The Impact of Social Media on FOMO and Fear of Exclusion: A Study on Social Media Users' Behavior in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of social media in fostering the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and the Fear of Social Exclusion, particularly among social media users in Vietnam. The rapid expansion of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok has brought many benefits in terms of social connection and interaction. However, excessive use of social media can also lead to psychological consequences, such as anxiety from missing out on information or feeling isolated from social groups. The study employs a quantitative research method with a sample of 300 social media users aged 18 to 45 in Vietnam, representing the age group with the highest level of social media interaction. Data was collected through a survey and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS software. The results indicate that perceived centrality on social media significantly influences user engagement and addiction, which, in turn, increase the likelihood of experiencing fear of exclusion; this fear of exclusion subsequently leads to FOMO. These findings emphasize the relationship between social media use and psychological issues, providing recommendations for users and managers to mitigate the negative effects of social media. This research context is particularly relevant in the digital age, where social media usage has become an integral part of daily life. With the rapid advancement of information technology, social media platforms have become essential tools for connection, yet they also pose significant risks to mental health. In the context of Vietnam, where social media is becoming increasingly prevalent, understanding its psychological impacts will help develop better strategies for managing and promoting healthier social media usage.

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, the rapid advancement of information and communication technology has brought significant changes to the way people live and work. One of the most notable changes is the rise and widespread adoption of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok. These platforms have become an integral part of the daily lives of millions of people worldwide, particularly among younger generations. Social media serves not only as a tool for connection and information sharing

but also as a space for self-expression and personal image building (Przybylski et al., 2013).

However, alongside the increasing use of social media, serious psychological issues have also begun to emerge. Among these are the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and the Fear of Social Exclusion. FOMO is defined as the feeling of anxiety and unease that occurs when individuals believe they are missing out on exciting experiences that others are participating in, prompting them to continuously check social media for updates (Przybylski et al., 2013). Meanwhile, the fear of social exclusion manifests as the anxiety and fear individuals' experiences when they feel isolated or not accepted within a social group (Williams et al., 2000).

Previous studies have shown that excessive use of social media can lead to psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, and even suicidal ideation (Hunt et al., 2018). Abel et al. (2016) explored how FOMO affects the social media behavior of university students, finding that students with high levels of FOMO tend to use social media even during class or while studying, leading to reduced academic performance. Similarly, Roberts and David (2019) confirmed the close relationship between FOMO, social media engagement, and poor mental health.

This study aims to assess the impact of perceived centrality on FOMO and the fear of social exclusion, with social media use serving as a mediating variable. Perceived centrality is defined as the extent to which individuals perceive their role and importance within a social group (Scott et al., 2017). Individuals with high perceived centrality often feel they play a crucial role in the group, which leads them to participate more actively in group activities. This research holds not only theoretical value but also practical significance, as it provides insights for social media users and platform managers to develop strategies for mitigating the negative psychological effects of social media use.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Perceived Centrality

Perceived centrality is defined as the extent to which an individual perceives their position and importance within a social group. It is a key concept that helps to understand how individuals interact and perceive their social relationships. In the context of social media usage, individuals with high perceived centrality often feel that they play an important role within their group, leading them to actively participate in social media activities (Scott et al., 2017). The study by Scott et al. (2017) also indicates that these individuals frequently use social media to express themselves and seek validation from others. Conversely, individuals with low perceived centrality may feel pressure and anxiety, potentially leading to psychological issues such as

FOMO and the fear of exclusion.

2.2. Social Media Engagement

Social media engagement is defined as the extent to which individuals participate in activities on social media, such as posting statuses, images, videos, commenting, liking friends' posts, and joining groups or events (Przybylski et al., 2013). Przybylski et al. (2013) suggest that high levels of social media engagement can be a significant factor influencing FOMO. Those who are actively engaged tend to frequently check and connect online to ensure they do not miss any activities their friends are participating in.

Roberts and David (2019) explored the relationship between social media engagement and mental health, finding that high levels of engagement may lead to feelings of loneliness and decreased well-being, particularly when engagement is driven by FOMO. This indicates that social media engagement, if not properly managed, may have negative psychological consequences.

