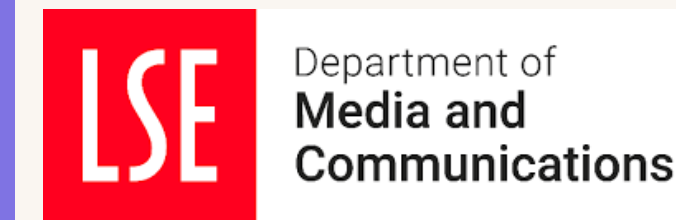




# Self-Regulation Habits of 18-to-29-year-olds on Social Media

Isabella Szklany, MSc Media and Communications (Research)



## Background

This ongoing master's dissertation aims to uncover how individuals self-regulate and limit their use of social media. Self-regulation is when one conducts their behavior to achieve a specific goal and avoid a negative outcome (Carver & Scheier, 1998). Drawing on **domestication theory** (Silverstone et al., 1992) to understand technology's role in everyday life and the **dual-systems theory** of human behavior operating either as a conscious or non-conscious decision (Aagaard, 2021), this research looks to see if the **redomestication** (Huang & Miao, 2021) of social media, can be considered by the user to either improve or diminish how content they are with social media's role in their daily life.

## Research Question

**Main Research Question:** How do 18-29-year-olds self-regulate their social media use?

**Sub-Questions:**

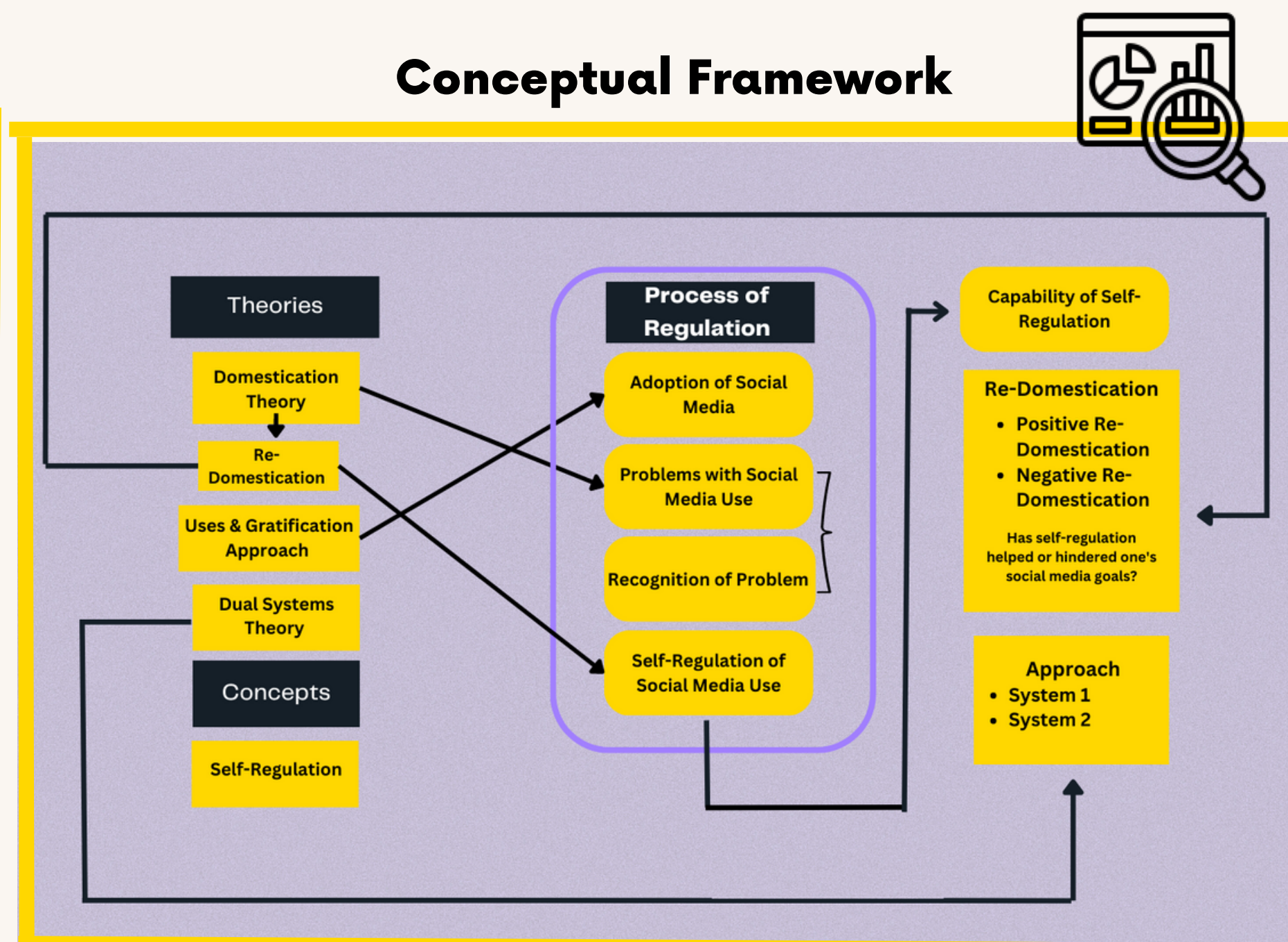
- Which elements of social media platforms do 18-to-29-year-olds self-regulate?
- What are their reasons and strategies for self-regulating their social media use?
- To what extent are young adults capable of self-regulating their social media use, and do they face any difficulties?



