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'CSS / PMS Essay 148'.

"Social Media and Identity Crisis" Outline

1. Introduction

Thesis statement: Sudden deep infiltration of social media has created a severe identity crisis. The influence of online abstract world hampers the creation of a strong concrete identity. So a robust concentrated global and individual effort is required to alleviate the negative impacts of social media on identity formation.

2. Social media threat to identity

3. How social media is creating identity crisis

a) Westernization of global online social media culture

b) 5th generational cultural war of identity

c) Scanned and fabricated version of social media life

d) Moral identity online conflict

e) Modern marketing tactics

f) Sudden exposure of young minds.

g) Abstract nature of online identity

4. Negative affects of identity crisis created by social media

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- a) Cultural global south and global north
- b) Xenocentrism and brain drain
- c) Unipolar online cultural world order.
- d) Endangered indigenous native identities
- e) Mental Health issues
- f) Lack of focus and decreased attention span.

5. How this identity crisis can be overcome

- a) World governing body to regulate social online sphere
- b) Culturally inclusive and safe online world
- c) Strengthening of local identities
- d) Need for Psychological

intervention

6. Conclusion

"Social Media is not real life" was the name given to the instagram account by the famous Australian influencer Essena O'Neill. At that time she had 6M followers on instagram. She publicly quit her account in 2015. The constant impulse drive for likes and shares had ~~fr~~ thrown her into a severe identity crisis. Her personality and identity were no longer her own but were driven by external influences and urges. This is not only her case. The rise

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of social media has created identity crisis on every level and for everyone.

The dominance of western identity norms exclusively as a part of 5th generation identity war is playing a part in this crisis. Mostly

social media life is based upon fabricated fake life versions. This creates a deep moral identity crisis.

Modern marketing tactics further exploit this situation to gain financial

benefits. A great number of those affected are young people. It is difficult for their untrained minds to grasp the abstract online world of social media.

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Social media induced identity crisis has led to the formation of online global North and South. The formation of a xensentric unipolar online identity order has further caused brain drain of young minds. This has endangered the survival of native identities and has also created a great number of mental issues. This all can be addressed by the creation of global world body, to ensure a positive and inclusive online sphere. Sudden deep infiltration of social media has created a severe identity crisis. The influence of online abstract world hampers the creation of a strong concrete identity. So a robust

concentrated individual and global effort is required to alleviate the negative impacts of social media on identity formation.

Social media holds a great deal of influence upon the minds of the people. It is cheap to use and also easily accessible. Currently there are 5.31 billion active social media users i.e almost 64.7% of global population (Data Report, Global Digital Insights, April 2025). Such vast exposure has challenged the identity of people. The sudden exposure to vast and diverse world of information has created confused personalities.

Contrary and opposing thought processes compulsively engage the mind of the modern man. People are unable to hold on to any one identity. Their opinions about self realization are constantly being challenged and altered by ever changing dynamics of the volatile online world. Hence a deep phenomenon of identity crisis in the modern ^{mind} has taken place.

The sphere of the social media is indeed a picture of virality about western identity. Most of the content like posts, reels, blogs and memes etc are based upon western

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concepts of identity. Major platforms of social media like facebook, instagram, X and snapchat etc are owned by western countries like USA. The dominance of single western identity over platforms consumed by nations all over the world has created a deep identity crisis among the people of other nations. The social media global trends are hence not inclusive but ^{are} exclusively based on a single western identity. Most of the users of social media are non-western i.e East Asia 1247 million, South Asia 962 million, Southeast Asia

527 million (Global Data & Statistics, Social media users 2025). So the prevalence of a single dominant identity over a platform used by multiple people has created a severe global identity crisis.

This dominance has created a 5th generation war based on identity. Several different identities are constantly struggling to create a space for themselves in the online sphere. The deeping struggle and friction of this kind has further aggravated the identity crisis among the people. In order to dominate the online sphere

people continuously mould and alter their identities. They are stuck in a never ending perpetual loop of finding the perfect identity. So instead of creating strong concrete identities and self image, people hang out to fake fluid identities. Such identities are temporary and create confused personalities. Hence the struggle for who has the best image on the online sphere has created a weak sense of self realization. This has indeed worsened the state of identity that people possess.