2.3. Social Media Addiction

Social media addiction is defined as the condition in which individuals find it difficult to disengage from social media, even for a short period, and tend to continuously check social media without specific reasons (Andreassen et al., 2012). Social media addiction can lead to serious psychological problems, including anxiety, depression, and decreased academic or work performance. Andreassen et al. (2012) developed a scale for measuring social media addiction and found a close link between addiction and psychological issues such as anxiety and depression. Individuals addicted to social media often use it as a way to escape real-life problems.

Elhai et al. (2017) conducted a systematic review on the relationship between social media addiction and psychological issues. Their findings showed that social media addiction is not only associated with anxiety and depression but also affects sleep and overall health. This highlights the importance of managing social media usage to prevent negative psychological outcomes.

2.4. Fear of Social Exclusion

Fear of social exclusion is defined as the anxiety and fear experienced when an individual feels isolated or not accepted in a social setting (Williams et al., 2000). This occurs when an individual feels left out or does not belong to a particular social group. The fear of exclusion can result in negative psychological outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, and decreased self-esteem. Williams et al. (2000) showed that social

exclusion can have harmful psychological effects. Individuals who feel excluded often turn to social media to seek acceptance and a sense of belonging within a community.

Oberst et al. (2017) also found that social exclusion can increase the risk of social media addiction and FOMO. Their findings suggest that individuals who feel isolated are more likely to use social media excessively to compensate for their feelings of exclusion, leading to serious psychological problems.

2.5. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

FOMO is defined as the feeling of anxiety and unease when an individual is unable to participate in activities that others are engaging in, leading to a strong desire to stay connected and updated on social media (Przybylski et al., 2013). FOMO is a widespread phenomenon in modern society, especially with the rapid growth of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Individuals experiencing FOMO tend to frequently check social media to ensure they do not miss any events or activities their friends are involved in (Przybylski et al., 2013).

Previous studies have shown that FOMO can lead to negative mental health outcomes. Przybylski et al. (2013) identified FOMO as a key motivator driving social media use, and individuals with high levels of FOMO are more likely to check social media frequently. This behavior can lead to psychological problems such as anxiety and depression.

Additionally, Abel et al. (2016) examined how FOMO affects the social media behavior of university students, finding that students with high levels of FOMO frequently use social media during class and while studying, resulting in reduced academic performance. These findings emphasize that FOMO not only negatively impacts mental health but also affects other aspects of life, such as work and academic performance.

Studies indicate that FOMO can lead to social anxiety, feelings of loneliness, and pressure to continuously connect with others through social media. Therefore, FOMO not only harms mental health but can also lead to burnout, as social media users feel compelled to constantly monitor and participate in online activities.

2.6. Basis for Developing the Research Model

The research model is developed based on a solid theoretical foundation from previous studies on the impact of social media on users' psychology. The main research variables include perceived centrality, social media engagement, social media addiction, fear of exclusion, and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). Based on the theoretical basis of these variables, the relationships between them are proposed through the following hypotheses:

Perceived centrality reflects an individual's awareness of their role and importance within a social group (Scott et al., 2017). Individuals with high perceived centrality tend to participate more in social activities, particularly on social media, to maintain their position within the group. Based on this, the first hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Perceived centrality positively influences social media engagement.

Individuals with high perceived centrality are more likely to rely on social media as a means of maintaining their social standing (Andreassen et al., 2012). This can lead to social media addiction, where users find it difficult to stop using social media. Therefore, the second hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Perceived centrality positively influences social media addiction.

Fear of social exclusion often occurs in individuals with high perceived centrality, as they are concerned about being excluded from social activities if they do not maintain a regular presence on social media (Williams et al., 2000). Thus, the third hypothesis is suggested:

H3: Perceived centrality positively influences fear of exclusion.

Individuals who frequently engage with social media are often worried about being excluded from social activities because they feel pressure to maintain constant connections with the online community (Przybylski et al., 2013). Hence, the fourth hypothesis is formulated:

H4: Social media engagement positively influences fear of exclusion.

Individuals addicted to social media often feel pressured to continuously update and maintain online relationships to avoid feeling excluded. Elhai et al. (2017) found that social media addiction is closely related to fear of exclusion, leading to anxiety and insecurity. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Social media addiction positively influences fear of exclusion.

FOMO frequently occurs when individuals fear they might miss out on experiences that others are participating in. Fear of social exclusion is an important factor that increases FOMO, as users feel the need to continuously check social media to ensure they do not miss out on important information (Przybylski et al., 2013). Based on this, the final hypothesis is formulated:

H6: Fear of exclusion positively influences FOMO.

