

# FACTORS AFFECTING TEENAGERS' DEVIANT BEHAVIORS: A CASE STUDY OF SOCIAL NETWORK USE

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**Abstract** - The objectives of this study were to study (1) the deviant behaviors of teenagers caused by social network use and (2) the factors affecting the deviant behaviors among teenagers resulting from social network use. The samples of this study were 346 high school students of a school in Bangkok derived from simple random sampling. The questionnaire was employed as a research tool to collect the data. The data then were analyzed using one-way ANOVA and correlation. The results showed that the respondents had a low level of deviant behaviors. The findings also indicated that the place of using the social network, family relationship, and social environment had the positive relationships with deviant behaviors. However, family types had no impact on the deviant behaviors. Suggestions and recommendations for related stakeholders are discussed in the latter part of this article.

**Keywords** - Deviant Behavior, Social Network

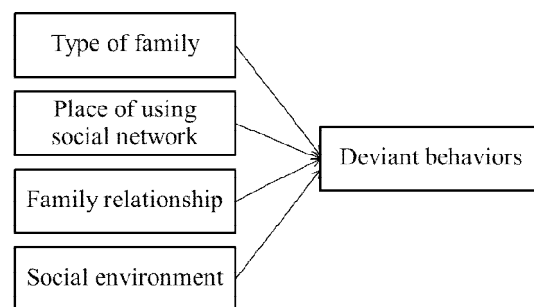
## I. INTRODUCTION

Advancement in information technology results in a non-boundary communication through internet. This pattern of communication has dramatically changed the relationship among people in a society. A new type of social communication, the social network, has emerged and been very popular leading to the drastic changes in lifestyle and daily life of today people. Many of them can communicate and share their experiences on this social network rather than a face-to-face communication [1]. In Thailand, the number of internet users has been creasing like those numbers in other countries. Young people whose ages of 15-24 years are classified as the highest ratio group of using internet according to the report by the National Statistics Office indicated [2]. This report also indicated that young people spend their time on surfing internet rather than participating in other social activities. The government policy on promoting information technology and computer skills among young students is one of the major reasons that cause the rapid increase of internet users in the country [3].

Using internet and social network could affect young people in various aspects. A new value and attitude toward using social network have been created among the young people. A person who has no access to the internet or has no social network will be classified as an outdated person and unlikely to be accepted by his or her peer [4]. Using internet and social network result in deviant behaviors among young people, especially, posting impolite words or statements, porn photos, aggressive clips, and so on. Young people nurtured in a good family and social environment are likely to become good quality manpower for the country [5]. Social media contributes to teenagers' engagement in risky sexual

behaviors in the long run [6] and fighting among young girls [7]. However, the general types of deviant behaviors caused by the internet and social network use are sexual deviance [8], self-harm groups [9], and hate groups [10]. The deviant behaviors caused by the internet and social network could lead to various kinds of social problems. Some teenagers might engage in crime and law violation while some of them might become the victims of the violation.

According to previous studies, there were many factors affecting the deviant behaviors among young people such as family environment [11], socioeconomic environment [12], race and gender [13], locus of control [14], type of family [3], a place of using social network [3], family relationship [15], and social environment [16]. The authors, therefore, would like to examine factors affecting deviant behaviors among teenagers who use the social network. Suggestions and recommendations will be given to related stakeholders for their future implication. However, only some variables were selected in this study; type of family, a place of using the internet, family relationship, and social environment. The conceptual framework of the study was proposed as illustrated in Fig. 1.



**Fig. 1. Conceptual framework**

## II. METHODS

### Sample

The samples of this study were the secondary and high school students of a public school in Bangkok. The majority of the respondents were female accounting for 57%. Approximately 21% were the grade 7 students. Most of them live with their family (59%) and around 71% of their parents live together. They used the internet from 04.00 PM – 12.00AM (46%) and spent about 5-10 hours a day (51%). They reported that they used the internet at home accounting for 93% of the whole respondents. The reasons for using internet were following news and information (25.4%), communicating with friends (24.9%), and updating their personal information (20.5%) respectively.

### Measures

Family relationship was a 13-item questionnaire with the Cronbach's alpha of .85. The respondents were asked to rate the score ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Some sample items were "my parents don't pay attention to what I am doing," "I have to solve the problem on my own without any advice from my family," and "I seldom have a chance to be with my parents."

Social environment was a 14-item questionnaire with the Cronbach's alpha of .92. The respondents were asked to rate the score ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Some sample items were "I always searching information from social network," "My friends always ask me to do something that I don't want to," and "I always behave in accordance with my social network idol's behaviors."

Deviant behavior was a 36-items questionnaire. It consisted of three dimensions; anti-social behaviors, sexual behaviors, and assembly for unlawful purposes. These three dimensions provided the Cronbach's alphas of .92, .89, and .91 respectively. The respondents were asked to rate the score ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Some sample items were "I use the social network to express my emotion aggressively," "I critic the rules and regulations of the school on the social network," and "I employ the social network to create or establish my group of interest."

## III. ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics; mean, standard deviation, percentage and frequency were employed in this study. For hypothesis testing, one-way ANOVA, and correlation statistics were used to analyze the collected data.

