



The Undesirable Effect of Facebook Addiction on Vietnamese Youth

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Abstract

This study investigates the complex dynamics of Facebook usage among Vietnamese youth and examines its negative effects on their well-being and social behaviors. Given the growing reliance on platforms like Facebook among Vietnam's youth, the research aims to highlight the adverse consequences of such extensive engagement. Using quantitative methods, a survey was conducted with 261 Vietnamese citizens aged 13 to 25, consisting of 24 questions covering demographics and Facebook usage frequency. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale, and data analysis was performed using SPSS software, including Multiple Regression Analysis. The results indicate a significant negative impact of social media addiction on self-esteem (H1 accepted), suggesting that Facebook addiction lowers the self-esteem of Vietnamese youth. Although H2 was not supported, the positive coefficient suggests a statistical significance, indicating that Facebook addiction does not diminish self-presentation on social media. Instead, it correlates with increased self-presentation, including false representation. Moreover, social media addiction positively influences self-harm intention (H3 accepted), indicating a heightened risk of physical and psychological self-harm among Vietnamese youth. These findings underscore the importance of addressing the negative effects of Facebook on the psychological and social well-being of Vietnam's younger generation. Interventions aimed at mitigating Facebook addiction and its consequences are crucial for creating a healthier online environment for Vietnamese youth. This research contributes valuable insights to understanding the nuanced impacts of social media, particularly Facebook, on Vietnam's youth.

Keywords: Social Media Addiction, Vietnamese Teenagers, the Impact of Facebook, Self- Esteem, Sel-Presentation, Self-Harm

Introduction

Recent advancements in science and technology have drastically reshaped society and communication, fueling the rapid expansion of the internet. Platforms like Facebook have emerged, meeting diverse needs, especially among young users seeking information,



entertainment, and connection. While Facebook's swift connectivity and broad sharing capabilities have become integral to daily life for many, excessive usage among young users has raised concerns about Facebook addiction and negative effects.

A 2013 report by Comscore revealed Facebook as the most popular social network among Vietnamese people, highlighting its significant impact on media and journalism, particularly among the youth. While Facebook offers benefits such as fast information access, entertainment, and global connections, over-reliance can lead to adverse health effects and reduced face-to-face interactions. The prevalence of Facebook addiction among young people has concerning implications, including mental disorders, depression, and suicidal thoughts. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that approximately 700,000 individuals die by suicide annually, equating to one person every 35 seconds. Bark's survey of US teens' Facebook messages and activities revealed that nearly 75% of them had been involved in discussions or situations related to self-harm or suicide ("Bark's 2021 annual report," 2021). Jordan Smoller, from Massachusetts General Hospital, emphasizes that "Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people in the United States," highlighting the alarming nature of this trend (DeSmith, 2023).

As of March 2022, over a third of Facebook users in Vietnam are between the ages of 13 and 24. While social networks offer benefits when used appropriately, they can also lead to negative consequences, influenced by factors like self-esteem and self-presentation.

Objectives

This study aimed to understand the dark side of Facebook on Vietnamese adolescents. There are three research objectives, which are:

- To examine the influence of Facebook addiction on Vietnamese youth in term of self-esteem.
- To examine the influence of Facebook addiction on Vietnamese youth in term of self-presentation.
- To examine the influence of Facebook addiction on Vietnamese youth in term of self-harm and suicides.

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Facebook use and Self-esteem

Early theories, notably by Abraham Maslow, posited self-esteem as a fundamental human need, comprising both external recognition and internal self-worth. Contemporary



theories, such as sociometer theory and terrorism management theory, further explore motivations behind self-respect maintenance and its protective function against anxiety. Carl Rogers emphasized the role of unconditional positive regard in fostering healthy self-esteem, crucial for young adults' development, particularly influenced by peer interactions and feedback (Matthew, 2023). However, social networking, exemplified by platforms like Facebook, presents a complex influence on self-perception.

With millions of photos uploaded daily on Facebook, teenagers frequently engage in comparison, significantly impacting their self-esteem. The emphasis on idealized images can fuel envy and admiration, particularly affecting self-image. Despite potential negatives, social media can also bolster self-esteem through positive feedback, fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance, crucial for adolescent development and well-being (Valkenburg, 2017). These dynamics underscore the importance of healthy self-esteem in shaping youths' psychological well-being and future success. Based on the previous study, we predict that social media might impact on self-esteem of Vietnamese youth. The following hypothesis can be proposed as follow:

H1: Facebook addiction negatively influence on Vietnamese youth' self-esteem.

