

## Impact of Social Media on Global Citizenship According to Social Studies Teachers

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### Abstract:

Many events that occur in the world affect not only the place where they occur but also many regions in the world. This situation necessitates the evaluation of the developments and changes in the world from a universal perspective rather than considering the national interests of each country. The universal evaluation of the problems experienced has led to the emergence of global citizenship. With global citizenship, individuals interact with other people and become sensitive to different events. The individual's interaction with other people and forming public opinion about the events that occur can be realized more quickly and easily with social media, which is preferred by all societies globally. For this reason, the aim of the research was to determine 'the impact of social media on global citizenship' in line with the views of social studies teachers. Phenomenology, a qualitative research method, was preferred in this study. The participants of the study were 22 social study teachers working in secondary schools in the city center. To obtain the data, a semi-structured interview was developed by the researcher after consulting expert opinions. The research concluded that the use of social media has a strong impact on global citizenry, as evidenced by a range of petite responses gathered from the varied related dimensions of importance, awareness, and effect about the subject.


### Keywords:

Social Media, Global Citizenship, Teachers

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## INTRODUCTION

Today, changes in technological developments have facilitated interactions between individuals and societies. With the reflection of these developments on transportation opportunities, individuals have been able to get to know and communicate not only with their own societies but also with communities with different cultural characteristics. At the same time, today, migration events, which are intensively experienced at the international level for different reasons (war, economic, political, etc. reasons), have affected many countries. The increase in interactions between countries for different reasons has led to the situation of being a citizen of the world as well as a citizen of a state (Cesairo, 2017; Kan, 2009; Levinson, 2014; Parekh, 2003; Stromquist, 2009; Şahin, 2011; Şahin & Çermik, 2014). This situation necessitates that while evaluating the developments and changes in the world, all the events that arise should be handled with a universal perspective, not by considering country-based national interests. The universal evaluation of the problems experienced has led to the emergence of global citizenship. Global citizenship is not a formal citizenship legally bound to a state; it refers to the universal citizenship of individuals regardless of their legal citizenship (Ekici, 2008; Kan, 2009; Levinson, 2014; Osler & Starkey, 2005; Wintersteiner et al., 2015).

Morais and Ogden (2011) state that global citizenship has three overarching dimensions social responsibility, global competence, and global civic engagement. In the social responsibility dimension, the individual examines different perspectives and respects differences by empathizing. Simultaneously, they become aware of the global effects of local behaviors. In addition, the individual evaluates social problems in the context of global justice and inequalities. In the global competency dimension, individuals show interest in world issues and events by recognizing their own limitations and capabilities. The individual should be unprejudiced when interacting with different cultures. Global civic engagement is defined as recognizing local, national, and global community issues and demonstrating action and disposition to respond through activities such as community engagement, political activism, and volunteering. Individuals help and contribute by volunteering in global civic organizations (Morais & Ogden, 2011).

The global citizenship approach is primarily considered criticizing international crises, various problems, and different problems that occur all over the world. Wars, famines, climate change, human rights problems, and unequal conditions in world trade affect all societies in the world. The solution to these problems can be realized through international political understanding and an appropriate citizenship approach. In addition, global citizens should have knowledge about social, cultural, political, and economic problems in the world. At the same time, global citizens should be conscious people who respect different religious, social, cultural, and national identities. Global citizens should use their global knowledge to achieve their goals in transferring universal values (respect, equality, and justice) (Wintersteiner et al., 2015). Individuals should also share their

knowledge with people in different communities. Today, it is possible to reach millions of people globally and share information with them through social media (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Dickson & Holley, 2010; Greenhow, 2011; Parekh, 2003). With the use of web-based and mobile technologies in social media, people can interact with each other more (Akarsu, 2016; Dickson & Holley, 2010; Elitaş, 2020).

Social media is a broad-based platform that allows people to express their views and opinions on the internet without time and place limitations, provides unlimited use of multimedia features offered by the internet, and realizes the existence of an interactive environment based on mutual sharing and exchange of views with different people (Bulunmaz, 2011). On social media, individuals can share their information and thoughts online in the form of words, pictures, videos, and sounds (Safko & Brake, 2009).