These hypotheses are constructed based on a combination of theoretical foundations and evidence from previous studies, aiming to examine the relationships between the variables in the context of social media use. The research model will be tested using quantitative data analysis methods, with the

goal of determining the effects of these factors on the behavior and psychology of social media users.

2.7. Research Model

Perceived centrality refers to the degree to which an individual perceives their importance and position within a social group. The study by Scott et al. (2017) indicates that individuals with high perceived centrality often feel they play an important role in social groups and, therefore, tend to participate more actively in social activities, including on social media. This can be explained by the need for self-affirmation and social acceptance. When individuals perceive that they hold a central position within the group, they are motivated to maintain and reinforce this position through active participation on social media.

The study by Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012) also supports this view, suggesting that social media engagement is often driven by psychological needs for social connection and self-affirmation. Therefore, perceived centrality may be a key factor influencing social media engagement.

Hypothesis H1: Perceived Centrality has a positive effect (+) on Social Media Engagement.

The study by Andreassen et al. (2012) found that social media addiction is characterized by difficulty in disengaging from social media and a tendency to check it continuously. Individuals with high perceived centrality often feel responsible for maintaining their position within the social group. This can lead to excessive social media use and dependence on it to sustain social relationships and their status.

Scott et al. (2017) discovered that individuals with high perceived centrality are more likely to use social media to express themselves and seek validation from others. This may lead to social media addiction, as individuals feel pressured to maintain and reinforce their central position. Thus, perceived centrality may be an important factor driving social media addiction.

Hypothesis H2: Perceived Centrality has a positive effect (+) on Social Media Addiction.

Fear of social exclusion refers to the anxiety and fear of being isolated or not accepted within a social group. Individuals with high perceived centrality often worry about maintaining their position within the group and fear being excluded if they do not meet the group's expectations. The study by Williams et al. (2000) shows that social exclusion can lead to negative psychological effects, including loneliness, anxiety, and reduced self-esteem.

Oberst et al. (2017) also found that individuals with high perceived centrality tend to be more anxious about the possibility of being excluded from the group, which can lead to fear of social exclusion. Therefore, perceived centrality may have a positive effect on fear of social exclusion, as individuals feel pressure to maintain and reinforce their position in the group.

Hypothesis H3: Perceived Centrality has a positive effect (+) on Fear of Social Exclusion.

Social media engagement refers to the extent to which individuals participate in activities on social media, such as posting statuses, images, or videos, commenting, liking friends' posts, and joining groups or events on social media. The study by Przybylski et al. (2013) suggests that social media engagement can be a significant factor influencing FOMO and fear of social exclusion. Individuals who are actively engaged on social media tend to be more anxious about the possibility of being excluded from the group, as they feel the need to continuously update and stay connected to avoid missing out on any activities involving their friends.

Roberts and David (2019) also explored the relationship between social media engagement and mental health, and their findings indicate that high levels of social media engagement can lead to feelings of loneliness and decreased well-being, especially when such engagement is driven by FOMO. This suggests that social media engagement can increase fear of social exclusion, as individuals feel pressured to maintain social relationships and avoid being left out.

Hypothesis H4: Social Media Engagement has a positive effect (+) on Fear of Social Exclusion.

Andreassen et al. (2012) defined social media addiction as the condition where individuals find it difficult to disengage from social media and tend to check it continuously. Individuals who are addicted to social media often feel more anxious about being excluded from the group because they depend on social media to maintain social relationships and feel secure within the group.

Elhai et al. (2017) conducted a systematic study on the relationship between social media addiction and psychological issues. The results showed that social media addiction is not only associated with anxiety and depression but also leads to fear of social exclusion. Individuals addicted to social media often feel pressured to maintain social relationships and avoid being left out, which can lead to fear of social exclusion. Therefore, social media addiction may have a positive effect on fear of social exclusion.

Hypothesis H5: Social Media Addiction has a positive effect (+) on Fear of Social Exclusion.

Przybylski et al. (2013) found that FOMO refers to the anxiety experienced when individuals are unable to participate in activities that others are engaging in, leading to an insatiable desire to stay connected and updated on social media. Fear of social exclusion may lead to FOMO, as individuals feel anxious about being left out and therefore tend to check social media continuously to ensure they do not miss any events or activities involving their friends.