Facebook use and self-presentation

On Facebook, with the advent of the mobile internet and smartphones, people seem to be more interested in building their own profile and online personality. In today's social media landscape, users not only perform on stage, but also express themselves through turning profile pages and photos into “artifacts” on the internet or social networks, can be called “exhibition space” (Chua & Chang, 2016; Hogan, 2010). Social media introduces new interactive platforms in which self-presentation and peer influence interact to jointly build beauty standards (Meier & Gray, 2014). Social networks such as Instagram and Facebook have facilitated peer comparison of appearance and image among teenagers (Mascheroni & Ólafsson, 2014). Today, many teenage girls engage in online self-presentation such as posting self-portraits or “selfies” and sharing “casual clothes” photos for observation and comparison yourself and your peers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). At the same time, the media image of idealistic beauty permeates the circuits of social networks through information sharing and through teenage girls embodying idealistic beauty standards in the content they post (Boyd, 2014).

Moreover, social media offers opportunities for feedback on self-presentation, sometimes leading individuals to misrepresent themselves online. This false self-presentation has been associated with increased social anxiety and decreased self-esteem,



highlighting the complex interplay between social media use and psychological well-being (Twomey & O'Reilly, 2017). Therefore, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H2: Facebook addiction negatively influence Vietnamese youth' self-presentation.

Facebook use and Self-suicide, Self-harm Behavior

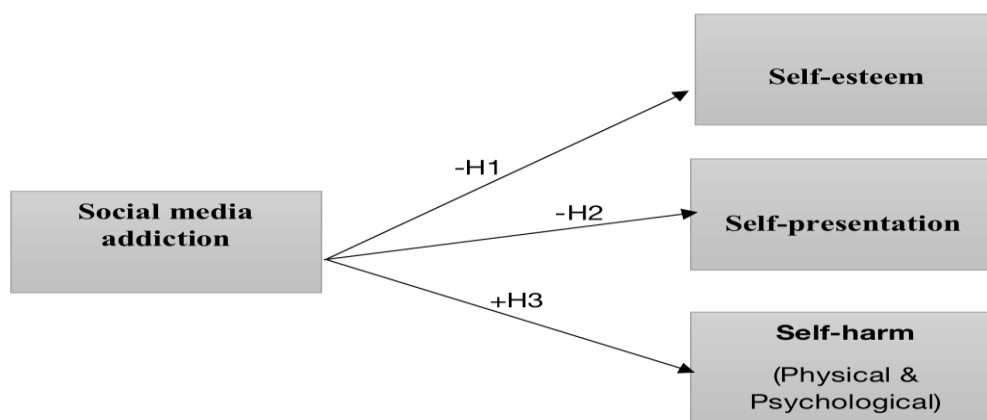
During puberty age between 13- to 19-year-olds, adolescent 's thinking and psychophysiology develop very strong, they are easily affected by external factors, causing curiosity, want to learn and want to imitate becomes even more intense. While social networks are too large like Facebook, with countless information, graphic violent, sensitive content and bullying type of content, adolescents spend a lot of their time on social media are more likely to face mental health problems. Teenagers who spend too much of time for social media will easily lead to depression, self-harm and suicide. The algorithms of social media networks such as Facebook have the function of pushing similar content that the user has viewed before. And once users have viewed some related negative content, graphic, then the similar content will always show up and causing young people to fall into a dark rabbit hole filled with the content of self-harm, long-term lead to depression and suicide after that. In addition, the low self-esteem factor about the body of young people on social networks also has a significant influence on self-harm. Many people on social media even praise unhealthy content such as fasting and showing photos with slim bodies. Some teens even describe self-harm and share eating disorders in a positive light. Accessing these contents and images like this every day will make young people constantly compare their bodies. This condition can lead to anxiety, depression, and even suicide.

Cyberbullying also is a burning problem in several countries around the world. According to statistics, among teenagers, about 3 of 10 children are victims of cyberbullying. The researchers also found that being bullied online increased the risk of having suicidal thoughts and trying not to depend on face-to-face bullying. Increased internet use during the COVID-19 pandemic has fueled this trend even further. Based on previous study, we predict the following hypothesis as below:

H3: Facebook addiction positive influence on Vietnamese youth' about physical and psychological.



Conceptual Framework



Methodology

Research Design

This study aims to investigate the impact of social media addiction on youth' self-esteem, self-presentation, and self-harm behavior. According to Churchill (1996), quantitative research can provide precise relationships between the variables related to the hypotheses. In order to achieve the aim of this study, a large number of respondents are required, which is why a quantitative study is a suitable method. In this study, a quantitative research approach was used with the help of an online questionnaire created on Cognito Forms to collect the data. Multiple regression analysis was performed to test the proposed hypotheses. The author used Cronbach's alpha to measure the reliability of the measurement scales used in the questionnaire. In an effort to understand social media addiction, respondents will be asked about their frequency of using Facebook and in the last section of questionnaire, participants reported on their self-esteem, self-presentation and self-harm. To measure the level of agreement for these three variables, a five-point Likert scale was employed to measure.