The online life of social media itself is a fabricated and scanned version of a person's identity. The online identities mostly adopted by users are not true reflection of their nature. Filtered versions of life based on current trends are often presented to earn likes and shares. This purposeless activity hampers the development of a true identity. As a person constantly jumps and moves from one version of identity to another version, he slowly loses his true self. No concrete concept about self identity takes hold in such a volatile

environment. "We are on Twitter with one side of our personality, and Facebook with another, and LinkedIn with another side of our personality and we are toggling between them. That's just a version of what an impostor does: shifting from one side of their personality to another with lightning speed" (Walter Kirn, American Novelist). Therefore the fake nature of online presence has greatly marred the true identities of users.

In addition to all of the above the sphere of the social media has also greatly

affected the moral identities of people. The vast multi-cultural audience perceive online posts from their own prism of morality. This has created confusion and misunderstandings on many of the occasions. Justin Seacco a PR executive had a low twitter following. She before boarding to Africa Tweeted a funny satire for her friends and fellow worker: "Going to Africa, Hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white!" The tweet went viral. The hashtag #HaveYouLanded Yet went viral. She lost her job. She believed that it was a satirical comment forgetting privilege, but the

mass audience of social media perceived it wrongly as outright racism. Hence the confusion about moral identity perception prevailed due to vague and fluid nature of the online sphere.

Not only morally but social media also leads to a certain type of fiscal identity crisis. Utilitarian identity is imposed upon the consumers. People don't purchase what they need. Instead they are pushed into the obsessive and compulsive consumerism. Online target advertisements are mainly used by big business companies for this very purpose. Social

media advertising is projected to reach \$276.7 billion in 2025, with 83% of that on mobile platforms" (Sprout Blog, Must know social Media Marketing Statistics for 2025, February 20 2025). As a result due to such vast advertising targeting the financial aspect of identity has also been affected.

All of the aspects of identity crisis discussed above are mainly faced by young people. The majority of the users are young. The adolescent mind is still in the phase of development. It has not yet reached the stage of critical and logical maturity. As a result it is

difficult for that mind to properly filter and analyze the vast information thrust upon by the social media online sphere. "Nearly all teens 96% report daily internet use and nearly half state that they are online almost constantly" (Teens, Social Media & Technology, Pew Report, December 2024). Most of these vast majority of teens report having multiple personalities. A different personality for a different platform. Therefore the young developing mind has been affected the most by identity crisis, being the major user of social media

The prominent reason that social media leads to all of the aforementioned identity crisis is because it is abstract in nature. The online sphere is so volatile that logical grasp and critical understanding of its information is nearly impossible. In physical and practical life the identity is formed by real life experiences. Real life actions and reactions lead to brain growth. On the otherhand human brain cannot properly grasp and understand the non-physical abstract world of social media. Accordingly it can be said that the pursuit

of trying to create a concrete identity through social media is like trying to catch a black cat in a black room.

Social media has entered a new era of digital and algorithm colonialism. The western dominated online sphere has pushed the identity crisis of the global south into further decay. The digital literacy rate of global south is far below as compared to global north. Global North's digital literacy is >80% whereas that of global south is <40% (UNESCO Institute of Statistics Study 2022).

Such deep digital divide has created a severe identity crisis in global south. The cultural and social imperialism of global north in the online sphere of social media has literally imported the physical north and south and has created a online global north and south. This has facilitated further exploitation of global south not only financially but also socially, culturally and identity wise.

This deepening divide between the online global north and global south has increased the pace of brain drain. Mesmerized by the

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digital world of the west, most people have developed xenocentric identities. They prefer to leave their native countries in search of better economic and educational opportunities, promised by the online global north. The drain of human resource and intellect has further pushed the nondeveloped countries of the south into a never ending cycle of identity crisis. The media coverage of emphasizing the benefits of working abroad has been linked to increased emmigration of skilled workers in Albania.

EJ. Social Media influence on Brain drain perception,

Bolivia Gijerazi, Feb 2024).

Resultantly the influence of social media has led to severe brain drain, facilitated by identity crisis induced in local people.

The online global divide and brain drain are major symptoms of the process of creation of a unipolar cultural and identity world order. The dynamics of identity play a crucial role in online social media power-politics. This identity crisis has been mainly induced to be used as a soft power tool. The global dominant states are constantly using the online sphere to superimpose their own

version of identity over the rest of the people. They know that in the modern era of sophisticated weapons and mutually assured destruction, conventional armies are of little use. Influencing the hearts and minds of people is what matters the most. Social media platforms act as battle grounds to conduct psychological operations, spread disinformation and influence public opinion (Role of social media in 5th generation warfare, Federal law journal of Pakistan, Spring 2023). Therefore the identity crisis imposed by social online platforms

has facilitated the creation of unipolar online world.

