



## Attitudes toward Self-Disclosure on Facebook: A Review of Perception, Emotion and Behavior in University Students

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### Abstract

A number of social networking platforms have emerged as a result of the development of information and communication technology which have become increasingly user-friendly and full with valuable features. The social networking site with most users is Facebook. Teenagers, particularly college students use Facebook most frequently to study, gain information, entertain themselves and connect with others through self-disclosing personal information on the Facebook profile page. This quantitative study aimed to analyze the attitude of pedagogical students regarding self-disclosure on Facebook as represented through cognition, emotion and behavior concerning academic achievement. The survey was completed by 535 university student's majority in pedagogy. There were 41 students who used it for less than three years between three to five years by 218 students and 276 students who use it more than five years. The questionnaire was self-reported by participants to assess university students' attitudes toward self-disclosure on Facebook. The results indicate that pedagogical students with excellent academic achievement and more than five years of Facebook experience had the highest-level attitude toward self-disclosure on Facebook. The results indicate a positive relationship between cognition, emotion and influence factors students' Facebook attitudes. Future research on methods that enhance student positive disclosure can benefit from this study. Future research should examine how self-disclosure on Facebook relates to other aspects, such as Facebook usage time, financial state and perception of advantages and its disadvantages of Facebook in order to evaluate students' attitudes objectively.

**Keywords:** Academic achievement, Attitude, Behavior, Emotions, Perception, Self-disclosure.

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### Contribution of this paper to the literature

The pedagogical literature is the correlation between academic accomplishment and Facebook experience and level of attitude toward self-disclosure on Facebook among pedagogical students. This research also adds to a comprehension of pedagogical students' attitudes on self-expression on Facebook.

## 1. Introduction

The invention of social networks is a revolutionary development in the era of global technology. In recent years, social networks have become the most popular form of Internet communication among university students (Pelling & White, 2009). The objective of social network users is to maintain touch with friends and family, connect with others and share information such as news, images and events. Social networking sites (SNS) are websites or mobile applications that let users create profiles and communicate with other users (Obar & Wildman, 2015). A social networking website is an online tool that allows users to create public or semi-public profiles, establish a list of tethered friends and interact with and follow other personal accounts (Boyd, 2008). According to Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre (2011), the essential features of social media platforms include identification, online communication, sharing, online and offline presence, relationships, reputation and group. There are several controversial opinions on social networks. Social networks provide a number of benefits and drawbacks that may affect individual.

Facebook's founding reflects a significant turning point, despite the increasing popularity of social networking websites such as MySpace, Twitter and Instagram. Facebook is currently the most popular social networking website, with an increasing number of users worldwide. College students frequently prefer Facebook while other networks can also be used to connect people (Golder, Wilkinson, & Huberman, 2007). According to (Stutzman, 2006), more than 90% of American university students use Facebook, making it one of the most popular social networking sites among British students. Facebook and all social networking are founded on sharing individual information and frequently encourage users to reveal themselves by sharing personal profiles and updating their profile and interests (Ledbetter et al., 2011). Bumgarner (2007) opines that Facebook is frequently used for social purposes, such as communicating with friends and discussing other users' personal profiles. Facebook users have access to various unique modes of communication and self-expression (Pempek, Yermolayeva, & Calvert, 2009) by adding friends, sharing information, commenting and searching for information. Users have excellent opportunities on Facebook to identify themselves and obtain information aligned with their self-concept.

According to Li-Barber (2012), students between the age of 18-24 frequently used social networking sites such as Facebook. Social networking sites provides platforms for self-disclosure, establishing and maintaining relationships (Mehdizadeh, 2010). Goffman (2006) claimed that social networking presents a new model for a study analyzing the level to which users disclose themselves on various social media platforms. The social network is a platform where users are permitted to express themselves based on communication, establish Facebook profiles that assist in the growth of individual identities. Jourard and Lasakow (1958) were the first to define self-disclosure as the process of sharing information about oneself with others. Wheelless and Grotz (1976) defined self-disclosure as any information about oneself that an individual wants to share with others. Disclosures may be revealed to the public or private with most social networking platforms, including Facebook. Self-disclosure is a fundamental form of communication that may be described as the behavior of disclosing confidential information to another person (Archer, 1980). Sharing information about oneself will help others better understand themselves. Self-disclosure is crucial to establishing, maintaining and ending intimate relationships (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Furthermore, self-disclosure is the process by which an individual shares their emotions, thoughts, experiences and other private information about themselves with other people. (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993).

