

PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS, SOCIAL COMPARISON, AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN ADOLESCENTS FOLLOWING FAMILY VLOGGERS

Hafiza Zainab Amir^{*1}, Dr Humaira Naz²^{*1}Centre for Clinical Psychology (CCP), University of the Punjab, Lahore²Assistant Professor, Centre for Clinical Psychology (CCP), University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan^{*1}zainabamir0317@gmail.com, ²humaira.ccp@pu.edu.pkDOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17548148>**Keywords**

parasocial relationships, social comparison, identity development, adolescents, family vloggers, Pakistan

Article History

Received: 15 September 2025

Accepted: 25 October 2025

Published: 07 November 2025

Copyright @Author

Corresponding Author: *

Hafiza Zainab Amir

Abstract

The study explored the influence of parasocial relationships and social comparison on identity development among adolescents who follow family vloggers in Pakistan. It was hypothesized that parasocial relationships and social comparison would positively predict the diffuse, unhealthy development of identity, and that social comparison would mediate the relationship between parasocial relationships and identity development. The sample included 150 adolescents aged 12–18 years ($M=14.45$; $SD=1.62$) recruited through purposive sampling from academic institutions. A correlational research design was employed. Data were collected using three standardized tools: the Parasocial Relationships in Social Media Scale (PRISM), the Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM), and the Assessment of Identity Development in Adolescence–Short (AIDA-S). Statistical analyses included reliability analysis, Pearson correlation, and mediation analysis. Results revealed significant positive correlations between parasocial relationships and (diffused) identity development, particularly identity incoherence. Social comparison of opinions and identification with family vloggers predicted identity discontinuity, while social comparison of abilities and interests in the lives of family vloggers predicted identity incoherence. Mediation analysis further showed that the comparison of ability significantly mediated the relationship between the subscales (knowledge about family vloggers and interaction with the family vloggers) of parasocial relationships with vloggers and identity development.

INTRODUCTION

The study aimed to explore how adolescents form parasocial relationships, specifically with family vloggers, and the role of social comparison in the development of identity in adolescents. In the current days, family vlogging is the most widespread form of content in Pakistan. The emergence of family vlogging is more about creating connections with others than just entertainment. Quite a number of Pakistani

audience are familiarized as they watch these vlogs. (Noureen, 2024)

Family vlogging means recording and uploading everyday life and experiences to such platforms as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, focusing on family content, entertainment, travel, cooking, educational, and lifestyle content. Most family vloggers can form an emotional connection with many of their fans, which makes vlogging their major occupation (Mehsud, 2025). The broadcast

yourself ideology that YouTube advances has promoted the rise of YouTubers; they are video bloggers who post frequently on their personalized YouTube pages. (De Bérail & Bungener, 2022).

Many family vloggers in Pakistan are substantially popular, such as Sistology, Rajab Vlogs, Ducky Bhai, Maaz Safder World, etc. Although their relatable and entertaining content fosters attachment, critics raise concerns about privacy, exploitation of children, and oversharing (Nizami, 2025). There are hazards beyond emotional impact as well, as cybercrimes, stalking, and child predation come into the picture when the routines and places where one needs to go every day are publicly available. To fight against this negative tendency, it is necessary to promote ethical and responsible vlogging practices among the content creators by emphasizing educational talks, respecting family privacy, sharing on their platforms charity, social awareness, and Islamic values (Waseem, 2025).

Adolescence, defined by Erikson (1968) as the stage of identity versus role confusion, is the exploration of self-concept and identity. Marica (1966) expanded the theory and described four statuses of identity formation in adolescents as diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and achievement. According to (Branje et al., 2021), coherent identity is the major developmental event for the adolescents. This phase relies on life events, changing experiences, combining the past, present, and the future to form coherent identity. During this most critical period, they will all experience the natural urge to form social connections, a desire for novelty, and a need for role models. That's why one of the reasons of actively follow influencers and celebrities is adolescents (Tolbert & Drogos, 2019).

Adolescents compare themselves with curated and idealized lives of vloggers, which results in the experience of insecurity, low self-esteem, and anxiety (De Bérail & Bungener, 2022). Teenagers who have an unstable sense of identity are experiencing a wide variety of mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, and loneliness (Ragelienė, 2016). This inner struggle may lead to identity regression, and they are subjected to high

psychological pressure as they keep on balancing authenticity and social pressure (Chao, 2022)

A parasocial relationship occurs when a viewer forms a lasting, one-sided connection with a media performer, such as an online celebrity, who cannot reciprocate the affection (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Social Cognitive theory explains that adolescents form parasocial relationships with the family vloggers through observational learning and models (Bandura, 1986). The four constructs which make the relationship comprise parasocial relationships are the interest of life of the media persons, the identification of media persons, the interaction with the media persons, and the knowledge of media persons (Boyd et al., 2022). Although this enhanced accessibility may form a feeling of intimacy, it may also result in improper connections (Haupt & Johnson, 2023). Adolescents tend to compare themselves with idealized vloggers, which often results in dissatisfaction, self-doubt, and low self-esteem (Baumann, 2022; Murray, 2024).

