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The Role of Social Media in Modern Society in Thailand

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Abstract- Social media has found its place at the heart of Thai life. It influences the way Thais talk to each other, the way politics works, the direction of business, and the way we feel about each other each day. This paper examines the role of social media within Thai society, where it all started, and what it all means. This includes the major players such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LINE, and TikTok. The depth of the analysis also includes the role of the internet and other online media on the way people communicate, the words and language that are used, the politics of participation, and the way that global business works in areas such as marketing and online shopping. While doing this, it also connects people, enables civic life, boosts creativity, and helps build economic opportunities. However, it also poses challenges such as misinformation, privacy concerns, online harassment, and even addictions. This discussion balances these opportunities with the challenges, and their implications for Thai society. Further, it also discusses the possible future trends of social media in Thailand, future technologies, and their regulations. Thus, it may be said that social media also has a place in Thai society, building society, while also fostering new social, cultural, and political streams.

Keywords- Social media; Thailand; digital communication; political engagement; e-commerce; cultural change; mental health; misinformation; social networking platforms; digital society

I. Introduction

Social media platforms have become key to Thai society. They influence how people communicate, interact, and engage in various areas like politics, business, and culture. The digital world has introduced new ways to communicate and has changed traditional interaction patterns. This shift has reshaped social norms and cultural values. These platforms allow for instant sharing and interaction through different media formats. This enables quick and clear exchange of information. The speed and reach of connectivity highlight the important role social media play in public life. Their impact stretches to elections, business activities, education, and cultural trends (Ghifrani Alimin, 2024). For example, political activists have used social media to gain support, organize events, and coordinate protests, which have improved civic engagement. Businesses use these platforms for marketing, while schools have integrated them as tools for sharing knowledge. Culturally, new trends spread rapidly through social media, often causing conflicts with established traditions (Hai Bui, 2016).

Social media also has positive effects. They help build community, encourage collaboration, and offer ways for self-expression, meeting fundamental human needs for communication and belonging.



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Historical Context of Social Media In Thailand

This is significant for modern society, as it enables the sharing of ideas and concepts over long distances (Ghifrani Alimin, 2024). It could be seen as enabling the flow of information through technology, the exchange of news, and views, with different platforms for such information flow (Hai Bui, 2016). It is further seen as an avenue to advance one's social life or business interests, as the user could also use this to be a journalist, uploading images or videos in real time. There is the ability to use this in fostering friendships or other relationships in society. For Thailand, the concept of social media is seen in communication technologies such as blogs, wiki, profiles, forums, and so forth. These are technologies that enable the users to share opinions, provide comments, vote, or enable the exchange of different types of media. Some notable platforms in this Thai society include Wikipedia and, more recently, Facebook, which is the most popular platform of its kind in Thai society.

III. Social Media Platforms Popular In Thailand

Digital technologies and social media now lie at the heart of Thai communities. Many social media platforms are used inside the communities for interactions with friends and family and electronic commerce activities. Examples of these include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LINE, and Tik Tok.

Facebook can boast the highest number of users, with over 51 million users. The site is accessible to every age group and remains the most used social media outlet throughout Thailand today. Instagram has been adopted by 16 million users, seeming to be a favorite among teens and Bangkok's urban youth. Twitter has become a vital channel for social activism and political protest. LINE, Thailand's major instant messaging platform, has more than 46 million users. Tik Tok particularly appeals to Gen Z, cultural influences of which have copious relevance across Thailand's thriving online landscape.

Facebook

Facebook is currently the most used social networking site in Thailand, used by about 99% of its users. Invented in February of 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook allows users, like Friendster, to create a profile and maintain a friend network. The website allows users to share photos and notes within the personal network and to like, comment on, or share posts with other users.

Instagram

Instagram is a visually heavy social media platform in Thailand. It gives the opportunity for both individuals and organizations to create photo and video posts in many content formats, such as feed posts, stories, and IGTV. These features offer flexibility in crafting messages and their presentation. Themes that are normally posted on Instagram are food, lifestyle, travel, and daily activities.

By the year 2019, there were about 16 million people in Thailand already using Instagram. Of these users, 63% were female, while 37% of them were male. This would mean a huge female subscriber base within the country. Instagram usage is particularly immense among the youth demographic. The heavy emphasis on visual content has



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made this important for promoting travel destinations, hotel and resort experiences, restaurants, and bars.

Twitter

Twitter is one of the most influential microblogging-based social application tools in the world in which users' uploaded status can be transmitted and made publicly visible to anyone in the world. Twitter is also capable of becoming a powerful tool in facilitating political discourse, as well as having the potential to influence community participation in politics. In such regards, Obama is one of the American politicians who has made use of social media to influence his presidential election campaigns in the United States. Surprisingly, Twitter, as a form of communication, played a positive part in Obama's victory in the presidential election (Salman et al., 2018).

