https://doi.org/10.17163/soph.n39.2025.08

The Relationship between Young People and Social Networks in Inhabiting Virtual Spaces

La relación entre jóvenes y redes sociales en el habitar espacios virtuales

José Rolando Alegría-Morán[*]
Universidad Católica de Temuco, Chile
jalegria@uct.cl
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0862-0306

Forma sugerida de citar: Alegría-Morán, José Rolando. (2025). The Relationship between Young People and Social Networks in Inhabiting Virtual Spaces. *Sophia, Colección de Filosofía de la Educación*, (39), pp. 245-267.

Abstract

This paper acknowledges the significant role of Internet in the development of individuals, understanding that much of our daily actions are mediated by virtual elements. From this reality, the objective is set to explore the possibility that today's youth perceive their social media not merely as technological tools, valued for their utility and user experience, but as spaces that can be inhabited. To achieve this, a hermeneutical analysis of various texts by key authors on Youth, Inhabiting Spaces, and Social Networks was conducted. It can thus be argued that inhabiting is an act that involves shaping a space through affection and symbols, as those who inhabit the space also shape and define their identity. One of the main characteristics of youth is the trial and exploration of identity expressions, which makes inhabiting particularly significant during this stage of life. This idea makes the notion of social media as inhabitable spaces especially remarkable, positioning young people as the first inhabitants of these virtual environments. The conclusion of this study suggests that it is plausible to consider young people as inhabitants of virtual spaces rather than just users, which encourages further research and development in this area. Future investigations could explore this concept further, examining how young people shape their identities in these virtual spaces.

Keywords

Youth, Social Networks, Virtual Space, Internet, Identity, Adulthood.

* Doctor of Social Sciences with a specialization in Youth Studies at Silva Henríquez Catholic University, Master's Degree in Philosophical Studies at Alberto Hurtado University. He currently works as a professor in the Department of Applied Ethics in the Faculty of Religious Sciences and Philosophy at the Catholic University of Temuco. Google Scholar: https://scholar.google.es/citations?user=W13UVZ8AAAAJ&hl=es

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador

Resumen

Este trabajo reconoce la importancia que han tenido los fenómenos de internet en el desarrollo de los sujetos, entendiendo que gran parte de las acciones cotidianas se ven mediadas por elementos virtuales. Es desde esta realidad que se establece como objetivo explorar la posibilidad de que los jóvenes actuales enfrenten a sus redes sociales como espacios que pueden ser habitados y no como herramientas tecnológicas, valoradas por la utilidad y la experiencia de usuario. Para esto se realizó el análisis hermenéutico de diversos textos de autores referenciales en temas de juventud, habitar espacios y redes sociales. De esta manera, se puede indicar que habitar es un acto que implica moldear el espacio por medio del afecto y los símbolos, en la medida que los sujetos que habitan moldean y dan forma a su identidad. Una de las características principales de la juventud es el ensayo de manifestaciones identitarias, por lo que habitar es algo de mucha importancia en esta etapa de la vida, volviendo sugerente la idea de que las redes sociales pudieran ser espacios habitables, estableciendo a los jóvenes como sus primeros habitantes. La conclusión de este estudio muestra que es plausible suponer a los jóvenes como habitantes de los espacios virtuales y no solo como usuarios, lo que invita al desarrollo de futuras investigaciones en esta área.

Palabras clave

Juventud, redes sociales, espacio virtual, internet, identidad, adultez.

Introduction

One of the defining features of our time is the growing impact of the internet and its platforms on every aspect of life. It is becoming increasingly difficult for individuals to stay away from apps such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, which means that part of everyday life now takes place in the virtual world. This permanent exposure to the internet has prompted the academic world to explore the impacts of these technologies on the development of individuals, concluding that young people have been most strongly influenced by this phenomenon (Feixa, 2014; Morduchowicz, 2018).

Hence, this article aims to address the following question: how do young people today relate to their social networks? A possible answer may begin with the hypothesis that young people's relationship with their social networks is radically different from that experienced by previous generations. Assuming a relationship mediated exclusively by use hides the other aspects of the youth phenomenon, as the relationship seems to have depths that have not yet been fully explored. Thus, it can be theorized about the difference in the nature of the experience, thinking of it more as a spatial experience, with a virtual nature, and less as an experience of use, such as communication and information technology (ICT).

There are new possibilities for reflection by changing the focus and conceptualizing social networks not only as technological tools but also as virtual spaces. This is how the concept of "inhabiting" appears sugges-

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

tive, understood by authors such as Marc Augé (2008) Martin Heidegger (2003), and Michelle De Certeau (2000) as the action through which subjects construct themselves while creating and shaping space through symbolic and emotional elements, turning it into a place. The act of inhabiting is key to understanding how young people use social networks to rehearse and consolidate expressions of identity, while appropriating these spaces, shaping them and charging them with their own symbols and emotions.

The objective of this work is to present a theoretical proposal to base scientific research on the experience of inhabiting virtual spaces. Its importance lies in the fact that it presents a perspective on the world of young people that has long remained hidden. This would allow to take a new approach to different aspects of youth, both in terms of formative development and in the areas of education, parenting, and the creation and implementation of public policies focused on social development or access to technology. It is reasonable to assume that redefining the relationship between youth and social media should have an impact on the development of all aspects of youth studies.

The methodology used to write this article was the hermeneutic analysis of academic texts, which consists of carefully reading the texts and then establishing the most relevant ideas, reflections, and statements that contribute to achieving the research objectives (Quintana & Hermida, 2019). This stage consists mainly of the selection, analysis, interpretation, and understanding of the texts reviewed. Subsequently, a narrative that aims to answer the research question, presenting the results of the analysis and understanding of the texts studied. For the selection of texts, an exhaustive review of articles from high-impact journals and diverse specialized literature was carried out. Then, a discussion was developed between the theories presented by the authors in the fields of philosophy, sociology, and anthropology, to finally present a conclusion.

