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## Factors affecting deviant behavior of adolescents in Vietnam

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### ABSTRACT

*In Vietnam, deviant behavior in adolescents is increasingly popular and gradually becomes a major concern of the whole society. The purpose of this study is to identify Factors affecting deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents, including: Nature of adolescence (Biology, Intelligence and Cognitive functions) and Nurture (Family atmosphere, Education environment, Media and technology, Peer Pressure, and Religion and Politics). 426 survey samples were collected to serve the data analysis process as well as all hypotheses were examined by using STATISTIC 10 ver., LISREL 8.8 with Covariance Matrix, and LISREL model. This research showed that The Factors of Nature of adolescence, Family atmosphere, Education environment, Social media and technology and Peer pressure could have important effect on behavior of adolescents in Vietnam, even resulted in some deviant behavior. The study makes suggestions to improve morality and foster personality for adolescents in Vietnam, as a small contribution to the country's further development.*

**Keywords:** *deviant behavior, adolescents, nature of adolescence, education environment*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research background

In early adolescence, children begin to develop the ability to think abstractly and logically (Petersen, 1988). Adolescents have self-perception, thereby enhancing their self-perception as well as the desire to reflect on their individual self (Clark, 1987). During this period, adolescents gradually learn how to control their emotions and adjust their behavior in accordance with social norms. Up to now, many studies have been conducted to investigate the influence of living conditions on the development of

children, especially the obvious and profound effects in adolescence.

According to the latest statistics of the Ministry of Public Security, the rate of juvenile crime in the whole country is 5.2% for people under 14 years old, 24.5% for people aged 14 to under 16 years old, and 70.3% for people aged 16 to under 18 years (VLLF, 2018). Such statistics from the Ministry of Public Security could be seen that the situation of crime and law violations caused by adolescents during that time was complicated with the nature and level of more possible dangerous crimes, causing serious consequences. Some adolescents were born in families with difficult circumstances, when going to the city to earn a living, were lured by bad objects and easily gathered into gangs of robbers to have money. In addition, the breakup of the family could be one of the causes of the children's psychological crisis, less attention and education.

### ***1.2. Research purpose***

The purpose of this study is to propose and test factors possibly affecting deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents. This research built a model including six hypotheses (Nature of adolescence, Family atmosphere, Education environment, Social media and technology, Peer pressure, Religion and politics) believed to affect Vietnamese adolescents' deviant behavior. Based on the research results, recommendations and suggestions will be made to limit the causes of some of adolescents' unethical behavior, thereby making a small contribution to a more developed country in the future.

### ***1.3. Research structure***

Chapter 1. Introduction of deviant behavior, briefly talk about the moral degradation of adolescents in Vietnam. Chapter 1 also succinctly presents the purpose and structure of the research.

Chapter 2. Literature review gives prior research related to the findings and definitions of all structures. This chapter presents in detail the theoretical background and previous studies related to deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents. This chapter also proposes six hypotheses to be tested in the study.

Chapter 3. Methodology introduces the conceptual model, this section also presents the process of building a scale based on the original scales of previous studies. Moreover, chapter 3 also shows how the data were collected and analyzed.

Chapter 4. Shows the data analysis results and test results of hypotheses.

Chapter 5. Conclusion, discussion, and limitations.

## **2. Definition of key terms**

### ***2.1. Adolescence***

Adolescence is considered a transition period between children and adults. According to

the World Health Organization (WHO), adolescent is defined as ranging in age from 10 to 19 years old (2017). Adolescence is the period of transition from a child to an adult, it is also a time for growth spurts and puberty changes. An adolescent may grow several inches in several months followed by a period of very slow growth, then have another growth spurt (Demir, 2011).

## **2.2. Deviant behavior**

Deviant behavior is defined as the perceived violation of the standards or expectations of a group or of society. Cultural norms and expectations define a wide range of human activities, so the concept of deviance has a correspondingly broad connotation. An obvious form of deviance is crime, the violation of norms that are officially enacted into law (Belhassen, 2012). Deviant behavior is marked by violation of social norms, moral norms, cultural values, the process of assimilation, and in the reproduction of values and norms. Negative deviant behaviors are criticized and condemned by public opinion or require the application of sanctions according to principles and provisions of law (Demir, 2011).