Twitter, on the other hand, provided a different interface as it allowed users to send and receive short messages, referred to as "tweets." They were the most popular among celebrities and individuals who wanted to join a wide range of ongoing issues around the world. Twitter also serves as a tool for activism as users can give their opinion regarding different issues in society and politics (Ghifrani Alimin, 2024).

LINE

Sharing information is one of the most important functions of smartphones. People want to share information with others instantly. LiNE was developed mainly for the "sharing" of information. Originally developed as a communication tool, it now supports mobile payment and commerce, enabling a variety of interactions. LiNE supports a speech-recognition-to-text translator, two-person call, video call, group call, chat interface, chat room, news, Facebook feed, mobile payment (LiNE Pay), and mobile commerce, inviting shoppers to the LiNE Mall (<https://store.line.me>). LiNE offers the use of stickers, fixed-phrase icons, Emoticons, and other elements to augment communication. Japanese history and culture are also reflected in the content of stickers. LiNE is popular in many dominantly Buddhist Asian countries, including Thailand, where it retains 86.5 million registered users (October 2017). LiNE was adapted quickly to the Thai context, with Coins and Stickers released specifically for that country in 2012. Online shopping is a trend today, especially via popular channels like websites, Facebook, Instagram, and the LiNE application in Thailand. Purchase experience, social presence, and trust have been identified as crucial factors influencing the intention to purchase via LiNE (Maichaimongkol, 2019).

TikTok

The introduction of TikTok in Thailand was in 2017. Currently, in January 2023, the population in Thailand had access to the internet, and the figure stood at 89.4%, the majority of whom were actively consuming and using the platform. The introduction of TikTok, therefore, changed the ways of social media.

TikTok is different from other social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LINE, as each of these has been prominent in different areas of Thai social media life since the early 2010s. The original TikTok app required its users to create their own videos, but the current version of TikTok is more focused on watching videos made by other people. It has a variety of videos of different kinds.



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The health crisis disrupted the co-existence of political parties, the media, and citizens, although the viability of TikTok networks persisted (Sun et al., 2022), with political issues being among the most discussed.

TikTok acts as a medium for tenders where enthusiastic youths are offered ample opportunities to display their talent and abilities, helping to enhance creativity. The app provides economic empowerment to its users.

IV. Demographics of Social Media Users In Thailand

Social media in Thailand is characterized by several demographic factors, which include the segregation of the Thai population based on factors like age, gender, and geographical factors. Age is the primary factor that segregates the Thai population in terms of the use of social media networks. Young people are the primary users of social media networks. The use of social media networks increases from 12 to 25 years of age and then decreases sharply. Men are more likely to use the social networks than women in Thailand, especially for the purpose of obtaining news. In addition, social networks are more popular among the people living in urban areas than in the rural areas, where people prefer the Long-Term Evolution (LTE) network services.

According to the National Statistical Office, 67.2% of the Thai population accessed the social media networks in 2017. Further research indicates that the access of the Thai people to the social media networks is limited to only more than half of the people in the age bracket of 15-64 years. In Thailand, the majority of the people, that is, about two-thirds of the people of all ages, access the Facebook platform. In addition, 30% of the total population in Thailand access the Instagram platform, while 18.3% access the Twitter platform. TikTok is the second most popular platform in Thailand after the Facebook platform, and 24.1 million people in Thailand access the platform. Further, the average user in Thailand is active for 95 minutes per day.

Users of the social media networks in Thailand are mostly in the 15-44 years bracket. Further, 100% of the people in the 15-24-year bracket and 80% of the people in the 25-34 years bracket access the internet. Further, 85% of the people in Thailand, irrespective of the age factor, access the social media networks. Gender factors indicate that 69.9% of the women and 63.5% of the men in Thailand who access the internet are active in the social media networks. (ทองมูลเล็ก and วิจิตรธรรมรส, 2018) (Hai Bui, 2016).

Age Groups

Age is an essential factor in the use of social media in Thailand, while gender is not (ทองมูลเล็ก and วิจิตรธรรมรส, 2018). In Thailand, the survey of more than 38,000 people over the age of 15 revealed that the percentage of people who use social media is the highest in the 15-34-year-old group, while the percentage decreases in the older groups. In addition, people living in urban areas are more likely to use social media than people living in rural areas. Health factors and the lack of access to devices and the internet also affect the elderly's engagement in social media. In the same way, the elderly in Thailand are less likely to use the functions and applications of SNSs than the younger groups. This is in the same context as the recent study in China, which is



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also applicable in Thailand, showing that older people are less likely to engage in social media than the younger and middle-aged groups (Zhou et al., 2022). For the elderly, the factors that affect access to SNSs include age, gender, residence, education level, and regional development. For the elderly, especially older women, the more access they must SNSs, the more they are likely to engage in these applications. This is because SNSs help the elderly maintain contact with friends and participate in social

activities after retirement. In addition, older women are more likely to use the functions and applications of SNSs than older men of the same age. For the elderly, the more advanced the socioeconomic status, the younger the age in the older groups, and the more developed the region they are living in, the more diverse the activities they are likely to engage in on SNSs.

