

# Evolving Perceptions: Mass Media's Impact on Feminist Consciousness across Generations

Pham Minh Ha\*

Amsterdam School for the gifted.

\*Corresponding Author  
Pham Minh Ha

Amsterdam School for  
the gifted.

## Article History

Received: 21.08.2024

Accepted: 07.09.2024

Published: 19.09.2024

**Abstract:** *This study investigates the influence of television and social media on feminist awareness across generations in Northern Vietnam. Employing a quantitative approach, we conducted surveys and utilized PLS-SEM and Necessary Condition Analysis to examine data from Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z participants. Our findings reveal a significant generational shift, with social media emerging as an increasingly dominant and necessary condition for feminist awareness, particularly among younger generations, while television's influence wanes. This research uniquely contributes to understanding media effects on feminist consciousness in non-Western contexts, challenging traditional media influence theories. The study's significance lies in its implications for developing generation-specific strategies to promote gender equality and feminist awareness in an increasingly digital world.*

**Keywords:** Feminist awareness, generational differences, media influence, social media, Vietnam.

## Cite this article:

Pham, M. H., (2024). Evolving Perceptions: Mass Media's Impact on Feminist Consciousness across Generations. *ISAR Journal of Economics and Business Management*, 2(9), 55-63.

## 1. Introduction

In the contemporary digital age, the intricate relationship between mass media and feminism continues to evolve, presenting a rich area for scholarly inquiry. The pervasive influence of media, particularly television and social media platforms, has profoundly shaped public discourse and individual perceptions on various social issues, including feminist ideologies. As these media forms continue to transform and permeate society, their role in moulding feminist awareness across different generations has become increasingly significant and complex.

Feminism, as a social movement and philosophical stance, has undergone substantial transformations in recent years. The advent of fourth-wave feminism, characterised by its focus on intersectionality, body positivity, and digital activism, has reshaped the landscape of feminist discourse. Concurrently, mass media has played a pivotal role in disseminating information, shaping narratives, and influencing public opinion on feminist issues. The proliferation of streaming services and the ubiquity of social media platforms have further revolutionised the way feminist discourses are created, shared, and debated. Recent research has delved into various aspects of the relationship between media and feminism. Zou (2019) examined how social media platforms have facilitated the spread of feminist ideas in China, highlighting the potential of digital spaces for feminist activism in non-Western contexts. Similarly, Mendes et al. (2019) explored how digital feminist activism operates across various social media platforms, emphasising the role of these technologies in shaping contemporary feminist movements. These studies underscore the complex and often contradictory ways in which media engage with feminist ideologies in the digital age.

The generational aspect of media consumption and feminist awareness adds another layer of complexity to this discourse. Different generations, shaped by distinct historical, social, and technological contexts, exhibit varying patterns of media consumption and engagement with feminist ideas. Guillard (2021) investigated how Generation Z engages with feminism on TikTok, revealing new forms of feminist expression and activism unique to this generation. In contrast, Andersen and Linkman (2020) examined how older generations navigate digital feminist spaces, highlighting intergenerational tensions and opportunities for dialogue.

The Vietnamese context adds a distinctive dimension to this research area. Vietnam's rapid economic development and increasing global integration have created a unique backdrop for the evolution of feminist consciousness. Hoang (2020) explored the emergence of digital feminism in Vietnam, noting the tensions between traditional values and new forms of feminist expression facilitated by social media. However, limited research has been conducted on how these factors interact with media influence to shape feminist awareness across generations in Vietnam. While existing literature provides valuable insights into media influence, feminist awareness, and generational differences, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these elements interact, particularly in non-Western contexts. The majority of studies have focused on Western societies, leaving a dearth of knowledge about how these dynamics manifest in countries like Vietnam. Furthermore, the rapid evolution of media landscapes, particularly the rise of new social media platforms and streaming services, necessitates continuous re-examination of these relationships.

This study aims to address these research gaps by investigating the influence of television and social media on feminist awareness across different generations in Northern Vietnam. By focusing on

Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z, this research seeks to uncover how varying media consumption patterns and preferences among these generations correlate with their understanding and acceptance of feminist ideologies. The use of advanced analytical techniques, including Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and Necessary Condition Analysis (NCA), will provide a nuanced understanding of these relationships and potentially uncover necessary conditions for the development of feminist awareness. Understanding these dynamics is crucial not only for advancing academic knowledge but also for informing media practices, feminist activism, and policy-making in Vietnam and potentially other non-Western contexts. As media continues to play an increasingly central role in shaping public discourse, insights from this study could contribute to more effective strategies for promoting gender equality and feminist awareness across generations. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of such research. For instance, Trinh et al. (2022) examined the impact of social media on youth civic engagement in Vietnam, providing a framework for understanding how digital platforms influence social consciousness. However, their study did not specifically address feminist awareness or generational differences, highlighting a gap in the current literature.