## **2.3. Nature of adolescence**

Because the age adolescence is from 10 to 19 years old, hence, their brains are not fully developed, and their physical changes is also easy to notice (voice changes, body shape, pubic hair distribution, and facial hair ...). Hence, adolescence can be considered as a sensitive period for human, the physical environment, nutritional quality, and external society can drastically change physical and mental well-being for the rest of their lives. In terms of behavior, adolescents often experience rapid emotional changes and a desire to assert their identity, begin to build peer relationships, and transition to independence (Blakemore & Robbins, 2012).

Therefore, the research constructs the first hypothesis as:

H1: Nature of adolescence influences on deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents.

## **2.4. Nurture**

Nurture defined by Cambridge Dictionary is take care of, feed and protect someone or something, especially young children or plants, and help them to grow and develop. Nurture plays significant roles in the cognitive development of children and adolescents.

## **2.5. Family atmosphere**

Family is the first institution teaching norms of social life. Through direct parent-child interaction, they learn how to trust the others, how to establish and maintain the relationships, and they feel comfortable with family members (Kirkpatrick, 1990). However, in the process of economic integration and development in Vietnam, many families are still not aware of the importance of coordination between family, school and society in educating and orienting youth (Timberlake, 1984).

Hence, the second hypothesis of this study is constructed as:

H2: Family atmosphere affects on deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents.

### **2.6. Education environment**

Education is accepted worldwide as a useful tool for constituting socially desirable behavior, positive values, skills and knowledge into learners (Mello, 2008). Parents who send their children to school also aim for their children to receive great morals, acquire the necessary skills and knowledge so that they can make contributions to the development of themselves and the society. However, at present, the quality of training in Vietnam is still uneven, especially in remote areas, facilities and awareness of the importance of education are still limited. school is a place where students go every day, if this environment has many evils such as school violence, theft, sexual abuse ... and maybe adolescents will imitate and follow those negative actions. Therefore, the study proposes the third hypothesis as:

H3: Education environment impacts on deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents.

### **2.7. Social media and technology**

Communication and technology have brought many other chances and dangers, we could not know exactly the advancement has affected us in a positive or negative effects. Social media shape who we are and how we define ourselves. Social networking brings people around the world closer together through smartphone screens, which makes it gradually become an inseparable part of life (Ozorak, 1989). For teenagers, who are inquisitive and curious about all things, technology helps them find and validate information from diverse sources. If the diverse source of information is well controlled, it will be a great educational environment through self-exploring problems and finding correct answers to improve children's comprehensive cognitive ability. This is also a place for them to find hobbies that are suitable for themselves such as reading, listening to music, watching movies, ... However, the negative effects of technology and media are unpredictable like the amount of information it given (Aronowitz, 1984). Sometimes, information on social media makes children obsessed and want to imitate when those things are labeled as adult. In addition, addiction to smartphones, televisions ... also brings some serious consequences in the process of physical and cognitive development such as speech delay, obesity due to sedentary or violent tendencies, incapability concentrate. The role of media in shaping perception and personality is profound and powerful.

Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is developed:

H4: Social media and technology have the influence on deviant behavior Vietnamese adolescents.

### **2.8. Peer pressure**

Peer influence is a good way to describe how adolescents' behavior is built up by wanting to feel part of a group of friends or peers. Peer pressure might encourage teens

to become more active in athletics or to avoid risky behaviors (Cornwall, 1988). Or it could lead them to try alcohol or drugs, to skip school, dating or taking part in sexual activities or engaging in other negative behaviors.

Hence, the study proposes the fifth hypothesis as:

H5: Peer pressure impacts on deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents.

### 2.9. Religion and politics

Religion and politics have a huge impact on adolescents. If young generations live in a religious and political environment that encourage deviant behaviors, even if adolescents know deviant behavior is not right, but they still learn from the majority to do morally corrupt actions (Iannaccone, 1990). However, efforts from Vietnamese government and educational programs can bring some good effect on adolescents.

H6: Religion and politics influences deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents.

