
Nhan Nguyen, An Dang, Tai Ngo, Hieu Tran and Dung Tran

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to investigate the role of self-esteem in mediating the relationship between passive social networking usage (PSNU) and life satisfaction, as well as whether the relationships between PSNU and self-esteem/life satisfaction as well as self-esteem and life satisfaction vary by gender.

Design/methodology/approach – This research is conducted in compliance with the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association’s study on a subject of 304 students. Study participants are invited to participate in the survey by completing the anonymous questionnaire regarding passive social network usage, self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Findings – The findings indicate that self-esteem mediated the relationship between PSNU and life satisfaction. Furthermore, gender moderated the self-esteem and life satisfaction relationship, and such an effect was stronger for females than males.

Research limitations/implications – This study, adopting a cross-sectional design and self-report scale, examined the relationship between PSNU and life satisfaction. However, the short study duration hindered establishing a cause-and-effect relationship. Credibility concerns arose from participant-induced noise variables in the self-report scale. Future research should use diverse methods to validate underlying mechanisms. Despite limitations, the study revealed self-esteem as a mediating factor, alleviating the negative impact of PSNU on life satisfaction. Both male and female users are encouraged to engage in self-education, valuing their self-esteem for heightened life satisfaction.

Originality/value – These findings contribute to the understanding of how passive social network usage predicts life satisfaction (mediating effect of self-esteem) based on social comparison theory and when self-esteem increases life satisfaction (moderating effect of gender) based on social role theory of gender differences.

Keywords Passive social network usage, Life satisfaction, Self-esteem, Gender differences

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Over the past few years, social networks have been flourishing in numerous different countries, and Facebook could be a typical example of this phenomenon (Syn and Oh, 2015). Since being founded in 2004, Facebook has had nearly 1.7 billion users after more than 10 years of development, with approximately 500 million people from distinct regions of the world assessing such an online platform daily (Kross et al., 2013). Up to now, social networks have gained almost four billion global users (e.g. Facebook, Youtube, WhatsApp and Instagram) (Kemp, 2020a), including 65 million Vietnamese people (Kemp, 2020b). In

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addition, social networking sites have been considered as a tool to express personal thoughts as well as feelings (Neesha and Deepanjal, 2017) and to accommodate people’s needs for entertainment, especially the youth’s (Das and Sahoo, 2011). Numerous studies have demonstrated that this phenomenon has had significant impacts on the behavior and physical as well as mental health of people of all age brackets (Das and Sahoo, 2011; Saini et al., 2020). However, inconsistency was found among the distinct results of several studies. A number of researches indicated that social platforms have exerted certain beneficial effects on the society, namely, boosting psychological well-being (Kim and Lee, 2011), releasing negative emotions (Wang et al., 2018a) and enhancing life satisfaction (Ellison et al., 2007; Nabi et al., 2013). On the other hand, there are several detrimental influences caused by social networking usage on people’s lives. For instance, they are likely to suffer from stress because of the lack of a sense of social connectedness in relationships on social media, which could adversely affect the ability to take control of their personal emotions (Kalpidou et al., 2011), decline their self-esteem (Krause et al., 2021; Schmuck et al., 2019) and decrease their well-being (Kross et al., 2013; Wirtz et al., 2021). Besides, social platforms also make individuals draw negative comparisons in their self-awareness (de Vries and Kühne, 2015). A question of when social platform use has positive impacts and vice versa is begged.

To be more specific, studies have demonstrated that social media use is divided into two categories: active social network usage – the behaviors of communicating and interacting actively with others on social networking sites, and passive social network usage (PSNU) – the behaviors of observing and monitoring others’ information without performing any interactions (e.g. viewing and reading other people’s information without leaving any comments or reactions) (Apaoiaza et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2019, 2016; Verduyn et al., 2015). In particular, active social network usage (including updating status with friends, interacting with posts and posting personal status lines) has brought about the ability to improve the sense of connection, satisfy the demand for harmony and reduce people’s feelings of loneliness (Burke et al., 2010; Deters and Mehl, 2013). However, many researchers have illustrated that PSNU has negative associations with social awareness (Chen et al., 2019) and users’ subjective well-being (Chen et al., 2016; Ding et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2017). Mentioned as a component of subjective well-being (Veenhoven, 2012), life satisfaction plays an important role in reflecting an individual’s cognitive aspects (Huebner et al., 2006). Besides, Wang (2013) has investigated the correlation between PSNU and life satisfaction, as well as expanded their findings when exploring this relationship through a number of mediating variables such as envy (Ding et al., 2017) and self-image (Lin et al., 2021). Therefore, the present study was conducted to investigate the relationship between PSNU and life satisfaction via the mediating variable, self-esteem. At the same time, the study also explored the moderating role of gender in the paths of the conceptual model (PSNU → self-esteem → life satisfaction, self-esteem → life satisfaction) (see Figure 1) to explain the difference in psychological characteristics between men and women, which may lead them to changes in self-esteem as well as life satisfaction after using SN passively. Besides, with such differences, changes in life satisfaction might also significantly vary by gender after the reduction of self-esteem because of experiences in PSNU.