Almost all SNS are intended for sharing, accessing, analyzing and understanding information. The objective of information sharing is to draw the attention of others, enhance social capital, develop interpersonal relations, and attract like-minded individuals and advance information and society's knowledge base. Several studies have found a relationship between the desire to obtain attention from others through online self-expression and concerns about privacy and personal information loss (Utz & Krämer, 2009). Li-Barber (2012) argue that self-disclosure is associated with the desire to show an attractive self-image to others. Previous research had identified several variables that might influence self-disclosure, including perceived benefits, risks and concerns about privacy (Xu, Michael, & Chen, 2013). Other studies had discovered that regular usage of social networks positively affects disclosure. In contrast, issues about privacy have been shown to have a detrimental effect on self-disclosure (Chen & Sharma, 2015).

Doleck, Bazalais, and Lemay (2017) argue that the demand for self-disclosure is a significant factor in social media. The attitude is considered an individual's positive or negative evaluation of the situation or behavior in an issue. Attitude is a developed mental construct that allows an individual to distinguish between positive and negative responses to stimuli. The research by Villela et al. (2015) indicates that individuals have different attitudes about sharing information on social networks and how they perform it. Numerous previous studies have investigated the relationship between attitude and behavioral intentions. Because attitude reflects a user's experience, social network users with a positive attitude are more likely to continue using them. According to Kwon, Park, and Kim (2014), attitudes about Facebook and Twitter were influenced by the perceived safety level

provided by social networks. Positive attitudes were found to be associated with the regular usage of social media. [Chu \(2011\)](#) found that college-aged Facebook group members participated in higher levels of self-disclosure and had a more positive attitude about social networking. There are significant correlations between the demand for self-disclosure and attitudes toward Facebook use but less with perceived usefulness ([Blanco, Blasco, & Azorín, 2010](#)). According to [Kwon et al. \(2014\)](#) attitudes about Facebook and Twitter are influenced by the perceived safety level provided by social networks. Positive attitudes are found to be associated with the regular usage of social media. [Chen and Sharma \(2015\)](#) also investigated the learning-based development of Facebook users' attitudes and the association between individuals' attitudes and self-disclosure. Gender differences were found in both the relationship between attitude and the relationship between site usage rate and self-disclosure.

This study assessed students' attitudes toward self-disclosure on Facebook by looking at perception, emotional and behavioral variables. Facebook users disclose various emotions to others through daily status updates, including photographs, quotations and other media ([Pempek et al., 2009](#)). Social networking sites provide users with a platform for sharing personal thoughts, emotions and experiences with others ([Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007](#)). Facebook users are more inclined to provide information about their families and personal interests on the site ([Jaidka, Guntuku, & Ungar, 2018](#)). Moreover, self-disclosure on social media can release negative emotions ([Bazarova & Choi, 2014](#)). The study of [Qiu, Lin, Leung, and Tov \(2012\)](#) focused the investigation on the emotional expression on Facebook. Individuals are more inclined to disclose positive emotions than negative ones, and they express affection better on Facebook than in reality. Self-disclosure is related positively to interactions with others on Facebook, expressing emotions, seeking attention and acceptance. In addition, disclosure of the true self was positively associated with the degree of personal disclosure in wall posts. People who believe they can express their "themselves" on the internet are more active on Facebook, updating their material, comments and emotions regularly to reveal themselves ([Seidman, 2014](#)). According to research by [Amichai-Hamburger and Vinitzky \(2010\)](#), individuals with a low level of emotional stability have a higher tendency to self-disclose and share more personal information online than those with a high level of emotional stability. Attitudes are not only expressed through emotion but also confirmed through perception and behavior. Previous studies have examined the elements influencing individuals to disclose information about themselves are user characteristics, perceptions and preferences ([Oghazi, Schultheiss, Chirumalla, Kalmer, & Rad, 2020](#)). According to [Qureshi and Mir \(2013\)](#), users' desires to use Facebook are positively impacted by their perception of Facebook as a source of information and a chance for self-disclosure. Perceptions of self-esteem and collectivism increased positive self-disclosure while life satisfaction and privacy problems decreased it. ([Chen, 2017](#)).