The uses and gratification theory explained the motive behind the use of social media and expectations of gratification received from social media. They identified psychological needs, such as cognitive needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, and tension release needs as gratification needs (Blumler & Katz, 1974). The choice of social media is likely to be determined by audience choice and media influence (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

Media use is strongly linked with social comparison. Adolescents are often involved in social comparison- it is a system of comparing oneself with others in terms of their abilities or opinions. Comparison of abilities means the assessment of one's achievements, capability, or results as compared to others. The comparison of thoughts, beliefs, or judgments to what other people think is a comparison of opinion (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999). Parasocial relationships trigger social comparisons among people, which may cause inadequacy or low self-esteem. (Hoffner & Bond, 2022). It implies that the emotional attachment to media personalities makes this channel where self-evaluation becomes more negative and judgmental, eventually influencing

the self-perception of a person (Garcia et al., 2022). The constant comparison and identification with media personalities distort the identity and stability of adolescents, leading to identity confusion and distress (Staff, 2025). Identity can be defined as the coherent and persistent sense of a self, interpersonally and how one relates to others interpersonally, that offers continuity over time and contexts. Identity can result in two different but interconnected ways: discontinuity and incoherence. Discontinuity is the absence of respect for emotions and time in owning the self, concerning the person experiencing a lack of fixed goals, role, and stability. Incoherence, on the contrary, is a confusion of minds, a conflict between self-images (Aqeel, 2020). Overexposure to family vlogs about filtered ways of living may cause adolescents to internalize an unreasonable ideal, leading to incoherent or diffused identities (Agarwal, 2024). The same causes conflict between identities formed by media and cultural or religious values in Pakistan, and young people are confused about the authenticity (Rehman et al., 2024). The recent research conducted by Ghafar et al. (2025) investigated the impact that YouTube family vlogs had on the lifestyle perceptions and cultural values of Pakistani youth and found out that regular viewing affects their perceptions. The paper has emphasized the effect of family vloggers on the behavior of young audiences and social comparisons.

Theoretical Explanation

The social comparison theory, Uses and Gratifications Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory informed the current study as they combine to explain how the use of family vloggers helps the adolescents to develop identity. Based on the Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), teenagers compare themselves with vloggers in terms of abilities and lifestyles and, as a result, often feel inadequate. According to Uses and Gratifications Theory (Blumler and Katz, 1974) adolescents develop parasocial relationships in order to fulfill emotional and social needs like belonging and entertainment. The Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) also adds that

adolescents also internalize the behavior, attitudes, and values of the vloggers through observation and imitation.

Literature Review

Studies on family vlogging emphasize that it is becoming more powerful in defining societal values and juvenile conduct. Vloggers in Pakistan attract a huge following as they use family-oriented material that encapsulates everyday life, amusement, and societal expectations. Research describes that such material affects viewers and their lifestyle expectations, cultural understanding, and social dynamics (Kanwal and Naeem, 2023; Safdar and Abbasi, 2024). Family vloggers such as Ducky Bhai, Maaz Safder, and Sistrology are successful because they produce content that seems to be relatable, funny, and emotionally appealing. Nevertheless, the fact that they always depict ideal family life brings up the issue of cultural authenticity and moral limits (Abbas et al., 2024; Ilyas, 2021).

As observed in the research on parasocial relationships, regular interaction with media influencers creates emotional bonds similar to a real relationship. These relationships become stronger as more interaction occurs, the person is perceived to be similar, and admires the influencer (Reynolds, 2022). These one-sided attachments are particularly vulnerable to adolescents, who are in their developmental phase and subject to forming their values, behavior, and identity (Bond et al., 2024; Wayne, 2023). Overexposure is also likely to increase anxiety, loneliness, and reliance on online validation.

Research also indicates that parasocial relationships impact on the social actions and self-esteem of adolescents. High parasocial relationships are also associated with increased social anxiety and a desire to use the Internet rather than face-to-face communication (Wayne, 2023). Even though parasocial relationships may offer companionship and role models, they also give a distorted self-image by promoting unrealistic ideals and lifestyles (Hoffner and Bond, 2022; Oxley, 2010).

The exposure to social media also increases the level of social comparison, as people compare

themselves with influencers. Upward comparisons, comparing other people to be better or more successful usually decrease self-esteem and satisfaction (Chae, 2017). Studies have shown that when adolescents compare themselves with influencers often, they feel envy, dissatisfaction with their bodies, and lack of confidence (Anwar and Tasawar, 2024). On the same note, Ruther et al. (2023) concluded that viewing idealized images of influencers leads to more comparison and lower self-esteem.

Delmee (2021) notes that the lower comparison of abilities is connected with greater self-commitment and identity clarity, whereas high comparison leads to self-doubt. Yang (2021) and Yang et al. (2018) found that frequent comparison in social media correlates with rumination, normative pressure, and identity distress. The teenagers who depend so much on external validation tend to have diffuse or incoherent identities, and they find it difficult to establish fixed values and goals. The mediating effect of the social comparison between parasocial relationships and self-perception is always supported in the literature. Garcia et al. (2022) discovered that high levels of parasocial commitment enhance the preference for self-comparisons with idealized figures, which indirectly reduces self-esteem. Burnell et al. (2024) noted that these comparisons are dangerous to identity formation because they strengthen unrealistic expectations and reliance on external validation. According to Mula-Marquez et al. (2024), the identification with fictional or media characters can provide a temporary fulfillment of the attachment needs but also can confuse the personal identity and the imagined one.

In a similar way, as Tian et al. (2023) point out, Generation Z consumers who connect with influencers tend to follow their values, behaviors, and consumer habits as a way of expressing themselves. Although such identification might provide temporary guidance, it can easily substitute the real identity development with a fake one. In the Pakistani environment, the exposure of adolescents to vloggers whose materialism and Westernization ideals are propagated may be in contrast to the cultural and

religious values of adolescents. According to Rehman et al. (2024), these contradictions can confuse the traditional family norms with the online descriptions of success and happiness. In the teens whose self-image has not yet been fully established, this difference may cause even greater internal conflict and mental discomfort.

Hypotheses of the Study

H1: There will be a positive relationship between parasocial relationships, and diffuse identity development in adolescents

- There will be a positive relationship between parasocial relationship and discontinuous form of identity development.
- There will be a positive relationship between parasocial relationship and incoherent form identity development.