Social media, which has a functional structure compared to traditional media tools, is a different mass communication tool. First social media derives its power from individuals. Because messages on social media are developed by users. At the same time, social media is cost-effective and open to everyone. Therefore, social media is more easily accessible than traditional media, and it also has the power to create a more functional public opinion and agenda. In addition, because social media is constantly evolving, it will soon become the primary means of communication (Akarsu, 2016; Alav, 2014). Since social media is a widely preferred communication tool worldwide, people want to spend more time on social media. Since social media is preferred globally and affects societies, it is also important in terms of global citizenship. For this reason, the aim of the study is to determine 'the effect of social media on global citizenship' in line with the views of social studies teachers. Within the framework of this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Do you think societies today attach importance to global citizenship?
2. According to social studies teachers, how can individuals acquire global citizenship awareness?
3. According to social study teachers, how do social media affect society?
4. What is the effect of social media use on the formation of global citizenship awareness among individuals?

## METHOD

### *Research Model*

In line with the purpose of the research, this study was conducted in accordance with qualitative research, an approach that tries to examine and understand social phenomena and events according to the environment in which they are located. The main purpose of qualitative research is to perceive social life holistically situated within the perspectives of the individual and how he /she benefits from them. At the same time, to explain the changes and events that occur in society (Hancock, 1998; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Phenomenology,

one of the qualitative research methods, was preferred in this study. Phenomenology explores how people make sense of their experiences and how they transform their experiences into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning. In addition, phenomenological research reveals the results of our experiences and the reasons for our perceptions and behaviors (Ersoy, 2017; Patton, 2014).

### *Participants*

The study group consisted of a total of 22 social studies teachers working in secondary schools in the city center. The study group was determined by a purposeful criterion sampling method, and social studies teachers working in secondary schools were selected. Social study teachers were preferred as participants because social study education utilizes different disciplines and includes topics related to global citizenship. The demographic characteristics of the social study teachers who participated in this study are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

#### *Demographic Characteristics of Participating Teachers*

Demographic Characteristics		Participating	
		n	%
<b>Gender</b>	Female	14	64
	Male	8	36
<b>Age</b>	30 or less	2	9
	approximately 31-40	14	64
	41 and above	6	27
<b>Professional Seniority</b>	1-5 year(s)	1	5
	6-10 years	8	36
	11-15 years	9	41
	16 and above	4	18
<b>Educational Level</b>	Bachelor's Degree	21	95
	Master's Degree	1	5

From the demographic characteristics of the teachers presented in Table 1, 64% of the participants, in terms of gender, were women and 36% were men. Looking at the age of the teachers in Table 1, it is seen that 9% of them are 30 years old and below, 64% are between 31 and 40 years old, and 27% are 41 and over. Looking at Table 1, in terms of professional seniority, it is seen that 5% of the participating teachers are 1–5 year- experienced, 36% are 6-10 year-experienced, 41% are 11-15 year-experienced, and 18% are 16 and above. Looking at Table 1 regarding the education level of the participants, it is seen that 95% of the participating teachers are bachelors and 5% are postgraduates.

### *Data Collection Tools*

After being developed by the researcher and consulting expert opinions, a semistructured interview form consisting of 4 questions was prepared to determine the views of social studies teachers on the effect of social media on global citizenship. First, the theoretical dimension was established in the research. The researcher then prepared the questions in the interview form because of the literature review and consulted the opinions of four Social Studies education experts regarding the suitability of the prepared questions for the study. The researcher conducted validity and reliability studies of the semi-structured interview form by consulting experts.

### *Data Analysis*

In the study, a semi-structured interview form was used to reveal the views of social studies teachers on the impact of social media on global citizenship. Content analysis was used to analyze the data obtained from the teachers' opinions. Some opinions obtained from the participants were included in the content analysis. The data obtained during the analysis process were first sub-coded by examining the views expressed by the participants. While subcoding, all interview forms (Teacher 1) were numbered as T1, T2, T3.....T22. Additionally, opinions and sub-themes were coded as G1, G2....G10. Since more than one sub-coding could be reached from the answers given by the participant teachers, numbers were given for each sub-code. All codings (including subcodings) were coded by considering the answers given by the teachers. After subtheme coding, the themes were formed through inductive analysis. All subcoding occurred without a break in the data analysis process. Two weeks were waited after the creation of the themes. The data obtained from the participants were then coded again. Thus, we checked whether a different result emerged because of both coding. The reliability of the data was ensured with this comparison.