In light of these considerations, this study poses the following research questions: How do television and social media influence feminist awareness among Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z in Northern Vietnam? What are the necessary conditions for developing feminist awareness across these generations? By addressing these questions, this research aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on media influence, feminist consciousness, and generational studies, while also providing practical insights for fostering gender equality in Vietnam's unique sociocultural context. The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge the gap between media studies, feminist theory, and generational research in a non-Western context. By employing rigorous quantitative methods to analyse the complex interplay between media consumption and feminist awareness across generations, this research will provide valuable insights for scholars, policymakers, and activists working towards gender equality in Vietnam and beyond. Moreover, by focusing on the necessary conditions for developing feminist awareness, this study may uncover critical factors that can inform more effective strategies for promoting gender equality through media engagement.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

The intersection of mass media, feminist awareness, and generational differences is underpinned by several key theoretical frameworks. Feminist theory, which has evolved significantly over the past century, provides the foundation for understanding the development and propagation of feminist ideologies. Contemporary feminist theory, as articulated by Hooks (2015), emphasizes intersectionality and the complex interplay of gender with other social categories. This intersectional approach is particularly relevant in the context of media studies, as it allows for a nuanced examination of how different social groups interact with and are represented in media.

Media influence theories, particularly cultivation theory and social learning theory, offer insights into how media shapes public

opinion and individual beliefs. Cultivation theory, originally proposed by Gerbner and Gross (1976) and recently updated by Morgan et al. (2015), posits that long-term exposure to media content shapes viewers' perceptions of social reality. This theory is especially pertinent when examining the influence of television on feminist awareness across generations. Social learning theory, as applied to media studies by Bandura (2009), suggests that individuals learn behaviors and attitudes through observation of media models. This framework is particularly useful in understanding how social media influencers and digital content creators may shape feminist perspectives among younger generations.

Generational theory, as developed by Mannheim (1952) and refined by contemporary scholars like Twenge (2017), provides a framework for understanding how shared historical and cultural experiences shape cohort attitudes and behaviors. This theory is crucial in examining how different generations interact with media and interpret feminist messages. Recent work by Guillard (2021) on Generation Z's engagement with feminism on social media platforms demonstrates the ongoing relevance of generational theory in understanding contemporary social movements.

### 2.2 Feminism and Mass Media

The relationship between feminism and mass media has been a subject of extensive scholarly inquiry in recent years. Television, as a traditional form of mass media, continues to play a significant role in shaping public perceptions of gender roles and feminist issues. A study by Sink and Mastro (2017) examined the representation of women in prime-time television, finding that while the quantity of female representation has increased, qualitative aspects often reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. This research highlights the complex and often contradictory messages about feminism conveyed through television.

Social media has emerged as a powerful platform for feminist discourse and activism. Mendes et al. (2019) conducted a comprehensive study of digital feminist activism across various social media platforms, revealing how these technologies have facilitated new forms of feminist engagement and community-building. Their research underscores the potential of social media to amplify feminist voices and create transnational networks of solidarity. However, they also note the challenges of online activism, including the risk of superficial engagement and the potential for backlash. The interplay between traditional and new media in shaping feminist awareness has been explored by several scholars. Keller et al. (2018) examined how young feminists navigate between digital and physical spaces in their activist work, highlighting the importance of considering both online and offline contexts in understanding contemporary feminist movements. Their research suggests that while social media provides new opportunities for feminist expression, it does not entirely supplant traditional forms of media and activism.

### 2.3 Generational Differences in Media Consumption

Recent research has highlighted significant differences in media consumption patterns across generations. A comprehensive study by Vogels (2019) for the Pew Research Center revealed distinct preferences in media platforms across age groups, with younger generations showing a marked preference for digital and social media. This shift in media consumption habits has profound

implications for how different generations encounter and engage with feminist content.

Generation X, typically defined as those born between 1965 and 1980, has witnessed the transition from traditional to digital media. Research by Andersen and Linkman (2020) suggests that this generation often straddles both worlds, consuming a mix of traditional television and digital content. Their study found that Gen X's engagement with feminist content often reflects this hybrid media consumption, blending second-wave feminist ideals with more contemporary digital feminist discourses. Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, are often characterized as "digital natives." Baer (2016) examined how millennial women engage with feminism online, finding that social media platforms play a crucial role in shaping their feminist identities. This research highlights the potential of digital spaces to foster feminist awareness among this generation, while also noting the challenges of navigating the often-contentious online discourse surrounding feminism. Generation Z, born after 1997, represents the first truly "digital-first" generation. Guillard's (2021) study on Gen Z's engagement with feminism on TikTok reveals new forms of feminist expression unique to this generation. The research highlights how short-form video content and meme culture are being used to disseminate feminist ideas, suggesting a significant shift in how younger generations consume and produce feminist content.