H2: There will be a positive relationship between social comparison and diffuse identity.

- There will be a positive relationship between the social comparison (ability and opinion) and discontinuous form of identity development.
- There will be a positive relationship between the social comparison (ability and opinion) and incoherent form of identity development.

H3: Social comparison (ability and opinion) will mediate between parasocial relationships and diffuse identity

Method

A correlational research method was used in this study. The purposive sampling was used to select adolescents with a high frequency of watching family vlogs, which is in accordance with the focus of the study. Academic institutions were used to approach the participants. G * power was used to determine the sample size. The inclusion criteria were adolescents aged between 12-18 years who regularly watched family vlogs and were waiting to watch new ones. Individuals who were poorly exposed or mentally ill were not included.

Table 2.1
Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Male	67	44.7
Female	83	55.3
Family System		
Joint	78	52
Nuclear	72	48
Socioeconomic Status		
Upper	15	10
Middle	122	81.3
Lower	13	8.7
Frequency		
Every Day	99	66
Several Times a Week	45	30
Once a Week	6	4
Time Duration		
Less than 15 min	2	1.3
15 to 30 min	54	36
30 to 60 in	54	36
More than I hour	40	26.7
App		
YouTube	147	98.0
Instagram	1	0.7
TikTok	2	1.3
Imagined Relationship		
Friend	79	52.7
Teacher	9	6.0
Role Model	55	36.7
No Imagined Relation	7	4.7
Admiration		
Personality	32	21.3
Talent/Skills	37	24.7
Appearance	16	10.7
Lifestyle	65	43.4
Emotional Attachment		
Strongly Attached	69	46.0
Moderately Attached	46	30.7
Little bit	31	20.7
Not at all	4	2.7
Personal Phone		
Yes	59	39.3
No	91	60.7
Favorite Family Vlogger		
Rajab's Family	93	62
Ducky Bhai	22	14.7
Maaz Safdar	6	4



Sistrology	21	14
Zulqarnain Sikandar	5	2.7
Wanderers Live	5	2.7

Note. N=150; Age (M= 14.45; SD=1.62); Monthly Income (112633.33; SD=86467.12)); Grade (9.01; SD= 1.26)

Measures

Parasocial Relationships in Social Media (PRISM) was used to measure parasocial relationships. An interest, knowledge, identification, and interaction with vloggers is measured with 22 items. The scoring of responses was done using a 5-point Likert scale. The alpha of the overall scale was .93, which is a high measure of reliability. (Boyd et al., 2024).

For social comparison Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM) was used. The scale consists of 11 items that evaluate the comparison of abilities and opinions on a 5-point scale. The reliability coefficients were more

than .70 (Gibbons and Buunk, 1999). Assessment of Identity Development in Adolescence- Short (AIDA) was used to assess the development of identity. A 23-item self-report measure of disturbed identity in terms of discontinuity and incoherence scale. A high score signifies increased identity diffusion. Total scale reliability was at Cronbach's alpha = .94 (Aqeel, 2020). Permission was taken to use the Urdu versions of the scales

Result

This section examines the connection between adolescence and para-social relationships, social comparisons, and identity development.

Reliability Analysis

Table 3.1

Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities of Study Measures (N=150)

Variables	M	SD	Range	α
PRISM	83.07	14.35	22-110	.93
Interest	28.54	4.821	7-35	.85
Identification	20.77	4.39	6-30	.78
Interaction	14.76	3.47	4-20	.77
Knowledge	19.00	3.97	5-25	.77
INCOM	35.22	6.37	11-55	.70
Ability	17.42	4.47	6-30	.68
Opinion	17.80	3.36	5-25	.57
IDA	53.89	9.94	0-115	.70
Discontinue	29.71	4.66	0-55	.42
Incoherence	24.17	7.31	0-60	.71

Note. M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation; value; α = Cronbach alpha; k= No. of items; PRISM= Para social Relationships in Social Media; INCOM= Iowa- Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure; IDA= Identity Development in Adolescence

All the scales and subscales are reliable, and they are measuring what they are supposed to measure, and they have shown a stable Cronbach's α value.

The data exhibited a normal distribution, with both skewness and kurtosis values falling within the acceptable range

Correlation

A bivariate correlation analysis, using the Pearson product-moment correlation, was used in the analyses

Table 3.2
Correlation between Parasocial Relationships, Social Comparison, and Identity Development (N=150).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. ED	-	-	.32**	.28**	.21**	.19*	.11	.05	.17*	.11	.16*
		.29**									
2. EAS		-	.60**	.56**	.58**	.46**	.36**	.107	.36**	.25**	.3**
3. Interest			-	.66**	.67**	.68**	.25**	-.01	.18*	.12	.16*
4.				-	.66**	.62**	.31**	.02	.31**	.27**	.26**
Identification											
5. Interaction					-	.63**	.39**	.02	.27**	.19**	.25**
6. Knowledge						-	.32**	.05	.29**	.21**	.28**
7. Comp							-	.19**	.33**	.14*	.36**
Ability											
8. Comp								-	.13	.23**	.04
Opinion											
9. IDAT									-	.72**	.91**
10.										-	.36**
Discontinuity											
11.											-
Incoherence											
Mean	.67	.46	28.54	20.77	14.76	19.00	17.30	17.54	53.97	29.63	24.33
SD	.48	.50	4.82	4.39	3.47	3.97	3.98	2.41	9.62	4.36	7.14

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; ED= Every Day viewing of family vlogs; EAS= Emotional Attachment (Strong); IDAT= Identity Development in Adolescents Total; SD= Standard Deviation

The findings revealed that there was a positive correlation between diffused identity development, especially identity incoherence, and daily viewing of vlogs. There was also a significant positive correlation between emotional attachment to vloggers and discontinuity as well as incoherence, which implied that adolescents who were highly attached to vloggers had more identity diffusion. All sub-scales of parasocial relationships that included interest, identification, interaction, and knowledge were positively associated with diffuse identity patterns. The social comparison (ability and opinion) was positively correlated with identity diffusion, which proves that adolescents who compare themselves with vloggers are likely to feel confusion and inconsistency in self-concept.

Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis was carried out using macro-PROCESS (Hayes, 2013) based on Lambert et al. procedure (as cited in Field, 2013). PROCESS is a tool for computing path-analysis-based mediation. Among the two subscales of the mediator (social comparison), the comparison of ability fulfilled the assumptions, while the comparison of opinion did not meet the assumptions of mediation. Among the subscales of identity development, only identity incoherence fulfills the assumptions of mediation, while the subscale of identity discontinuity was unable to fulfill the assumptions. The following tables show the results of the mediation analysis between the subscales of parasocial relationships (interest, identification, interaction, and knowledge), comparison of ability, and identity incoherence.

Table 3.3
Mediating Role of Comparison of Ability between Interest in Family Vloggers and Incoherent Identity Development

Predictors	M ₁ (Ability)	Y(Incoherence)
------------	--------------------------	----------------

		Coeff.	SE	P		Coeff.	SE	p
X(Interest)	a ₁	.05	.08	.56	c'	-.12	.14	.38
M(Ability)					b	.49	.14	<.001
C ₁ (EAS)	f ₁	2.59	.78	<.001	g ₁	3.64	1.41	.01
C ₂ (ED)	f ₂	-.05	.69	.93	g ₂	1.21	1.20	.32
Constant	i ₁	14.81	2.10	<.001	i ₂	16.84	4.26	<.001
		R ² =.13				R ² =.18		
		F(3,146)= 7.31, p= <.001				F(4,145)= 7.99, p= <.001		

Note. *p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001, Indirect Effect= (Effect=.02, 95%CI= -.05, .11); ED = Every Day viewing of family vlogs; EAS = Emotional Attachment (Strong)

The mediation analysis indicated that there was no significant indirect effect of interest in vloggers on identity incoherence through ability comparison. Direct correlation between interest and incoherence was also insignificant. Covariates showed significant predictive ability between emotional attachment and ability comparison and identity incoherence, but not everyday engagement. Findings, therefore, showed that ability comparison did not mediate the relationship, although it was an independent predictor of identity incoherence.

Table 3.4

Mediating Role of Comparison of Ability between Identification with Family Vloggers and Incoherent Identity Development

Predictors		M ₁ (Ability)				Y(Incoherence)		
		Coeff.	SE	P		Coeff.	SE	p
X(Identification)	a ₁	.15	.08	.07	c'	.09	.15	.55
M(Ability)					b	.48	.15	<.001
C ₁ (EAS)	f ₁	2.16	.74	.01	g ₁	2.62	1.35	.05
C ₂ (ED)	f ₂	-.15	.68	.81	g ₂	.90	1.19	.45
Constant	i ₁	13.24	1.59	<.001	i ₂	12.39	3.4	<.001
		R ² =.15				R ² =.18		
		F(3,146)= 8.46, p= <.001				F(4,145)= 7.86, p= <.001		

Note. *p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001, Indirect Effect= (Effect=.07, 95%CI= -.01, .21); ED= Every Day viewing of family vlogs; EAS= Emotional Attachment (Strong)

The findings indicated that the mediation of ability comparison between identification with family vloggers and identity incoherence was not significant. There were no significant indirect and direct effects between identification and incoherence. Of covariates, emotional attachment was a significant predictor of ability comparison and identity incoherence, but there was no significant impact of everyday engagement. Though comparison of ability was not a mediator, identity incoherence was predicted by it independently.

Table 3.5

Mediating Role of Comparison of Ability between Interaction with Family Vloggers and Incoherent Identity Development

Predictors		M ₁ (Ability)				Y(Incoherence)		
		Coeff.	SE	P		Coeff.	SE	p
X(Interaction)	a ₁	.32	.11	<.001	c'	.02	.19	.90

M(Ability)					b	.49	.15	<.001
C ₁ (EAS)	f ₁	1.61	.75	.03	g ₁	2.90	1.37	.04
C ₂ (ED)	f ₂	-.09	.66	.88	g ₂	.99	1.19	.40
Constant	i ₁	11.94	1.44	<.001	i ₂	13.57	3.16	<.001
		R ² =.18				R ² =.18		
		F (3,146)= 10.66, p= <.001				F(4,145)= 7.76, p= <.001		

Note. *p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001, Indirect Effect= (Effect=.15, 95%CI= .05, .28); ED= Every Day viewing of family vlogs; EAS= Emotional Attachment (Strong)

As indicated in the table, the ability comparison played a significant role in mediating between interaction with vloggers and identity incoherence. The immediate influence of interaction on incoherence was not significant, and this means complete mediation. Emotional attachment was the covariate that had a significant influence on both ability comparison and identity incoherence, and no effect on everyday viewing.