According to [Ampong et al. \(2018\)](#), privacy perceptions, problems and intrusive events are substantial predictors of self-disclosure. Because the disclosure of personal information is generally at the center of communication on Facebook, the perception of one's ability to maintain privacy is significantly correlated with the usage of Facebook ([Kwon et al., 2014](#)). The positive relationship between perceived benefit and self-disclosure behavior is confirmed ([Cheung, Lee, & Chan, 2015](#)). Self-disclosure behaviors include sharing personal information with others. Self-disclosure behavior is assessed by the number of user profiles, including personal information and the quantity of information disclosed on social networking sites ([Sharif, Soroya, Ahmad, & Mahmood, 2021](#)). The practice of updating photographs and taking selfies on social networking websites is one of the signs of a person's self-disclosure. According to [Kim, Baek, and Choo \(2017\)](#), a self-disclosure attitude may have an impact on selfie-taking behavior. Self-disclosure increased the effect of selfie-posting behavior on social media when the level of self-satisfaction was high.

Attitudes towards self-disclosure on Facebook are influenced by various elements such as culture, personality, loneliness etc. In the Vietnamese context, Facebook users' self-disclosure is a feature favored by young people, especially university students. Although there is numerous research in the world concerning students' attitudes towards self-disclosure on Facebook, in Vietnam. The studies related to this topic are still limited. This research concentrates on university students to analyze attitudes towards self-disclosure on Facebook through the association between cognition, emotion, and behavior on variables such as self-image, politics or religion, academic achievement and social life issues. In addition, the study also examined the level of attitude toward self-disclosure based on academic achievement and years of experience using Facebook.

## **2. Research Methodology**

### **2.1. Participants**

The sample was selected from the university students at three universities in Vietnam. The participants were selected using a method called convenience sampling. A total of 535 university students majoring in pedagogy filled out the Google form survey with 66 men (12.3%) and 469 women (87.7%) responding. First year students accounted for 49.3% followed by sophomore students at 45.2%, junior students at 4.1% and senior students at 1.3%. Participants described their years of experience using Facebook with 41 students reporting less than three years, 218 reporting between 3- 5 years and 276 reporting more than five years.

### **2.2. Measurement**

Participants self-reported the questionnaire. This study employed a survey designed specifically for university students to evaluate the attitudes of university students toward self-disclosure on Facebook. Students were asked about their perceptions, emotions and behaviors about self-disclosure on Facebook with regards to emotions, self-image, academic achievement, politics or religion and societal issues. The questions were assessed on a Likert 5-point scale, ranging from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = neither agree; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree).

### **2.3. Procedure**

A quantitative research design was used to achieve the research objectives. Participants volunteered to fill out a questionnaire as part of the research. Before conducting the survey, volunteers will inform of the purpose and characteristics of the study and assured of their personal anonymity and confidentiality. Each participant filled out

a self-reported survey after providing full consent. The questionnaire was divided into two different parts. Participants are required to provide demographic information such as gender, age, school year, number of years using Facebook, academic accomplishments etc. After completing part 1, proceed to part 2 which consists of study questions. Before completing the questionnaire, the researcher will explain the procedure to the participant. The survey was completed by the participants in between 15 and 20 minutes.