Gender Distribution

The proportion of male and female social media users also differs across countries. In Thailand, women dominate social media users, comprising a total of 63% compared to their male counterparts, who have a smaller proportion (Celina Sicat Dayrit et al., 2022). The female majority is also present in rural and urban areas, but rural areas have a higher proportion of women than urban areas. The female majority is higher in rural areas, where there is a 68% female majority compared to urban areas, where it is 62%. The Angeles Metropolitan Area alone has ten million more female social media users than males. Many women social media users are aged between 35 and 44 years. The female majority among social media users is a common feature among most Asian countries, but Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines have a higher female majority than other Asian countries. In other countries, such as Japan and the UAE, there is a male majority or a significantly smaller proportion of women compared to men.

Urban vs Rural Usage

Various researchers have studied the differences in the use of social media in rural areas and urban areas, considering aspects such as infrastructure, technology, content, society, personal safety, budget, etc. (Zhao, 2018). The use of social media affects the lives of users, which differ according to whether they are from rural areas or urban areas. The location of users should be taken into consideration while conducting a social study related to the use of social media (ทองมูลเล็ก & วิจิตรธรรมรส, 2018). These aspects are reflected in the data related to Thailand as well. Urban users tend to connect with friends, family, celebrities, and influencers. Social media is also used as a tool for conducting social studies, keeping track of recent events, etc. Facebook and Twitter are used to discuss important, political, and societal issues. On the contrary, users in rural areas, especially those in the northeastern region of Thailand, which is also known as Isan, tend to add family members and village friends to their social network. Users in rural areas tend to add political figures such as the minister or the prime minister. For example, Terdsakun Group, who is a railway mechanic from the province of Ayutthaya, is an ordinary netizen outside the academic world. He does not usually use social media to discuss scientific or educational content, nor does he use social media to connect with a large network of people. However, he uses social media to keep track of specific activities in which he cannot participate. There are fewer political activists in rural areas, especially in Facebook, in comparison to cities like Bangkok or Chiang Mai.



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Twitter is used more in areas like Bangkok and Chiang Mai, but in the Northeast, users are scarce. People in rural areas may prefer to use the Isan language rather than Thai.

V. Impact of Social Media On Communication

The role of social media platforms is vital in changing the style of communication. An example is how social media has changed a new language through the new vocabulary, slang, and buzzwords associated with it.

Social networks are considered a dominant force in generating new words, including slang and buzzwords, which influence changes to languages (Hooi-Ten Wong et al., 2017). Facebook, a social platform for socializing and individual communication among different demographics, is a major source of new words and influences many users to adopt new words among many users in Thailand and globally. The language is influenced by English slang, and it is used among many users in Thailand. The language is communicated through a mix of languages, and some expressions of sentiments are derived from English language sources. The influence of social media and technology is a major force in developing a culture that influences communication and language.

Every generation has a unique language, and social media platforms are a major force in modern-day widespread communication (Ghifrani Alimin, 2024). The platforms and their styles influence modern-day communication and language expressions. The language reflects demographic factors, including age, and the Thai language incorporates social identities associated with English language and culture when using English language words.

Changing Communication Patterns

Social media is a powerful tool with a significant impact on society, especially in communication. Communication is a skill that plays a critical role in influencing interactions among humans. Developments in modern communication have introduced diversity in communication approaches, including communication via letters, emails, and social media. Internet communication via online discussion boards, chat rooms, QQ, ICQ, and others is a communication approach in the early 1990s, averaging 25-30 minutes spent using the internet. Neutral communication via WhatsApp and Facebook is a widely used communication approach in modern society, highly researched by communication scholars. Changing communication approaches may result in new issues.

Social networking may result in addiction, which may have a negative impact on individuals (Hooi-Ten Wong et al., 2017).

Influence on Language and Slang

Social media has made it easier to disseminate Thai slang, and young people use terms from various groups, including urban youth and online communities (Agung Sugiharto, 2017). There are daily creations of new slang terms through social media tools like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and Line, but most of these are not in use within



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a short period and become obsolete. As the public and private domains of language become integrated and individual mass communication grows, the emergence of new slang terms and styles seems to be transient. The environment of the internet and social media has hastened the evolution of slang terms, and new terms like "ขงกฏ" (khong guu, "mine") and "aysok" ("so sexy") gain popularity but become obsolete within a period of two years.