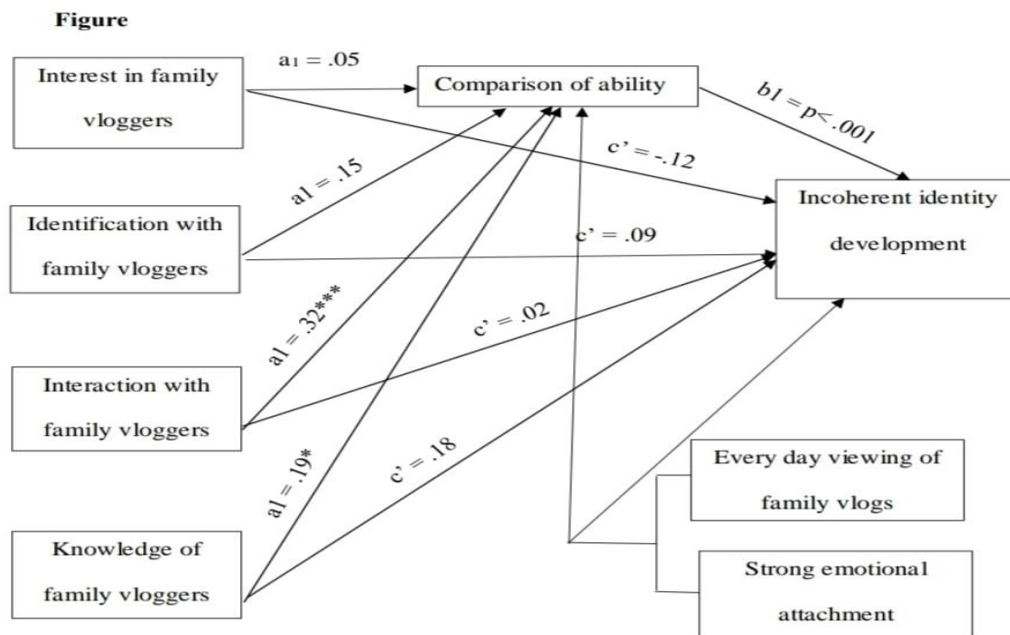
Table 3.6

Mediating Role of Comparison of Ability between Knowledge of Family Vlogger and Incoherent Identity Development

Predictors		M ₁ (Ability)				Y(Incoherence)		
		Coeff.	SE	P		Coeff.	SE	p
X(Knowledge)	a ₁	.19	0.8	.02	c'	.18	.16	.24
M(Ability)					b	.46	.14	<.001
C ₁ (EAS)	f ₁	2.12	.71	<.001	g ₁	2.41	1.29	.06
C ₂ (ED)	f ₂	-.07	.67	.92	g ₂	.93	1.18	.43
Constant	i ₁	12.59	1.57	<.001	i ₂	11.22	3.35	<.001
		R ² =.16				R ² =.18		
		F (3,146)= 9.19, p= <.001				F(4,145)= 8.16, p= <.001		

Note. *p< .05, **p< .01, ***p< .001, Indirect Effect= (Effect=.09, 95%CI= .01, .22); ED= Every Day viewing of family vlogs; EAS= Emotional Attachment (Strong)

The table indicates that comparison of abilities was an important mediator between knowledge about family vloggers and identity incoherence. The direct impact of knowledge on incoherence was not significant, which implies complete mediation. Emotional attachment was the covariate that had a significant influence on both ability comparison and identity incoherence, and no effect on everyday viewing.



Note. The following figure shows the results of mediation. It suggests that the subscales of parasocial relationships (interest, interaction, identification, and knowledge of family vloggers are the predictor, comparison of ability acts as a mediator, and incoherent identity development is the outcome variable. Every day viewing of family vlogs and emotional attachment are covariates

Institute for Excellence in Education & Research

Discussion

This study investigated how the parasocial relationships impact identity development in adolescent viewers of family vloggers, and the mediator was social comparison. The findings showed that parasocial relationship is positively related to disturbed identity development, especially identity incoherence. The longer the time spent with vloggers, the greater the confusion and inconsistencies in the sense of self in adolescents. These results are similar to other studies that highlight that teenagers are susceptible to the effects of the media since they are in the critical phase of self-discovery and identity development (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966). In line with the previous literature, teenagers who identify with or admire vloggers to a great extent are more likely to have increased levels of comparison and self-doubt (Garcia et al., 2022; Hoffner and Bond, 2022). With the help of parasocial bonds, adolescents can experience the emotional attachment to vloggers and

view them as their real friends or role models (Horton and Wohl, 1956). Nonetheless, these one-sided relationships may result in unrealistic demands and reliance on media personalities to validate them. By adopting idealized lifestyles these vloggers are internalized by adolescents as personal norms, thus leading to self-discrepancy and identity confusion (Chae, 2017; Ruther et al., 2023).

The mediating effect of social comparison was also supported by the results. Compared to vloggers, adolescents also compare their ability when they measure their success or appearance or social acceptance. This comparison is upward resulting in dissatisfaction and fragmented identity. The same results were obtained by Vogel et al. (2014) and Yang et al. (2018), who stated that frequent comparison on social media is a factor that leads to low self-esteem and identity instability. The present research also supports the fact that these comparisons reinforce the impact of parasocial relationship on identity incoherence. One of the covariates was emotional

attachment, and it means that adolescents who find themselves strongly related to vloggers have a higher risk of identity confusion. This indicates that it is not necessarily the frequency that decides but the emotional intensity of such relationships that is important. It did not, however, have a significant impact on outcomes, and everyday interaction with vlogs, which implies that attachment and admiration have a greater influence than exposure itself

Conclusion

The study brings out the psychological consequences of family vlogging among Pakistani adolescents. When the adolescents engage in parasocial relationship with the vloggers, they view them as their friends or role models. Although this may give short-term emotional attachment, it may also breed the addiction to online approval. Results confirm the fact that sustained exposure to idealized lifestyles enhances social comparison. Adolescents start to evaluate their value, skills and achievements in comparison with those of vloggers and, in most occasions, result in decreased self-esteem and misunderstandings of their values and identity. The imitation of external behaviors, attitudes, and aesthetics at the expense of forming true identities is the norm with adolescents who idolize vloggers. This simulation produces incoherence, which is demonstrated by high correlations between parasocial involvement and identity disturbance.