This article is structured in four parts. The first part explores the concept of inhabiting; the second part presents the various elements that make up the idea of youth; the third part offers various elements for a better understanding of the nuances of the idea of virtual space; and the final part presents various proposals that refer to the relationship between youth and virtual space, focusing on studies that reflect the Chilean experience of the phenomenon. The study concludes with points that address the issues raised in this introduction, proposing guidelines and projections for future research.

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

The act of inhabiting

Inhabiting involves a constant process of constructing intimate and personal space. As Heidegger (2003) states, "we inhabit not because we have built, but because we build and have built insofar as we inhabit, i.e., insofar as we are inhabitants" (p. 203). By inhabiting, subjects shape the surrounding space, while at the same time shaping themselves, which is why subjects need to inhabit spaces. In contrast, space does not need to be inhabited; it simply is there, without the need for inhabitants. This phenomenon makes the act of inhabiting something particularly human.

The world is constructed by the subjects who inhabit it, shape it, name it, and appropriate it, while defending and determining its intimacy and, above all, its identity. According to Delgadillo (2022), the relationship that subjects develop with their surroundings is conditioned by everyday experience. An example of this can be found in the experience of the neighborhood, which sustains the subjects' sense of belonging while being charged with affections and symbols that give it a particular identity. Along the same lines, Giglia (2012) establishes that the world allows itself to be discovered and named, providing individuals with the necessary foundations to create order and meaning in a space that is taking shape, while the relationship between individuals and space becomes deeper.

As will be seen, and considering the observations of Delgadillo (2022) and Giglia (2012), the act of inhabiting for young people is particularly significant, since the consolidation of their identities is generated as they appropriate their environments, humanizing and symbolically domesticating them. Through this process, these spaces become intimate places charged with emotion. Margulis (2005), in researching the behavior of young people in Buenos Aires at night, asserts that by occupying the space around them, they imbue it with elements that have a meaning exclusive to the world of youth, marking a clear distinction with those who do not belong to that youth, exiling them to the margins and expelling the rest of society from those spaces that are not their own. In this way, the act of inhabiting allows individuals to construct the contexts in which they will live (Suazo & Cárdenas, 2021). Individuals define the scenarios in which they will defend their present and project their future, these being a reflection and consolidation of an identity that is constantly evolving.

For Núñez and Benwell (2019), one of the main motivations for making a space a lived-in place lies in the consolidation of the emotional intimacy of individuals and in those immaterial and intangible processes

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

that make these spaces unique and non-transferable. The construction process reflects motivations and intentions inherent to intimacy, evoking tastes and interests at the moment of shaping, making each space bear the specific stamp of its inhabitant. An example of this can be found in the moment when a house goes from being just any space to a lived-in space. Those who have had this experience will be able to point out that the space becomes their own at the moment of decorating and arranging furniture, and then giving way to the construction of memories and emotions that are inseparable from the space. Augé (2008) argues that affections and emotions are consolidated when inhabiting a space, which consequently functions as a source and sustenance of identity characteristics, as an emotional refuge, etc. Margarit *et al.* (2022) add that these spaces can also function as a context for the development of relationships with other subjects, and can therefore promote shared affections.

According to Soto (2016), the act of inhabiting would be to give affective meaning to an occupied and appropriated space, where "utilitarian variables and functional reasons are suspended to give way to the instantaneity of the feeling of pleasure originating in a set of aesthetic attributes" (p. 18). Although initial access to spaces will always be conditioned by practicality, the act of inhabiting will render the practicality of the space irrelevant, framing the mediation with subjects in a more emotional than practical light.

De Certeau (2000) argues that subjects take the construction of spaces beyond the walls of their homes, shaping the world and themselves, traveling along paths, creating memories and emotions. Along the same lines, Le Breton (2022), highlighting the act of walking, establishes that the constant journey through the heart of spaces literally shapes paths where there were none before, paths that intertwine with each other, allowing subtle grooves to appear in the earth, establishing a particular and unique identity for the space, while they take shape as subjects, constructing themselves at the same time as they construct the paths. For De Certeau (2000), estructures emerge during the journey through the act of walking. It may be a building that was previously unknown and now becomes familiar, eventually becoming a point of reference, adding a characteristic that was not its own, modifying it and, in turn, appropriating it for the emotional creation of that city. In this exercise, a voice develops around the space being inhabited, allowing it to be structured through stories that refer to it.

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

Symbolic construction of places

Marc Augé (2008) argues that places are sources of meaning for those who inhabit them, considering their identifying, relational, and historical characteristics as distinctive features. It can be said that a space becomes a place when individuals imbue it with and condition it through various symbolic and emotional elements, consolidating the individual's identification with the place. This space, now understood as a place, becomes the framework for the flourishing of interpersonal relationships with varying degrees of importance, and serves as a foundation for the construction of a personal and intimate memory, in which the process of constructing the multiple manifestations of identity is conducted.

For De Certeau (2000), places are "fragmented and folded in histories [...]embedded in the pain or pleasure of the body" (p. 121). This definition highlights the intimate and emotional nature of the configuration of a place, as it refers to the personal and collective stories and experiences of the subjects who inhabit and shape that space transformed into a place. What characterizes places is not their original usefulness, but the affective elements that make them up. An example of this can be found in the place where one lives, what is known as home will always bring together a series of practical elements, such as protection from the environment or inclement weather. However, it is the emotional aspect, those fragmented and hidden stories, that make it a home, making practicality secondary and giving way to feelings and symbols. The first thing a person refers to when talking about their home is not necessarily the fact that it protects them from the weather, but that it is a place that holds memories and where they feel good.

It should not be forgotten that a place never ceases to be a space; it always refers to being there, as it will always behave as a context. However, a space will not always be a place, as there are spaces whose meaning is based exclusively on the utility they provide (Augé, 2008). Augé (2008) calls these spaces non-places, understanding them as spaces determined by their utility. Examples of non-places include a train station, a bus terminal, etc. Although for Giglia (2012), these could become places if inhabited by people, i.e., shaped by affections, emotions, and symbols.