Researchers have argued that the use of informal language in social media significantly impacts the use and understanding of the English language (Sha and Pathan, 2018). There is more exposure to slang, abbreviations, and acronyms in the language of social media, and these are increasingly being used in face- to-face communication, making it difficult to distinguish between the right and wrong use of the language. Although the language of English can adapt and change more easily than other languages, the use of informal language in digital communication is likely to result in significant linguistic change in the near future.

VI. Social Media and Politics

Apart from affecting voting, campaigns, and issues in politics, social media profoundly changes the way politics is conducted in the country, including in regimes characterized by high levels of political control. How this affects politics and its implications in an authoritarian regime, however, is not well scrutinized. This piece seeks to fill in the gaps in the study of the regime in Vietnam by answering two issues: the implications of online discussions in the circulation of political information and the interactions of the regime's elite, as well as the disappearance of online activism despite the opportunities for doing so. In regimes that control information as a factor of control, the mainstream media is controlled by the government, accompanied by the marginalization of alternative discourses and propaganda in the form of reform. This action allows for the creation of an area where people in the public are free to shape opinions in the Southern Asian country through numerous public participation activities. The regime, however, still expected that the cases of such opinions would not be common, widespread, and long-lived.

In 2011, the information flow through social media by the party-state strengthened, as did one-sided media. This created a growing appetite for more information among people, which led to swift dissemination of contradictory information in form of rumors—especially regarding major political figures. The media attention given to a retired Politburo official's health conditions and the ease with which one could create their own story is a typical case of how rumors thrive in conditions where information is unclear. The dramatic involvement of key players, coupled with a lack of trust in the state, leads to rumors about political gray areas. Detractors use political scoring to retaliate, and his claims could be attempts to influence the debate—especially with the mood of the political weather (Hai Bui, 2016).

Political Activism

The role of social media in Thai politics, in the context of the election campaign, can be regarded as dynamic in nature. This phenomenon allows people to voice and unify their ideas, and therefore, political engagement becomes visible and quantifiable. The



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government has responded to this by attempting to curb information flow in social media, thus sustaining control (Hai Bui, 2016).

Election Campaigns

During these periods, the number of “likes” for Thai political parties on Facebook is high, and these same political party pages have increased posts. A similar phenomenon occurs in Twitter, with increased followers and the number of posts relating to political parties during these periods. Additionally, the number of daily tweets containing the party names is also high during these periods. In essence, Facebook and Twitter transform into advertising tools during these periods, with followers promoting positive notes about the parties and politicians they support, thereby promoting these parties in social media (Salman et al., 2018).

Government Regulation

The Thai government sets three clear rules on how food is advertised. The foods, in this case, include fried and baked potatoes, snacks extruded, chocolate, instant meals, and frozen, and are supposed to carry printed package labels that warn consumers to eat in moderation and to stay active. Similarly, advertisement over these foods should be accompanied by warning messages that are loud and audible for at least five seconds. Marketing promotions—special prices, coupons, and sweepstakes—are supposed to offer complete information and spell conditions against which they apply. Failure to adhere to the above regulations has one facing fines of between 5,000 to 100,000 baht.

VII. Social Media and Business

“Social media has emerged as an important toolkit for various organizations, providing them with opportunities such as brand visibility, lead generation, as well as conducting sales from the online platform. In fact, over 40% of Thai internet users have been engaging in buying products/services through the electronic platform as of 2013. With this trend, the market is projected to reach \$3 billion. Four major drivers account for this booming electronic business in Thai markets. They include the growing number of active social media users, more people using electronic business as a means of conducting their trade, increasing access to electronic mobile payments, as well as the adoption of electronic business among small, medium-sized enterprises as well as multinational corporations—at various levels,” as proposed by Rianto Rahadi and Andretti Abdillah (2013).

These include small-sized firms as well as multinational corporations that have recognized that electronic business would play an important role in selling as well as building brands, with several partnering with diverse mobile network service providers in the country in exploiting the fact that mobile technology has become an essence of various daily activities such as shopping.

Marketing Strategies

With the advent of social media, it is now easy to create new brands using affordable tools that are not complicated. Moreover, social media provides new opportunities for marketing that did not exist before. Unlike with earlier forms of media like television or print, social media provides brands with the opportunity to talk to their consumers



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rather than simply presenting them with messages. This is the main reason why new gen entrepreneurs are using social media as the platform of choice for their marketing campaigns. Over 40% of small and medium-sized enterprises are planning on using social media marketing, with several having already begun integrating Facebook and Twitter with their branding campaigns (Wahyu Widyaningrum, 2016).

