EXPLORING VIETNAMESE UNDERGRADUATES' PERCEPTION OF THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LONELINESS

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ABSTRACT

This work aims primarily at exploring the perception of social and emotional loneliness of Vietnamese undergraduates. The sample was composed of 221 students (45 males and 176 females from Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior) of 19–24 ages attending three Universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. They completed the Social and Emotional Loneliness, which included Romantic, Family, Social. The Vietnamese people group's research then gathered data. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Cochran methodology was applied to determine the sample size, and the MANOVA test was used to assess differences between each group. The results found that regarding the Social and Emotional Loneliness towards research scores, the Social and Emotional Loneliness of females was found to have higher than males. Moreover, the Social and Emotional Loneliness Senior that found to be higher than those of Sophomore, Junior, and Freshman on the Social and Emotional Loneliness of research scores. The University students who had gone under the research showed, and they would be interested in Social-more than Romantic, Family.

KEYWORDS: University Students, Romantic, Family, Social

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INTRODUCTION

The more lonely people are growing, the more modern life(Killeen, 1998). Social and Emotional Loneliness negatively impacts several areas of health, including sleep(Hayley et al., 2017). Social and Emotional Loneliness gives people the feeling of uncomfortable, empty, or even aching(Peplau & Goldston, 1985), emotional and social isolation(Bauminger & Kasari, 2000). Studies around the point of loneliness are diverse with various dimensions related to age differences(Furman & Buhrmester, 1992), sex differences(Cramer & Neyedley, 1998), or its causes such as social media(Pittman & Reich, 2016).According toHayley et al. (2017), they showed that Social and Emotional loneliness negatively impacts several areas of health, including sleep.Diehl, Jansen, Ishchanova, and Hilger-Kolb (2018)study Loneliness among students at universities, which determines emotional and social loneliness found that 32.4% felt moderately lonely and 3.2%, severely lonely. Emotional loneliness was more common than social loneliness (severe loneliness: 7.7% vs. 3.2%), and showed that loneliness seems to be prevalent in university students.Özdemir and Tuncay (2008)found that there were significant relationships among romantic relationships, parents' status, and loneliness. However, according to the research conducted byWiseman, Gutfreund, and Lurie (1995), they found thatmales were significantly higher in loneliness than females, while females were significantly higher in depression than males.

In contrast, according to research Lamm and Stephan (1987), they found that no significant differences between men and women on these correlations, though there was a trend towards higher coefficients among men. Huynh, Tran-Chi, and Nguyen (2018) have shown significant differences between Vietnamese primary teachers with different years of teaching experience in the implementation of social-emotional education programs. However, they are not mentioned about undergraduates' perception of Social and Emotional Loneliness. While several such studies have been conducted for different nations, no research has yet examined the perception of social and emotional loneliness of Vietnamese undergraduates. This research aims to explore and take in the students throughout their thoughts of isolation. The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of loneliness, essential needs during university education, and relationships between loneliness, essential needs, and characteristics of university students.

The following null hypotheses were tested:

Hypotheses

A 4×2 factorial design was used. The independent variables were two students' characteristics: school years (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior), and gender (Male and Female). Three dependent variables were measured: Romantic, Family, Social. The following null hypotheses were tested:

- **H₀₁** (main effect): There are no significant differences between male and female groups of students when they are compared simultaneously on Romantic, Family, Social.
- **H₀₂** (main effect): There are no significant differences between Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior groups of students when they are compared simultaneously on the Romantic, Family, Social.
- **H₀₃** (interaction effect): There are no significant interactions between the school year and gender groups of students when they are compared simultaneously on the Romantic, Family, Social.