1.1 Passive social networking usage and life satisfaction relationship

Life satisfaction is a personal assessment of people’s life quality according to their own criteria (Shin and Johnson, 1987). Diener (1984) stated, because there are various standards that individuals base on to evaluate their life satisfaction, it is pointless to depend on criteria suggested by researchers so as to assess their life aspects. In general, those with a high level of life satisfaction are likely to have a sense of optimism about their life; by contrast, those who tend to be pessimistic toward their life may possess a low level of life...
satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985). When the correlation of life satisfaction with PSNU is considered under social comparison theory, studies have illustrated that PSNU can contribute to social similarities and feelings of envy, which decreases the satisfaction of individuals with their lives (Krasnova et al., 2013). Tromholt (2016) demonstrated that Facebook usage causes negative influences on users’ subjective well-being, especially addicts’ and envious people’s. An experiment performed showed that their life satisfaction and positive emotions were enhanced when they halted using such a platform. According to social comparison theory, people tend to compare themselves with others (Festinger, 1954). Besides, research also revealed that people passively using social media with high frequency were likely to perceive others’ lives as always more preferable than theirs, making them feel unfair (Chou and Edge, 2012). Therefore, comparing their selves with others may lead to diminished life satisfaction, and we propose:

H1. PNSU may be associated with decreased life satisfaction.

1.2 Role of self-esteem as a mediator

Self-esteem is an appraisal component of self-concept that corresponds to the overall view of the self as worthy or unworthy (Baumeister, 1998); in other words, this judgment expresses the attitude of acceptance or rejection of oneself. Those with high self-esteem tend to accept and respect themselves; if an individual assesses himself or herself with positive emotions, he or she may have high self-esteem, and vice versa (Petersen, 1965). Numerous pieces of research have demonstrated that PSNU could negatively predict self-esteem by mediating social comparison (Liu et al., 2017). Tazghini and Siedlecki (2013) stated that individuals with high self-esteem tend to engage in more active social media behaviors, such as sharing their thoughts and feelings with others. According to Wang et al. (2018b), people with low self-esteem tend to have a high tendency to ruminate, but rumination is linked to depression and internet addiction disorder – a type of behavior that negatively uses social media. Steinsbekk et al. (2021) showed that strategies of social networking site use could have a differing effect on the youth’s self-esteem. A meta-study was done and concluded a negative association between social media use (especially malicious social media behavior) and self-esteem; this relation was also proved by a large number of hypotheses, studies and experiments (Saiphoo et al., 2020). On the other hand, previous research has shown that self-esteem is the factor affecting life satisfaction (Huo and Kong, 2014; Liang et al., 2020; Moksnes and Espnes, 2013; Yetim, 2003; Zhang, 2005); besides, studies undertaken by Campbell (1981) proved that this factor had the greatest

Figure 1 Conceptual model with single mediation of self-esteem and gender as a moderator

Note: PSNU = passive social network usage
Source: Figure by the authors
influence on people’s life satisfaction. Based on the results of the above-mentioned studies, within the research context in Vietnam, self-esteem is treated as a mediating variable between PSNU and life satisfaction. Therefore, we would hypothesize:

\[ H2 \]: Self-esteem plays a role as a mediating variable in the connection between PSNU and life satisfaction.

1.3 Moderating role of gender

Although PSNU may weaken self-esteem and predict lower life satisfaction, it is probable that its effects may not impact males and females equally. Based on the peer-socialization model of sex-linked adjustment and social role theory, the differences in family, occupational and social roles between males and females may play an essential role in explaining how PSNU affected their self-esteem/life satisfaction as well as how their self-esteem affected life satisfaction differently.

