecisions. It is common to want to participate in groups, have different compartments, establish tastes and affinities. They are young, and in addition to all these issues there is Instagram as a new member, influencing and impacting the psychological health of this vulnerable age. It was also noticed that positive aspects are being established, but unfortunately, what is revealed is loneliness, even if they seek contacts and relationships, they are alone and connected.

**Keywords:** Instagram, Teenager, Identity Construction.

## INTRODUCTION

Contemporary society envisions new scenarios in relation to the construction of the identity of individuals, and social networks is one of them and perhaps one of the most influential. Virtual culture is present in many homes regardless of socioeconomic status and especially among children and adolescents who spend more and more time connected to the internet (SALLES, 2005). Recent research shows that the average time spent on social media has increased by 60% in the last seven years. In addition, Brazilians are in 2nd place

in the world ranking of time spent on social media, 225 minutes a day, second only to the Philippines, which has 241 minutes (FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO, 2019).

In this perspective, we see that the majority are children and adolescents in full development, a period of constant and intense changes, both at the psychic and physical and social levels (BIAZUS and RAMIRES, 2012, p. 84). A phase full of anguish and decisions that will lead to the future of this teenager who, whether or not they have conflicts, which will depend on their history, will trigger possible disorders, mainly in behavior.

Faced with this scenario, the theme of the construction of the adolescent's identity, in the face of social media, becomes extremely important, since studies show that this generation lives in a world dominated by the media (PORTES and GONÇALVES, 2008), also stating that "Being young in a connected world is living a historically unprecedented experience" this article aims to understand the role of Instagram in the process of building the identity of teenagers.

Individuals undergo transformations over time, and adolescence is one of the most affected. It is the moment when they are building their personality, creating representations of themselves and the world through social relationships and the media is inserted in this context. Therefore, this study focuses on understanding the adolescent in this very current process that takes into account social media and its influences.

## DEVELOPMENT

Adolescence is one of the transition periods understood as a subjective event, it is at this stage that the transformations of puberty begin, when the adolescent is not considered a child, but also not an adult. Adolescents experience a rupture with the past, which modifies their psychic life and offers them

new thoughts, possibilities, hopes and fears, causing many conflicts experienced at this stage (ROEHRS et al, 2010). It is noticed, however, that social interactions assume great relevance throughout what is established in a space of experimentation and reflection of a new interpretation of the self (FARIAS and CRESTANI, 2017).

Almeida et. al (2018), understand that the construction of identity occurs through interaction with the other individual; and, the use of social networks is considered a tool for this to happen. The authors state that social interaction and social networks improve interpersonal relationships and help in the construction of the adolescent's identity. In this way, technologies shape the subject's identity, establishing a place in society, thus allowing a discourse on the subject's thinking and acting.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Human Development in Adolescence**

The human development phase of adolescence is a period full of changes at the physical, neurochemical, cognitive, emotional and behavioral levels, a transition that is modified by the tasks and demands of the environment. These demands of adolescents involve greater social interaction with peers, greater self-perception and development of their skills and competences, construction of their own identity and life values, as well as decision-making regarding their professional trajectory (NEUFELD, 2017).

In this period between ten and nineteen years, adolescents begin a rapid acceleration of physical growth and sexual development. As they are involved in intense transformations building their new identity, the young people's concern with their body image increases. These concerns and distortions with weight and body, which often grow disproportionately, can generate psychological changes in relation

to perception and motor coordination (AERTS et.al, 2010).

According to Papalia (2013) for a large part of society, adolescence is the time of transition from childhood to adulthood, in which several physical, cognitive, emotional and social changes occur in their development, as well as taking various forms in social contexts, cultural and economic. One of the major physical changes that stand out at this stage is the onset of puberty, which begins around the age of 13, which is considered a process in which the individual reaches sexual maturity and the ability to reproduce. Still, for Piaget apud Papalia (2013), at this stage adolescents enter the final stage of cognitive development, which he called formal-operational, characterized by the ability to think in abstract terms (PAPALIA, 2013).