Data Collection

The research participants were 221 Vietnamese of three Universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The survey instrument was distributed to 250 Vietnamese students of two Universities located in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, of which 221 questionnaires were returned, with a return rate of 88.4 percent, which had exceeded the 30 percent response rate most researchers require for analysis (Dillman, 2000). The sample of this study was drawn from 221 respondents who completed the survey instrument, including 45 males (19 freshmen, 16 sophomores, seven juniors, three seniors) and 176 females (64 freshmen, 87 sophomores, 17 juniors, eight senior). The researchers had contacted the individual faculty of each university before questionnaire distribution. The researchers contacted the representatives of three universities' including the Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Saigon University, Economic University with their consent, explained the purpose of the study before delivering questionnaires. Only if all participants were voluntarily willing to complete the questionnaires, the research was conducted. There were more females 176 (79.6%) than males 45 (20.4%) among the 221 students who were surveyed, including 83 Freshmen, 103 Sophomores, 24 Juniors, and 11 Seniors. Table 1 shows the distribution of participants in the school year by gender groups.

Table 1: Number of Participants in the School Year by Gender Group

School Year	Gender		
	Male	Females	Total
Freshman	19	64	83
Sophomore	16	87	103
Junior	7	17	24
Senior	3	8	11

Measurement

Participants were asked to complete the following questionnaire: the Vietnamese versions of the Social and Emotional Loneliness Scale (SELSA) for students based on the original (DiTommaso & Spinner, 1993). The SELSA consists of three subscales: Romantic, Family, Social. The 37 items of SELSA were translated into Vietnamese by two bilingual researchers who were both familiar with the construct being assessed. For one of them, the first language was Vietnamese, and the other the first language was English. Forward and backward translation procedures were used. The same sequence of items was maintained in the Vietnamese translation of the index. All participants were instructed to read the questionnaire questions carefully and choose the responses that best described themselves. The SELSA consists of 37 items measured on a 7-point Likert scale in which the one indicates a response of 'strongly disagree,' while the value seven responds to 'strongly agree.' The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) estimate for this sample was fairly high at .60 (Bowling, 2014). Alpha coefficients for each subscale were as follows: Romantic: .93, Family: .89, Social: .91 (DiTommaso & Spinner, 1993). One possible reason for the higher reliability of the subscale of the SELSA scale could be the contextual differences; students responded to scale items according to their understanding level. The Social and Emotional Loneliness Scale (SELSA). The mean score for the sample on the SELSA (total score) was 151.30 (SD = 35.90). The mean score on the Romantic subscale was 47.05 (SD = 15.44). The mean score on the Family subscale was 45.84 (SD = 11.46). The mean score on the Social subscale was 58.41 (SD = 14.18). Table 2 presents descriptive statistics of dependent variables including The Social and Emotional Loneliness, Romantic, Family, and Social results by school year and gender groups.

RESULTS

Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics (Cohen, 1988) were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected. A two-way MANOVA was performed with two independent variables (school year and gender) and subscales of the SELSA as dependent variables. The average item means average standard deviation, F values, and effect sizes from MANOVA were calculated for each of the scales of the SELSA. These analyses were used to investigate differences in Romantic, Family, Social to the Vietnamese students' base on the school year and gender.

Table 2: Number of Participants in Grade by Gender Groups

Gender	School Year Group				
	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Combined
Male	19	16	7	3	45
Romantic					
M	45.21	49.44	37.57	54.66	46.15
SD	15.23	15.17	24.09	7.51	16.61
Family					
M	45.95	45.81	35.71	47.00	44.37
SD	10.81	10.95	18.49	12.00	12.49
Social					
M	59.37	55.56	46.71	62.00	56.22
SD	17.21	13.37	23.27	15.62	16.97
Female	64	87	17	8	176
Romantic					
M	46.89	48.14	41.88	52.50	47.27
SD	14.75	15.39	15.06	15.79	15.16
Family					
M	45.91	46.79	43.65	47.75	46.21
SD	11.87	10.77	11.61	10.18	11.19
Social					
M	58.00	59.96	56.82	60.50	58.97
SD	15.06	11.84	14.37	14.30	13.38

