



## Factors Influencing Social Media Addiction Among High School Students in Thailand: An Exploratory Factor Analysis

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### Abstract

Social media addiction has now become an increasingly significant issue because it can affect the emotional health, family relationships, and life events of users. Moreover, it has been shown to decrease daily usage control for academia and recreational activities, especially among youths. Therefore, the researchers aimed to investigate the factors that influence high school students' use of social media. A qualitative approach was applied in this study to conduct a preliminary examination of the factors involved, which was carried out by interviewing six psychology specialists in Thailand. Data were collected from high school students in Thailand, with 445 survey responses collected and analysed. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to discover the factor structure of the measurement. The results showed that there were four positive components: happiness, tolerance, interpersonal communication, and narcissism. The initial Eigen Values ranged from .210 to 10.378, while the variance was 59.506. Future research should include a confirmatory factor analysis and a focus on various countries to validate the findings, as well as, studying the prevalence and potential treatments for Social Media Addiction.

**Keywords:** Social media addiction, High school student, Exploratory factor analysis



## 1. Introduction

Due to ease of accessibility, people are now more connected to the digital world. Use of social media has completely changed social realities; People can now engage in two-way interaction on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube). As a result, social media is designed with the goal of providing users with enjoyment while also encouraging them to use it for longer periods of time and more frequently. This often leads to the overuse of social media, which can cause numerous negative effects (Nalwa, K. and Anand, A., 2003).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, education has shifted from on-site to online. E-learning has forced children to adopt new technologies and given them unlimited time to spend on social media. Teenagers are more likely to spend more time on social media because of having unlimited time since they are unable to effectively control their own behaviour (Dalvi-Esfahani, M. et al., 2021) and because they have faster adapting skills compared to the elderly (Cheng, C. et al. 2021). In order to provide support, Ahmed, O. et al. (2021) maintain that addiction involves behaviour restriction. Also, Pino, M. J., et al. (2020) found that psychological, social, and environmental factors contributed to internet loss control. As technology progresses, social media addiction decreases work productivity while influencing interpersonal relationships and overall well-being for users (Sun, Y., & Zhang, Y., 2021). Teenagers spend more than eight hours a day on the Internet, mostly for studying and family relationships (Wang, H. et al., 2011).

Accordingly, this research is a preliminary exploration to investigate the factors influencing social media addiction among high school students in Thailand with the EFA Method.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents a review of the literature focusing on Human Behaviour Theory related to Social Media Usage and Problems of Social Media Usage. Section 3 presents the model, sample selection, data collection, and analysis methods used in this study. Section 4 presents the results and discusses the findings. Finally, Section 5 presents the conclusion as well as a discussion on the consequent implications and limitations of the study and ideas for further research.



## **2. Body of paper**

While studying the factors that influence high school students' use of social media, the researchers focused on the human behaviour theory related to social media usage and the risks of social media addiction, as below:

### **2.1 Human Behaviour Theory related to Social Media Usage**

#### **2.1.1 The Theory of Planned Behaviour**

The intention to express behaviour reflects on attitudes toward behaviour, culture, (Ajzen, 1991) and other factors that control expression, such as attitudes toward behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural controls.

#### **2.1.2 Cognitive Behavioural Theory**

Human emotion and behaviour are influenced both positively and negatively by cognition (Shaw, M. and Black, D.W., 2008). It could be caused by someone's experience, such as perceived information, belief, or developed skills from perceiving and interpreting. It seems remarkable that an individual's mood can change quickly when using the internet. It can be advantageous to encourage problematic online behaviour to get away from problems or improve an individual's mood (Sangchanchai, P., 2006).

#### **2.1.3 Components Model of Addiction**

Addiction could be related to numerous factors, including physical, psychological, and social factors that influence how people perceive and express themselves. In terms of addiction, there are six main elements: Salience, Mood Modification, Tolerance, Withdrawal, Conflict, and Relapse. Even if one component is missing, people can become addicted to something if they use it frequently enough (Griffiths, M., 2009).

### **2.2 Risk of Social Media Addiction**

#### **2.2.1 Social Media Characteristic**

Social media usage can lead to self - confidence and mental stability as it is possible for users to express themselves in a virtual environment to stay in touch and connect with people who share their interests (Dalvi-Esfahani, M., et al., 2021).

Using an internet-connected electronic device, everyone can use social media at any time, from anywhere (Cheng, C., et al., 2021). There have been efforts to increase the amount of time that people spend on the internet by creating new technologies (Nalwa, K. and Anand, A., 2003). Moreover, Fu, S. and H. Li (2020) found that many people who tried to cut back on their online usage and stop using social media noticed that they were faced with unhappiness and emotional problems.



## 2.2.2 Problems with Social Media Usage

Addiction is characterised by uncontrolled use and excessive online reach, specifically in the context of social media, gaming, and sexual topics (Muller et al., 2016). Remaining connected to the internet promotes a sense of belonging and decreases feelings of fear of rejection in relationships (Sun, Y., & Zhang, Y., 2021). It is a well-known and common recreational activity, despite the fact that excessive use may cause issues (Dalamaria, T., et al., 2019).

Social media has been found to be the reason for introverts and psychological disease (Shek, D. T. L., et al., 2016). As introverts, people use social media as a way to get away from real-life relationships, enjoy pleasure, deal with loneliness, and make new connections. Psychiatric issues reflect on problematic social media use (Sun, Y., & Zhang, Y., 2021), such as comparison with others, misused situations, and illegal and immoral usage. Utilising social media for education, on the other hand, might lead to pupils being online for extended periods of time, and perhaps too frequently. This could have a negative impact on both student intention and performance in class (Bhandarkar, A. M. et al., 2021).

