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#### A METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGY FOR INVESTIGATING SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: A PSYCHOSOCIAL INTEGRATIVE MODEL

Annotation

This study is aimed at developing and scientifically substantiating a methodological approach to studying social network addiction (ITQ) among student youth. ITQ was interpreted not as a separate behavioral deviation but as the product of a complex interplay of individual-psychological, socio-contextual, and motivational factors. Psychodiagnostic methodologies were comparatively analyzed based on the criteria of theoretical appropriateness, empirical validity, and psychometric quality.

**Key words:** Social media addiction, impulsivity, escapism, FoMO, self-esteem, gender roles, psychosocial model, psychometrics.

#### TALABALARDA IJTIMOYIY TARMOQLARGA QARAMLIKNI TADQIQ ETISHNING METODOLOGIK STRATEGIYASI: PSIXOSOTSIAL INTEGRATIV MODEL

Annotatsiya

Mazkur tadqiqot talaba yoshlar orasida ijtimoiy tarmoqlarga qaramlikni (ITQ) o'rganish uchun metodologik yondashuvni ishlab chiqish va ilmiy asoslashga qaratilgan. ITQ alohida xulq-atvor og'ishi emas, balki individual-psixologik, ijtimoiy-kontekstual va motivatsion omillarning murakkab o'zaro ta'siri mahsuli sifatida talqin etildi. Psixodiagnostik metodikalar nazariy moslik, empirik validlik va psixometrik sifat mezonlari asosida qiyosiy tahlil qilindi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Ijtimoiy tarmoqlarga qaramlik, impulsivlik, eskapizm, FoMO, o'z-o'zini baholash, gender rollari, psixosotsial model, psixometriya.

#### МЕТОДОЛОГИЧЕСКАЯ СТРАТЕГИЯ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ ЗАВИСИМОСТИ ОТ СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ СЕТЕЙ У СТУДЕНТОВ: ПСИХОСОЦИАЛЬНАЯ ИНТЕГРАТИВНАЯ МОДЕЛЬ

Аннотация

Данное исследование направлено на разработку и научное обоснование методологической стратегии изучения зависимости от социальных сетей у студентов. Зависимость рассматривается не как изолированное поведенческое отклонение, а как результат сложного взаимодействия индивидуально-психологических, социально-контекстуальных и мотивационных факторов. Психодиагностические методики были подвергнуты сравнительному анализу на основе теоретической адекватности, эмпирической валидности и психометрического качества.

**Ключевые слова:** Зависимость от социальных сетей, импульсивность, эскапизм, FoMO, самооценка, гендерные роли, психосоциальная модель, психометрика.

**Introduction.** A critical imperative in contemporary psychology is the rigorous analysis of the interaction between digital technologies and the human psyche. The phenomenon of Social Media Addiction (SMA), increasingly prevalent among university students, necessitates not only the determination of its prevalence but also the elucidation of its underlying psychological mechanisms. In addressing this task, the development of a methodological instrumentarium capable of measuring theoretical constructs with empirical validity and reliability is of paramount importance. While numerous psychodiagnostic tools exist to assess personality traits, emotional states, and social behavior, not all meet modern psychometric standards. Consequently, the selection of methodology must be predicated not on popularity or convenience, but on theoretical alignment with the research model, empirical reliability, and measurement precision. This study presents a comparative analysis of psychodiagnostic methodologies for investigating SMA in students. The selection process was guided by three primary criteria: (1) theoretical adequacy, (2) validity and representativeness, and (3) psychometric robustness. As a result, an empirical program was developed, and a battery of methodologies was scientifically justified.