According to Giglia (2012), places become inherent and inseparable from individuals, since those who inhabit them will always shape them, taking them wherever they go. An example of this is when someone moves house, taking with them furniture, appliances, and personal items, such as decorative objects or photographs. The subject imbues these ob-

Sophia 39: 2025.
© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

jects with a series of elements of identity and personality, distributing and arranging them according to their will, shaping this new space according to their motivations and interests. Inhabiting a place implies taking it everywhere, to a new home, to a new office, etc.

This aspect is particularly relevant when talking about young people, as their consolidation as autonomous individuals goes hand in hand with the establishment, appropriation, and construction of places. According to Feixa (2018), this can be observed, for example, in the construction of their intimate spaces, such as their bedrooms, where individuals express their multiple manifestations of identity. For Margulis (2005), this is established in the creation of leisure spaces, such as neighborhoods dedicated to partying and celebration with an exclusively youthful character. Along the same lines, Navarro (2019) observes this characteristic in the occupation of commercial spaces, such as shopping malls or department stores, which are re-signified and charged with symbolism by the young people who inhabit them, turning them into places with a marked youth significance. The construction of places strongly manifests the "I am" of the subjects, so for those who are fighting their identity, building and defending a place can be decisive.

An idea of youth

As mentioned above, through the act of inhabiting, individuals transform and construct spaces into places, charging them with emotions and symbols. This allows the intervened space to become a reflection of the intimate and profound "I am," making it fundamental to the development of personal identities. This idea takes on great relevance when the focus is on youth, since it is in the act of inhabiting that all those elements of identity and belonging are played out, defended, manifested, and established, turning young people into subjects who are owners of a future but, above all, belong to a present with rights and dignity.

According to Margulis and Urresti (2008), youth is characterized as a category that is articulated in terms of age, constituted in a latency of responsibilities and associated with social classes that allow the privilege of suspending the actions of adulthood. Therefore, it is assumed to be a study group belonging to a specific age range, characterized by the idea of a "social moratorium," in which individuals do not yet assume the roles and responsibilities of the adult world, which means, and taking into account what Reguillo (2013) indicates, that their perspective of the "now"

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

is conditioned by what "will be" and not by what "really is." For Benavides (2021), this idea of moratorium implies pausing the productive and social responsibilities of individuals, with the intention of taking advantage of this time to acquire the tools that will allow them to better face adult life.

Authors such as Piaget (2018) and Reguillo (2013) argue that another characteristic of youth is the state of construction and testing of identity, since, as will be discussed in more detail below, this stage sees the development and consolidation of various manifestations of identity that will have consequences on both the present and future of individuals. Canales *et al.* (2015) affirm that it is necessary to understand young people as possessors of a fragile, recently acquired autonomy that is constantly challenged and strained by the rule of an adult and hegemonic world (Oliveira, 2025).

It may seem that youth brings with it a number of advantages for facing the conditions of adult life, since this moratorium presents an opportunity for individuals' skills to mature and become more effective. However, contemporary reality suggests something different. According to Feixa (2020), this period in which individuals are not yet considered adults by the community places them in a situation of exposure and vulnerability. The suspension of responsibilities, coupled with an identity that is not yet consolidated and fragile autonomy, makes them invisible in a world that can be complex and hostile.

Construction of youth identity

For Quiroga *et al.* (2021), youth serves as a stage in the development of individuals in which they consolidate and explore various manifestations of identity, forming the basis of those elements that will be decisive during adulthood. This projection into the future is fundamental to understanding the phenomenon. However, the idea is not fall into the trap of reducing young people to a promise of future adults, but rather recognize and value their present. For Reguillo (2013), being young involves the exercise of various identity practices corresponding to a current reality loaded with cultural, aesthetic, and emotional characteristics that are unique to them.

According to Muñoz *et al.* (2020), the characteristics of youth are consolidated through interaction with other individuals, especially other young people. Reguillo (2013) indicates that in this relationship, diverse forms of being young are constructed, rather than a single youth, since, in the tension and conflict generated in interactions, individuals can take di-

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

fferent approaches to facing the reality of being young. This reality means that youth identities are constructed in relation to other individuals, a relationship that is mainly conditioned by opposition. For some researchers, the most relevant opposition is that generated with the adult world (Oliveira, 2025; Serrano, 2022; Krauskopf, 2004; Reguillo, 2013), which means that different young people share this common factor, making them part of a generational experience (Feixa, 2014).

According to Le Breton (2012), relationships with peers are fundamental in the construction of identity, but they also expose individuals to the possibility of being judged by the rest of the community. This experience of being judged by others is heightened in the age of hyperconnectivity, where a kind of omnipresent panopticon represented by social media prevails (González, 2017). This means that individuals develop their identity, taking into account the permanent exposure of information offered by the network and the constant judgments of the individuals who make up virtual communities, which, according to Han (2019), generates an "uncontrolled avalanche of passions that does not constitute any public sphere" (p. 119). An opinion or comment on a behavior can be addressed or assimilated, and eventually discussed, but when there are thousands of them, they become a swarm that is difficult to bear, let alone contain. For Han (2018), the multitude of opinions behaves like a noisy experience, making it almost impossible to rescue any degree of information, thus hindering the establishment of identity practices.

Identity development in the construction of places

By appropriating spaces, occupying them, and shaping them through symbols and affections, subjects transform them into inhabited places (Augé, 2008; Giglia, 2012). For several authors, the source of this impulse lies in the need of young subjects to shape and rehearse various manifestations of identity (Morduchowicz, 2018; Feixa, 2018; Reguillo, 2013). Youth becomes that moment in the lives of individuals when they experience all the characteristics that will define them in the future, but with an impact and relevance in the present.

According to Soto (2016), spaces reflect these identity-related circumstances, transforming them into places of belonging for young people and making them exclusive (Bayón & Saraví, 2022). This exclusivity is the starting point for tension with the environment (Bayón & Saraví, 2022; Margulis, 2005; Feixa, 2018). Although spaces are initially neutral, they are also contested, since, according to Días and De Almeida

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

(2017), individuals establish their power and autonomy in them. When a young person appropriates a space, they are occupying a place that was previously occupied, which, according to Bayón and Saraví (2022), can lead to mutual agreement on the occupation of the space or, conversely, to conflict and tension. The second option tends to be the most common and the main break with the adult world (Oliveira, 2025; Serrano, 2022).