### *Ethical considerations*

During this research, we paid scrupulous attention to ethical guidelines, ensuring that the integrity and reliability of the study were never compromised.

In alignment with the overarching commitment to ethics, this study stringently adhered to all provisions delineated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive." It is imperative to note that there were zero instances of activities that might infringe upon the clauses stated under the "Actions against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics."

Ethical Review Board: Dicle University Social Sciences and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee

Date of Ethics Review Decision: 27.08.2020

Ethics Assessment Document Issue Number: 81787

## FINDINGS

### Views on the importance of global citizenship in societies today

To determine the views on the importance of global citizenship in societies, teachers were asked the question "Do you think that societies today attach importance to global citizenship, explain?". The data obtained from the answers given by the participants to this question are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

*The extent to which societies view global citizenship as important*

	Sub Themes	Participating	f
<b>G.1. Yes</b>	G.1.1. Inclusion in the education program	T3, T8, and T21	3
	G.1.2. Multicultural education	T8, T21	2
<b>G.2. No</b>	G.2.1. Increasing wars	T1, T4, T6, T7, T11, T13, T14, and T18	8
	G.2.2. Economic inequality in the world	T4, T7, T9, T10, T12, T17, and T22	7
	G.2.3. Spread of racism	T2, T6, T9, T15, T16, and T20	6
	G.2.4. Anti-immigrant feelings	T1, T2, T5, T15, T16, and T19	6
	G.2.5. Insensitivity to problems in different societies	T2, T5, T10, T17, T19, and T22	6
	G.2.6. Individual life being at the forefront	T4, T11, and T18	3

Table 2 shows that the teachers gave different answers to the question "Do you think that today's societies attach importance to global citizenship?". While some teachers who expressed different opinions expressed 'yes' to this question, some of them expressed 'no'. The teachers who expressed 'yes' opinions expressed their opinions on the sub-themes of inclusion in education programs (f: 3) and multicultural education (f: 2). The teachers who stated 'no' among the participants expressed their opinions on the sub-themes of increasing wars (f:8), economic inequality in the world (f:7), spread of racism (f:6), anti-immigrant feelings (f:6), insensitivity to problems in different societies (f:6), and individual life being at the forefront (f:3).

Some answers to the question "Do you think that societies today attach importance to global citizenship?" are given below:

"Global citizenship only exists as a concept. Because today there are many wars, such as the Ukraine-Russia war. These wars seriously affect not only these two countries but also other countries. But we do not see a serious reaction of people against the war. People start to show their reactions when they are influenced by the war. In other words, when the war starts to affect their own lives, they show their reactions. This situation shows that societies do not attach



importance to global citizenship, and the important thing is to maintain their own lives comfortably." (T4)

"I think global citizenship is given importance; otherwise, it would not be included in education programs. There are also many studies on multicultural education." (T8)

"Absolutely not. Because there is great economic inequality in the world. There are very rich countries on one side and very poor countries on the other side, and rich societies are not interested in the problems of poor communities."(T22)

### Views on the acquisition of global citizenship awareness

To determine the views on the acquisition of global citizenship consciousness, the teachers were asked the question "Explain how global citizenship consciousness can be acquired by the individual?". The data obtained from the answers given by the participants to this question are given in Table 3.

**Table 3.**

*Opinions on the acquisition of global citizenship awareness*

Sub Themes	Participating	f
G.1. Formal education	T2, T4, T5, T6, T9, T11, T12, T14, T16, T19, T20, and T21	12
G.2. Taught by the family	T1, T2, T7, T8, T10, T13, T14, T17, and T20	9
G.3. Social learning	T1, T3, T6, T9, T10, T15, T18, and T19	8
G.4. Through social media	T3, T5, T7, T13, T15, T18, T19, and T22	8
G.5. Educational programs on television	T2, T4, and T22	3

Table 3 shows that the teachers gave different answers to the question "How can the individual gain global citizenship awareness?" The participants expressed their opinions on this question as formal education (f: 12), taught by education (f: 9), social learning (f: 8), through social media (f: 8), and educational programs on television (f: 3).