**Table 1.** Descriptive the attitudes of students toward self-disclosure on Facebook based on academic achievement.

Academic achievement	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Level (%)				
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Weak	2.95	0.67	0.0	28.6	52.4	14.3	4.8
Average	3.09	0.61	1.9	14.4	55.6	25.0	3.1
Good	3.14	0.55	0.4	12.0	63.1	19.6	4.9
Very good	3.14	0.51	1.1	6.7	72.2	16.7	3.3
Excellent	3.25	0.41	0.0	0.0	66.7	30.8	2.6

### 3. Results

According to academic achievement, the attitudes of pedagogical students toward self-disclosure on Facebook were divided. As seen in Table 1. Excellent academic achievement reported the highest levels of attitude toward self-disclosure on Facebook (Mean = 3.25, SD = 0.41), followed by Very good academic achievement (Mean = 3.14, SD = 0.51) and Good (Mean = 3.14, SD = 0.55). Students with Average academic achievement had a quite low attitude toward self-disclosure on Facebook (Mean = 3.09, SD = 0.61), whereas those with Weak academic achievement had the lowest (Mean = 2.95, SD = 0.67).

**Table 2.** Descriptive the attitudes of students about self-disclosure on Facebook based on years of experience using Facebook.

Years of experience using Facebook	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Level (%)				
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Less than 3 years	3.04	0.55	0.0	17.1	63.4	17.1	2.4
3 - 5 years	3.09	0.58	1.4	13.3	61.0	21.6	2.8
More than 5 years	3.17	0.55	0.7	9.4	63.0	21.7	5.1

Table 2 revealed that the attitudes of pedagogical students about self-disclosure on Facebook were evaluated based on years of experience using Facebook. Students who have used Facebook for the above five years have the highest mean score (Mean = 3.17, SD = 0.55), followed by students who have used Facebook for 3 to 5 years (Mean = 3.09, SD = 0.58). Students who have experienced using Facebook for less than five years had the lowest mean score (Mean = 3.04, SD = 0.55).

**Table 3.** Correlation between cognition, emotion, behavior, and influence factors.

Variable	Perception	Emotion	Behavior	Influence Factors
Perception	1			
Emotion	0.670**	1		
Behavior	0.673**	0.781**	1	
Influence Factors	0.676**	0.772**	0.758**	1

Note: \*\* P value is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 3 indicated that there were significant positive relationship between perception about self-disclosure on Facebook and emotion about self-disclosure on Facebook ( $r = 0.670$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), perception and Behavior about self-disclosure on Facebook ( $r = 0.673$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), Student's Perception about self-disclosure on Facebook and Influence Factors on attitude towards self-disclosure on Facebook ( $r = 0.676$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and Student's Emotion and Behavior about self-disclosure ( $r = 0.781$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Comparing pairs of values, Student's Emotion and Behavior regarding self-disclosure exhibited the highest positive relationship.

### 4. Discussions

Self-disclosure is a fundamental aspect of Facebook users. Users' attitudes toward social networks and self-disclosure on social networks have attracted considerable attention in previous research. This research aimed to assess pedagogical students' perceptions, emotions and behavior regarding self-disclosure on Facebook. In addition, according to their academic achievement and year of Facebook usage, the study analyzed students' attitudes toward self-disclosure by categorizing them. The findings showed a positive relationship between students' perceptions, emotions and behaviors towards self-disclosure on Facebook.

The results indicated that the attitudes of pedagogical students regarding self-disclosure on Facebook according to academic achievement were average. A previous study found a relationship between Facebook usage and academic performance (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010). European-Americans are more likely to submit accomplishment updates than Turkish users, and optimistic attitudes and self-improvement desire are positively connected with European-Americans' propensity to publish accomplishment updates. (Günsoy, Olcaysoy Okten, Cross, & Saribay, 2020).

That means students with excellent academic achievement consider Facebook is a social platform for communication. Students with excellent academic achievement evaluated their attitudes about self-disclosure on Facebook the highest, and vice versa. Students believed that sharing emotions and thoughts is a way to reduce stress and pressure. Students' problematic Facebook use, loneliness and poor sleep are all associated with anxiety and despair. (Ho, Huynh, & Tran-Chi, 2021). This result is consistent with several previous studies that found that time spent on Facebook is related to self-disclosure on Facebook. Almakrami (2015) revealed that daily

Facebook usage was substantially and positively associated with self-disclosure, developing, and maintaining offline interactions and self-disclosure. Results suggested that higher self-disclosure was linked to Facebook account ownership for a longer period of time. Participants used Facebook every day for two hours and twenty minutes on average, having account for five years and ten months. (Choi & Bazarova, 2015).