Because it is known as a phase of emotional instability and growth explosion, with physical and psychosocial changes, adolescence is a period of transition and a new relationship with the adult world, being the moment in which the adolescent is faced with personal conflicts. and family members, questioning and ambivalence. During this period, "naturally depressive and conflicting moments" are characteristic, and for some authors the adolescence phase is a process of mourning or depression, that is, the process would take place through the mourning of the child's body, for the loss of childhood parents. , by the loss of childhood identity and by the adolescent's own affirmation in the adult world (AVANCI et al, 2007).

According to Farias and Crestani (2017), currently, technologies have played a relevant role in people's lives, since, with technological advances, such as the internet, several changes occur for society, modifying the ways of thinking and acting, in different aspects of human behavior. However, online social networks have been transforming the nature of

relationships and interactions between people in their daily lives. Thus, the increasing use of the internet has provided a strong discussion about its impact on social behavior, especially on the lives of adolescents.

### **Social Networks as a problem or a solution?**

The communication system takes place in the following scheme: sender > message > receiver, therefore, the media, here in particular, social networks, are the sender, the content or the degree of information is the message and the teenager, the receiver. This type of media aims to inform people about matters of interest to people, up to this point we all understand the importance of being connected. However, the biggest question is how this message arrives and is processed in the adolescent's head in such an unstable and delicate phase (RIBEIRO and BATISTA, 2010). However, the need for a limit on the use of social networks is evident, so that the results of this are not negative and do not expose the young person.

The content produced by the media can have consequences for recipients, especially teenagers, and the relationship they establish with the so-called Internet Influencers whose effects are observed in the behavior and social, cognitive and affective development of these young people. The media and social networks are not determining factors in the formation of this teenager, but the influence on the way they behave and constitute themselves is undeniable (DIAS et al, 2012).

For Biazus and Ramires (2012), networks are open structures capable of integrating "new nodes", sharing the same communication codes. This openness expands not only to consumer demands but also to various interests, values and beliefs with an enormous potential to establish interpersonal relationships, but, on the other hand, an enormous potential in

sedentary lifestyle, cognitive difficulties, lack of interest, potentiating attention disorders, obsessive disorders, anxiety, language directly affecting learning (SILVA and SILVA, 2017).

### **The Construction of Identity in Adolescence and Social Networks**

During adolescence, the construction of personal identity is one of the most important tasks, and the essential step in transforming the adolescent into a productive and mature adult. The formation of this identity is influenced by intrapersonal, interpersonal and cultural factors, resulting in the definition of who the adolescent is, what his values are and which way to go (SCHOEN-FERREIRA et al, 2003).

The search for identity, at this stage, integrates occupational, sexual and value factors. Erik Erikson describes "the psychosocial conflict of adolescence as identity versus identity confusion" (PAPALIA, 2013). Fidelity emerges as a virtue of this conflict, for adolescents who manage to solve their crises proficiently.

In the individuation process, the teenager strives to gain autonomy and personal identity, spend less time with the family, become more isolated, have less intimacy with their siblings and find affection, embracement, attention in peers. Thus building intimate relationships that will serve for the next stages of their development (PAPALIA, 2013).

Currently, the internet is one of the main devices that culture offers for the social inclusion of adolescents, which has been providing the chance for socialization in a quick and simple way, making more and more adolescents use social networks, and, consequently, changing the forms of interaction between them. Social networks, in turn, have become a stimulating element of development processes, as they emerge as a day-to-day tool that provides multiple and

diverse feelings and experiences (FARIAS and CRESTANI, 2017).

Regarding the relationship between social networks and the construction of the adolescent's identity, according to Neufeld (2017), the "link with technology, with its communication resources, image exposure and dissemination of opinions" can manifest itself as a means of getting attention from other people and even gaining popularity with peers. Social networks serve as support for the dissemination of the individual lifestyle, which in adolescence can have a direct association with the values and preferences of the young person himself, or can be established by the peer group, by ideologies and conceptions that are not necessarily, respond to or agree with the adolescent's beliefs. Still, this dynamic can cause confusion and difficulties in the consolidation of self-concept, self-efficacy and, mainly, affect the self-esteem of adolescents. Since, they are just looking to consolidate their identity, whether through publications, writing their ideas or creating networks with other people (NEUFELD, 2017).