Some answers given to the question "How can an individual gain global citizenship awareness?" are given below:

"Global citizenship awareness should be given to the person primarily in the family, and then it should be gained through education at school. In addition, television programs should be aimed at creating global citizenship awareness." (T2)

"I think it can be best acquired at school. Of course, people can also learn by looking around them, from their friends and social media." (T19)

"Creating global citizenship awareness in a society depends on the education to be given at school and in the family." (T20)

### Views on the impact of social media on society

To determine the views on the impact of social media on society, the teachers were asked the question "How does social media affect society?" The data obtained from the answers given by the participants to this question are given in Table 4.

**Table 4.**

#### *Opinions on the impact of social media on society*

	<b>Sub Themes</b>	<b>Participating</b>	<b>f</b>
<b>G.1. Positive impact</b>	<b>G.1.1.</b> Socialization of Individuals	T2,T4,T6,T8,T11,T13, and T18	7
	<b>G.1.2.</b> Interaction with people	T3, T9, T10, T14, T16, and T22	6
	<b>G.1.3.</b> Being a communication tool	T2, T9, T10, T13, T15, and T20	6
	<b>G.1.4.</b> Contributing to social change	T2, T6, T8, T12, T19, and T21	6
	<b>G.1.5.</b> Reaching the society in general	T3, T4, T11, T12, and T20	5
<b>G.2. Negative impact</b>	<b>G.2.1</b> Damage to moral values	T1, T17, and T7	3
	<b>G.2.2.</b> Cultural degeneration	T1, T17, and T7	3
	<b>G.2.3.</b> Distancing from real life	T5, T1	2

Table 4 shows that the teachers gave different answers to the question "How do social media affect society?" Some of the participants stated that social media affects society positively and united under the sub-themes of socializing individuals (f:7), interaction with people (f:6), being a communication tool (f:6), contributing to social change (f:6), and reaching the society in general(f:5); while according to Table 4, some of the participants stated that social media has a negative impact on society and united in the sub-themes of damage to moral values (f:3), cultural degeneration (f:3), and distancing from real life (f:2).

Some answers given to the question "How do social media affect society?" asked the participant teachers are given below:

"Social media causes people to lose their moral and cultural values. With social media, people are more influenced by foreign culture, and because of this influence, they lose their own values." (T1)

"Today, communication is mostly established through social media. Because communication is easy, people interact more." (T9)

"The most important feature of social media is that it is accessible to everyone. Since any innovation can reach the whole society through social media, it contributes to social change."(T12)

### Views on the Effect of Social Media Use on Global Citizenship Awareness in individuals

To determine the views on the effect of social media use on global citizenship awareness in individuals, teachers were asked the question "What is the effect of social



media use on the formation of global citizenship awareness in individuals?". The data obtained because of the answers given by the participants to this question are given in Table 5.

**Table 5.**

*Opinions on the effect of social media use on global citizenship awareness among individuals*

Sub Themes	Participating	f
G.1. Awareness of differences	T1, T4, T7, T9, T12, T13, T15, T17, and T18	9
G.2. Reaching the whole world	T2, T3, T5, T8, T10, T11, T14, T19, and T21	9
G.3. Combating social inequalities	T1, T6, T9, T10, T16, and T21	6
G.4. Interacting with different cultures	T2, T9, T10, T11, T13, and T20	6
G.5. Producing solutions to social problems	T4, T12, T14, T17, and T22	5
G.6. Greater awareness	T1, T9, T12, T22,	4
G.7. Being sensitive	T4, T8, and T16	3
G.8. Facilitating information sharing	T3, T8, and T14	3
G.9. Critical thinking	T5, T18	2
G.10. Creating a sense of trust	T4, T20	2

Table 5 shows that the teachers gave different answers to the question "What is the effect of social media use on the formation of global citizenship awareness in individuals?". The participants responded to this question by stating their opinions as being aware of differences (f:9), reaching the whole world (f:9), combating social inequalities (f:6), interacting with different cultures (f:6), producing solutions to social problems (f:5), greater awareness (f:4), being sensitive (f:3), facilitating information sharing (f:3), critical thinking (f:2), and creating a sense of trust (f:2).