## Methodology

**Method:** Semi-Structured Qualitative Interviews.  
**Sampling:** Snowball Sampling.  
**Inclusion Criteria:** 18-to-29-year-olds using Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tik Tok or Twitter.  
**Analytical Method:** Thematic Analysis.

## Conceptual Framework



## Preliminary Discussion

The assumed themes expected to be found include the **adaption of social media, social media problems, problem recognition, regulation of social media, and self-regulation capabilities**. The codes have been chosen inductively and deductively based on the framework and participants' responses. Participants regulate social media mainly because the apps are too **time-consuming or negatively impact their well-being**. Surprisingly, participants have reflected **discontent with the platform's design** and how they try to **regulate what they do**, such as liking and commenting on posts. While analysis is in the beginning phases, interviews reflect **different levels of domestication** of the app by users and a general finding that **regulating social media has improved their usage**.



## Quotes

"And so if I'm using, like I've had TikTok downloaded at times, If I'm using it a lot, I feel like I can't focus on schoolwork for longer periods of time. "  
 - Jessica

"My friends at school would do this thing because we would have class together till like 9:00 o'clock on Wednesdays and Thursdays we would do this thing we'd go out after class, so we go to get like a late dinner or something, and we put our phones in the middle and be like whoever picks up their phone first like has to pay."  
 -Mark

## Video



## Preliminary Findings

18-to-29-year-olds regulate their social media use to **achieve a better relationship with themselves**. While individuals report feeling **content with how they regulate, they do acknowledge that they can still improve their use**. They regulate their time on the app and how often they post or comment. Despite problems with social media, they value the platforms to connect with others and stay connected to their family and friends.

## References

- Aagaard, J. (2021). Beyond the rhetoric of tech addiction: why we should be discussing tech habits instead (and how). *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 20(3), 559–572. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-020-09669-z>
- Carver, & Scheier, M. (1998). *On the self-regulation of behavior*. Cambridge University Press.
- Huang, Y., & Miao, W. (2021). Re-domesticating social media when it becomes disruptive: Evidence from China's "super app" WeChat. *Mobile Media & Communication*, 9(2), 177–194. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2050157920940765>
- Silverstone, R., Hirsch, E., & Morley, D. (1992). Information and communication technologies and the moral economy of the household. In *Consuming technologies: Media and information in domestic spaces* (pp. 15–31). essay, Routledge.