Complementing, Rosado and Tome (2015) explain that with technological changes, social networks have become essential tools for interpersonal interaction, allowing their users to exchange information and communicate, in addition to enabling the experimentation of identities and creating relationships with other people.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

In order to investigate how Instagram influences the construction of adolescents' identity, an interview through an online questionnaire was used as a research instrument (using the "Google Forms" resource). The questionnaire was prepared by students of the 3rd semester of the Psychology course at the Centro Universitário Ideau -

Bagé - UNIDEAU, for the Theoretical and Practical Improvement Project, containing 08 questions, and sent by social networks, emails and telephone invitations. With the dissemination of the questionnaire on social networks, 106 responses were obtained, however, 81 responses were selected, from adolescents aged between 12 and 18 years, who fit the profile proposed by the research.

The method used in the research has a descriptive perspective, with a qualitative-quantitative approach, since the proposal of the work seeks to understand the role of "Instagram" in the process of building the identity of adolescents.

The main question was whether respondents frequently and preferentially used the social network Instagram to be able to assess this influence. The answers also glimpsed significant points such as the profiles and main subjects that they seek or follow in this network. In relation to socio-emotional issues, what is the main feeling when using the media and the feeling of not being or not being able to connect.

As mentioned, obtaining the questions via the internet did not make it possible to establish contact with the young people to get to know and analyze their thoughts and intentions more deeply.

After the analysis of the data, the discussions were guided both by the questions of the research problem and by the theoretical framework studied, which served to assist in the evaluation and organization of the responses sent.

Subsequently, the data were tabulated in the very program used "Google Forms" in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the influence of Instagram in the construction of the adolescent's identity.

In general, the qualitative-quantitative approach collaborated so that the work could have follow-up and data, and establish a

better understanding of the correlation of this social media and the adolescent development process.

## **ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

For the construction of information with the adolescents in the research, an online questionnaire was used as the main instrument, containing 08 questions. The sample consisted of 81 adolescents, 46 (56.8%) were female, 33 (40.6%) were male, 01 (1.2%) preferred not to respond and 01 (1.2%) of the fluent gender, aged between 12 and 18 years, with the majority 33 (40.7%) aged 15 years, as shown in the data gathered in Graphs 1 and 2.

In Brazil, the Statute of Children and Adolescents (Law n° 8.069, 07/13/1990) considers adolescents as those between 12 and 18 years of age. For Papalia (2013) adolescence begins between 10 and 12 years old until approximately 20 years old, considering the fact that its beginning and end are not clearly defined. However, she mentions that the beginning of adolescence occurs with the onset of puberty, that is, from the ability to reproduce.

Schoen-Ferreira et. al, (2003), point out that adolescence is a very recent concept in our society, however, the definition represents the psychosocial transformations that accompany physical changes and the modification of body image, which encompasses particular characteristics according to the individual's sociocultural environment, It is difficult to determine an age at which the individual stops being a child and becomes an adult, as it will depend a lot on the culture and the time and place in which this teenager lives.

Regarding the use of social networks, it was asked: "Is Instagram your most used social network?" (Table 3), of the 81 answers, 38 (46.9%) answered "YES" and 44 (54.3%) answered "NO".

Another important aspect that the adolescents highlighted was regarding the time available to use the internet, of the 80 responses, 23 (28.7%) more than 08 hours a day, 20 (25%) from 6 to 8 hours a day, 22 (27.5%) from 4 to 6 hours a day and 15 (18.8%) from 2 to 4 hours a day, as shown in Table 4.

