ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of the use of online social networks in Thailand has motivated the need for academic research in this area. Online social networks (or social network sites) (SNS) are unlike other task-oriented information systems which aim to provide users with automated processes and information in order to increase their work performance. SNS was purposively designed to provide users with an alternative way for developing human relationships and unlike most task-oriented information systems the adoption of SNS is totally voluntary. Because of the close relationship with human personal and social behavior, the adoption of SNS needs to be studied from social, psychological, and technological perspectives. However, the existing technology adoption models as well as recent exploratory studies lack a suitable conceptual framework for explaining a user's adoption of SNS. In order to address these issues, this study extends the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by introducing a set of social, psychological, and system usage constructs that are derived from different research disciplines. Moreover, no studies of the adoption of SNS in Thailand were found in the literature and since Thai society has been identified as having unique characteristics (Hofstede, 2009) it is useful to develop and test a model in the context of Thailand.

Against this background, this study develops a theoretical causal model including social, psychological, and usage factors derived from previous studies in order to explain an individual's intention to use SNS. Data collected by questionnaire in a survey of 322 Thai citizens is analyzed in order to test and simplify the model using structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques. Results from the data analysis and the final model indicate that two social influences (Social Identity and Social Norms),

two psychological factors (Telepresence and Flow experience), and two usage factors (Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness) were found to have significant effects on Intention to use SNS. In terms of significant causal effects or significant correlations, there is full or partial theoretical support for many of the findings from previous studies conducted in the context of developed western societies. However, significant indirect causal effects of Social Norms and Social Identity on Intention involving mediation effects due to the intervening variables Perceived Ease of Use and Perceived Usefulness were found and these have not been reported in previous studies and highlight the significant importance the two social influences (Social Norms and Social Identity) as determinants of SNS adoption among Thai users.

The thesis concludes with a discussion of limitations on the findings of the study and directions for future research as well as theoretical and practical implications of the findings.