The mediating effect of social comparison underlines the fact that social comparison is not the cause but the process of evaluation that prompts identity diffusion. Teenagers who are emotionally involved with the vloggers are always in a constant comparison of their satisfaction with life, looks and other accomplishments with those they see in the internet. On the whole, the findings support the hypothesis that the combination of parasocial relationships and social comparison has an impact on identity development in adolescence.

Limitations and Suggestions

The research was also limited to teenagers in Lahore, and thus it cannot be used to make conclusions about the broader population. It is a cross-sectional, self-report study, which can be biased in the response and cannot prove causality. Adolescents who were only

watching vlogs were taken into the study, eliminating the other media influences. Future research ought to employ bigger and more heterogeneous samples and longitudinal designs to help clarify the causal connections. A more in-depth investigation of the personal experiences of adolescents could be done with the help of qualitative methods. Digital literacy, media balance, and family communication awareness programs are also suggested in order to reduce the adverse effects of media.

REFERENCE

- Abbas, Q., Ahmad, R. W., Hassan, A. a. U., & Ahmed, D. (2024, December 31). *Vlogging culture in Pakistan and its impact on the society*. <https://thecrja.com/index.php/Journal/article/view/71>
- Agarwal, N. A. (2024). The effect of social media in identity formation in adolescence. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 23(3), 775-779. <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2024.23.3.2685>
- Anwar, N. I. K. R. N. S. M., & Tasawar, N. R. M. S. F. K. (2024). Impact of body dissatisfaction, Self-Objectification, and internalization of media ideals on appearance anxiety in males. *PJPPRP*, 14(2). <https://doi.org/10.62663/pjpprp.v14i2.126>
- Association, A. P. (2021). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)*. American Psychiatric Publishing.
- Avci, H., Baams, L., & Kretschmer, T. (2024). A Systematic review of social media use and adolescent Identity development. *Adolescent Research Review*, 10(2), 219-236. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-024-00251-1>
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. Prentice Hall. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1985-98423-000>
- Baron, M. (2024, July 22). *The impact of social media on a teen's sense of self - Moriah Behavioral Health*. Moriah Behavioral Health. <https://www.moriahbehavioralhealth.com/the-impact-of-social-media-on-a-teens-sense-of-self/>

- Baumann, S. (2022.). *Parasocial relationships and perception of self*. Voices of USU: An Anthology of Student Writing, Vol. 16. <https://uen.pressbooks.pub/voicesofusuvol16/chapter/parasocial-relationships-and-perception-of-self/>
- Bennett, L. L. (2024.). *Understanding parasocial relationships and the mental health impact*. Louisiana Tech Digital Commons. <https://digitalcommons.latech.edu/theses/120>
- Berman, S. L., Montgomery, M. J., & Kurtines, W. M. (2004). The development and validation of a measure of identity distress. *Identity*, 4(1), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532706xid0401_1
- Bond, B. J., Dill-Shackleford, K. E., Dibble, J. L., Gleason, T. R., Jennings, N., Rosaen, S., & Forster, R. T. (2024). Parasocial relationships in children and teens. In *Handbook of Children and Screens* (pp. 239-244). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-69362-5_33
- Boyd, A. T., Morrow, J. A., & Rocconi, L. M. (2022, December 30). *Development and validation of the Parasocial Relationship in Social Media Survey*. <https://www.thejsms.org/index.php/JSMS/article/view/1085>
- Boyd, A. T., Rocconi, L. M., & Morrow, J. A. (2024). Construct validation and measurement invariance of the Parasocial Relationships in Social Media survey. *PLoS ONE*, 19(3), e0300356. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0300356>
- Branje, S. (2021). Adolescent identity development in context. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 45, 101286. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2021.11.006>
- Branje, S., De Moor, E. L., Spitzer, J., & Becht, A. I. (2021). Dynamics of Identity Development in Adolescence: A Decade in Review. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 31(4), 908-927. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12678>
- Brown, W. J. (2018). Celebrity involvement. In *Routledge eBooks* (pp. 255-270). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315776774-17>
- Burnell, K., Trekels, J., Prinstein, M. J., & Telzer, E. H. (2024). Adolescents' Social Comparison on Social Media: Links with Momentary Self-Evaluations. *Affective Science*, 5(4), 295-299. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42761-024-00240-6>
- Campbell, J. D., Trapnell, P. D., Heine, S. J., Katz, I. M., Lavallee, L. F., & Lehman, D. R. (1996). Self-concept clarity: Measurement, personality correlates, and cultural boundaries. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70(1), 141-156. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.70.1.141>
- Chae, J. (2017). Explaining females' envy toward social media influencers. *Media Psychology*, 21(2), 246-262. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2017.1328312>
- Chao, K. (2022). The Quarter-Life Crisis: The lack of identity development support in adolescents. *Journal of Student Research*, 11(4). <https://doi.org/10.47611/jsrhs.v11i4.3049>
- De Bérail, P., & Bungener, C. (2022). Parasocial relationships and YouTube addiction: The role of viewer and YouTuber video characteristics. *Psychology of Language and Communication*, 26(1), 169-206. <https://doi.org/10.2478/plc-2022-0009>
- Delmée. (2021). *The Impact of Social Comparison on Identity Development: a Mediation Model*. <https://arno.uvt.nl/show.cgi?fid=157783>
- Desk, W. (2024). YouTube releases list of most popular creators in Pakistan: Ducky Bhai dethroned? *Aaj English TV*. <https://english.aaj.tv/news/330391849/youtub-e-releases-list-of-most-popular-creators-in-pakistan-ducky-bhai-dethroned>
- Diaz, A. D., & Kaliebe, K. (2024). PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN ADOLESCENTS. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 63(10), S55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2024.07.251>
- Ellithorpe, M. E., & Bleakley, A. (2016). Wanting to see people like me? Racial and gender diversity in popular adolescent television. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 45(7), 1426-1437. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-016-0415-4>