Oberst et al. (2017) also showed that social exclusion can increase the risk of FOMO. Individuals who feel socially excluded tend to be more anxious about missing out on their friends' activities, leading to FOMO. Therefore, fear of social exclusion may have a positive effect on FOMO, as individuals feel pressured to maintain social relationships and avoid being left out.

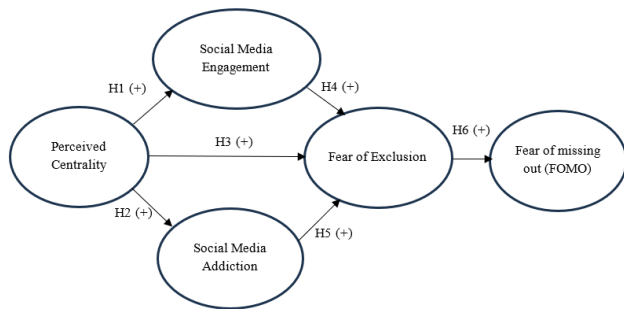*Hypothesis H6: Fear of Social Exclusion has a positive effect (+) on FOMO.*

Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

3. Research Methodology

Research Participants and Sample: This study was conducted with participants who are social media users aged 18 to 45 in Vietnam. This group was selected because they represent the age range with the highest level of social media usage and are more likely to be affected by psychological factors related to social media use. The estimated sample size for the study is 300 respondents, ensuring both representativeness and reliability of the research results. Respondents were randomly selected through popular social media platforms in Vietnam such as Facebook, Instagram, and Zalo. To ensure randomness and diversity in the survey sample, a simple random sampling method was applied.

Data Collection Method: Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire, which includes validated scales widely used in previous research. The questionnaire is divided into two main sections: (1) demographic information and (2) research variables related to social media behavior and psychology.

The variables in this study were measured using validated scales adopted from prior research. Demographic information included questions regarding participants' age, gender, educational attainment, and marital status. Perceived Centrality was assessed using the scale developed by Scott et al. (2017), which measures the extent to which individuals perceive their role and importance within a social group. Social Media Engagement was measured using the instrument

developed by Przybylski et al. (2013), capturing participants' level of involvement in social media activities such as posting content, interacting with others, and participating in online groups or events. Social Media Addiction was evaluated using the scale proposed by Andreassen et al. (2012), which assesses the degree of dependency on social media and the difficulty in regulating its use. Fear of Exclusion was measured based on the scale developed by Williams et al. (2000), which gauges individuals' anxiety and fear of being isolated or rejected by their social circles. Finally, the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) was assessed using the scale introduced by Przybylski et al. (2013), which evaluates the level of anxiety and discomfort experienced when individuals perceive themselves as missing out on rewarding experiences that others are having.

Data Analysis Method: The collected data will be analyzed using SPSS and AMOS software. Analytical methods such as descriptive statistics, reliability testing (Cronbach's Alpha), exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM) will be employed to test the research hypotheses. SEM is selected to analyze the relationships between variables and to assess the fit of the proposed theoretical model.

4. Research Results

4.1. Survey Sample Information

The demographic analysis of the research sample, which includes 300 respondents, shows diversity in terms of age, gender, education level, and marital status. The age distribution of the respondents is as follows: 35% are aged 18-25, 40% are aged 26-35, and 25% are aged 36-45. The younger age group (18-25) often consists of students or individuals at the beginning of their careers, who tend to use social media extensively to connect with friends and follow new trends. The 26-35 age group, which constitutes the majority of the sample, generally has stable jobs and personal lives and uses social media for professional networking and work-related updates. The 36-45 age group primarily uses social media to maintain personal and family relationships.

Regarding gender, 45% of the respondents are male and 55% are female. Men typically use social media to stay updated with news, participate in interest-based groups, and connect with friends, whereas women often share personal experiences and engage in community activities. The education level of respondents is also diverse, with 20% having a high school education or lower, 50% holding a university degree, and 30% having a postgraduate degree. The group with postgraduate education often uses social media for work and research purposes.

As for marital status, 60% of respondents are

single, 35% are married, and 5% are divorced or in other situations. Single individuals use social media to connect and seek new relationships, while married individuals use it to maintain communication with family and friends. This diversity ensures that the research results will be highly representative, accurately reflecting the social media user base in Vietnam, and providing useful conclusions for different demographic groups.