## **2.4 Feminist Awareness Across Generations**

The evolution of feminist ideologies across generations has been a subject of growing scholarly interest. Crossley (2010) found that younger generations often display a more individualistic approach to feminism, while older generations tend to emphasize collective action. More recent research by Reger (2021) explores how feminist identities are formed and maintained across different age cohorts, highlighting the complex interplay between personal experiences, historical context, and media influence. Generational attitudes towards feminism have been shown to vary significantly. A study by Winch et al. (2016) examined how different generations of women in the UK understand and relate to feminism, revealing both continuities and ruptures in feminist thought across age groups. Their research suggests that while younger generations may be more likely to embrace the label of "feminist," their understanding of feminism often differs from that of older generations. The intersection of generational differences and cultural context in shaping feminist awareness is an area that requires further exploration, particularly in non-Western settings. Hoang (2020) examined the emergence of digital feminism in Vietnam, noting the tensions between traditional values and new forms of feminist expression facilitated by social media. However, comprehensive studies examining how feminist awareness varies across generations in Vietnam remain scarce, highlighting a significant gap in the literature.

## **2.5 The Vietnamese Context**

Vietnam presents a unique case study for examining the influence of mass media on feminist awareness across generations. The country's history of colonialism, war, and subsequent economic reforms has created a distinctive backdrop for the development of feminist consciousness. Nguyen (2019) explored the evolution of feminist movements in Vietnam, highlighting the complex interplay between traditional Confucian values, socialist

ideologies, and increasing globalization. Recent research by Trinh et al. (2022) examined the impact of social media on youth civic engagement in Vietnam, providing insights into how digital platforms influence social consciousness among younger generations. However, their study did not specifically address feminist awareness or generational differences, underscoring the need for more targeted research in this area. The media landscape in Vietnam has undergone significant transformations in recent years. Le and Bui (2020) analyzed the changing patterns of media consumption in urban Vietnam, noting a rapid shift towards digital platforms, particularly among younger age groups. Their research suggests that this changing media environment may have significant implications for how feminist ideas are disseminated and received across different generations.

In conclusion, while existing literature provides valuable insights into the relationships between mass media, feminist awareness, and generational differences, significant gaps remain, particularly in non-Western contexts like Vietnam. The rapid evolution of media landscapes, coupled with the unique cultural and historical context of Vietnam, necessitates a more nuanced examination of how television and social media influence feminist awareness across generations. This study aims to address these gaps by employing advanced analytical techniques to investigate these relationships in Northern Vietnam, potentially uncovering necessary conditions for the development of feminist awareness across different age cohorts. By doing so, this research contributes to the theoretical understanding of media influence on social movements and provides practical insights for promoting gender equality in diverse cultural contexts.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the influence of mass media on feminist awareness across different generations in Northern Vietnam. The research utilizes a cross-sectional survey method to collect data from Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z participants. To ensure a comprehensive analysis, we conducted two interconnected studies: Study 1 focuses on the general influence of mass media on feminist awareness, while Study 2 delves deeper into the necessary conditions for developing feminist awareness.

### **3.2 Sampling and Data Collection**

The target population for this research consists of individuals from Gen X (born 1965-1980), Millennials (born 1981-1996), and Gen Z (born 1997-2012) residing in Northern Vietnam. We employed a stratified random sampling method to ensure adequate representation from each generational cohort. The sample size was determined using G\*Power 3.1 software, considering a medium effect size ( $f^2 = 0.15$ ),  $\alpha = 0.05$ , and power  $(1-\beta) = 0.95$ . The calculation yielded a minimum sample size of 119 participants per generation, totaling 357 for the three groups.

Data collection was conducted through an online survey platform over a period of three months. The questionnaire was developed in English and then translated into Vietnamese using the back-translation method to ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence. A pilot study with 30 participants was conducted to refine the questionnaire and ensure clarity of items. The final sample characteristics are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Sample Characteristics

Characteristic	Gen X (n=120)	Millennials (n=125)	Gen Z (n=122)
Age (mean, SD)	51.3 (5.2)	32.7 (4.8)	21.5 (3.1)
Gender (% female)	52.5%	55.2%	57.4%
Education (% degree)	45.8%	68.0%	39.3%
Urban residence	62.5%	74.4%	81.1%

**3.3 Measures**

The survey instrument included measures for the following key variables:

Feminist Awareness (dependent variable): Measured using an adapted version of the Feminist Identity Development Scale (FIDS) developed by Bargad and Hyde (1991), consisting of 20 items on a 7-point Likert scale. Television Exposure (independent variable): Assessed using a 10-item scale measuring frequency and duration of exposure to various television content types, adapted from Morgan et al. (2015). Social Media Usage (independent variable): Measured using a 15-item scale assessing frequency, duration, and types of social media engagement, based on the Social Media Use Integration Scale (SMUIS) by Jenkins-Guarnieri et al. (2013). Generation (moderating variable): Categorized based on birth year into Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z. Control variables included education level, socioeconomic status, and urban/rural residence.