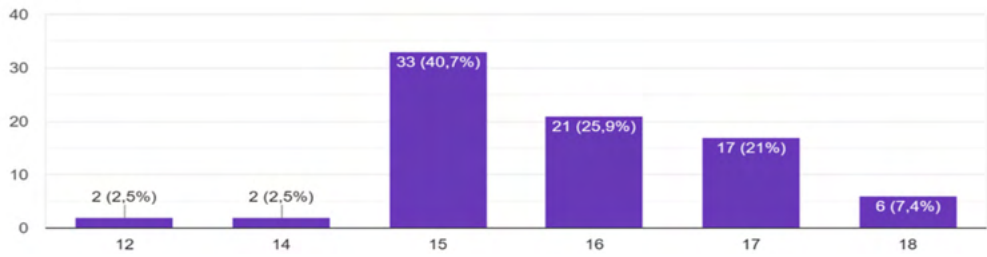
In relation to socio-emotional issues, as already argued, social media provide adolescents with moments of searching, both for relationships and for information. One of the most relevant aspects of the responses obtained is the fact that they seek profiles and information about prejudice. Many answers point to the dissatisfaction of watching news about social injustices: bullying, machismo, racism, homophobia.

In this sense, Dias et al. (2019) highlight that bullying is one of the most talked about topics among young people, and it is one of the topics capable of causing discomfort among children and adolescents. In addition, experiences that involve various forms of access to inappropriate content or contact with negative profiles or problematic behaviors are among the main problems that draw the attention of researchers and specialists in this area.

The information was highlighted in the analyzed data, the young person wants to be well informed and connected with the world, although we know the importance of how these messages must arrive. Only one of the 81 responses pointed out that they accompany crimes and violence, for the majority who registered that they prefer good and true news.

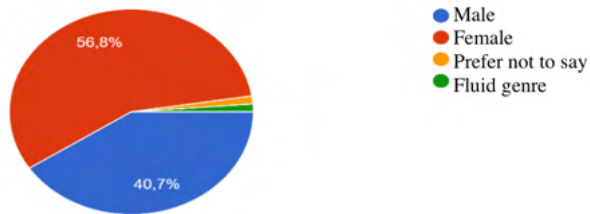
Although the data point to the high frequency of use of Instagram, as it is incorporated into the daily lives of young people it is not indiscriminate, there are limits established by the adolescents themselves, they know that it is "bad".

How old are you  
81 responses



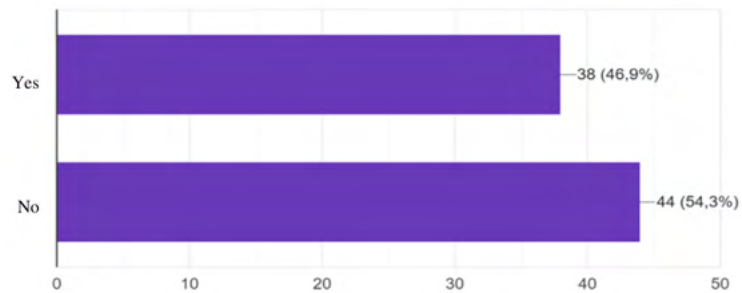
Graph 1: Age of participants.

what is your gender  
81 responses



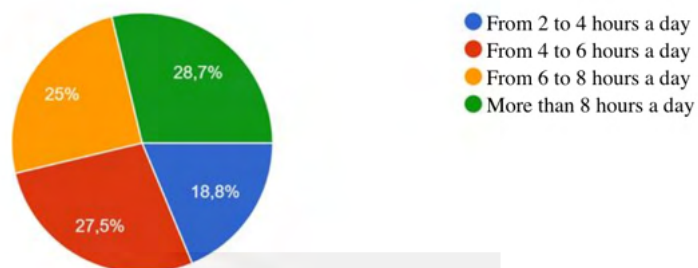
Graph 2: Gender of the participants.

Instagram is your most used social network?  
81 responses



Graph 3: Answers regarding the question "Is Instagram your most used social network?"

How much free time do you have on the internet?  
80 answers



Graph 4: Answers referring to the free time that the participants have on the internet.

## CONCLUSION

Through the data collected, identifying how Instagram really influences the construction of teenagers' identity was a challenge, judging by the fact that it was not a personal interview and inevitably happened through social networks. Face-to-face contact was needed to see and get to know this teenager, how he presents himself, how he develops his thoughts and judgment. Despite this, the answers served for the study.

The survey points inform, first of all, that young people are concerned about what is happening in the world itself, they are looking to establish relationships, they are wanting to have fun and get informed with what is seriously safe and authentic.