In the case of Thailand, the growth in the usage of e-commerce is one major driver for the increased demand for social media marketing services. The projected sales in the Southeast Asia region for the year 2025 in the online retail market stand at \$88 billion, with Thailand contributing 15 percent toward the total value.

In 2021, the Thai e-commerce retail market contributed 5.8 percent toward the total retail sales in the Southeast Asia and Oceania region, making Thailand rank second in the market.

E-commerce Growth

The online shopping industry in Thailand is witnessing rapid growth, with factors like faster penetration of internet services, widespread use of smartphones, and the introduction of modern, consumer-friendly online payment systems fueling the boom. The online shopping industry in Thailand recorded 2.47 trillion baht in online business in 2021, rising from 1.55 trillion in 2019 and 1.57 trillion in 2020. Social media platforms have emerged as one of the most important tools used by online shopping companies to market their products, and mobile commerce is also contributing substantially to the growth of online shopping in Thailand. Generation Y consumers are attaching considerable importance to the convenience offered by online shopping platforms and are increasingly viewing online shopping stores as more secure and superior to brick-and-mortar stores (Kongprapunt and Papat, 2018).

Among the factors fuelling the online shopping industry in Thailand, the factor of trust emerges as the most important factor influencing the online shopping behavior of Gen-Y consumers in Thailand. Increasing numbers of consumers are making use of their smartphones to order goods and services and send international remittances, and the mobile commerce segment recorded 86.0 percent of the total online commerce industry in Thailand in 2021.

Established businesses and new market players are making use of social media platforms like Facebook and Line to advertise their businesses globally and are aiming to create large online business ecosystems to enhance the overall ease and effectiveness of online shopping in Thailand (Wulan, 2015).

Brand Engagement

Today, through social media, brands are able to communicate and keep in touch with their respective customers and potential customers. By having the back-and-forth communication, brands are able to create brand engagement, defined as the interaction between customers and brands in which customers are positively and somewhat interactively engaged with the brand marketer, and the extent to which customers are emotionally and intellectually connected to the brand, prompting them to engage in and collaborate with the brand; and the extent to which the bond between the consumer and



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the brand is strong, particularly if the number of engaged consumers with the brand is high because the brand can influence the purchasing behavior of other consumers and their brand loyalty. Through social media, brand marketers create multiple brand marketing options to communicate and engage with their respective customers.

Thai companies have readily adapted to this technology, using it extensively. For example, at Facebook, Thai brands and personalities have increasingly used user-generated content in order to prevent the loss of market shares and build brand images. For instance, developing original content is subject to the interpretation of consumer needs, thus Thai brands have targeted their advertisements using the numerous influencers in the market. Generally, the entertainment industry in Thailand encourages young talent in the industry, including actors, singers, music shows, among others, using social media like Facebook and Instagram.

Thai brands have used various means to promote products including developing customer-oriented content, making relevant updates, creating product relationships with special happenings in the market, and asking clients to share experiences in order to influence others to have the same experiences.

VIII. Social Media and Mental Health

The rise of social media brings a mix of mental health effects-some hopeful, others with warning signs. These platforms open avenues for online connections and shared experiences, which can foster a sense of belonging and real support. Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter give voice to people and a space for those more socially reserved to talk about themselves, as pointed out by M Khalaf et al. in 2023. Interactive gaming on Facebook and LINE has the potential for helping form friendships and gaining emotional support.

Yet there are risks. To people with social anxiety, social networks can feel daunting because interactions may be shaped by lingering inhibitions. Very high usage can breed intolerance and aggression, and it can intensify social comparison in a way that fuels anxiety and lowers self-esteem. Cyberbullying, particularly among teens and young adults, raises the odds of anxiety and depression and, in extreme cases, can even push someone toward suicide (Nazmunnahar et al., 2023). These issues are especially salient where social media use is heavy, as in Thailand, for example, where studies show a pressure to stay actively engaged on these platforms.

Positive Impacts

Popular forms of online social networking include Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram. Among these social networks, Facebook has been observed to be the most used form of social expression in Thailand, which has the highest online activity across the entire Asia-Pacific region. Thai youth spend more than 7.3 hours on social media daily, as opposed to just 1.72 hours globally. After the UAE, the Thai population has been observed to be the most active in terms of using online social networks globally. The fame that has been achieved by the popularity of social media has contributed to



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the interest that individuals have in celebrities and the way celebrities live their lives or venture into the entertainment sector as a profession. Indeed, social media has defined the way individuals in Thailand perceive going to the theatre in this century. The advantages derived from using information technology have heightened the status of social media as a force to reckon with, especially in terms of offering privacy, connectivity, ease of email expression, networking, and using video sharing as a communication tool (Oluwadamilola Kemi, 2016).