Males and females have been found to have quite different approaches to happiness (Della Giusta et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2021). Gender is suggested to be a potential moderator in the correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction (Moksnes and Espnes, 2013). A study revealed that gender influenced the correlation between using social media for social comparison and depressive symptoms, with females having a stronger correlation than males (Nesi and Prinstein, 2015). According to peer-domain research, connection-oriented objectives predominate among girls. Teenage females outperformed adolescent boys on a composite goal score that reflected how much they valued social objectives (e.g. making friends, helping others) over nonsocial goals (e.g. obtaining excellent grades, making money). Females are more concerned with the status of their relationships and peer judgments (Rose and Rudolph, 2006). Moreover, the social role theory depicts that males are generally more prominent in positions of authority, while females are more prominent in caring about their children, parents and husbands (Eagly, 1987). These characteristics may lead them to be distinctly affected by PSNU. Specifically, the high frequency of females’ connections to their family, friends and peers may put them at risk of reducing self-esteem and life satisfaction when PSNU is dominant among them because of the upward social comparison tendency. However, cultivating a relationship with others may also help females to receive essential feedback from their friend list on SN, so they may have more opportunities to improve their life satisfaction after experiencing a decrease in self-esteem from PSNU. This line of reasoning implies that:

\[ H3 \]: Gender has a moderating role in the relationships between PSNU and self-esteem/life satisfaction as well as between self-esteem and life satisfaction, with females tending to have a stronger correlation than males.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The research is conducted in compliance with the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association’s study on a subject of 304 students. Study participants are invited to participate in the survey by completing the questionnaire. There are about 77 male students (25.4%) and 226 female students (74.6%).

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 Passive social networking usage. The scale has five questions, for example: “I am very active on social network sites”; “I often comment on friends’ posts or status,” etc. (Chen et al., 2016; Ding et al., 2017; Verduyn et al., 2015). Research participants assessed each item based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “completely not true” to 5 =
“completely true.” Higher final mean scores mean more passive use of social network sites. On the other hand, the first two sentence scores are reversed. Cronbach’s $\alpha$ coefficient is 0.80.

2.2.2 Self-esteem. Rosenberg (1965) developed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), which was used to assess an individual’s self-esteem. Study participants were asked to rate their consent based on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree.” High average values reflect high levels of self-esteem. In this study, Cronbach’s $\alpha$ is 0.78.

2.2.3 Life satisfaction. The scale is built based on five items to assess life satisfaction, for example: “In most ways my life is close to my ideal,” “The conditions of my life are excellent,” etc. (Diener et al., 1985). Each item corresponds to a response based on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree.” High mean values indicate higher life satisfaction. Cronbach’s $\alpha$ for the present sample is 0.78.

2.3 Data analysis

Baseline analysis was tested and calculated by SPSS 20.0. In addition, the study uses the PROCESS macro version 3.4 for SPSS 20 to analyze the complex pattern of the mediating variable in the relationship between PSNU and life satisfaction and the moderating role of gender in the relationship between PSNU and self-esteem/life satisfaction as well as self-esteem and life satisfaction (Hayes, 2013).

3. Results

Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics of gender, PSNU, self-esteem and life satisfaction variables. Besides, when looking into the correlation among the variables, it has been shown that PSNU has negative relationships with self-esteem ($r = -0.28$, $p < 0.001$) and life satisfaction ($r = -0.15$, $p = 0.012$); Nevertheless, there is a positive connection between self-esteem and life satisfaction ($r = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$) (see Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSNU</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: PSNU = passive social network usage</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: Table by the authors</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSNU</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>–0.28***</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
<td>–0.14*</td>
<td>0.50***</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes: *$p &lt; 0.050$; ***$p &lt; 0.001$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source: Table by the authors</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1 Testing the mediating effect of self-esteem

The result demonstrates that the total impact of PSNU on life satisfaction was statistically significant: $R^2 = 0.25$. As can be seen in Figure 2, PSNU negatively influenced self-esteem (path a; $b = -0.14, p < 0.001$); in addition, self-esteem positively influenced life satisfaction (path b; $b = 1.41, p < 0.001$). However, the total effect of PSNU on life satisfaction was statistically significant (path c; $b = -0.20, p = 0.012$); therefore, $H1$ was supported.