Such a unipolar online world will surely endanger the indigenous native identities. Constantly increasing influence of online dominant foreign identities and the resulting xenocentric brain drain will lessen the influence of native identities on their own public. As more and more people discard their indigenous beliefs, the native identities will be pushed into extinction. Social media algorithms and content moderation policies often reflect western norms,

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leading to the censorship of indigenous cultural expressions (Leigh Meardon, Facebook censorship of Aboriginal bodies - The Guardian, March 2018).

As a consequence of the creation of prevalent unipolar online world; the native local identities have been pushed into crisis.

The severe prevalence of identity crisis has led to mental health issues among the affected people. Most of the consumers are pushed into a never ending loop of inferiority complex; especially when they are exposed to scanned and

fabricated online identities. The pursuit of a perfect identity induces mental issues like depression, anxiety and psychosis.

Online comparisons of their own local identity with that of a superficially created perfect exotic identity, continuously perplexes their mind. Content moderators exposed to extreme and disturbing content report severe mental health issues including depression, anxiety and PTSD (Rachel and Hall, Meta faces Ghana law suits - The Guardian, April 2025). Hence the online platforms induced identity crisis has created

severe mental Health issues.

Such mental health issues have created a lack of focus. This decreased attention span can also be attributed to ways in which online content is designed. Reels and short videos posted on most of the platforms are based on inducing short abrupt dopamine surges. People get used to short attention spans and are unable to develop strong concrete logical opinions about anything. Social Media addiction had a significant negative association with executive functioning but

positive association with emotional disturbance (Kuo Zhang, Effect of social media addiction on executive functioning among young adults, 2023). Since the attention span has been greatly minimized therefore people are in a constant loop of identity crisis as their thought process is feeble and volatile

The prevalent identity crisis and its negative impacts can be avoided by creation of a proper check and balance system. This will lead to filtration of such materials that are specifically designed to induce identity crisis

in the consumers. It will make the online sphere a safe place for all. All the nations should be made equal stakeholders so that it is a inclusive collaborative body. Sir Tim Berners the inventor of world wide web has encouraged legislation and Regulation of the social media platforms (Mark Sellman, social media is harming the young - The Times UK, March 2025). Hence the oversight and regulation by a competent and dedicated global body can eliminate the phenomenon of identity crisis induced by social

media platforms.

The online world should be designed in such a manner that it represents inclusivity. People from across the globe should be provided equal digital space to express their own identities. They should be allowed to represent and propagate their culture and thoughts. Digital Barriers and firewalls have to be shunned in the online sphere. The Interaction design foundation has defined digital inclusion as the access and use of information and communication technologies by all people.

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regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, mobility, physical and cognitive abilities, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Thereby by creating a accessible and favourable online sphere the identity crisis among many can be avoided.

In addition to all of the above efforts, the local communities themselves can also play a role in alleviating the identity crisis by taking robust actions. Native people should more actively engage themselves with their identities. They should

take concrete steps towards preservation and survival of their indigenous cultures. The #IndigenousPeoplesDay campaign and the indigenous TikTok movement are a positive step in this regard. Similarly, #OurStories campaign was a youth led initiative in Canada. It encouraged their indigenous young people to share their cultural practices, personal stories, and experiences. As a result of all such efforts to strengthen the roots of indigenous identity among locals, the ensued identity crisis can be treated effectively.

Psychological intervention is also needed to decrease the number of mental health issues arising from identity crisis induced by social media platforms. Anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder and lack of focus are some of the prime examples that require psychological intervention. A good mental health is the key in avoiding identity crisis. A strong mind is difficult to manipulate and influence. People with healthy minds are more efficient in navigating the social media platforms. Accordingly a good psychological intervention would equip with strong thought

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process. It would help them avoid the trap of identity crisis while navigating the digital sphere of social media platforms.

Conclusively it can be stated that albeit the increasing influence of social media platforms have caused deep identity crisis through western dominated online spheres, scanned fabricated version of reality, morally conflicted confused ideas and utilitarian driven algorithms; but still all is not lost yet. With a robust and concerted effort the uniqueness of online world leading to xenocentric

mentalities and endangering of local identities can be reversed. Strengthening of identities among people is of prime importance. This can be achieved by proper regulation of online spaces. Which will ensure an inclusive and safe online world. As a result people's identity will be secured and their process of self realization will be strengthened. Ray T Bennett has described this in a splendid way, "Strong people have a strong sense of self worth and self awareness; they don't need the approval of others"