As for Feixa (2018) and Reguillo (2017), young people need these spaces to exercise their various expressions of identity. Identity has no value if it cannot be converted into an aesthetic expression or a form of mastery; it has no meaning if it is not shared with others, which is why occupying spaces is not an option but an imperative. For Serrano (2022), individuals need a place to be, "to find references that lead them to be aware of their existence" (p. 10). The place they inhabit and construct offers them a starting point from which they can contextualize themselves, bearing in mind that the meanings and symbolism were placed there by themselves. Hence, young people are constantly looking for spaces, personal or public, to live the identity they have been developing. They will be willing to fight for this opportunity to inhabit and will spend much of their time finding and building a place that allows them to recognize themselves as part of something and help them find themselves as subjects with identity and belonging (Serrano, 2022).

There are many examples of this, some very general, but particularly interesting are the different experiences of social protest in which young people played a leading role. Three well-documented cases of meaning-making through an aesthetic that transformed space, turning it into places of resistance, but ultimately into places for young people. According to Reguillo (2017), this could be observed in the context of the mobilizations in New York and Spain during 2011, and in the context of the mobilization of occupied squares. Aguilera (2016) makes the same observation in Chile during the student mobilizations of 2006, a phenomenon popularly known as the "penguin revolution" (in Chile, school students are called "penguins" because of their uniforms). In the first two cases, public spaces were occupied, while in the third, schools were forcibly occupied. In all cases, not only political and social issues were at stake, but also the identities of those who participated in these protests. It is common to hear comments such as "I was there," followed by recognition of having participated in a milestone event that shaped one's identity.

In these cases, it is possible to say that the act of occupying and belonging becomes almost more important than the original reason for the mobilization. Darren Webb (2022) says:

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

> No! They occupied a space, they stayed, and they refused to make demands or account for themselves. Many believed that the transformed social relations of a new community, of a different way of doing things, would emerge in and through the process of rejection and the pure reclamation of a space (p. 298).

The spatial occupation in the Occupy Wall Street phenomenon became more relevant than the initial motivation. The subjects identified with the space as they constructed it as a place, giving meaning to the interactions that were generated within it. The determination of that space on Wall Street developed a sense of personal identity for those who became inhabitants of the place, which caused the original motivation to begin to fade. A similar situation is presented by Aguilera (2016) when he collects stories from young Chilean students who participated in a school takeover during the 2006 protests. The occupation of space becomes more important to the subjects than their original motivation. In this instance, roles, affections, and symbols are formed according to the relationship that the group has in the occupied space. The young people even state that the experience makes them reconfigure their relationship with their environment, as spaces appear that were not previously categorized by them, such as the school kitchen or a tunnel that served as a refuge during the dictatorship and was used at that time to hide materials for the protests (Aguilera, 2016, p. 214). This experience becomes more meaningful for young people than their initial motivation, causing the mobilization to lose momentum over time.

This relationship between young people and space will be particularly relevant at a time when the virtual world is gaining momentum, as individuals turn to these virtual spaces in search of opportunities to make their expressions of identity and freedom visible, to develop and experience them, making these spaces meaningful.

Social media and the normalization of the virtual experience

According to Navarrete *et al.* (2017), social media is a concept used to "describe internet-based platforms for interacting with people who share interests, common goals, or similar contexts with users, or who are simply known" (p. 256). For Fernández *et al.* (2014), these platforms allow individuals to "build a public or semi-public profile within a limited system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and exploit their list of connections and those made by other users

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

within the system" (p. 12). In these definitions, and considering Lupano and Castro (2019), social networks are characterized as virtual platforms that allow interaction between individuals through profiles created with the idea of displaying only what they wish to present to the other individuals with whom they interact.

Van Dijck (2016) indicates that social networks are characteristic of Web 2.0 and, although they are offered as environments where users have control over the application, Morduchowicz (2018) and Pariser (2018) argue that they respond to particular interests, which means that they are not as neutral as they appear. Pariser (2018) asserts that social media is a business with owners and shareholders, and is sustained by the use and processing of information shared by users. In this way, they can create advertising tailored to each individual, thereby generating profits and creating efficient and personalized *marketing* campaigns. For example, Meta (2025), in its terms and conditions, explains its business model, acknowledging that all information provided by the user will be used to deliver everything that may be interesting. Probably the main appeal of social media lies in its ability to generate a sense of personalized belonging, as users have the freedom to shape the profiles and spaces offered by the platform, and in turn, the application rewards them with data that it assumes may be interesting to them, being appealing the experience of the immersion achieved through interaction with the virtual world.

Social media and contemporary youth

Tools such as the National Youth Survey conducted by INJUV (2022), the Digital X-Ray Report by CRITERIA (2023), and the study conducted by Tarullo (2020) on the motivations of young people to be on social media have established that most actions carried out by young people on the internet involve access to a social network, which, according to Morduchowicz (2018), leads them to consider social media as equivalent to the internet.

Young people see social media as spaces that allow interactions without the same community commitments required by relationships in the analog world. For Bauman and Leoncini (2018), social media allows individuals to present themselves with very few limitations, building profiles in which, according to Navarro (2019), they display all the characteristics they consider noteworthy and want others to know about.

Morduchowicz (2018) considers that social media initially behave as a private space, without adults, where they can fully exercise their

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

autonomy and freedom, experiencing a power that allows them to shape their surroundings without opposition from others. This view is shared by Bauman and Leoncini (2018), who believe that young people can explore different applications and platforms, looking for those that best suit their needs, installing and uninstalling them without any commitment. They can also experiment with different identities, assuming virtually any characteristic as their own. Muñoz *et al.* (2020) argue that, in interactions on social media, young people can try out different standards of intimacy, something that is unlikely in interactions in the analog world. They can engage in actions protected by anonymity, without having to experience the tension of facing others face to face.