Some of the answers given to the question "What is the effect of social media use on the formation of global citizenship awareness in individuals?" are given below:

"Since people can reach the whole world through the use of social media, they can create awareness for any social problem and strive for the solution of that problem worldwide. Information about emerging problems and solutions can be quickly shared with others through social media. Therefore, the use of social media develops global citizenship awareness among people." (T14)

"Through the use of social media, people have become aware of inequality anywhere in the world. Being aware of inequalities and being sensitive contributes to global citizenship awareness. In global citizenship, not only the problems in one country but also the problems experienced all over the world are considered." (T16)

"The individual becomes aware that he is not alone with social media. Interaction with different cultures makes them respect people all over the world. Thus, the individual becomes a global citizen." (T20)

## CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When we look at the results obtained regarding the importance of global citizenship in today's societies, some of the teachers stated that they considered global citizenship important, while some of them stated that they did not consider it important by saying 'yes' and some of them said 'no'. While some of the teachers who stated 'yes' about the importance of global citizenship stated that it should be included in education programs, others stated that multicultural education should be given importance. The teachers who expressed 'no' opinions stated that the increase in wars, economic inequality in the world, the spread of racism, anti-immigrant sentiment, insensitivity to the problems in different societies, and individual life were at the forefront. When societies raise their citizens, they not only want them to be responsible for their own countries but also to be sensitive to global developments. In addition, educational institutions try to teach individuals their own culture while teaching them to respect different cultures. Thus, the individual will act not only nationally but also globally (Osler & Starkey, 2005; Wintersteiner et al, 2015). Regarding this situation, Kan (2009) recently stated that education systems have been focusing on raising citizens who have global citizenship awareness and adopt more universal values. However, many negative events such as wars, economic inequalities, and racism in the world show that societies do not give enough importance to global citizenship. To find solutions to the problems in the world, individuals need to be raised in accordance with the understanding of global citizenship. Preventing inequalities between societies is possible only if all societies take these problems into consideration and act jointly (Faist, 2009; Levinson, 2014; Morais & Ogden, 2011; Parekh, 2003).

When the results on the acquisition of global citizenship awareness by individuals are examined, it is concluded that according to the teachers, global citizenship awareness can be acquired through formal education, family education, social learning, social media, and educational programs on television. A person is primarily influenced by the family in which he or she was born and raised. The information conveyed to the child by the family plays an important role in the development of the child's mindset. The attitudes and behaviors of parents shape the development of the child's mental process (Arslan & Ulaş, 2021; Çiftçi, 1991; Kır, 2011). Therefore, the family's perspective on global citizenship affects the formation of global citizenship awareness in the individual. The individual also receives effective and systematic education at school. The knowledge and skills that students are expected to gain in the education process should be aimed at creating global citizenship awareness in individuals. The information that individuals have previously learned will be reinforced in the school environment, and individuals will become equipped with new

information (Kan, 2009; Wintersteiner et al, 2015). In addition, learning new information from an individual's social circle of friends, the television programs they watch, and the social media they use contributes to an individual's understanding of global citizenship. It is obvious that the content of the programs watched on television and the information on social media will change an individual's ideas (Grandy & Mavin, 2011; Zafer & Vardarlier, 2019) and enable him/her to approach events from a critical perspective. Again, regarding this situation, Arslan (2006) stated, television has a very effective power in dominating the "symbolic environment" of individuals.

Considering the results obtained regarding the impact of social media on society, the teachers concluded that social media positively affects society in terms of socializing individuals, interacting, being a means of communication, contributing to social change, and reaching society in general, and negatively in terms of damage to moral values, distancing from real life, and cultural degeneration. After today's technological developments, people have started to use technology more and more, and with this use, social media has entered the lives of societies and has increased its impact on society day by day. Because individuals spend most of their time on social media, the impact of social media on people has also increased (Akarsu, 2016; Çalapkulu & Alp, 2020; Egüz & Kesten, 2018; Karaboğa, 2019; Şener & Yiğit, 2021). Because of individuals using social networks, they can communicate with different people. Individuals socialize at the same time by communicating with different people (Akarsu, 2016; Calap & Çebi, 2020; Mital et al., 2010). Regarding this situation Çalışkan and Mencik (2015) stated that the use of social media, which has become a habit almost like eating and drinking by many users, brings together crowded masses from every culture, society, and almost every segment of society in a wide socialization denominator. At the same time, the communication opportunities brought by social media enable civil society organizations and other organizations to reach target audiences that they have difficulty reaching, to take action easily, and to spread their messages easily and quickly.