Inferential Analysis

The null hypotheses were tested using a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Using MANOVA, the multiple dependent variables should be related to each other at a low to a moderate level (Pallant, 2016). More specifically, a high correlation (.5 to 1) among dependent variables shows multicollinearity and small to medium correlation ($\pm .10$ to $\pm .49$) among dependent variables show singularity. Table 3 revealed that all values were more than .57, which provides controlling singularity assumption. Besides, Pallant (2016) stated that correlations around .80 or .90 cause violation of multicollinearity assumption. Since all values were under .80, multicollinearity, the assumption was also checked.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

	Romantic	Family	Social
Romantic	1	.58**	.57**
Family		1	.80**
Social			1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The researchers tested all the assumptions, and the results were positive except the Box's test of equality of variance. MANOVA is robust to violations of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices if the sizes of groups are nearly equal or if the size of the largest group is less than about 1.5 times the size of the smallest group (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005). Although the largest group in this research ($n = 87$) was about 29 times larger than the smallest group ($n = 3$), the multivariate homogeneity of covariance matrices tested with Box's M test revealed that the M value of 37.07 was not significant ($p = .36$). Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of covariance matrices was satisfied.

The MANOVA revealed a significant multivariate effect for the school year, Wilks' Lambda = .95, $F_{(3,211)} = 1.13$, $p < .40$, partial $\eta^2 = .016$, and a non-significant multivariate effect for gender, Wilk's Lambda = .99, $F_{(3,211)} = .40$, $p > .75$, partial $\eta^2 = .006$. A non-significant multivariate effect for interaction was also found, Wilk's Lambda = .97, $F_{(9,513)} = .65$, p

> .75, partial $\eta^2 = .009$. Therefore, the results suggested that the first hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected, but the second hypothesis (H_{02}) and third hypothesis (H_{03}) were not rejected.

Based on the significant effects found from the MANOVA, a separate two-way univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) for each of the dependent variables was conducted without undue inflation of the experiment wise Type I error (Grimm, L., & Yarnold, 1995). The Levene's test revealed that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met for Romantic [$F(7, 213) = 1.38, p > .22$], Family [$F(7, 213) = 1.20, p > .31$], Social [$F(1, 213) = 1.69, p > .11$].

The ANOVA results as shown in Table 4 revealed the interaction effect was non-significant ($p > .05$). A significant school year effects on Romantic [$F(3, 221) = 2.30, MSE = 237.89, p < .08$, Partial $\eta^2 = .031$], Family [$F(3, 221) = 1.88, MSE = 131.39, p < .13$, Partial $\eta^2 = .026$], Social [$F(3, 221) = 1.43, MSE = 201.13, p < .24$, Partial $\eta^2 = .020$] among the Freshman, Sophomore, Junior and Senior (Freshman: $M_{\text{Romantic}} = 46.05, M_{\text{Family}} = 45.93, M_{\text{Social}} = 58.68$; Sophomore: $M_{\text{Romantic}} = 48.78, M_{\text{Family}} = 46.30, M_{\text{Social}} = 57.76$; Junior: $M_{\text{Romantic}} = 39.73, M_{\text{Family}} = 39.68, M_{\text{Social}} = 51.76$, Senior: $M_{\text{Romantic}} = 53.58, M_{\text{Family}} = 47.37, M_{\text{Social}} = 61.25$). Significant gender effects on Romantic [$F(1, 221) = .03, MSE = 237.89, p < .85$, Partial $\eta^2 = .000$], Family [$F(1, 221) = .88, MSE = 131.39, p < .004$, Partial $\eta^2 = .005$], Social [$F(1, 221) = .84, MSE = 201.13, p < .36$, Partial $\eta^2 = .004$] among males and females (Male: $M_{\text{Romantic}} = 46.72, M_{\text{Family}} = 43.62, M_{\text{Social}} = 55.91$; Female: $M_{\text{Romantic}} = 47.35, M_{\text{Family}} = 46.02, M_{\text{Social}} = 58.82$).