## 2.3 Methodology

This study applied a qualitative method to generate findings on the factors to support high school students' use of social media in Thailand from psychological specialists. Purposive sampling was used as the basis for selection. Interviewees in this study consisted of three child psychiatrists and three adolescent psychology experts in Thailand. Table 1 presents the interviewees' information. The interviews were conducted online via Zoom application. Each interview took between 30 and 60 minutes, and each was recorded with the permission of the interviewees. Because of the qualitative method, we developed a questionnaire consisting of 2 parts. The first section collected personal information, while the second section assessed the participants regarding their social media usage. The data analysis included a total of 445 responses. The sample population was mostly female (69%), with an average grade point between 3.51 and 4.00 (60.4 %).

All measurement scales were adapted from the interviews and existing literature as shown in Table 2. These items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Based on the data analysis, we used Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) to examine the reliability of each item, which produced scores greater than 0.70 in each case, establishing that the measures were reliable and internally consistent (Hair et al., 2010). Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) of all variables were calculated using SPSS 22.



## 2.4 Results

The preliminary factor analysis results show an excellent Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of 0.942 and significance of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. In terms of Principal Component Analysis, the rotated solution revealed 4 components, explaining a total of 59.206% of the variance, whereby component 1 contributed 43.241%, component 2 contributed 49.194%, component 3 contributed 54.695%, and component 4 contributed 59.206%. The results of this analysis indicated that components 1-4 were strong components and influenced Social Media Addiction among High School Students in Thailand, as shown in Table 1.

*Table 1: Matrix of Components from Orthogonal Rotation (Varimax Method)*

		Components			
		1	2	3	4
1	I am not proud of myself.	.731			
2	I am not confident enough to determine anything.	.711			
3	I am not enjoying anything.	.648			
4	I cannot face problems or stress.	.645			
5	I am not happy with my present life.	.624			
6	I feel that my life is unpredictable.	.616			



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7	I never enjoy activities.	<b>.608</b>			
8	I don't know how to make or keep relationships with people around me.	<b>.592</b>			
9	I cannot give my opinion in my real life.	<b>.583</b>			
10	I feel that living today is not challenging enough.	<b>.485</b>			
11	I feel impatient and restless when I cannot be online.		<b>.700</b>		
12	I fail to control spending time online.		<b>.691</b>		
13	I will never give up being online, even if I have pain while using it.		<b>.689</b>		
14	I feel annoyed if someone bothers me while I am online.		<b>.611</b>		
15	I find others in my life compliant to me about the amount of time I spend online.		<b>.603</b>		
16	I neglect my coursework/assignments to spend more time online.		<b>.590</b>		
17	I try to hide how long I spend online.		<b>.577</b>		



18	I reduce time for my hobby or my favourite activities.		.569		
19	I feel more comfortable communicating on social media than in real life.			.804	
20	I feel that people on social media are friendlier to me than in real life.			.760	
21	I am self-confident on social media.			.708	
22	I always want to be admired by others.				.758
23	I feel unsatisfied when people do not admire me.				.751
24	I am unsatisfied when others have an opposite opinion of me.				.655

This study revealed only 4 factors influenced Social Media Addiction of High School Students in Thailand, which could indicate the name of each component in Table 1 as Happiness, Tolerance, Interpersonal Communication, and Narcissism.

## Discussion

The current research suggests that social media addiction is linked to a number of physical and psychological characteristics, as well as social and cultural factors (Griffiths, M., 2009). In particular, Paakkari, L., et al. (2021) found that problematic online usage among adolescents is driven by a variety of factors, including personal issues, family, friends, and culture. As a result, this study was created to help young Thai individuals who are addicted to social media.



### **3. Conclusion**

We conclude from the results of the exploratory factor analysis of the adolescent population in Thailand that 4 factors can be identified as influencing Social Media Addiction among High School Students in Thailand. The researcher named each component from the characteristics of the developed questionnaire: Happiness, Tolerance, Interpersonal Communication, and Narcissistic.

*Table 2: Component from the Characteristics of the Developed Questionnaire*



Components	Question No.	Definition	Reference
Happiness	1st-10th	Life satisfaction through physical, psychological and social factors	Monacis, L., et al., (2017), Boer, M., et al., (2021), Sun, Y. and Y. Zhang, (2021)
Tolerance	11th-18th	Increasing duration and frequency of social media usage to maintain level of life satisfaction	Bhandarkar, A. M. et al., (2021), Boer, M., et al., (2021), Monacis, L., et al., (2017), Pino, M. J., et al., (2020)
Interpersonal Communication	19th-21st	Interaction with people in real life and people in social media; Ability to express an opinion and themselves to others	Servidio, R., et al. (2019), Ahmed, O., et al. (2021), Monacis, L., et al., (2017)
Narcissistic	22nd-24th	Sense of self-importance and a deep need for excessive attention and admiration	Lucia M. et al. (2017), Ahmed O. et al. (2021), Servidio, R., et al. (2019), Sun, Y. and Y. Zhang, (2021), Dalvi-Esfahani, M., et al. (2021)

## Limitations & Future Research

According to the data, the purpose of this study was to develop a component model for high school students in Thailand who are addicted to social media. A Confirmatory Factor Analysis affirmative components model is required to validate high school students' use of social media in further work. Young people in Thailand, as reported by them, were the only source of the findings in this study. To make the experiment stronger, it would be worthwhile to assess Social Media Addiction in other countries and among other social groups to develop a prevalence and treatment approach.



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