The findings indicated that there was a positive correlation between students' perceptions, emotions and behaviors towards self-disclosure on Facebook. Previous research has limited results on the relationship between attitudes and self-disclosure on websites (Salehan & Kim, 2012). A positive attitude encourages a member to continue using the service over a social networking site, increasing the user's information disclosure. In addition, analyses reveal that the relationship between attitude and self-disclosure differs significantly between male and female Facebook users (Chen & Sharma, 2015).

Qureshi and Mir (2013)'s studies investigate the perception, attitude and purpose of Facebook users using the platform. The results reveal that individuals consider Facebook a platform for self-disclosure, social capital building and social relationships. Previous studies have shown that communicating one's thoughts and emotions through social networking sites results in increased acceptance and satisfaction within one's social network (Xu, Ryan, Prybutok, & Wen, 2012). The association between users' perceptions of Facebook, a platform for building social capital and their continuing intention toward the site is influenced by Facebook attitudes. According to studies, Facebook users disclose more positive emotions and happiness than in real life (Qiu et al., 2012). People can modify their self-image and make it more attractive on Facebook (Krämer & Winter, 2008) and share their strengths or talents to disclose themselves positively with others (Bareket-Bojmel, Moran, & Shahar, 2016). Individuals are less inclined to share negative emotional experiences to develop a more desirable social image in cyberspace. Positive self-disclosure on social networking sites increases social attraction, perceived intimacy and psychological health (Reinecke & Trepte, 2014).

## 5. Limitation and Future Research

Several limitations were discovered in this study. Student self-reports are required to complete surveys leading to potentially misleading responses. Future studies can integrate Facebook account analysis with student self-reports and in-depth interviews for the most objective results possible. The study is only valid and reliable in the context in which it was conducted. Future research must repeat the evaluation of pedagogy students' attitudes regarding self-disclosure on Facebook in many different cultural contexts. Moreover, university students are the target demographic for this study. However, expressing oneself on Facebook is an essential aspect of social network users and is increasing in popularity among people of all ages. Therefore, future research must explore diverse groups to understand the unique features of Facebook users. This study is cross-sectional research. It is not representative of causation correlations. For in-depth evaluation, empirical research and in-depth interviews are investigated. In addition, future research may extend the current study by evaluating additional aspects associated with self-disclosure attitudes, such as belief, the convenience of use and perception of the benefits and risks of Facebook.

## 6. Implications

This study contributes theoretically to the knowledge system regarding the usage of social networks, particularly Facebook, in daily life. The survey provides a realistic perspective on Facebook users' attitudes about self-disclosure. Educators and sociologists can use the results of this study to develop and design effective strategies for using Facebook in the Vietnamese context. Because emotions and self-disclosure on Facebook are associated with privacy, policymakers must strengthen policies to ensure the security and confidentiality of shared information on social networking websites. These findings also help educators and sociologists in the development of culturally and socially appropriate approaches to the promotion and instruction of positive self-disclosure. To better support the self-disclosure requirements of adolescents, it is beneficial to provide users with simple, clear and easy-to-understand privacy policies and features.

## 7. Conclusion

Facebook is a social networking website that is widely used by people of all age's university students used it more frequently. Facebook is the most significant instrument for networking, interacting and sharing information among university students. An individual's updating of images, emotional states, quotations, comments or personal and social life information on a social network is self-disclosure. Our research assesses and analyzes the attitudes of pedagogical students regarding self-disclosure on Facebook using three primary factors: perceptive, emotional, and behavioral.

In addition, we examined the attitudes of pedagogical students regarding self-disclosure on Facebook according to their academic achievement and years of Facebook usage were divided. The results suggested that pedagogical students with excellent academic achievement and more than five years of Facebook exposure had the most positive attitude about self-disclosure on the platform. Students' Facebook attitudes positively correlated with perception, emotion and influence factors. This study has given a theoretical basis for future quantitative surveys and interviews on student self-disclosure related to the following research subjects. In addition, the study highlights issues for educators and policymakers in formulating strategic plans for the effective and an appropriate use of Facebook in the social context.

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