However, with the appearance of the mediating role of self-esteem, it became statistically nonsignificant (path c'; $b = -0.001, p = 0.984$). Therefore, self-esteem served as a full mediating variable in the relationship between PSNU and life satisfaction. As illustrated in Table 3, the estimation of the indirect impact of PSNU on life satisfaction via the mediating role of self-esteem was $-0.20, 95\% CI [-0.296, -0.111]$. Zero was not included in the 95\% bootstrap confidence interval, which was based on 5,000 samples, indicating that the influence of PSNU on life satisfaction was mediated by self-esteem. Hence, $H2$ was also supported.

3.2 Testing the moderating effect of gender

To test the moderating effect of gender in the relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction, we divided the samples into two groups (males and females) and ran these groups in Amos software to examine how PSNU was linked to life satisfaction via self-esteem between males and females, and whether self-esteem functioned as a mediator for both males and females.

![Figure 2](image-url)

**Table 3** Direct and indirect impact among 95\% confidence intervals and study variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model pathways</th>
<th>Estimated effect</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNSU → SE</td>
<td>$-0.14$</td>
<td>$-0.192$</td>
<td>$-0.086$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE → LS</td>
<td>$1.41$</td>
<td>$1.124$</td>
<td>$1.701$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSNU → LS</td>
<td>$-0.001$</td>
<td>$-0.645$</td>
<td>$1.395$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSNU → SE → LS</td>
<td>$-0.20$</td>
<td>$-0.296$</td>
<td>$-0.111$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** PSNU = passive social network usage; SE = self-esteem; LS = life satisfaction

**Source:** Table by the authors
As can be seen in Figure 3, for males, the link between PSNU and life satisfaction was statistically nonsignificant \((b = -0.03, SE = 0.15, p = 0.844)\). The link between PSNU and self-esteem was negative and significant \((b = -0.14, SE = 0.05, p = 0.009)\). However, the link between self-esteem and life satisfaction was positive and significant \((b = 0.94, SE = 0.32, p = 0.015)\). After the appearance of self-esteem, the relationship between PSNU and life satisfaction was still statistically nonsignificant \((b = 0.08, SE = 0.15, p = 0.593)\).

As can be seen in Figure 4, for females, the total effect of PSNU and life satisfaction was negative and significant \((b = -0.25, SE = 0.09, p = 0.005)\). Besides, this link was mediated by self-esteem, revealing that the impact of PSNU on self-esteem was significant and negative \((b = -0.11, SE = 0.03, p < 0.001)\), and the impact of self-esteem on life satisfaction was significant and positive \((b = 1.65, SE = 0.17, p < 0.001)\). Moreover, when the variable – self-esteem – was controlled, the impact of PSNU on life satisfaction was decreased and nonsignificant \((b = -0.07, SE = 0.08, p = 0.403)\).

As can be seen in Table 4, the interaction term between PSNU and gender was found to be nonsignificant \((b = 0.01, p = 0.795)\), thus gender did not moderate the relationship between PSNU and self-esteem.

As can be seen in Table 5, the interaction term between PSNU and gender was found to be nonsignificant; thus, the relationship between PSNU and life satisfaction was not moderated by gender \((b = -0.07, p = 0.336)\). However, testing the moderating role of gender in the relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction, the interaction term between self-esteem and gender was statistically significant \((b = 0.34, p = 0.038)\). Based on this result,
we may conclude that gender moderated the relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction, and this effect was stronger for females than males (see Table 5 and Figure 5). Therefore, our finding showed that H3 was partially supported.

4. Discussion

The results revealed that there is a negative correlation between PSNU and life satisfaction, which is fairly consistent with several studies’ findings (Chen et al., 2016; Ding et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2021; Verduyn et al., 2015, 2017); however, while such pieces of research perceived life satisfaction as a component in subjective well-being and past research concentrated on the direct path, our study clarified the mediating role of self-esteem in the relationship between PSNU and life satisfaction. The current study indicated that self-esteem was a significant component in mediating the relationship between PSNU and life satisfaction. These findings are explained by social comparison theory, as individuals compare what they possess with what others have (Buunk and Gibbons, 2007; Festinger, 1954; Goethals, 1986). Other users are likely to express their own positive emotions or ideal images via social platforms (Mehdizadeh, 2010), leading to an increase in detrimental influences on passive users, especially on their self-esteem (Chen et al., 2016; Tazghini and Siedlecki, 2013). Besides, a number of studies using social comparison theory to guide their results found several psychological factors serving as mediators in the relation between PSNU and life satisfaction, which include self-concept (Lin et al., 2021), envy (Ding et al., 2017) and upward social comparison (Wang et al., 2017).