4.2. Model Analysis and Research Hypotheses

The results of the reliability test for the scales using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient show that all scales meet the required threshold of greater than 0.6. The results of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using Principal Axis Factoring and Promax rotation indicate that the factor loadings for all observed variables are

greater than 0.5, which is considered acceptable. The composite reliability (CR) of all factors is greater than 0.7, thus satisfying the required condition. The calculation of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) shown in Table 1 is greater than 0.5, which meets the requirements for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

The results of the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis in Figure 2 show that the Chi-square/df ratio is 1.432, which is less than 2; the GFI is 0.899, approximately 0.9; the CFI is 0.970, which is greater than 0.9; the TLI is 0.966, also greater than 0.9; and the RMSEA is 0.038, which is less than 0.08, indicating that the theoretical model fits the data well. All relationships in the model have a 95% confidence level, with $p = 0.000$. This demonstrates that the scales of the constructs in the research model are theoretically related.

Table 1. Reliability and Validity Assessment of Measurement Scales

| Factor/ Observed Variable	Reliability and Validity	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE
Perceived Centrality	Cronbach's α = 0.807	0.884	0.559	
PC1	I feel that I am an important part of my social media friend group.	.798		
PC2	I believe that my friends on social media see me as an important person.	.725		
PC3	I am frequently mentioned or tagged in posts by my friends on social media.	.692		
PC4	I feel that my presence on social media is meaningful to my friends.	.643		
Social Media Engagement	Cronbach's α = 0.846	0.847	0.580	
SME1	I frequently post status updates, photos, or videos on social media.	.800		
SME2	I often comment on or like my friends' posts on social media.	.779		
SME3	I spend a lot of time scrolling and viewing content on social media every day.	.736		
SME4	I actively participate in groups and events on social media.	.704		
Social Media Addiction	Cronbach's α = 0.839	0.840	0.567	
SMA1	I find it difficult to stay away from social media, even for a short period.	.820		
SMA2	I feel anxious or stressed when I cannot access social media.	.744		
SMA3	I frequently check social media even without a specific reason.	.743		
SMA4	I feel that social media has affected my daily activities.	.707		
Fear of Exclusion	Cronbach's α = 0.841	0.842	0.573	
FOE1	I worry that my friends might exclude me from social activities.	.803		
FOE2	I feel fearful when thinking that I might be isolated from my friend group.	.768		
FOE3	I often feel not accepted in my social media friend group.	.750		
FOE4	I worry that people will forget me if I do not participate in social activities.	.691		
FOMO	Cronbach's α = 0.883	0.807	0.517	
FOMO1	I feel anxious when I cannot participate in activities that my friends are involved in.	.830		
FOMO2	I frequently check social media to ensure that I do not miss any important information.	.773		
FOMO3	I feel uneasy when I see friends posting interesting experiences that I am not part of.	.763		
FOMO4	I worry that I will miss important opportunities if I do not update social media regularly.	.697		
FOMO5	I worry that I will miss important opportunities if I do not update social media regularly.	.651		
FOMO6	I frequently follow my friends on social media.	.593		
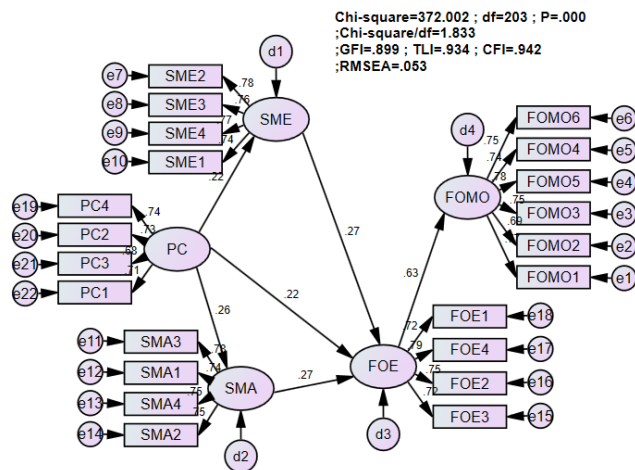
Figure 2. Results of the SEM Analysis

The estimation results of the theoretical model in the SEM analysis show that hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, and H6 are accepted with 95% confidence.