- Erickson, S. E. (2023a). PSRs in adolescence. In *Oxford University Press eBooks* (pp. 190-209). <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197650677.013.8>
- Erickson, S. E. (2023b). PSRs in adolescence. In *Oxford University Press eBooks* (pp. 190-209). <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197650677.013.8>
- Erikson, E. H. (1993). *Childhood and society*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7(2), 117-140. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872675400700202>
- Garcia, D., Björk, E., & Kazemitabar, M. (2022a). The A(ffect) B(ehavior) C(ognition) D(ecision) of parasocial relationships: A pilot study on the psychometric properties of the Multidimensional Measure of Parasocial Relationships (MMPR). *Heliyon*, 8(10), e10779. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e10779>
- Garcia, D., Björk, E., & Kazemitabar, M. (2022b). The A(ffect) B(ehavior) C(ognition) D(ecision) of parasocial relationships: A pilot study on the psychometric properties of the Multidimensional Measure of Parasocial Relationships (MMPR). *Heliyon*, 8(10), e10779. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e10779>
- Ghafar, M. U., Amin, R. U., Rashid, A., Ghafar, M. U., Amin, R. U., & Rashid, A. (2025). Exploring the effects of YouTube family vlogs on youth: a study of Hazara University Mansehra, Pakistan. *THE PROGRESS a Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 6(2), 179-187. <https://doi.org/10.71016/tp/zhpthp09>
- Gibbons, F. X., & Buunk, B. P. (1999). Individual differences in social comparison: Development of a scale of social comparison orientation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76(1), 129-142. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.76.1.129>
- Gleason, T. R., Theran, S. A., & Newberg, E. M. (2017). Parasocial interactions and relationships in early adolescence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00255>
- Haupt, A., & Johnson, V. B. a. D. (2023, July 13). In defense of parasocial relationships. *TIME*. <https://time.com/6294226/parasocial-relationships-benefits/>
- Hoffner, C. A., & Bond, B. J. (2022). Parasocial relationships, social media, & well-being. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 45, 101306. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101306>
- Horton, D., & Wohl, R. R. (1956). Mass Communication and Para-Social Interaction. *Psychiatry*, 19(3), 215-229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00332747.1956.11023049>
- Ilyas, K. (2021). CONTEMPORARY TRENDS OF VLOGGING IN PAKISTAN: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF POPULAR VLOGS. *ILMA Journal of Social Sciences & Economics*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.46745/ilma.ijss.2021.01.01.05>
- Irmer, A., & Schmiedek, F. (2023). Associations between youth's daily social media use and well-being are mediated by upward comparisons. *Communications Psychology*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44271-023-00013-0>
- Kanwal, L., & Naeem, R. (2023). Exploring the impact of Pakistani vloggers' content on youth. *Global Digital & Print Media Review*, VI(III), 28-40. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gdpmr.2023\(vi-iii\).04](https://doi.org/10.31703/gdpmr.2023(vi-iii).04)
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and Gratifications research. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509. <https://doi.org/10.1086/268109>
- Liu, Y., Di, S., Zhang, Y., & Ma, C. (2023). Self-Concept Clarity and Learning Engagement: The Sequence-Mediating role of the Sense of Life meaning and Future orientation. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(6), 4808. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20064808>
- Lou, C., & Kim, H. K. (2019). Fancying the new rich and famous? Explicating the roles of influencer content, credibility, and parental mediation in adolescents' parasocial relationship, materialism, and purchase intentions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02567>

- Malti, T., & Noam, G. G. (2016). Social-emotional development: From theory to practice. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 13(6), 652–665.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2016.1196178>
- Mann, R. B., & Blumberg, F. (2022). Adolescents and social media: The effects of frequency of use, self-presentation, social comparison, and self esteem on possible self imagery. *Acta Psychologica*, 228, 103629.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2022.103629>
- Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego-identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 3(5), 551–558.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/h0023281>
- Meca, A., Eichas, K., Quintana, S., Maximin, B. M., Ritchie, R. A., Madrazo, V. L., Harari, G. M., & Kurtines, W. M. (2014). Reducing Identity Distress: Results of an identity intervention for emerging adults. *Identity*, 14(4), 312–331.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2014.944696>
- Muffler, O. (2024). Teens parasocial relationships negatively affect their mental health. The Oracle.
<https://lehsoracle.com/30282/opinion/parasocial-relationships-are-negatively-affecting-teens-mental-health/>
- Mula-Márquez, Y., Nava-Arquillo, B., & Matías-García, J. A. (2024). Parasocial relationships and identification with fictional characters in adolescents and adults: a systematic review. *Research Square (Research Square)*.
<https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-4154497/v1>
- Murray, W. (2024, April 16). Parasocial relationships: The good, the bad, and the boy bands. Thriveworks.
<https://thriveworks.com/blog/parasocial-relationships-boy-bands/>
- Mustafa, F., Bibi, S., & Majeed, M. (2024). Impact of Social Media Use, Social Comparison & Self-Esteem Among Adolescents. *Global Mass Communication Review*, IX(III), 12–26.
[https://doi.org/10.31703/gmcr.2024\(ix-iii\).02](https://doi.org/10.31703/gmcr.2024(ix-iii).02)
- Nesi, J., & Prinstein, M. J. (2015). Using Social Media for Social Comparison and Feedback-Seeking: Gender and Popularity Moderate Associations with Depressive Symptoms. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 43(8), 1427–1438.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-015-0020-0>
- Nizami, M. (2025, January 8). The rise of daily family vlogging in Pakistan. Day News TV.
<https://www.daynews.tv/2025/01/08/the-rise-of-daily-family-vlogging-in-pakistan/?amp=1>
- Noon, E. J. (2020). Compare and despair or compare and explore? Instagram social comparisons of ability and opinion predict adolescent identity development. *Cyberpsychology Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 14(2).
<https://doi.org/10.5817/cp2020-2-1>
- Noureen, S. (2024, December 14). The Rise of Family Vlogging in Pakistan: How Rajab Family and Sistology are Leading the Way. Tashheer Digital.
<https://tashheer.com/family-vlogging-pakistan/>
- Oxley, L. (2010). Parasocial comparison: the analysis of a new social comparison target when looking at body satisfaction.
<https://udspace.udel.edu/items/8eedf734-cbfa-4eeb-88d3-220a41cf7c2c>
- Pazer, S. (2024, October 13). Research Paper: The Impact of Social Media Use on Identity Formation among Adolescents - published by Sora Pazer in IJARIIT Journal. IJARIIT.
<https://www.ijariit.com/manuscript/the-impact-of-social-media-use-on-identity-formation-among-adolescents/>
- Quan-Haase, A., & Young, A. L. (2010). Uses and gratifications of social media: A comparison of Facebook and instant messaging. *Bulletin of Science Technology & Society*, 30(5), 350–361.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0270467610380009>
- Quan-Haase, A., & Young, A. L. (2014). The Uses and Gratifications (U&G): Approach as a lens for studying social Media Practice. In Robert S. Fortner, P. Mark Fackler (Eds.). USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118591178.ch15>