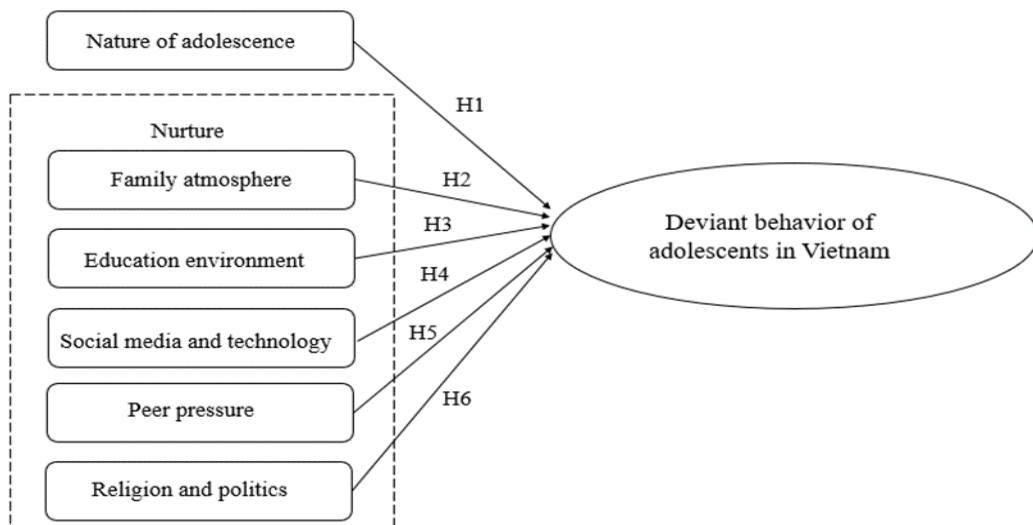


Figure 1. Proposed Model

### 3. Methodology

In this study, the tests of hypotheses will be applied LISREL software. LISREL gives diverse sorts of measurement instruments that would be valuable to decide the legitimacy of information. LISREL software can support the research data to examine the relationship between latent variables under the theoretical foundation and the relationship between latent variables, after the indicators are analyzed, it is possible to assess the quality of the measures.

The indices are calculated and considered to evaluate the model's suitability such as:  $\chi^2$  (chi-square), the value of  $\chi^2$  is the smaller grades is better. That means the model is higher goodness of fit. RMSEA (errors of model) is smaller than 0.08 and P value is greater than 0.05 are the model is good of fit. Besides, STATISTICA 10 is also applied

in this investigation because of the decent variety of statistic information accumulation in gender, age, frequently visited platforms, education level, region.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Demographic analysis

The demographic analysis of the factors possibly affecting deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents received total 426 responses, and detailed results are shown in Table 1. The percentage of male is 47.7% (203 samples) of total samples (426 samples), female 36.9% (157 samples) of total samples (426 samples) and LGBTQ+ is 15.4% (66 samples). The subjects invited to participate in the survey are adolescents, parents of teenage children, people involved in education and the rest are people working in many fields and living in different regions in Vietnam. About age, under 18 has the highest frequency with 186 samples (43.7%), next is the age group 19-25 with 94 samples (22.1%); the age group 26-35 with 37 samples (8.7%) of total samples; the percentage of age group 36-45 is 16.4% (70 samples) and the age group 46-55 years old is 9.1% (39 samples) of total samples. Regarding frequently visited platforms used by survey participants in this research, Facebook and Google take the first and second place with 96.5% and 88.3%. About Religion, most of participants have no religious affiliation (67.6%) , the second largest religion in the survey is Buddhism with 79 samples (18.5%). The regions in the survey are relatively evenly distributed in 3 regions of Vietnam: North (33.8%), Middle (39.7%), South (26.5%). The diversity of survey participants will help the study have a multi-dimensional view, extract internal and external factors affecting deviant behavior of adolescents in Vietnam.