Second, despite acknowledging the time he has used the media, he knows how to maintain a balance, recognizes important values as he seeks and monitors social injustices, in addition to maintaining loyalty and solidarity with his peers.

It was noticed that positive aspects are being established, such as instant messages as real friends and the stimulation of social connections.

It was observed that currently, social networks are used as an environment to express everyday emotions using an abbreviated and little explanatory language, whose effects of this new reality can be measured from the time spent and how it is spent, in order to that collaborate in a healthy way for the social, psychological and cognitive development of the adolescent.

As exposed in the theoretical framework, social networks have gained space among adolescents and, as a communication tool, it allows them to take advantage of various possibilities of online life, such as posting photos to friends, having access to information and participating in discussions on topics that interfere in your life. Making

the internet a great influence on the lives of adolescents, including the identity that is constantly being formed, since the transformations resulting from adolescence generate insecurities in the face of so many changes that end up reflecting in this construction of identity.

However, at the conclusion of the research, it was recognized the need to deepen the theme, since it is essential to build new researches that allow a broader understanding of the meaning of social networks in the lives of adolescents, in terms of construction and affirmation. of identity.



## REFERENCES

- AERTS, Denise et. al. **Imagem corporal de adolescentes escolares em Gravataí-RS.** / Denise Aerts; Rafael Roswag Madeira; Vera Beatriz Zart. *Epidemiol. Serv. Saúde*, Brasília, v. 19, n. 3, p. 283-291, set. 2010. Disponível em: <[http://scielo.iec.gov.br/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S1679-49742010000300010&lng=pt&nrm=iso](http://scielo.iec.gov.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1679-49742010000300010&lng=pt&nrm=iso)>. Acesso em: 13/03/2020.
- ALMEIDA, Gilberto Gregório Santos et. al. **As redes sociais e os adolescentes: um estudo a partir dos pressupostos da psicologia social.** 2018/ ALMEIDA, Gilberto Gregório Santos; DIAS, Renata Piovan Cardozo; JACOBOWSKY, Rafaela; NASCIMENTO, Gabriela Vieira; SANTOS, Edinayra Araujo; DE LUIZ, George Moraes. Disponível em: <<http://www.repositoriodigital.univag.com.br/index.php/Psico/article/download/414/415>> Acesso em: 20/03/2020.
- AVANCI, Joviana Q. et al. **Fatores associados aos problemas de saúde mental em adolescentes.** / AVANCI, Joviana Q; ASSIS, Simone G; OLIVEIRA, Raquel V. C; FERREIRA, Renata M; PESCE, Renata P. *Psic.: Teor. e Pesq.*, Brasília, v. 23, n. 3, p. 287-294, Sept. 2007. Disponível em: <[http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0102-37722007000300007&lng=en&nrm=iso](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0102-37722007000300007&lng=en&nrm=iso)>. Acesso em: 17/03/2020.
- BLAZUS, Camilla Baldicera, RAMIRES, Vera Regina Rohnelt. **Depressão na adolescência: uma problemática de vínculos.** *Psicologia em estudos*, Rio Grande do Sul, v.17, n. 1, p. 83-91, 2012. Disponível em: <https://www.scielo.br/j/pe/a/RSkXKnYD4frXYKQrmzGdGMn/?lang=pt#>. Acesso em: 18/06/2020.
- DIAS, Vanina Costa et al. **Adolescentes na Rede: Riscos ou ritos de passagem?** / DIAS, Vanina Costa, LIMA, Nadia Laguardia, VIOLA, Daniela Teixeira Dutra, Kelles, Natalia Fernandes, GOMES, Patrícia da Silva, SILVA, Candida Rosa. (2019). *Psicologia: Ciência e Profissão*, 39, 1-15. Disponível em: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-3703003179048>. Acesso em: 18/06/2020.