Psychologically, self-esteem was considered as a psychological stability process; nevertheless, it could undergo a change over time (Orth and Robins, 2014). Based on self-development and the accumulating experience process, individuals’ self-esteem may be somewhat affected (Zeigler-Hill, 2013). Besides, self-esteem was mentioned as self-assessment about their values (Orth and Robins, 2014); in fact, social networking sites are perceived as places where users update and share positive posts that do wonders for

### Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>$b$</th>
<th>$S_{tb}$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$S_{r}^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>2.668</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>132.101</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSNU</td>
<td>-0.118</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>-0.260</td>
<td>4.647</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
<td>0.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.020</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
<td>&lt; 0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSNU \times Gender</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.260</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: PSNU = passive social network usage. Dependent variable: self-esteem; $***p < 0.001$

Source: Table by the authors

### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>$b$</th>
<th>$S_{tb}$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$S_{r}^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>4.349</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>79.171</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSNU</td>
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<td>-0.021</td>
<td>0.400</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
<td>0.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>1.452</td>
<td>0.156</td>
<td>0.481</td>
<td>9.279</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
<td>0.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.034</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>-0.031</td>
<td>-0.615</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSNU \times Gender</td>
<td>-0.065</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>-0.047</td>
<td>-0.906</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE \times Gender</td>
<td>0.337</td>
<td>0.162</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>2.084</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: PSNU = passive social network usage; SE = self-esteem. Dependent variable: life satisfaction; $***p < 0.001$

Source: Table by the authors
individuals (Chou and Edge, 2012) or even exaggerated information by users (Wenninger et al., 2019). As a result, feelings of envy, comparison and negative self-assessment might be formed among social media users, especially passive ones. Worse, if individuals’ self-esteem is not shaped by precise and objective assessments, their life satisfaction is likely to decline.

The study also found that the relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction was moderated by gender, and the strength of this relationship was stronger for females than males. This result can be explained from the point of view of social role theory and the peer-socialization model of sex-linked adjustment. The differences between men and women are reflected in the physical attributes of each sex (e.g. women’s childbearing, childrearing, size, speed or muscular strength of males) and other factors characterized by social, economic and technological forces in society (Eagly and Wood, 2016). Accordingly, females with the tendency to care about others may tend to seek sufficient and necessary feedback from their friends on SN, so they could have more chances to improve their life satisfaction than males.

Gender was found to have no moderating effect on the pathways (PSNU → self-esteem/life satisfaction). These may imply that, no matter what users’ genders are, when they are prone to using SN passively, they may experience a significant decrease in self-esteem and life satisfaction. Therefore, in our study context, users may use upward social comparison equally; thus, their self-esteem and life satisfaction were damaged equally.

5. Limitations and implications

First of all, our study was carried out with a cross-sectional design, and efforts were devoted to investigate the relationship among variables in a short period of time; thus, the reason–result relation among them was not found. Secondly, a self-report scale was applied to the study, which leads to a reduction in credibility because of noise variables caused by participants. Therefore, various methods should be applied in future studies so as to verify the reliability of the underlying mechanism in the association between PSNU and life satisfaction. Besides, other variables, which could play a role as mediators in the relationship
between PSNU and life satisfaction, should be researched in the future to provide a better insight into the complicated underlying mechanism of the correlation among these variables. Finally, in this study, the moderating impact of gender in the mediation model was investigated in a sample of Vietnamese university students. The gender disparities discovered may be a reflection of the Eastern culture in which the study was performed. Future research should examine whether gender differences remain similar in various populations, and similar research should be conducted on a variety of participants to verify the credibility of the relationship in Eastern countries, where collectivism is followed (Cohen et al., 2016).

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, the mediating variable (self-esteem) engaging in the negative impact of PSNU on life satisfaction was demonstrated. Our study suggests people use social networking sites less passively to boost their level of life satisfaction. Moreover, users, both males and females, are recommended to self-educate by appreciating their own values (self-esteem) so as to lead to enhancement in their life satisfaction, which is the basis for life satisfaction improvement programs through increasing their awareness as well as skills; therefore, helping participants use social networking sites less passively.

References


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