Social media has the potential to make weddings, and corporate functions attain international status. It has acted as a tool that has been used to maintain friendships, feel connected with others, bridge gaps between its users, as well as track down existing gaps or differences between individuals (Ghifrani Alimin, 2024). It has also been used to create and increase public awareness of socio-political issues in various regions, with individuals using its platform to stage protests or revolutions with little danger to their lives, with its status as a tool for political participation increasing (Ghifrani Alimin, 2024).

Negative Impacts

Social media today is a major player in Thai politics: both a booster at the national level and a messenger of the struggle at the international level, despite the grim tightening of the government's political stranglehold. It ensures the popularity of the current government by trying to lower the level of dissent against the government using social media. The influence of social media in Thai politics was first experienced after the disputed 2013–2014 Thai general election. Since April 2013, the anti-government protests led by the PDRC and their pro-government counter-protests were primarily promoted via social media sites. This social media platform was primarily employed by political fractions to bring people together and demonstrate against the opposing side. Without the support of social media, the revolutions

witnessed after the controversial election would have needed a huge consumption of time and resources. Social media, which helps bring large numbers of people together for protests, is also responsible for the spread of misinformation and propaganda against the government as well as the suppression of political communications, especially by regulating freedom of communication (Dwi Setya Watie, 2012).

Cyberbullying

Social media has opened doors to people across borders and has profoundly affected a traditional culture that has long centered on physical separation and a somewhat reluctant desire to interact. Most frequently, Thai people enter this world and articulate themselves in Thai combinations of global and local flavors, formal and informal language, and old and new ways of living. The virtual world reinforces political potency by providing a voice to a particular group (particularly identified by Suraseth and Koraneekij, 2024) and encouraging more young people to become part of a dialogue about politics. It speeds along the spread of new products, services, trends, and ways of living, and establishes a focal point for minority views and rare interests.

The major platforms of today—Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LINE, and TikTok—each attract a different segment of the youth. Facebook is where you find older adults



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and politicians spending their time, but where you don't find younger folks hanging out. Instagram is a platform for youth, activists, and creatives. Twitter is where you will find a variety of activists, commentators, and many others. Lastly, LINE is for our daily communication and covers a large e-commerce sphere.

Thai social media users differ from the rest of their social media-related everyday activities in their division by age, gender, geography, and status, a feature of the prevailing research tradition of social media-related subjects. Most users position themselves at the extremes of the online/offline spectrum. Novices come to social media with a sharp learning curve, which has the consequence of significantly influencing their online/offline communication. This change is not uniform; various groups have gone in different directions, sometimes at odds with one another.

IX. Cultural Influences of Social Media

Social media is reshaping the Thai cultural scene visibly and measurably. People, especially the young and working-age citizens, use social platforms as if it were a big stage for fashion, lifestyle, and trends. The apps update quicker, are more interactive, and are easier to use. Large-scale surveys confirm that many Thais use social media in pursuit of their goals of lifestyle and to arrange activities relevant to those pursuits. However, traditional Thai values also remain strong in daily life. Even while social media grows, it does not eradicate established ways of thinking or belief, and traditional norms continue to have their influence on behavior. Such staunch coexistence of online culture with long-standing traditions leads to a quite intense topic of study, and thus Third Millennium Thailand is very interesting.

Trends in Fashion and Lifestyle

Social media is now well entrenched as one of the prime movers of trends and lifestyle in Thailand, as it is in most countries. Fashion, which has been a fast-growing sector of the Thai economy, is now inextricably linked to social media-its producers use it for marketing, and its consumers for inspiration and self-

expression. In Malaysia, by 2019, Instagram was already the platform of choice for fashion e-commerce. This fact alone showed a regional preference for visually oriented interaction. In Thailand, the main trendsetters span top influencers, celebrities, street style icons, and socialites with large bases of followers. Since visuals trump words in catching attention, this has driven brands into creating slick supply chains to quickly translate buzz on Instagram into mass-market products. According to Pavitra (2022), Thai fashion has, for a long time, been propelled by social change. During the modern Rattanakosin era, dressing culture changed under the Westernizing policies epitomized by Field Marshal Por Phibulsongkram. Influential groups such as the aristocracy, the royal household, and state power spread trends down the chain. After World War II, urbanization and modernization focused on Bangkok propelled a new wave of influences other than any single individual. Industrialization and the movement of lower-class women to factories in Bangkok further set trends. The dynamics of fashion were driven by factors such as trendsetter or self-expression, a role model or muse, symbolic space, and fashion event-all reflected by journalists, magazine editors, fashion dolls, shows, and advertising. It is here that Raw Denim appeared as a niche collectible



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cum everyday staple, creating a distinctive movement and community within the Bangkok fashion scene.