Morduchowicz (2018) and Pariser (2018) express the same concern about the experience with virtual space. The virtual world appears to be a free and autonomous space, attractive to young people seeking opportunities for development where they can break free from the constraints of the adult world. However, the reality is very different, as they are confronted with a virtual experience saturated with advertising and biased or false information. It cannot be ignored that social networks are private entities that thrive on advertising sales; there is no innocence on the internet, everything is mediated according to particular interests (Van Dijck, 2016; Pariser, 2018; Johnson, 2013). Pariser (2018) and Meta itself (2025) claim that these networks operate through algorithms that feed on the behavior of individuals on the web, processing information and proposing topics, news, and products that may be attractive to the user.

Young people are constantly seeking autonomy. For Bauman and Leoncini (2018), this search is transferred to the virtual world to shape a world more in line with their ideas and tastes. In this context, Morduchowicz (2018) believes that it is possible for individuals to find all the information they need to support their positions, regardless of its origin and veracity, making their point of view the only valid one, without the need to question or defend what they believe in. A social network that constantly provides information according to criteria determined by algorithms, according to Ponce (2016) and Vallejos *et al.* (2020), causes interactions on social networks to become a political and cultural ghetto, leaving aside one of the original objectives of the internet: the mainstreaming of democracy and intellectual discussion.

The permanent and immersive experience of social media means that, in the end, there is not an outside, as there is no contradiction in the statements made on the internet. On the contrary, according to Han (2019), it is in contradiction that we find the construction of the new,

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

and according to Johnson (2013), diversity generates the growth of individuals. Thus, Morduchowicz (2018) considers that for young people who are forming themselves as social subjects, who belong to a community and who are defining their autonomy and identity, this can be extremely complex.

Social networks and young people in Chile

The first thing that appears in a search for research on the relationship between young people and social networks in Chile are studies that have directly questioned the relationship between youth, the internet, social networks, and ICTs, understanding that young people have a more naturalized relationship with these technologies than previous generations, even experiencing a continuous transition between the analog and the virtual. For example, Zarzuri (2014) develops the topic by assuming the use of social media as a means of communication, Palenzuela (2018) approaches the relationship as a technological means of organization, Cabello *et al.* (2017) question the practical use of technology, and Llorens *et al.* (2021) study the use of technology in schools. In all these works, social media is interpreted from its original conception as ICT, which in principle is not a problem, but which does not take into account the way in which today's young people develop their relationship with social media.

A specific example of this appears in the research by Salazar *et al.* (2021), which aims to explore the idea of *social media addiction among Chilean high school students*, taking into account different socioeconomic levels. The researchers used an instrument designed in 2014, which understands addiction as a situation that occurs during the practical use of virtual media. The results of the exercise indicated that young people do not show worrying levels of addiction, although connection times are high, which is one of the main factors indicating the presence of an addiction. The researchers indicate that they are unclear as to the reason for this situation.

Another contradiction can be observed in a study conducted by the University of Colima (Cuevas, 2020). This study addressed the construction of relationships around the use of virtual technologies and revealed contradictions such as young people considering that social media kept them away from others, but at the same time stating that they used it to interact.

In the application of the instruments in both studies, the questions focused on the utilitarian meaning that the subjects gave to their relation-

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

ship with social media, leaving aside questions that referred to experiences, emotions, or feelings that could explain their behavior. This also appears in the research by Martínez *et al*. (2022), where social media is only understood as a means of exchanging information between followers of an artist, or in the research led by De los Reyes *et al.* (2021), where social media is understood as a tool through which violence and control can be exercised over a partner. In these cases, measurements are taken without questioning how the subjects experience the virtual experience.

A second strand of research on youth and social media delves into how young people engage in political protest and student mobilizations, presenting social media as the main means of organization used by young people during the student mobilizations that took place in Chile in 2006, 2011, and 2015. This line of research includes the work of Cabalin (2014), Ponce (2016), Pleyers (2018), and Aguilera (2016). In all of this research, social media is recognized as a relevant factor in the rise of student protests, reaching a consensus that social media is a technology used mainly by young people and that it played a primarily organizational and dissemination role. In these studies, they are understood as fundamental and foundational tools for youth organization, as they allow for interaction and information exchange with less mediation than traditional channels, in addition to being a medium that, at the time, was used almost exclusively by students.

In recent years, even before the pandemic, various studies have appeared that recognize that social media can be more than just ICT. For example, studies such as those by Gómez and Jiménez (2022) and Armijo (2024) understand the virtual as a context that can have consequences on the way youth identities are constructed, as it can influence and condition interactions between individuals. Social media is beginning to be seen as more than just a technological medium, and spatial categories are beginning to be attributed to it, which makes the way it is understood more complex. Another example of this is the research carried out by Del Prete and Rendon (2020) and Vallejos *et al.* (2020), where social media is understood as a spatial context in which interactions can be constructed, leaving behind the traditional idea that social media serves to facilitate communication and organization, and beginning to fulfill the role of a space in which citizenship can be exercised. The difference with previous research is that it understood social networks only as a means of communication or as a technology that facilitates interaction, disregarding the possibility of also influencing the construction of discourses and narratives of citizen identity.

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

The other novel way in which current research has understood social media focuses on characterizing them as a spatial context in which skills and knowledge can be developed. This is the focus of research by Valdivia (2021), who argues that Instagram behaves as a space where young people are encouraged, through interaction with others, to learn how to create content to be displayed in that virtual space. In this case, the social network is presented as a context for sharing through the creation of audiovisual content.

This new approach to understanding the virtual world is also found in research that questions discrimination. An example is Del Prete and Rendon (2022), who present social networks not as tools for sending offensive messages, but as a context in which such actions can occur, behaving in a similar way to public spaces. In this way, social media becomes one of the conditioning factors in the act of violence, as a space that lacks the innocence of the instrument. This situation is being measured year after year by government and private organizations, which equate violence that occurs in virtual contexts with violence that occurs in the analog world, placing them on an equal footing in terms of their importance and impact on the development of society (Criteria, 2023).