Instrument Pretest

The questionnaires were sent to 176 respondents as a pretest to ensure that all of the questions and translations in this research were understandable and feasible for respondents to respond to. Among them, only 124 people were eligible for this pre-test. Because the research subjects were mainly Vietnamese teenagers, the researcher only selected data from survey participants between the ages of 13 and 25.



This pretest as well as investigated internal consistency and reliability (Cronbach's alpha values) of all measures were above 0.70, which is regarded satisfactory for exploratory investigations (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The reliability test results for each variable are shown in Table 4.1

Table 1: Reliability of Instrument

Variable	No. of Item	Cronbach's Alpha (n=124)
Social Media Addiction	13	0.931
Self-esteem	10	0.766
Self-presentation	10	0.825
Self-harm	10	0.985

Results

Descriptive Results of Variables

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient greater than 0.7 were examined to determine the measurement scales' reliability and extent the items are related. It is appropriate for this study (George & Mallery, 2003). Table 5.1 illustrates the results of the descriptive characteristics of the examined variables and the reliability of their measurement.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Test of Examined Variables

Scales	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha (n=261)
Self-harm	1.94	1.20	0.962
Self-esteem	3.33	0.52	0.728
Social Media Addiction	2.47	0.96	0.975
Self-presentation	2.80	0.52	0.813



Results of Hypothesis Testing

Using multiple linear regression, the impact of Facebook addiction on self-esteem was analyzed. The adjusted R^2 of 0.299 ($p < 0.001$) indicates that 29.9% of Facebook users' self-esteem was affected by addiction. The Durbin-Watson coefficient of 1.72 falls within the acceptance zone. ANOVA sig (F) = 0.000, confirming a significant linear relationship between self-esteem and social media addiction. The results reveal a significant negative influence of social media addiction on self-esteem ($\beta = -0.54^*$, Sig. < .05), supporting H1. In conclusion, Facebook addiction tends to lower the self-esteem of Vietnamese youth, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis between Social media addiction and Self-esteem

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.064	.074		54.733	.000
Social media addiction	-.296	.028	-.549	-10.569	.000

Dependent Variable: Self-esteem

Adjusted R square=0.299, F value=111.711, Durbin-Watson= 1.727, Sig.=0.000

The impact of Facebook addiction on self-presentation was also analyzed by multiple linear regression. The analysis indicates that Facebook addiction significantly affects users' self-expression by 31.1% (Adjusted R-square=0.311), with a Durbin-Watson coefficient of 1.70 falling within the acceptance zone. Despite not supporting H2, the positive β coefficient ($\beta = 0.56^*$, Sig. < .05) suggests statistical significance. In simpler terms, Facebook addiction does not diminish self-presentation on social media networks. Instead, the positive correlation implies that increased addiction correlates with a heightened inclination toward self-presentation on Facebook, including false self-representation. The coefficients indicated in table 5.3 as below.



Table 3: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis between Social media addiction and Self-presentation

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	2.053	.075		27.487	.000
	Social media addiction	.306	.028	.560	10.867	.000

Dependent Variable: Self-presentation

Adjusted R square=0.311, F value= 118.089, Durbin-Watson= 1.708, Sig.=0.000

Finally, the impact of Facebook addiction on self-harm was indicated in table 5.4. Social media addiction has a significant impact on self-harm intention, and the impact is positive ($\beta = 0.62^*$, Sig. < .05). In other words, if social media addiction increases by 1-unit, self-harm intentions will increase by 0.62 units. Hence, H3 is accepted and is concluded that Facebook addiction positive influence on Vietnamese youth about physical and psychological.

Table 4: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis between Social media addiction and Self-harm

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	.033	.161		.203	.839
	Social media addiction	.774	.061	.621	12.737	.000

Dependent Variable: Self-harm

Adjusted R square=0.383, F value= 162.228, Durbin-Watson= 1.011, Sig.=0.000



Conclusions and Discussion

H1: Facebook Addiction and Vietnamese youth' Self-Esteem

This study reveals a negative correlation between Facebook addiction and the self-esteem of Vietnamese teenagers, suggesting that increased social media use is linked to decreased self-esteem. The prevalence of social media platforms like Facebook exacerbates this issue by promoting excessive social comparison and presenting idealized images that can lower self-esteem.

H2: Facebook Addiction and Vietnamese youth' Self-Presentation

While Facebook addiction does not directly impair self-presentation, excessive time spent on social media encourages individuals to portray themselves differently online, often presenting an idealized version of themselves. This tendency reflects the desire to control how others perceive them, leading to false self-presentation among Vietnamese teenagers.

H3: Facebook Addiction and its Influence on Vietnamese youth' Physical and Psychological Well-being

The findings suggest that Facebook addiction among Vietnamese teenagers correlates with an increase in self-harm behaviors. Online communities may normalize harmful activities and fail to provide adequate support to individuals struggling with mental health issues, potentially exacerbating the problem.

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