5. Discussion of Research Findings

The results of the study show that perceived centrality has a positive and statistically significant impact on social media engagement. Specifically, the estimated coefficient is 0.213, with a C.R. (Critical Ratio) value of 3.147, which is greater than 1.96, and a P-value of 0.002 (less than 0.05). This indicates that when individuals perceive themselves as important within their social group, they are more likely to engage with social media to reinforce their status. This finding aligns with the study by Scott et al. (2017), which also confirmed that individuals with high perceived centrality often use social media to seek validation and express themselves. This can be explained by the psychological desire to maintain and enhance their position in the group through active presence on online platforms. The author suggests that in the context of Vietnamese society, active social media participation is also closely tied to the need for personal image building, further emphasizing the role of perceived centrality in driving online social behavior.

Furthermore, the study shows that perceived centrality also has a positive and statistically significant impact on social media addiction, with an estimated coefficient of 0.254 and a P-value of less than 0.001. This finding supports the results of Andreassen et al. (2012), which found that individuals with high perceived centrality tend to use social media more frequently to maintain their personal image and social status, leading to a higher risk of social media addiction. The author observes that in the rapidly growing context of social media, this behavior can become difficult to control, especially for individuals who seek validation from others. This can result in overdependence on social media, negatively impacting real-life interactions and personal relationships.

Additionally, perceived centrality has a positive and statistically significant impact on the fear of social exclusion, with an estimated coefficient of 0.216 and a P-value of 0.001. This finding aligns with Williams et al. (2000), who pointed out that individuals with high perceived centrality often worry about being excluded from the group. The author agrees with this view and adds that in the context of social media, continuous self-expression and online interaction become key tools for individuals to ensure their place within a social group. This heightens anxiety when individuals feel left out or unnoticed.

The study also reveals that social media engagement has a positive and statistically significant impact on fear of social exclusion, with an estimated coefficient of 0.270 and a P-value of less than 0.001. This finding aligns with Przybylski et al. (2013), which showed that individuals who actively engage on social media tend to worry more about being excluded from social activities. The author believes this may stem from the underlying competition on online platforms, where continuous presence and active participation are ways to maintain relationships and demonstrate connection with the group. This can place significant pressure on individuals, potentially leading to negative psychological consequences such as anxiety and stress.

Notably, social media addiction also has a positive and statistically significant impact on fear of social exclusion, with an estimated coefficient of 0.263 and a P-value of less than 0.001. This finding supports the study by Elhai et al. (2017), which found that social

Table 2. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
H1: Social Media Engagement ← Perceived Centrality	.213	.068	3.147	.002
H2: Social Media Addiction ← Perceived Centrality	.254	.070	3.650	***
H3: Fear of Exclusion ← Perceived Centrality	.216	.068	3.175	.001
H4: Fear of Exclusion ← Social Media Engagement	.270	.067	4.022	***
H5: Fear of Exclusion ← Social Media Addiction	.263	.067	3.941	***
H6: Fear of Missing Out ← Fear of Exclusion	.710	.083	8.560	***

media addiction is related to psychological issues such as anxiety and depression, and can lead to fear of exclusion. The author suggests that in modern society, social media has become a place where individuals seek connection and a sense of security within social relationships. Excessive use of social media may cause users to rely on validation from others, thereby increasing their fear of exclusion.

Finally, the study confirms that fear of social exclusion has a strong positive impact on FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), with an estimated coefficient of 0.710 and a P-value of less than 0.001. This result aligns with the findings of Przybylski et al. (2013), which indicated that fear of exclusion can lead to FOMO, as individuals who worry about being left out often check social media continuously to ensure they do not miss any events or activities involving their friends. The author observes that, in the context of social media, FOMO is not merely a psychological phenomenon but a powerful motivator driving continuous social media use, creating a cycle of anxiety over exclusion and fear of missing out. This underscores the need for appropriate interventions to mitigate the negative psychological effects that FOMO can have on social media users.

6. Implications of the Research

This study provides valuable insights into the relationship between perceived centrality, social media engagement, social media addiction, FOMO, and fear of social exclusion. The findings offer practical implications for various stakeholders, including social media users, platform managers, researchers, policymakers, and educational organizations. These results help identify the negative impacts of social media and suggest appropriate measures to mitigate such effects, while promoting positive and responsible social media usage.