It is relevant that these studies consider social media as a space and context, leaving aside the traditional idea of information and communication technology. This allows to have a more comprehensive understanding of social phenomena, with an emphasis on young people, as they can be considered the first original inhabitants of virtual spaces. Despite this, the idea that social media are tools continues to be present in much research, and work is still being carried out on this premise, where the research question continues to focus on how technology is used. This can be seen in research such as that of Bello and López (2022) and Coluccio and Muñoz (2021), where social networks are understood as tools that enable the development of leadership, or research such as that of Rodríguez *et al.* (2021) and Ibáñez (2024), which seek to understand the activities that subjects engage in when using social media, reducing the experience to sharing their own or third-party content.

It is understandable that the first studies to address the relationship between young people and social media understood that they were dealing with ICT, since that was the original purpose of social media and everything related to the internet. This is not a problem in itself, especially in older studies, but it becomes problematic when it is presented as the only valid approach to questioning this phenomenon. Today, it must be considered how young people experience social media, without reducing

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

the question to the functional and utilitarian, since these new generations are developing part of their personal and social experiences in virtual spaces. It is possible that different research approaches on this topic can coexist in academia, and the way in which Chilean academia has addressed the phenomenon is a good example of this.

Conclusions

Considering the initial question of this study (how do young people relate to their social networks today?), it is possible to argue that the relationship between young people and their social networks is characterized by the distinction between ICT and virtual space. It is possible to argue that the relationship between young people and their social networks is characterized by the distinction between ICT and virtual space. While ICT is a tool with a practical, measurable meaning and whose value is considered in terms of its usefulness, a space is not reduced to its use. Although spaces may have a specific function, they can also be inhabited, which suspends their purely practical nature.

Inhabiting a space implies that individuals not only relate to it, shaping it, but also construct themselves while transforming that space. This distinction is therefore fundamental to understanding the world of young people, as it offers a perspective that has remained hidden in recent times. By shaping the spaces they occupy, young people also shape their expressions of identity, shaping their virtues, beliefs, and senses.

Considering the objective of this study, which is to present a theoretical proposal on which to base scientific research on the experience of inhabiting virtual spaces and its importance for understanding the world of young people, we propose a different view from the way academia has approached the relationship between young people and the internet and its platforms. It can be argued that this relationship is not reduced to a mere user experience, but is shaped by emotions and symbols. Therefore, the next step is to open to the possibility of using other research methodologies that allow for empirical verification of the ideas presented here. Exploring this relationship as a spatial relationship, opening to the possibility of understanding it from the concept of "inhabiting."

This paradigm shift could have significant consequences in various areas of the humanity and in initiatives aimed at young people. Considering social media as virtual spaces, with all their implications, should prompt a reconfiguration of strategies in the field of education and digital

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

literacy. This is in line with the proposals of Gozálvez and Cortijo (2023) and Simbaña *et al.* (2025): to develop training opportunities that take into account that the use of a tool is not the same as accompanying young people in an experience that, although mediated by ICT, is still loaded with emotional and symbolic elements.

Bibliography

AGUILERA, Óscar
2016 *Movidas, movilizaciones y movimientos*. Santiago: Ril.

ARMIJO, Muriel
2024 ¿Qué es aprender para ti?: los espacios virtuales en las experiencias infantiles. *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud*, *22*(2), 1-24. https://doi.org/10.11600/rlcsnj.22.2.5946

AUGÉ, Marc
2008 *Los no lugares: espacios del anonimato*. México: Gedisa.

BAUMAN, Zygmunt, & LEONCINI, Thomas
2018 *Generación Líquida. Barcelona*: Paidós.

BAYÓN, María Cristina, & SARAVÍ, Gonzalo
2022 Espacios de pertenencia juvenil en contextos de desventaja: tensiones y disputas. *Última Década* (59), 43-74. http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-22362022000200043

BELLO, Juan, & LÓPEZ, Julián
2022 Distribución del Liderazgo y Éxito Escolar: Análisis de Redes Sociales en Escuelas Chilenas. *Revista Iberoamericana sobre Calidad, Eficacia y Cambio en Educación*, 20(4), 5-29. https://doi.org/10.15366/reice2022.20.4.001

BENAVIDES, Jacqueline
2021 Moratoria social y embarazo adolescente. *El Ágora USB*, *21*(1), 225-236. https://doi.org/10.21500/16578031.4551

CABALIN, Cristián
2014 Estudiantes conectados y movilizados: El uso de Facebook en las protestas estudiantiles en Chile. *Comunicar*, 22(43), 25-33. https://doi.org/10.3916/C43-2014-02

CABELLO, Patricio, CLARO, Magdalena, LAZCANO, Daniela, ANTEZANA, Lorena, & MALDONADO, Luis
2017 Implementación de estudio de usos, oportunidades y riesgos en el uso de TIC por parte de niños, niñas y adolescentes en Chile. *Encargado por MINEDUC y UNESCO-OREALC*. Santiago: Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12365/18812

CANALES, Manuel, GHIARDO, Felipe, & OPAZO, Antonino
2015 *Para un concepto de Juventud. En P. Cottet, Juventudes: metáforas del Chile contemporáneo* (pp. 47-68). Santiago: Ril.