Societies also undergo rapid change thanks to interactions on social media. However, social media, which affects individuals and acts as a social control mechanism on societies, can negatively affect societies that do not have sufficient knowledge in terms of technological production and use (Çalışkan & Mencik, 2015). If society does not have sufficient knowledge about social media and cultural values are not fully adopted by individuals, it may be exposed to cultural degeneration by being under the negative influence of foreign cultures. At the same time, the values that keep society together may lose their importance due to negative information and examples on social media. In addition, individuals who want to be accepted on social media and to be in constant interaction with other people may become depressed and face social exclusion if they cannot achieve what they want or if their success is not sustained (Akarsu, 2016).

When the results obtained regarding the effect of social media use on global citizenship awareness in individuals are examined, it is concluded that according to the

teachers, social media use affects global citizenship awareness in terms of being aware of differences, reaching the whole world, combating social inequalities, interacting with different cultures, producing solutions to social problems, greater awareness, being sensitive, facilitating information sharing, critical thinking, and creating a sense of trust. With the individual's use of social media, the individual will primarily interact with people in different countries. Recognizing people from different cultures will make the individual tolerant toward them (Harchekar, 2017; Koçođlu, 2017; Mital et al., 2010; Parlak Yorđancı, 2018; Saki & Yazıcı, 2022). Regarding this situation alıřkan and Mencik (2015) stated, people will be able to contribute to the globalization of the world by having different beliefs and identities through social media tools. According to the understanding of global citizenship, individuals will not only value their own culture more highly but also accept other cultures as wealth and respect them. At the same time, thanks to social media, individuals will be able to realize and communicate with people who advocate global citizenship in different countries. Therefore, it is clear that individuals will learn that they are not alone and their belief in world citizenship will increase.

In addition, thanks to social media, people can become aware of events and developments occurring anywhere in the world and have information about the local and global impact of these situations. For example, events such as the Ukraine-Russia war, the Arab Spring, and the Covid 19 epidemic disease were not only informed by political administrations but also by people from different countries sharing information about these issues (Aktař, 2018; Batur & Bostancı, 2022; Baydili, 2021; Durmuř, 2023; Kırık, 2012; Koçođlu & Danyal, 2020; Mertođlu, 2021; Ruhrmann & Daube, 2021). Regarding this situation Aktař (2018) stated, in the Arab Spring process, social media played a major role in announcing the events to international media, while regional and international media played an important role in the effective reporting of the conduct of the ongoing protests and uprisings. Global citizenship involves empathy, critical evaluation of events, and finding solutions to problems. According to Wintersteiner et al. (2015), individuals should critically evaluate a national or international event to become global citizens. Evaluations made from different perspectives can contribute more to awareness and possible solutions related to the event and make the world a more livable place. In this way, global citizens become aware of the international activities they have done and become aware of the activities and their impact. Again, Yıldırım (2020), in his research on the Covid 19 pandemic process, concluded that people actively used social media in this process to follow the agenda, access accurate information, interact with people, and participate in cultural activities and information exchange. Thanks to social media, people were able to understand and comprehend different global problems and enter solidarity of action and thought. The right to information, which is a fundamental human right, was obtained by people through social media during the pandemic. At the same time, since individuals are equal all over the world in the use of social media (being open to different interactions, reaching everyone, using it at any time, etc.), therefore people will respect differences by adopting universal

values (equality, freedom, respect, independence, etc.) in accordance with the understanding of global citizenship. Sensitivity to different problems in global citizenship can be realized through interaction with social media. Thus, while people gain sensitivity to events, they also gain a sense of responsibility as world citizens.

According to the results obtained in the research, the following suggestions can be made in order to use social media correctly and to affect the awareness of global citizenship in individuals; the recommendations can be made such as giving more importance to teaching social media in schools, including more social media-related topics in textbooks, providing teachers with in-service training on social media, and encouraging students to use social media under the supervision of their parents.

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### Author(s)' statements on ethics and conflict of interest

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