Digital Engagement and Positive Youth Development: A Systematic Review.

Antonio-David Martin-Barrado[1,*] & Diego Gomez-Baya[1].

[1] Department of Social, Developmental and Educational Psychology, Universidad de Huelva, Huelva (Spain).

*Correspondence: antoniodavid.martin@dpee.uhu.es.

uhu.es Universidad de Huelva — OBJETIVOS DE DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE

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INTRODUCTION & AIM

THE CHALLENGE

In the digital era, **adolescence involves risks such as Internet** and social media **addiction**, cyberbullying, or sexting, which are associated with diminished psychological well-being [1]. Artificial intelligence (**AI**) exacerbates these **issues** by creating a constant sense of reward [2].

THE APPROACH

Traditional: Risk prevention focus.
Current: **Positive Youth Development** (PYD). A strengths-based framework based on Relational Developmental Systems metatheory, emphasizing the plastic and bidirectional interactions (adolescents ↔ contexts) [3].

Core models

The "5Cs": Competence, Confidence, Character, Connection, and Caring [4].

40 Developmental Assets (DA): 20 Internal and 20 External Assets [5].

RESEARCH GAP

Despite extensive data on digital risks, studies linking them to PYD are limited.

AIM: To examine the influence of PYD on children and adolescents with digital technologies (Internet, social media, and AI).

METHOD

DESIGN: PRISMA systematic review (PROSPERO: CRD42024602945) based on the PICO format (Table 1).

DATABASES: *Web of Science*, *PubMed*, and *Scopus* (inception to December 26, 2024); see Figure 1.

TERMS: MeSH terms were used to generate keywords; no language restrictions.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT: Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) tool.
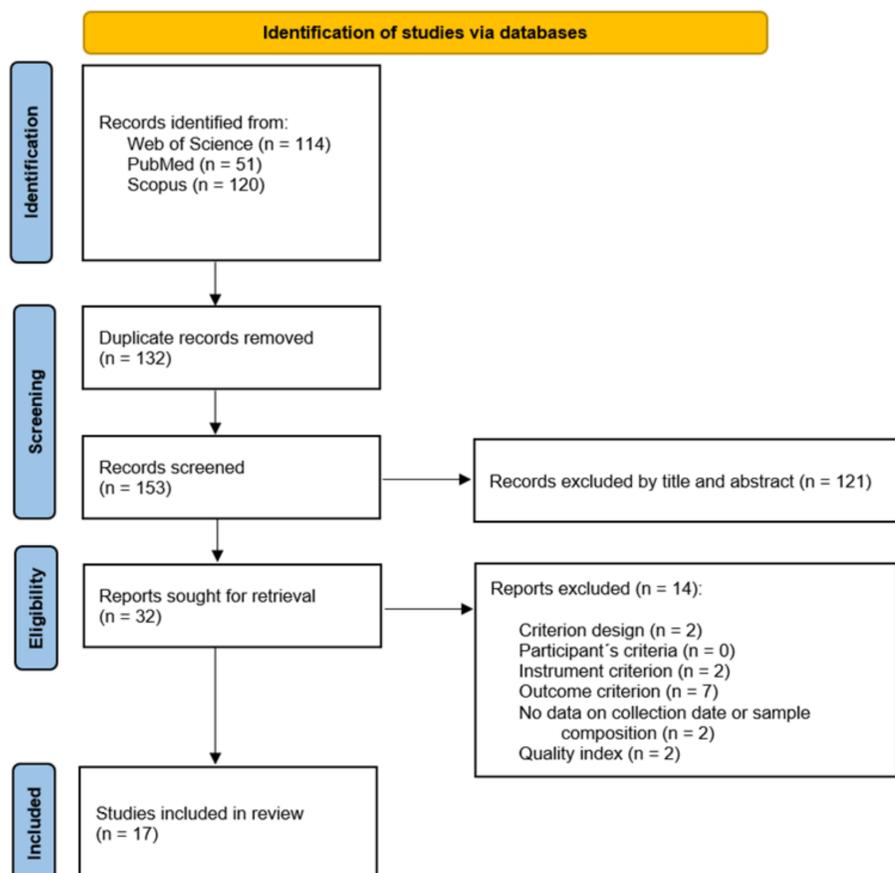
Figure 1.
PRISMA flowchart.

Table 1.
PICO criteria and research question.

Population (P)	Children and adolescents (ages 10–29)
Intervention (I)	Use of Internet, social media and AI
Comparison (C)	Variation in PYD levels/dimensions
Outcome (O)	Studies reporting dimensions of PYD and psychological well-being measures
Research Question	*How does PYD influence the use of Internet, social media and AI among children and adolescents (ages 10–29)?*

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

SAMPLE: **17 studies** (13 longitudinal, 4 cross-sectional; see Figure 2 and 3. The final sample comprised **37,015 students** aged **10 to 19 years**.

Figure 2.
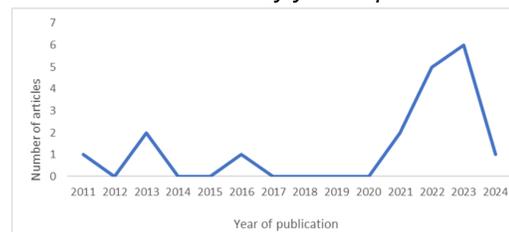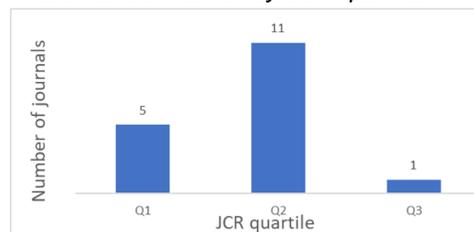*Distribution of articles by year of publication.*

Figure 3.
Journal distribution by JCR quartile.

1. CONTENT ANALYSIS

- **Higher PYD scores** correlated with **lower digital risks** (Internet/social media, Internet Gaming Disorder), **cyberbullying**, and **pornography** use. This aligns with other offline behaviors [3].

2. CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

- **Family support** (External Asset) played a **protective role** against online risks [6].
- **Males** showed more **externalizing behaviors** (e.g., cyberbullying), while **females** experienced greater **parental control** [7].

3. PARADOXICAL FACTOR AND GAP

- High Confidence and Competence were associated with increased pornography consumption, likely due to a biased self-perception or a **sense of invulnerability** [8].
- **No studies** were found linking **PYD to AI**.

LIMITATIONS
- Predominance of Chinese samples *(n = 15)* during COVID-19 lockdowns.
- Exclusion of non-student youth.
- The measures were self-reported.
- Three different instruments to measure PYD.

IMPLICATIONS
- Involve **youth in policy** to address their real needs.
- **Psychoeducational** programs for parents/educators to foster supportive digital environments.
- Develop **socio-emotional skills** to manage online risks.

CONCLUSION

► Higher **PYD** scores serve as a **protective factor against digital risks**.

► Some assets (e.g., **self-regulation** and **family support**) are buffers against the misuse of technology. Fostering **Character** and critical thinking is essential.

► Despite its prevalence, AI remains unexplored in PYD literature.

REFERENCES