COLUCCIO, Giuliani, & MUÑOZ, Maritza
2021 Estudio del desempeño y liderazgo de estudiantes de ingeniería industrial usando análisis de redes sociales. *Ingeniare. Revista chilena de ingeniería*, 29(4), 735-742. http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-33052021000400735

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

CRITERIA
2023 *Informe Radiografía Digital* 2022.
CUEVAS, Julio
2020 Imaginarios sociales sobre uso de tecnología y relaciones interpersonales en jóvenes universitarios a través del cine de ficción como recurso didáctico. *Sophia, colección de Filosofía de la Educación*, 28(1), pp. 165-183. https://doi.org/10.17163/soph.n28.2020.06
DE CERTEAU, Michelle
2000 *La invención de lo cotidiano. 1 artes de hacer*. México D.F.: Universidad Iberoamericana.
DE LOS REYES, Verónica, JAUREGUIZAR, Joana, BERNARAS, Elena, & REDONDO, Iratxe
2021 Violencia de control en las redes sociales y en el móvil en jóvenes universitarios. *Aloma*, 39(1), 27-35. http://dx.doi.org/10.51698/aloma.2021.39.1.27-35
DEL PRETE, Annachiara, & REDON, Silvia
2020 Las redes sociales on-line: espacios de socialización y definición de identidad. *Psicoperspectivas*, *19*(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.5027/psicoperspectivas-vol19-issue1-fulltext-1834
2022 The Invisibility of Gender-Based Violence in the Social Network. *Géneros*, 11(2), 124-143.
DELGADILLO, Víctor
2022 (Comprender las formas de) Habitar las ciudades: Ángela Giglia 1961-2021. *Quid*, 16(17), 214-224. https://doi.org/10.4000/cal.13055
DÍAS, Beatriz, & DE ALMEIDA, Eneida
2017 Procesos de significación en los modos de resistencia urbana. En P. Montealegre, & V. Rozas-Krause, *Disputar la ciudad* (págs. 87-103). Talca: Bifurcaciones.
FEIXA, Carles
2014 *De la Generación@ a la #Generación*. Barcelona: Ned.
2018 *La imaginación autobiográfica. Las historias de vida como herramienta de investigación*. Barcelona: Gedisa.
2020 Juventud y Crisis: el concepto de crisis en las teorías sobre la juventud. *Revista Española de Sociología*, 29(3), 11-26.
FERNÁNDEZ, Cristóbal, GARCÍA, María del Carmen, & DEL HOYO, Mercedes
2014 Las redes sociales en la cultura digital: percepción, participación, movilización. *Revista de la asociación española de investigación de la comunicación*, 1(1), 12-18. https://doi.org/10.24137/raeic.1.1.3
GIGLIA, Ángela
2012 *El habitar y la cultura*. Madrid: Anthropos.
GÓMEZ, Verónica, & JIMÉNEZ, Andrés
2022 Identidad en la era digital: construcción de perfiles en redes sociales en adolescentes chilenos/as. *Convergencia*, 29. https://doi.org/10.29101/crcs.v29i0.17430
GONZÁLEZ, Jorge
2017 El ocaso de la privacidad en las redes sociales. En A. Constante, & R. Chaverry, *Redes sociales, virtualidad y subjetividades* (págs. 139-155). Ciudad de México: Ediciones Monosílabo.
GOZÁLVEZ, Vicent, & CORTIJO, Gemma
2023 Desarrollo humano y redes sociales en sociedades digitales. *Sophia, Colección de Filosofía de la Educación*, (34), 41-64. https://doi.org/10.17163/soph.n34.2023.01

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

HAN, Byung-Chul
2018 *En el enjambre*. Barcelona: Herder.
2019 *La expulsión de lo distinto*. Barcelona: Herder.
HEIDEGGER, Martin
2003 *Filosofía, ciencia y técnica*. Santiago: Universitaria.
IBÁÑEZ, Rosa
2024 Mediación de aprendizajes en espacios virtuales de primera infancia. *Autoctonía. Revista de Ciencias Sociales e Historia*, 7(1), pp. 565-594. http://dx.doi.org/10.23854/autoc.v8i1.357
INJUV
2022 *10ª encuesta nacional de juventud*. Chile: Ministerio de desarrollo social.
JOHNSON, Steven
2013 *Futuro Perfecto*. Madrid: Turner.
KRAUSKOPF, Dina
2004 Comprensión de la juventud. El ocaso del concepto de moratoria psicosocial. *Revista de Estudios sobre Juventud*, 8(21), 26-39.

LE BRETON, David
2012 *La edad solitaria*. Santiago: Lom.
2022 *Caminar la vida*. Madrid: Siruela.
LLORENS, Andrea, ALARCÓN, Jimena, & BRAÑES, Javiera
2021 Alfabetización digital y Tic en la educación secundaria en Chile: Diagnóstico en tiempos de pandemia. *Interciencia*, 46(4), 148-155.
LUPANO, María Laura, & CASTRO, Alejandro
2019 Características psicológicas diferenciales entre usuarios de redes sociales de alta exposición vs no usuarios. *Acta Psiquiátrica y Psicológica de América Latina*, 1(65), 5-16.
MARGARIT, Daisy, MORAGA, Jorge, ROESSLER, Pablo, & ÁLVAREZ, Imara
2022 Habitar migrante en el Gran Santiago: vivienda, redes y hacinamiento. *INVI*, 37(104), 253-275.
MARGULIS, Mario
2005 *La cultura de la noche: la vida nocturna de los jóvenes en Buenos Aires*. Buenos Aires: Biblos.
MARGULIS, Mario, & URRESTI, Marcelo
2008 La Juventud es más que una palabra. *En M. Margulis, La Juventud es más que una palabra* (págs. 13-30). Buenos Aires: Biblos.
MARTÍNEZ, María, MARTÍN, Lara, & NICOLÁS, Rubén
2022 Censura y Redes Sociales. El caso de Zahara. *Revista Internacional de Cultura Visual*. http://dx.doi.org/10.37467/revvisual.v9.3554
META
2025 Centro de privacidad Meta. 23 de abril. Obtenido de Política de privacidad: https://privacycenter.instagram.com/policy/?entry_point=ig_help_center_data_policy_redirect
MORDUCHOWICZ, Roxana
2018 *Ruidos en la web*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones B.
MUÑOZ, José, TORRIJOS, Patricia, SERRATE, Sara, & MURCIANO, Alicia
2020 Entornos digitales, conectividad y educación. Percepción y gestión del tiempo en la construcción de la identidad digital de la juventud. *Revista española de pedagogía*, 78(277), 457-475. https://doi.org/10.22550/REP78-3-2020-07