TABLE 1. Demographic Statistics

Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender			Education		
Male	203	47.7	Junior high school	92	21.6
Female	157	36.9	High school	135	31.7
LGBTQ+	66	15.4	Bachelor	115	27.0
			Master	58	13.6
			Doctor	26	6.1
Age			Regions		
<18	186	43.7	North	144	33.8
19-25	94	22.1	Middle	169	39.7
26-35	37	8.7	South	113	26.5
36-45	70	16.4			
46-55	39	9.1			
Frequently visited platforms			Religion		
Google	376	88.3	No religion	288	67.6

Youtube	355	83.3	Buddhism	79	18.5
Facebook	411	96.5	Christianity	21	4.9
Tiktok	233	54.7	Catholicism	14	3.3
Porn sites	257	60.3	Protestantism	12	2.8
Other platforms	144	33.8	Other religions	12	2.9

**4.2. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)**

Table 2 presents in detail the CFA results. CFA will indicate whether measurements are linked; but does not indicate which observed variables to remove and which observed variables to keep. After running Cronbach's Alpha analysis, all factor loadings are greater than 0.3, so we can conclude that all factors are satisfactory. However, to further strengthen the reliability of the study, the minimum value accepted is 0.6 for Cronbach's Alpha analysis (Nunally, 1978).

*TABLE 2. CFA items and loading*

Constructs Items	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha	Constructs Items	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha
<b>Nature of adolescence</b>		0.781	<b>Social media and technology</b>		0.825
NA1	0.73		ST1	0.79	
NA2	0.66		ST2	0.63	
NA3	0.69		ST3	0.81	
NA4	0.78		ST4	0.67	
NA5	0.71				
<b>Family atmosphere</b>		0.657	<b>Peer pressure</b>		0.870
FA1	0.62		PP1	0.69	
FA2	0.68		PP2	0.75	
FA3	0.74		PP3	0.88	
FA4	0.72		PP4	0.93	
FA5	0.61				
<b>Education environment</b>		0.915	<b>Religion and politics</b>		0.660
EE1	0.89		RP1	0.78	
EE2	0.91		RP2	0.65	
EE3	0.72		RP3	0.82	
EE4	0.74		RP4	0.78	
EE5	0.82		RP5	0.60	

*TABLE 3. Covariance Matrix*

	NA	FA	EE	ST	PP	RP
<b>NA</b>	0.36					
<b>FA</b>	0.18	0.47				
<b>EE</b>	0.11	0.24	0.78			
<b>ST</b>	0.09	0.12	0.36	0.72		
<b>PP</b>	0.41	0.07	0.22	0.33	0.59	
<b>RP</b>	0.06	0.11	-0.01	-0.05	0.04	0.49

\* NA-Nature of adolescence, FA- Family atmosphere, EE- Education environment, ST- Social media and technology, PP- Peer pressure, RP- Religion and politics

Covariance can be negative or positive, thereby representing a positive or negative relationship between two variables. Covariance is calculated by analyzing changes in interest rates (standard deviation from expected return) or by multiplying the correlation between two variables by the standard deviation of each variable. The smaller the absolute value of the covariance, the lower the strength of the relationship. The covariance between two variables is the determining factor of the moment correlation coefficient that holds them.

TABLE 4. Goodness of fit statistics measurement

Fit measures	Statistics measurement target	Values
$\chi^2$	Smaller is better	0.03
P-value	Greater than 0.05	1.97
RMSEA	<0.08	0.02

In Table 4, by applying LISREL to test the goodness of fit of the model, chi-Square and RMSEA values were significant ( $\chi^2 = 0.03$ , RMSEA = 0.02, P-value= 1.97). The results indicated the model is good of fit.

4.3. Tests of hypotheses

Figure 2 and Table 5 present the Lisrel results. Not as predicted hypothesis, H6 - Religion and politics (T-value = -0.17,  $p > 0.05$ ) has insignificant influence on deviant behavior of adolescents in Vietnam. As the results, Nature of adolescence (T-value = 6.88,  $p > 0.05$ ), Family atmosphere (T-value = 3.01,  $p > 0.05$ ), Education environment (T-value = 2.37,  $p > 0.05$ ), Social media and technology (T-value = 7.49,  $p > 0.05$ ), Peer pressure (T-value = 12.62,  $p > 0.05$ ) have affected deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents. From the collected and analyzed data H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 can be concluded as supported, H6 is rejected.