- Ragelienė, T. (2016, May 1). *Links of Adolescents Identity Development and Relationship with Peers: A Systematic Literature Review*. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4879949/>
- Rasmussen, L. (2018, May 31). *Parasocial Interaction in the Digital Age: An examination of relationship building and the effectiveness of YouTube celebrities*. <https://thejsms.org/index.php/JSMS/article/view/364>
- Ravi, N., & Patki, S. M. (2025). Parasocial relationships, social support and well-being: A mixed-methods study among Indian youth. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 30(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2025.2480712>
- Rehman, Z., Rehman, Z., & Rehman, Z. (2024, December 12). Understanding Pakistan's identity crisis and its impact on society. *The Spine Times - the Spine Times*. <https://spinetimes.pk/understanding-pakistans-identity-crisis-and-its-impact-on-society/>
- Reynolds, S. (2022). *Parasocial Relationships with Online Influencers*. ProQuest. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/56c66da6db93fc74e141913a0f257afe/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>
- Rüther, L., Jahn, J., & Marksteiner, T. (2023). #influenced! The impact of social media influencing on self-esteem and the role of social comparison and resilience. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1216195>
- Safdar, G., & Abbasi, A. B. (2024, December 26). *Rise of entertainment YouTubers in Pakistan: A content analysis of selected vloggers*. <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/MCR/article/view/6353>
- Sedmak, A., & Svetina, M. (2023). Components of adolescents' attraction with YouTubers. *Current Psychology*, 43(7), 6167–6179. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04784-x>
- Staff, N. A. (2025). Social media comparison and teen mental health. *Newport Academy, LLC*. <https://www.newportacademy.com/resources/empowering-teens/theory-of-social-comparison/>
- TalktoAngel - Best Online Counselling & therapy | Best Online Psychologist Consultation India. (2024, December 17). TalktoAngel. <https://www.talktoangel.com/blog/celebrity-worship-syndrome>
- 百度学术. (2023). *The Relationship between Parasocial Interaction and Social Behavior Among Adolescents*. <https://xueshu.baidu.com/usercenter/paper/show?paperid=143x0tv0q47c0c708y5e0e10e7794409>
- Mehsud. (2025). TNN - TRIBAL NEWS NETWORK. <https://tnnenglish.com/the-rise-of-female-and-family-vlogging-in-pakistan-a-digital-revolution-or-a-cultural-dilemma>
- Tian, S., Cho, S. Y., Jia, X., Sun, R., & Tsai, W. S. (2023). Antecedents and outcomes of Generation Z consumers' contrastive and assimilative upward comparisons with social media influencers. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 32(7), 1046–1062. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jpbm-02-2022-3879>
- Tolbert, A. N., & Drogos, K. L. (2019). Tweens' wishful identification and parasocial relationships with YouTubers. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02781>
- Waseem, Q. (2025, February 19). *Family vlogging in Pakistan - Books Square*. Books Square. https://bookssquare.org/family-vlogging-in-pakistan/?srsltid=AfmBOooTt_ND-
- Yang, C. (2021). Social media social comparison and identity processing styles: Perceived social pressure to be responsive and rumination as mediators. *Applied Developmental Science*, 26(3), 504–515. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2021.1894149>
- Yang, C., Holden, S. M., Carter, M. D., & Webb, J. J. (2018). Social media social comparison and identity distress at the college transition: A dual-path model. *Journal of Adolescence*, 69(1), 92–102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2018.09.007>

- Zhang, R., Mercado, T., Chen, Y., & Bi, N. C. (2024). "How come I don't look like that": the negative impact of wishful identification with influencers on follower Well-being. *Online Media and Global Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/omgc-2024-0033>
- Zsila, Á., McCutcheon, L. E., & Demetrovics, Z. (2018). The association of celebrity worship with problematic Internet use, maladaptive daydreaming, and desire for fame. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions*, 7(3), 654-664. <https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.7.2018.76>