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

NAVARRETE, David, CASTEL, Sara, ROMANOS, Beatriz, & BRUNA, Ignacio
2017 Influencia negativa de las redes sociales en la salud de adolescentes y adultos jóvenes. *Psicología y Salud*, 27(2), 255-267.
NAVARRO, Fernando
2019 *ATR. Adolescentes a todo ritmo. Drogas y alcohol en las clases medias altas*. Buenos Aires: Marea.
NÚÑEZ, Andrés, & BENWELL, Matthew
2019 Comprendiendo el espacio desde otras escalas: la geografía del habitar como geo-grafía y geo-política cotidiana. *Revista Austral de Ciencias Sociales* (37), 161-166. https://doi.org/10.4206/rev.austral.cienc.soc.2019.n37-09
OLIVEIRA, Assis da Costa
2025 Colonialidad del poder centrado en los adultos y/o los derechos de los niños y los jóvenes. *Andamios*, 22(57), 241-274. https://doi.org/10.29092/uacm.v22i57.1151
PALENZUELA, Yadira
2018 Imaginarios sociales de jóvenes universitarios sobre su participación ciudadana en redes sociales virtuales. En C. Duarte, & C. Álvarez, *Juventudes en Chile* (págs. 178-195). Santiago: Facultad de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad de Chile.
PARISER, Eli
2018 *El filtro burbuja*. Santiago: Taurus.
PIAGET, Jean
2018 *Seis estudios de psicología*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI.
PLEYERS, Geoffrey
2018 Movimientos sociales en el siglo XXI. Buenos Aires: CLACSO.
PONCE, Camila
2016 Twitter como plaza pública en el debate sobre educación. *Inclusiones*, 3(4), 43-58.
QUINTANA, Laura, & HERMIDA, Julia
2019 La hermenéutica como método de interpretación de textos en la investigación psicoanalítica. *Perspectivas en Psicología: Revista de Psicología y Ciencias Afines*, 16(2) 73-80. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3593031
QUIROGA, Flor, CAPELLA, Claudia, SEPÚLVEDA, Gabriela, CONCA, Barbara, & MIRANDA, Jenniffer
2021 Identidad personal en niños y adolescentes: estudio cualitativo. *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud*, 19(2), 320-344. https://doi.org/10.11600/rlcsnj.19.2.4448
REGUILLO, Rossana
2013 *Culturas Juveniles*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI.
2017 *Paisajes Insurrectos*. Barcelona: NED.
RODRÍGUEZ, José, MARTÍNEZ, Francesc, RUBIO, María José, & GALVÁN, Cristina
2021 The content posting practices of young people on social networks. Pixel-Bit. *Revista de Medios y Educación* (60), 135-151. https://doi.org/10.12795/pixelbit.74205
SALAZAR, Cristian, BARROS, Darío, & QUINN, Joseph
2021 Comportamiento en el uso de Redes Sociales en estudiantes de enseñanza media: Los casos de un colegio particular y uno público en Chile. *Revista Ibérica de Sistemas e Tecnologías de Información*, 42(2), 506-519.

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

SERRANO, María Laura
2022 Vivir enclavados. Implicaciones del espacio habitado en la experiencia de juventud. *Regions & Cohesion*, 12(3), 1-20. https://doi.org/10.3167/reco.2022.120302

SIMBAÑA, Verónica, JARAMILLO, Lilian, & VINUEZA, Santiago
2025 El desafío de la escritura académica utilizando herramientas virtuales. *Sophia, Colección de Filosofía de la Educación*, (38), pp. 323-344. https://doi.org/10.17163/soph.n38.2025.10

SOTO, Marita
2016 Conversaciones sobre el habitar. *En M. Soto, Habitar y narrar* (págs. 13-30). Buenos Aires: Eudeba.

SUAZO, Víctor, & CÁRDENAS, Andrea
2021 Modos de habitar periurbano en Santiago de Chile: megaproyectos residenciales cerrados y transformaciones en la vida cotidiana. *Revista de Urbanismo* (45), 87-107. https://doi.org/10.5354/0717-5051.2021.61157

TARULLO, Raquel
2020 ¿Por qué los jóvenes están en las redes sociales? Un análisis de sus motivaciones a partir de la teoría de usos y gratificaciones. *Prisma Social* (29), 222-239. https://revistaprismasocial.es/article/view/3558

VALDIVIA, Andrea
2021 Aprendizaje en las redes sociales: literacidades vernaculares y académicas en la producción digital de jóvenes escolares. *Pensamiento Educativo*, 58(2), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.7764/PEL.58.2.2021.8

VALLEJOS, Natalia, RENDON, Silvia, & ANGULO, Félix
2020 ¿Son las redes sociales virtuales un espacio de ciudadanía? *Psychology, Society & Education*, 12(1), 31-42. https://doi.org/10.25115/psye.v0i0.2466

VAN DIJCK, José
2016 *La cultura de la conectividad*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI.

WEBB, Darren
2022 Ah Bartleby! Study, learning, and pedagogy in Occupy Wall Street. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, *45*(3), 285–309. https://doi.org/10.1080/10714413.2022.2079967

ZARZURI, Raúl
2014 *Medios, comunicación y Jóvenes. Una aproximación de la relación de los y las jóvenes con los medios y la comunicación en Chile*. Centro de Estudios Socioculturales.

Declaration of Authorship - CRediT Taxonomy	
Author	**Contributions**
José Rolando Alegría-Morán	As this is a single-author work, the entire contribution is attributable to the author. The content presented in the article is the sole responsibility of the author.

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.

Declaration on the use of artificial intelligence
José Rolando Alegría-Morán, **DECLARES** that the article entitled "The relationship between young people and social media in virtual spaces" was not created with the support of artificial intelligence (AI).

Date of receipt: December11, 2024
Revision date: February20, 2025
Approval date: April 25, 2025
Publication date: July15, 2025

© Universidad Politécnica Salesiana del Ecuador
Print ISSN:1390-3861 / Electronic ISSN: 1390-8626, pp. 245-267.