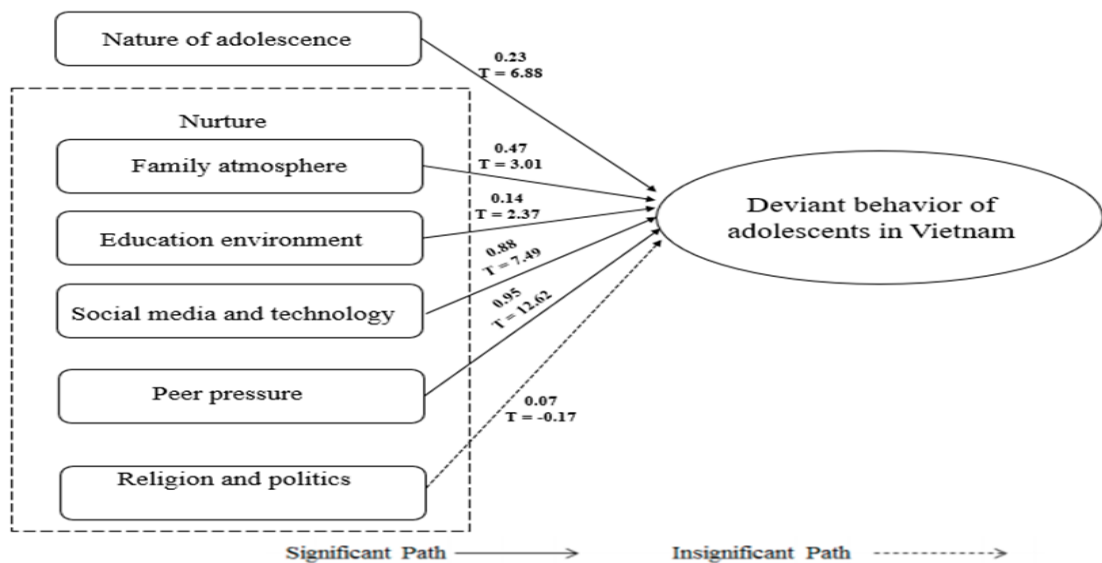


Figure 2. Result of LISREL



TABLE 5. Tests of hypotheses

	Hypothesis	Estimates	T-value	Supported (Yes/No)
H1	Nature of adolescence	0.23	6.88	Yes
H2	Family atmosphere	0.47	3.01	Yes
H3	Education environment	0.14	2.37	Yes
H4	Social media and technology	0.88	7.49	Yes
H5	Peer pressure	0.95	12.62	Yes
H6	Religion and politics	0.07	-0.17	No

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Summary of results

H1: Nature of adolescence has the influence on deviant behavior of adolescents in Vietnam.

Physical and psychological changes can completely transform a person. Adolescence is the most intense and complex period of human development. The manifestation of this stage is the simultaneous occurrence of a series of changes including physical maturation, changes in psychological adjustment and social relationships, and the initial formation of personality. But this is also the period with the most psychological disturbances compared to other age groups. During this period, adolescents become more mature or more quick-tempered, sometimes becoming quiet, and maybe adolescence could not realize changes by themselves.

H2: Family atmosphere has the significant influences on deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents.

In a society, there are many cases of serious violations of the law such as murder, robbery, rape, intentional injury. According to social activists' juvenile delinquency can increase, mainly from the family side.

Today, when living standards are really raised, many families have good economic conditions and also a very good condition for adult children's education. However, many families let their children enjoy life too soon, have invisibly pushed them into a depraved, very perishable lifestyle. When living in an environment only to receive and enjoy, most young people form the habit of being lazy and selfish, not understanding the true value of labor. Meanwhile, many parents are engrossed in doing business, all day long working, no longer have time to take care, listen and understand their children. Therefore, many children have overindulged useless games in many forms just to fill the mental void without knowing that danger is lurking, pulling them every hour. Some families with difficult economic conditions, many children had to struggle and make a living too soon, beyond their ability. With teenagers, parents need to understand and sympathize, always be close, share with their children, regularly monitor every change of their children. Depending on the psychophysiological development of the age group, there are appropriate educational measures. Parents need to pay special attention to orient and

adjust to psychological developments, not to let children develop their personality in a negative way.

H3: Education environment impacts on deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents. Currently, Vietnam is piloting at some schools an education program for life skills integrated into the regular curriculum of a number of subjects from primary to high school high school and the parallel extra-curricular programs also aiming to educate students' morality. Besides, organizing training teachers, discussion forum and exchanging practical experiences in students' moral education are also interested in Vietnam. Such efforts and innovations help Vietnamese students gradually realize basic ethical values such as responsibility in family relationship and responsibility of individuals with the whole society. Students also become more honest in educational activities not plagiarizing or copying work, not carrying documents during exams or tests, not running grades, not using fake diplomas, but daring to admit mistakes trying to live compassionately and altruistically ...