Table 4: Combined Univariate ANOVA

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	Romantic	1754.632 ^a	7	250.662	1.054	.395	.033
	Family	912.227 ^b	7	130.318	.992	.438	.032
	Social	1442.375 ^c	7	206.054	1.024	.415	.033
Intercept	Romantic	176499.640	1	176499.640	741.920	.000	.777
	Family	160262.354	1	160262.354	1.219.752	.000	.851
	Social	262532.569	1	262532.569	1.305.274	.000	.860
Gender	Romantic	7.946	1	7.946	.033	.855	.000
	Family	115.408	1	115.408	.878	.350	.004
	Social	168.995	1	168.995	.840	.360	.004
Schoolyear	Romantic	1638.130	3	546.043	2.295	.079	.031
	Family	741.196	3	247.065	1.880	.134	.026
	Social	860.058	3	286.686	1.425	.236	.020
gender * schoolyear	Romantic	150.659	3	50.220	.211	.889	.003
	Family	244.835	3	81.612	.621	.602	.009
	Social	590.076	3	196.692	.978	.404	.014
Error	Romantic	50671.820	213	237.896			
	Family	27985.909	213	131.389			
	Social	42841.154	213	201.132			
Total	Romantic	541650.000	221				
	Family	493228.000	221				
	Social	798321.000	221				
Corrected Total	Romantic	52426.452	220				
	Family	28898.136	220				
	Social	44283.529	220				

a. R Squared = .033 (Adjusted R Squared = .002)

b. R Squared = .032 (Adjusted R Squared = .000)

c. R Squared = .033 (Adjusted R Squared = .001)

DISCUSSIONS

The primary purpose of this research has been to study the experience in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam, of social and emotional loneliness by undergraduates. The main findings indicate that there was a relationship between three SELSA subscales: Romantic, Family, Social. It is an important conclusion to minimize the Social and Emotional Loneliness among Vietnamese University students.

This research reported that University students' perception of the Social and Emotional Loneliness was medium. We also found that there was a significant difference between male and female groups of University students when they are compared simultaneously on the SELSA subscales. The findings of Wiseman et al. (1995) is supported by our findings that males were significantly higher in loneliness than females, while females were significantly higher in depression than males. The results of this experiment are quite different from the opposite of the previous results of Lamm and Stephan (1987) found that there was no significant difference between men and women in these correlations, although there was a tendency towards a higher coefficient in men. Our research also indicated that Seniors higher is Social and Emotional Loneliness was Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, higher. Although more research is needed to investigate whether undergraduates have a different Social and Emotional Loneliness might be more pronounced in Vietnam, the results suggest that perceptions may prove essential to understanding the Social and Emotional Loneliness in Vietnamese University students. This research has several limitations. The primary defect arises from the sampling process used. The sample was drawn from only one city of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The random selection of participants alleviates this concern to a significant degree but does not entirely remedy that shortcoming. The second limitation is related to the sample and the self-reported measurements. It might bias the findings as well, and was cross-sectional research, which does not allow. Future studies should address these limitations. All results obtained after this research are necessary for the cognition of University students in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, about Social and Emotional Loneliness. The research is done with an expectation of acting as stimulation in extending similar investigations on bridging the gap between research and its needed practices in the University students in Vietnam. A larger-scale offers us a broader and more full perspective. With this, we will be able to find more reliable tests that help us explore and find the best ways to minimize, avoid, and solve the single problem between Vietnamese students.

CONCLUSIONS

Evidence of current research on university students' loneliness and depression. The present work investigated the social and emotional loneliness experience of Vietnamese undergraduates in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam. It shows that undergraduates' perception of the Social and Emotional Loneliness students is instead. It is the first research to investigate the understanding of Social and Emotional Loneliness by University students in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, to the best of authors' knowledge. All findings from this research are needed to reduce university students' social and emotional loneliness in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam. Besides the little study done in Vietnam, Vietnamese school teachers need to understand their tasks better.

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