Influence on Traditional Values

Today's Thai youth have a strong sense of pride in themselves, even in a world that prizes diversity less. The distinctiveness of their background in their home country seems to shine through in them. Moreover, more users have realized that social media usage is a privilege with responsibilities attached, and it is this sense of accountability that provides the foundation for respectful usage.

This is especially seen through the effect of social media on traditional values in Thailand. Modern influences of social media are affecting the young in Thailand. Today, more youths are being introduced to fashion and lifestyle trends that are currently popular among international celebrities. For many people in Thailand, dressing up well and looking stylish is not just about self-satisfaction, but about acceptance by society. This is an area where social media highly affects the association of the youth in Thailand with society cognitively.

X. Challenges of Social Media Use

Although social media offers numerous benefits, it also has several challenges identified, including the spread of rumors, privacy issues, and the potential for addiction. The spread of misinformation occurs easily, and the Covid-19 pandemic witnessed how personal communication and the unequal distribution of resources caused widespread misinformation and fear in society. The use of personal information and the sharing of data raise privacy concerns, which are of great worry because many people are unaware of the extent of their personal information being shared and are unable to distinguish between safe and unsafe spaces online while being inclined to ignore security measures. The problem of addiction has become widespread in society, primarily because of the convenience of accessing social media at any time; users are unable to reduce their usage despite the potential dangers of anxiety and depression that result from the abuse of social media, as identified in Thuseethan and Vasanthapriyan (2015).

Misinformation and Fake News

However, misinformation and fake news continue to circulate online through social media. They cause political or social unrest in different parts of the world, including Thailand. Facebook and Twitter are among social media used as major conduits of news or viral campaigns. However, Facebook has been accused of not doing enough in stopping the spread of misinformation or fake news. This misinformation or fake news spreads rapidly among Thai users of Facebook. Due to the large number of different social media, it is almost impossible to fight misinformation or fake news. Facebook's algorithms are not effective in differentiating between real or fake news. Therefore, fake news spreads around the world in no time. In such cases, people tend to believe fake news or misinformation promoted on Facebook as factual.

Additionally, younger generations tend to believe what is posted on these sites, as they do not verify it, and this aids in spreading false information. The platforms allow for



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quick dissemination of fake news, images, videos, and spam, and this is a danger and a waste of users' time. They help social groups play a major role in disseminating misinformation on a large scale. Simulations on a large scale have proven the influence of social groups on the movement of misinformation and anti-misinformation on a large scale. Online networks are dominant among the younger generation's sources of news, but there is a challenge of widely sharing false information.

There are many ways in which misinformation and fake news affect Thai society. Firstly, having media literacy skills helps to recognize the presence of fake news. However, other kinds of literacy do not help to combat the problem of fake news as effectively. An era of distrust leading to the media affects the way society views politics. Social media is the main source of the dissemination of misinformation, including national security issues. Young generations are more exposed to misinformation, including issues of body image, their political views, and their perception of the media. Disseminating fake news and images affects the way in which society trusts information. It is therefore important to understand media dependency, digital literacy, and the way in which social media affects society (Pourghomi et al., 2017) (Kaarkoski et al., 2022).

Privacy Concerns

The advent of social media has spawned numerous opportunities, both for recreation and for work. From marketing to social interaction, the opportunities seem to be in the myriad areas in between. The prevalence of these platforms in Thai culture has reached the point that it affects nearly all aspects of society, impacting the economy and the general interests of the population dramatically. It's also serving to give citizens a new way to stay aware of the actions both within and by the government. Of course, there are also a few negative ramifications. For instance, false information can spread rapidly, potentially sparking a rebellion, and content such as pornography, violence, drugs, and suicidal content can affect impressionable youth. On the other hand, social media can be employed for the dissemination of legitimate information to the public.

Addiction and Overuse

Social media addiction results in the uncontrollable and intense urge to access social media and the internet and can lead to the snowballing of academic, psychological, physical, and social issues. It causes people to engage in various psychological issues such as disturbances, sleep disorders, anxiety, and

depression. This addiction particularly affects young people. The craving for attention and the fear of missing out lead social media addicts to interact only through the screens. Thus, the addiction causes students to lose concentration in class and makes studies difficult, as the addiction makes it hard to concentrate and understand the new topics. The addiction keeps the addict away from exercise and sleep, resulting in the deepening of the negative effects of the addiction. The addiction causes students to spend more time online and makes them engage in impulsive purchases, which negatively affects them financially. The addiction finally causes people to lose valuable friendships and reduces their social circles due to the fear and concerns about being exploited and exposed to the world. It was acknowledged that the addiction results in mental health issues and that the addiction causes people to exhibit neuroticism, lower



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life satisfaction, depression, anxiety, boredom, and loneliness (Bai et al., 2024; R. R. Masthi et al., 2018; Phuong Doan et al., 2022).