- FARIAS, Cassia de Araujo, e, Patricia CRESTANI. **A influência das redes sociais no comportamento social dos adolescentes.** *Revista Ciência e Sociedade*, América do Norte, e, n. 2, jan./jul., 2017. Disponível em: <<http://periodicos.estacio.br/index.php/cienciaesociedade/article/view/2646/1628>> Acesso em: 20/03/2020.
- FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO. **Brasil é 'vice' em tempo gasto em redes em ranking dominado por 'emergentes'.** Publicado em 06/07/2019. Folha de São Paulo. Disponível em: <https://f5.folha.uol.com.br/nerdices/2019/09/brasil-e-2o-em-ranking-de-paises-que-passam-mais-tempo-em-redes-sociais.shtml>.
- NEUFELD, Carmem Beatriz, Organizadora. **Terapia cognitivo-comportamental para adolescentes: uma perspectiva transdiagnóstica e desenvolvimental.** / Organizadora, Carmem Beatriz Neufeld. – Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2017. e-PUB. Editado como livro impresso em 2017. ISBN 978-85-8271-398-3
- PAPALIA, Diane E. **Desenvolvimento humano** / Diane E. Papalia, Ruth Duskin Feldman, com Gabriela Martorell; tradução: Carla Filomena Marques Pinto Vercesi... [et al.]; [revisão técnica: Maria Cecília de Vilhena Moraes Silva... et al.]. – 12. ed. – Porto Alegre: AMGH, 2013.
- PORTES, Claudia Regina. GONÇALVES, Nádia Gaiofato. **Adolescência inventada: a mídia como representação**, Paraná. 2008. Disponível em: <http://www.diaadiaeducacao.pr.gov.br/portals/pde/arquivos/2029-8.pdf>.
- RIBEIRO, Ana Caroline. BATISTA, Aline de Jesus. **A influência da mídia na criança / pré-adolescente e a educação como mediadora desse contato.** Alcar – Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores de História da Mídia I Encontro de História da Mídia da Região Norte Universidade Federal do Tocantins – Palmas – outubro de 2010.
- ROEHRS, Hellen et al. **Adolescência na percepção de professores do ensino fundamental.** Hellen Roehrs, Mariluci Alves Maftum, Ivete Palmira Sanson Zagonel. *Rev. esc. enferm. USP*, São Paulo. 2010. Disponível em: <https://www.scielo.br/pdf/reeusp/v44n2/26.pdf>. Acesso em: 29/04/2020.
- ROSADO, Luiz Alexandre da Silva e TOMÉ, Vitor Manuel Nabais. **As redes sociais na internet e suas apropriações por jovens brasileiros e portugueses em idade escolar.** *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos* [online]. 2015, v. 96, n. 242, pp. 11-25. Disponível em: <<https://doi.org/10.1590/S2176-6681/324612565>>. ISSN 2176-6681. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S2176-6681/324612565>. Acesso em: 18/04/2020.
- SCHOEN-FERREIRA, Teresa Helena et. al. **A construção da identidade em adolescentes: um estudo exploratório.** Maria Aznar-Farias; Edwiges Ferreira de Mattos Silveiras; Schoen-Ferreira Teresa Helena. *Estud. Psicol. (Natal)*, Natal, v. 8, n. 1, p. 107-115, Apr. 2003. Disponível em: <[http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S1413-294X2003000100012&lng=en&nrm=iso](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1413-294X2003000100012&lng=en&nrm=iso)>. Acesso em: 17/04/2020.

SILVA, Thayse de Oliveira; SILVA, Leblam Tamar Gomes. **Os impactos sociais, cognitivos e afetivos sobre a geração de adolescentes conectados às tecnologias digitais.** Rev. psicopedag., São Paulo, v. 34, n. 103, p. 87-97, 2017. Disponível em <[http://pepsic.bvsalud.org/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0103-84862017000100009&lng=pt&nrm=iso](http://pepsic.bvsalud.org/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0103-84862017000100009&lng=pt&nrm=iso)>. Acesso em 29/03/2020.

SALLES, Leila Maria Ferreira. **Infância e adolescência na sociedade contemporânea: alguns apontamentos.** Estud. psicol. (Campinas), Campinas, v. 22, n. 1, p. 33-41, Mar. 2005. Disponível em <[http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0103-166X2005000100005&lng=en&nrm=iso](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0103-166X2005000100005&lng=en&nrm=iso)>. Acesso em 29/04/2020.