## IV. RESULTS

The findings of this study indicated that the respondents had the low level of deviant behaviors

(Mean = 1.43, SD = 0.65). The mean of each dimension was quite low. Anti-social behavior had the highest level (Mean 1.47, SD = 0.68) followed by sexual behavior (Mean = 1.46, SD = 0.65), and assembly for unlawful purposes (Mean = 1.36, SD = 0.71) in that order (Table 1).

**Table 1** Mean and standard deviation of deviant behaviors

Deviant behaviors	Mean	SD	Description
Anti-social	1.47	0.68	Low
Sexual	1.64	0.65	Low
Assembly for unlawful purposes	1.36	0.71	Low
Total	1.43	0.65	Low

We also found that type of family did not influence the deviant behaviors among young people using the social network as illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2** ANOVA classified by family type

Variance	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between group	1.684	3	.561	1.312	.27
Within group	146.317	342	.428		
Total	148.001	345			

The results indicated that a place of using social network was associated with the deviant behaviors among young people using the social network as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3** ANOVA classified by a place of using social network

Variance	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between group	5.758	4	1.439	3.451	.009
Within group	142.243	341	.417		
Total	148.001	345			

This study found the relationship between family relationship and deviant behaviors among teenagers using social network with the statistical level of .01 ( $r = .456$ ) as illustrated in Table 4.

**Table 4** Correlation between family relationship and deviant behaviors

Variable	Family relationship		
	<i>r</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	Explanation
Deviant behavior	.456*	.000	Moderate

\**p*-value <.05

There was an association between the social environment and deviant behaviors among teenagers using social network with the statistical level of .05 ( $r = .630$ ) as illustrated in Table 5.

**Table 5 Correlation between social environment and deviant behaviors**

Variable	Family relationship		
	<i>r</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	Explanation
Deviant behavior	.630*	.000	Quite high

\**p*-value <.05

## DISCUSSION

The results indicated that the respondents had the low level of deviant behaviors for all dimensions; anti-social behaviors, sexual behaviors, and assembly for unlawful purposes. In addition, the type of family did not influence the deviant behaviors among young people using the social network. This finding was not in line with the study of Juinamand Chantaranamchoo [3] who found the relationship between the family type and deviant behaviors. They mentioned that the family is the place for learning and socializing young people. The nurturing style is very important factors affecting attitudes and behaviors of young people. Young people living in the family where their parents have lived together would behave better than the separated family. Hence, living in the different type of family would result in different deviant behaviors expressing by the young people.

The relationship between the place of using the social network and the deviant behaviors among teenagers using the social network was found in this study. This supported the previous study [3] which found that using social network at home results in more deviant behaviors than using in other places. They mentioned that using the social network at home is more convenient for the young people to express their desires and needs especially when their parents are not at home. In some case, parents pay less attention to their children activities. Information technology and social network then become an important part of the young people' lives. Some of them experience the excess use of social network and lead to various social problems. If their parents pay more attention to the activities of their children by doing activities together and setting clear rules of using the social network, the deviant behaviors among young people will be minimized.

The family relationship has a moderate relation with the deviant behaviors of young people using the social network. This finding supported the study of Chummanon [15] who found that the roles of family members result in teenagers' behaviors, especially online games addiction. Prachayakul [17] explained that nurturing and teaching by parents also result in internet using behaviors of teenagers. Nurturing also has an influence on personality, behavioral expression, the relationship between parents and teenagers, and family climate [18]. These supported

that the relationship among family members is one of the key factors influencing the deviant behaviors of teenagers. Teenagers who have been nurtured with love and good caring would have better social immune to deal with social arousals. On the other hand, teenagers who have been nurtured without freedom to share ideas and opinions would express certain deviant behaviors.

Finally, this study found the relationship between the social environment and the deviant behaviors among teenagers. This relationship was quite strong. The social environment refers to peer influence, media influence, and imitation of actor/actress, singer, and net idol. This finding supported the study conducted by Veangkum et al. [16]. According to their study, they found media was the most important factor influencing the behaviors of using social network among young people. The finding also supported the results of the previous study conducted by Prachayakul [17] who found that peer influence was also an important factor that leads to peer's values, attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral imitation [19]. Some teenagers are affected by mass media leading to the imitation of their idols' behaviors.

## CONCLUSION

Social network nowadays becomes a very important part of individuals' daily life. A great number of social network users are young people who use the social media to express their needs and desires. However, they sometimes use the social network in the wrong ways. Some use it for their personal interest. Using social network could result in certain deviant behaviors among young people who have low self-control. This study tried to examine factors influencing the deviant behaviors among teenagers who use social network. The results showed that the place of using social network, the family environment, and the family relationship were associated with the deviant behaviors among young generations. However, the type of family did not have any impact on the deviant behaviors. Related stakeholders such as high school teachers can employ the findings of this study to better understand their students' behaviors, needs, desires, attitudes, values, and opinions reflecting from social network use. Researchers and individuals who interested in this issue can use these results as a reference in their future study. The authors would like to recommend researchers to conduct further research on specific social networks; Facebook, Line, Instagram, What's app, and so on. Finally, the executives of high school in Bangkok and other provinces can consider making a policy related to the use of social network among young people. This will enhance them to establish the policy that can help parents to cope with the deviant behaviors of teenagers. Furthermore, this will enhance behavioral modification of the teenagers and

prevent them not to violate the laws, commit a crime or make troubles for the society.

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