**Methods.** The research methodology is grounded in an "integrated psychosocial model," wherein SMA is interpreted not as an isolated behavioral deviation but as the product of the interaction between individual-psychological, socio-contextual, and cognitive-motivational factors. Thus, the identification of

personal factors was established as a priority. Theoretical frameworks were analyzed through a comparative lens, specifically evaluating H.J. Eysenck's PEN model (Psychoticism, Extraversion, Neuroticism) and its corresponding EPI/EPQ instruments [1; 2]. Although fundamental to the study of temperament, this model was found to lack sufficient differentiation for modern personality structures. Consequently, the "Big Five" model—a cross-culturally stable and empirically validated paradigm in global psychology—was selected [3; 4]. Given that the construct of impulsivity, crucial for addictive behavior, is not fully captured within the Big Five, it was isolated as a distinct independent variable. To achieve higher measurement precision, the short version of the Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (BIS-15) was utilized [5; 6; 7].

The selection of the dependent variable—Social Media Addiction (SMA)—involved a comparative analysis of existing tools. Classical instruments, such as K. Young's Internet Addiction Test (IAT) and the Chen Internet Addiction Scale (CIAS), were initially considered [8; 9]. While historically significant, their adaptability to the modern digital environment was deemed limited. Furthermore, platform-specific tools, such as the Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS) and the Problematic Facebook Use Scale (PFUS), were analyzed [10; 11]. However, these were found lacking in universality as they do not fully reflect the multi-platform behavior of contemporary users. Accounting for these methodological requirements, the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) was selected as a platform-neutral and

conceptually grounded instrument [12]. This methodology is based on M. Griffiths' component model of addiction (salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse) [13] and is characterized by its conciseness and high psychometric indicators.

**Results.** The analysis demonstrated that for a complex study of SMA, it is methodologically appropriate to categorize variables into four functional blocks. This structural approach allows for the analysis of SMA as an integration of individual, social, and cognitive factors.

**Block I – Risk Factors (Independent Variables):** This block encompasses individual-psychological and socio-contextual characteristics. Individual traits include Neuroticism, measured via the BFI-10 [14]; despite its brevity, this scale ensures validity through reverse-coded items and effectively identifies emotional instability. Impulsivity was assessed using the BIS-15 [5], while self-esteem was measured using the RSES [16], where low self-esteem is viewed as a significant predictor of compensatory behaviors in virtual environments. Socio-contextual factors include Academic Stress, measured by the PASS methodology [17], and Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), measured via the scale developed by

A.K. Przybylski et al. [20-21], reflecting the cognitive anxiety mechanism driving constant online presence.

**Block II – Mediating Psychological Mechanisms (Mediators):** The primary innovation of the research model lies in identifying mediators between risk factors and SMA. To this end, two original instruments were developed: the SMUMQ (Social Media Usage Motives Questionnaire), aimed at identifying pathological motives such as validation seeking and escapism, and the SMUPQ (Social Media Usage Patterns Questionnaire), which assesses user typology (passive, interactive, content-creating) to evaluate the role of activity types in addiction formation.

**Block III – Gender as a Moderation Mechanism:** In this study, gender is interpreted as a psychological construct rather than a simple demographic indicator. Therefore, the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) was implemented [22], allowing for a deeper analysis of how masculinity/femininity ratios and gender roles influence addiction mechanisms.

**Block IV – Outcome Variable (Social Media Addiction):** The BSMAS was utilized to evaluate SMA [10; 12]. This scale fully aligns with Griffiths' addiction components model [13]. International studies report high internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha > 0.85$ ) [10], confirming its psychometric reliability.

Table 1. Comprehensive Set of Psychodiagnostic Methodologies and Measurement Tools