For social media users, the study indicates that feeling important within a social group can lead to excessive social media use, causing an imbalance between online and offline life. To address this, users should recognize time limits on social media usage, set strict guidelines for themselves, and devote more time to offline activities. Social media platform managers can assist by developing features that help users manage their time, such as tools to track usage and reminders when users have been online for too long, thus reducing negative impacts.

Individuals with high perceived centrality should be cautious about becoming overly dependent on social media to maintain their sense of importance within a group. They should seek alternative ways to feel connected, such as participating in community activities or developing personal skills. Social media platforms should provide educational materials about the negative effects of social media addiction, while also developing

tools to help users control their social media behavior, such as "pause" or "usage limit" features to promote more effective time management.

High perceived centrality can increase the fear of social exclusion; therefore, users need to develop self-awareness and self-acceptance without relying excessively on validation from social media. This can help reduce unnecessary pressure and anxiety. Social media platforms should encourage a culture of tolerance and diversity, creating a safe and friendly environment where everyone feels welcomed and not excluded, helping to mitigate users' fear of social exclusion.

Excessive social media engagement can amplify the anxiety of being excluded from social activities. Users need to be mindful of their motivations for engaging with social media and adjust their behavior in a positive direction. They should reassess what drives them to engage with social media and limit negative factors such as the fear of missing out or fear of exclusion. Social media platforms should also provide tools to monitor users' engagement levels and offer educational materials about the psychological impacts of excessive social media use.

Social media addiction can exacerbate the fear of social exclusion, so users should recognize the signs of addiction and proactively seek support if necessary. They should also develop offline relationships and participate in real-world activities to reduce their dependence on social media. Social media platforms need to develop programs and tools that help users identify and control social media addiction, encouraging positive activities and reducing social pressures.

Finally, the fear of social exclusion can lead to FOMO, causing users to feel the need to continuously participate in activities or stay updated on information. To address this, users should learn to accept that they do not need to participate in every activity or know every detail at all times. Developing emotional management skills and maintaining a balance between online and offline life is crucial. Social media platforms should provide educational materials on FOMO and how to manage it, while encouraging users to engage in meaningful activities without the pressure of being constantly connected.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

7.1. Limitations

While this study provides significant findings regarding the relationship between perceived centrality, social media engagement, social media addiction, FOMO, and fear of social exclusion, several limitations must be acknowledged.

First, the research sample is limited to social media users aged 18 to 45 in Vietnam. Although this group

represents a high proportion of social media users, the findings may not fully capture the behavior of other age groups or users in different countries. Expanding the research to include other age groups, especially those over 45 or social media users from different cultural backgrounds, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of social media's impact.

Second, the data collection method relied on self-administered questionnaires, which are based on participants' self-reports. This can introduce issues related to data accuracy, such as social desirability bias or respondents potentially not being fully aware of their social media usage behavior. Future research could address this limitation by incorporating additional data collection methods, such as direct behavioral observation on social media platforms or in-depth interviews, to minimize these biases.

Third, the cross-sectional design of this study only allows for the analysis of relationships between variables at a single point in time. This limits the ability to establish long-term causal relationships between the research variables. Future research should consider adopting a longitudinal design to track changes in these factors over time and better determine the causal relationships between social media usage and related psychological effects.

7.2. Future Research Directions

Based on the aforementioned limitations, several future research directions can be developed to expand and deepen the understanding of the relationship between social media and psychological issues.

First, future studies could expand the scope of participants by including social media users across various age groups, particularly younger users (adolescents) and older adults. This would help explore the effects of social media on different age groups and reveal specific behavioral patterns unique to each group.

Second, cross-cultural studies are an important future direction. Comparing countries with different cultural contexts and levels of social media development could shed light on how cultural factors influence social media behavior and psychology, providing a more multidimensional understanding.

Third, future research should combine quantitative and qualitative methods to better understand the complex motivations, emotions, and behaviors associated with social media usage. In-depth interviews or other qualitative research methods could uncover aspects that quantitative methods may not fully capture.

Finally, longitudinal studies would be a crucial next step for analyzing the development of factors such as perceived centrality, social media addiction, and FOMO over time. Tracking these variables could offer better insights into the causal relationships and provide stronger empirical evidence for psychological health interventions related to social media usage.

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