However, in some schools, it can be noted that information technology, infrastructure and connection equipment are still poor, especially in remote and isolated areas, areas with difficult socio-economic conditions, which have not yet met the requirements of digital transformation.

In addition, the quality of the teaching staff in some places can be still limited and have not yet met innovation requirements, which negatively impacted Vietnamese adolescents' behavior.

H4: Social media and technology have the influence on deviant behavior Vietnamese adolescents.

Digital technology brings good effectiveness and many common risks such as bullying, encouraging child abuse and exploitation. Abuse can be classified into physical and non-physical abuse. Most cases of cyberbullying could begin in the form of non-physical abuse, leading to domination and intimidation, and causing physical abuse. In addition, many dark web sites could promote sex abuse, orthodox lifestyles and violence adversely affecting adolescents' behavior and challenge law enforcement.

H5: Peer pressure impacts on deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents.

Peer pressure today appears not only in young people living in rich life, but even poor students demand to follow the times, cheat, cheat, and steal the money their parents save to feed them. study. From peer pressure, young people like to express themselves and their own level, but they misunderstood the way to express themselves, so they went down the road of playing and demanding. Teenagers could be easily absorbed in playing and competing with others but forgot to study, often skipped school, dropped out of school. In addition, minors could get involved in illegal loan sharking lines and then ran out of money and entangled in evil roads.

H6: Religion and politics have no influences on deviant behavior of Vietnamese adolescents.

All ethnic groups in Vietnam are equal, unite, respect and help each other to develop together, all acts of ethnic discrimination and division are strictly prohibited. Vietnam is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious country, distributed in all regions, including urban, rural and mountainous areas. Religious compatriots are an integral part of the Vietnamese ethnic community. On the basis of respecting and promoting the good values of religions, the Vietnamese government always promptly detects, prevents and strictly handles the manifestations of abusing freedom of belief, religion and democracy to violate the law, incite people, believers, dignitaries, monks, etc. to cause disorder, destabilize socio-political conditions, and divide between ethnic groups and religions. Hence, religion and politics are not the reason creating alienation in the personality of adolescents in Vietnam.

### ***5.2. Theoretical implications***

Adolescents need special attention and education guidance from families, schools and the whole society because the physical and psychological changes at this age are huge. Deviant behavior of adolescents is a matter of great concern in Vietnam. However, very few studies have mentioned or delved into this issue. Moral alienation increases in society could hinder the progress of the country and become a threat to society. Pointing out the roots for some deviant behavior of adolescents in Vietnam is very important determining direction for future studies to fix the backlog problem, making a more civilized and developed society.

### ***5.3. Practical implications***

The study analyzed the factors that could have influence on adolescents' deviant behavior in Vietnam. Its results were fairly evaluated by the multidimensional view of all classes in Vietnamese society. Through the analytic results, it is clear that raising good values in society and repelling evils is an urgent matter. Adolescents need to be raised in a civilized family environment, need to learn in a good educational environment, live in a healthy society and stay away from harmful products. Adolescents' deviant behavior should be corrected with reasonable education and deterrence methods, should be strictly handled by state agencies, but also should be touched by the love of the whole society. In addition, network security should be paid more attention, finding a way to sterilize useless network sources for the civilized young generation in Vietnam.

### ***5.4. Limitations and further research***

Beside the positive contributions of the study, some limitations in the research still exist. Research analyzed data by LISREL, in order to achieve accurate and highly reliable research results, many research samples are required, costly and time consuming. The data collection method for this study is online survey, the data collected may be unreliable, the response rate is inconsistent because it is impossible to control

the reliability of the answers.

Future research will dig deeper into methods to prevent and reverse moral degradation of adolescents in Vietnam. In addition, solutions to help adolescents cultivate morality, minimize negative thoughts and behaviors will also be further studied in future studies. The young generation is the future of the country, so the education and upbringing of children need to be taken seriously and properly will be a right step.

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