Psychological construct	Methodology (Acronym)	Authors (Year)	Structure
<b>I. Risk Factors (Independent Variables)</b>			
<b>A1 – Individual-Psychological Factors</b>			
Neuroticism (Emotional Instability)	BFI-10 (Big Five Inventory-10)	B. Rammstedt & O.P. John (2007)	10 items; 5-point Likert scale.
Impulsivity	BIS-15 (Barratt Impulsiveness Scale)	E.S. Barratt (L. Spinella version, 2007)	15 items; 4-point scale.
Self-Esteem	RSES (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale)	M. Rosenberg (1965)	10 items; 4-point Likert scale.
<b>A2 – Socio-Contextual Factors</b>			
Academic Stress	PASS (Perceived Academic Stress Scale)	D. Bedewy & A. Gabriel (2015)	18 items; 5-point Likert scale.
FoMO (Fear of Missing Out)	FoMOs (Fear of Missing Out Scale)	A.K. Przybylski et al. (2013)	10 items; 5-point Likert scale.
<b>II. Mediating Mechanisms (Mediators)</b>			
Usage Motives (Validation and Escapism)	SMUMQ (Social Media Usage Motives Questionnaire)	Author-developed instrument	10 items; 5-point Likert scale; 2 subscales.
Usage Patterns	SMUPQ (Social Media Usage Patterns Questionnaire)	Author-developed instrument	12 items; 5-point Likert scale; 3 subscales.
<b>III. Moderation Mechanism</b>			
Gender Roles (Masculinity and Femininity)	BSRI (Bem Sex Role Inventory)	S.L. Bem (1974)	60 traits; 7-point scale.
<b>IV. Outcome Variable (Dependent Variable)</b>			
Social Media Addiction (SMA)	BSMAS (Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale)	C.S. Andreassen, T. Torsheim, S. Pallesen (2012)	6 items; 5-point Likert scale.

**Discussion.** The formulated empirical program and the selected battery of methodologies address several conceptual and methodological challenges in studying SMA. Primarily, by eschewing "all-encompassing" tools in favor of targeted methodologies aligned with specific hypotheses, this study interprets SMA as a complex psychosocial system rather than an isolated symptom.

Within this model, certain widely used constructs (e.g., social anxiety or loneliness) were interpreted not as independent phenomena but as derivatives of neuroticism and low self-esteem [26]. Thus, measurement focus was directed toward primary psychological factors. In assessing affective states, the selection of the PASS methodology over clinically oriented tools (DASS-21, BDI) ensured the contextual orientation of the study by reflecting the actual social pressures in students' lives [17; 27]. Similarly, priority was given to the RSES [16] and the original SMUMQ to identify the psychological drivers—validation seeking and compensatory needs—rather than purely external behavioral measures.

Furthermore, the operationalization of gender beyond biological sex as a psychological construct enhances the scientific novelty of the study. Analyzing the moderation effect of masculine

and feminine traits via the BSRI allows for the identification of differential addiction mechanisms. Theoretically, validation seeking may manifest more strongly in individuals with high feminine traits, while escapism may manifest uniquely across other gender profiles. This highlights the necessity of developing prevention and psychocorrection programs based on individual psychological profiles.

Thirdly, the introduction of original methodologies (SMUMQ and SMUPQ) fills a significant gap in existing psychodiagnostic tools. Many standard methodologies are limited to determining "how much time" or "which symptoms" are present but fail to sufficiently reveal the internal mechanisms—the "why" and "how" of addiction formation. By integrating motives (validation and escapism) with behavioral patterns, this study explains the process of risk factors evolving into addictive behavior as a dynamic model.

Finally, the adaptation of these methodologies to the socio-cultural environment of Uzbekistan warrants particular attention. While instruments like BFI-10, BSMAS, and RSES are internationally validated, their linguistic and cultural adaptation is a critical phase of empirical research. Constructs such as "validation," "escapism," and "impulsivity" may carry different

connotations in the local context compared to Western settings. Consequently, the psychometric properties (reliability, factor structure) of the Uzbek versions of these methodologies were independently verified.

**Conclusion.** The empirical program developed in this study is not merely a collection of methodologies but a logical extension of the theoretical model. It manifests as an integrated system encompassing individual and socio-contextual risk factors (Block I), motivational and behavioral mediators (Block II), the

gender moderation mechanism (Block III), and the resulting addiction indicators (Block IV). The selection of methodologies strictly adhered to the principles of theoretical alignment, psychometric reliability, and international validation. The comprehensive application of BSMAS, BFI-10, BIS-15, RSES, PASS, FoMO, BSRI, and original questionnaires enabled a multi-factorial and deep-level analysis of SMA among university students.

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