XI. Future of Social Media In Thailand

To speak of the future of the social media scene in Thailand, one considers the innovations yet to be launched into the market and the government's attempts to ensure stricter regulation. Artificial intelligence is becoming incorporated as tools within online sites, and augmented reality is redefining the experience that users get from online spaces. If the trend persists, Bowen will remain on an even keel as the social media scene becomes even more expansive to incorporate other developments such as virtual reality and the internet of things. Innovative content creation would be another beneficiary as more people get access to advanced content creation tools and the freedom to self-express.

On the governance side of things, after meddling in the activities of Facebook by third parties threatened democratic action, reevaluation of the responsible use of technology in political campaigns has been initiated. Today, there are growing concerns that social media may be exploited for purposes of interference with national sovereignty, hence the need for the intelligence community to invest in bot- detecting resources. Consequently, there has been a push for government assistance through apps like LINE.

Consequently, as the social media landscape in Thailand continues to shift in this direction, deeper integration with daily life is probable, with the enhancement in infrastructure remaining consistent (Ghifrani Alimin, 2024).

Emerging Technologies

New technologies have influenced the way people intertwine in recent times, and it all starts with social media. Friendster, which emerged in 2002, worked as a catalyst for online networks and information sharing, thus encouraging others to participate in the newly created space. Facebook, which made its appearance in 2004, took online interaction a step further by integrating multimedia and instant reaction features. Finally, Twitter came in 2006, offering a new means of information dissemination while presenting an alternative function in the realm of social and political activism, according to Ghifrani Alimin in 2024. The presence of widespread online accessibility and rising smartphone adoption means that individuals have the means to keep themselves connected and involved in social media networks round the clock, thus affecting all aspects of their lives. Social media, therefore, represents a significant

phenomenon in society because of its widespread adoption and depth, and in Thailand, it translates into a number of aspects that have a direct impact on society, including influencing the manner in which society deliberates, helps shape culture, impacts decision-making and shaping economy, and even changes the very manner in which individuals handle their family lives. New media offer an avenue for the newly found generations to reimagine or redefine even ancient forms of interaction. Of further significance in the realm of Thailand is the new means by which it offers an arena for the contest of ideologies between its rulers and the ordinary citizens. These arguments, therefore, highlight a theme that continues to require further study.



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Potential Regulations

The third wave of social media refers to the point in society when the government attempts to guide or direct the usage of social media sites. There was also a perceived notion that these social media sites operated as tools for political rivals, as some politicians presumably believed. At this point, some political parties, such as the Democrat Party and the Future Forward Party, decided to seek assistance from the government to guide rules for regulating the use of social media sites. However, there has been a push from the administration for controlling the usage of these sites since the days of the previous rulers, when controls were facilitated through legislation defined by law. Today, there has been a reliance on the Constitution adopted in 2017, even as the administration's grip on society seemed to be somewhat relaxed, despite its evident control over the latter. There was also a perceived inclination that the government established this sense of control to ensure that there would be more stringent measures regulating social media sites soon through modifications to the Computer Crime Act that was originally enacted in 2017.

These sites would be controlled unless the companies operated on the tenets that would take responsibility for what was posted on their websites; if not, there would be a push for prosecution under the Computer Crime Act, as delineated in Jaichuen et al., 2019.

XII. Conclusion

Social media has quietly woven many of the threads of modern life together, and in Thailand, this has been done in many ways. For one, it has allowed one to share thoughts, media, businesses and customers, political knowledge, community growth, tradition and culture, and even mental well-being, according to Ghifrani Alimin (2024). The dizzying growth of social media is revolutionizing our lives, both physically and psychologically, with ramifications for our politics, economics, culture, and society in many and varied ways.

They stretch communication beyond the traditional frontiers, allowing people to choose the platforms that best suit them (Salman et al., 2018). Facebook and LINE sometimes double as the actual face-to-face communication, ensuring that people stay connected in various contexts. Various platforms emerge because of the various reasons why people prefer to use them, such as Facebook, LINE, and YouTube – the traditional giants; Instagram and TikTok for those seeking something exclusive; and Twitter – the platform for the election campaign, especially for the politicians.

The 2019 Thai election saw social media play a crucial role, providing news, analysis, and updates. The mediums also provided a lively space for debates among politicians, voters, and journalists, further emphasizing the importance of mediums in circumventing state censors and initiating politics. In all these

scenarios, there is a visible presence of social media as mediums with significant effects on political discourse. Studies have primarily focused on Facebook, which, as seen, is integral to daily life for searching for information, jobs, or items, with LINE being a



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better, more effective option for quicker messages, while Instagram is relevant to those who embrace privacy.

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