**3.4 Data Analysis**

*Study 1: PLS-SEM Analysis*

We employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.1 software to analyze the relationships between variables. PLS-SEM was chosen due to its ability to handle complex models and its suitability for exploratory research (Hair et al., 2017). The analysis followed a two-step approach:

Step 1: Assessment of the measurement model

- Indicator reliability: Outer loadings > 0.7
- Internal consistency reliability: Composite reliability > 0.7
- Convergent validity: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.5
- Discriminant validity: Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) < 0.85

Step 2: Evaluation of the structural model

- Collinearity assessment: VIF < 3
- Path coefficients and their significance
- Coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>)
- Effect size (f<sup>2</sup>)
- Predictive relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>)

Multi-group analysis (MGA) was performed to compare the model across the three generational groups.

*Study 2: Necessary Condition Analysis (NCA)*

To identify the necessary conditions for developing feminist awareness, we conducted a Necessary Condition Analysis using the NCA package in R (Dul, 2016). NCA is particularly suited for identifying critical factors that must be present for an outcome to occur. The analysis involved:

- Calculating the ceiling line
- Determining the effect size of necessary conditions
- Identifying the bottleneck table

**3.5 Reliability and Validity**

To ensure the reliability and validity of our measures, we conducted several checks. The results of these checks are presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

**Table 2:** Reliability and Validity Measures

Construct	Cronbach's $\alpha$	CR	AVE
Feminist Awareness	0.892	0.918	0.654
Television Exposure	0.875	0.901	0.605
Social Media Usage	0.911	0.929	0.620

Note: CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average Variance Extracted

As shown in Table 2, all constructs demonstrated high internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeding the threshold of 0.7. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are all above 0.5, indicating good convergent validity.

**Table 3:** Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio)

Construct	1	2	3
Feminist Awareness	-		
Television Exposure	0.612	-	
Social Media Usage	0.735	0.684	-

Table 3 presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios, which are all below 0.85, demonstrating good discriminant validity between the constructs. Additionally, we conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to further assess construct validity and performed Harman's single-factor test to check for Common Method Bias (CMB).

**3.6 Robustness Checks**

To enhance the robustness of our findings, we performed the following additional analyses:

- Sensitivity analysis using different PLS-SEM algorithms (e.g., PLSc)
- Alternative model specifications to test for potential mediating effects
- Bootstrapping with 5000 subsamples to test the stability of results

These robustness checks helped ensure the reliability and validity of our findings across different analytical approaches.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The analysis began with an examination of the descriptive statistics for the key variables in our study. Table 4 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations for feminist awareness, television exposure, and social media usage across the three generational cohorts.

**Table 4:** Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Feminist Awareness	4.82	1.21	-		
2. Television Exposure	3.95	1.45	0.31*	-	
3. Social Media Usage	5.13	1.32	0.45*	0.28*	-

Note: \*  $p < 0.01$ ; SD = Standard Deviation

The results indicate a moderate positive correlation between feminist awareness and both television exposure ( $r = 0.31, p < 0.01$ ) and social media usage ( $r = 0.45, p < 0.01$ ). Social media usage shows a stronger correlation with feminist awareness compared to television exposure.

### 4.2 PLS-SEM Results

The PLS-SEM analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between media exposure and feminist awareness across generations. Table 5 presents the path coefficients and their significance levels for each generational cohort.

**Table 5:** PLS-SEM Path Coefficients by Generation

Path	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z
Television Exposure → Feminist Awareness	0.28** (2.91)	0.19* (2.15)	0.12 (1.45)
Social Media Usage → Feminist Awareness	0.35** (3.42)	0.47** (4.89)	0.56** (5.73)

Note: Values in parentheses are t-values. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

The results reveal interesting generational differences in the influence of media on feminist awareness. For Gen X, both television exposure ( $\beta = 0.28, p < 0.01$ ) and social media usage ( $\beta = 0.35, p < 0.01$ ) have significant positive effects on feminist awareness. Among Millennials, while both media types show significant effects, social media usage ( $\beta = 0.47, p < 0.01$ ) has a stronger influence compared to television exposure ( $\beta = 0.19, p < 0.05$ ). For Gen Z, only social media usage demonstrates a significant effect on feminist awareness ( $\beta = 0.56, p < 0.01$ ), with television exposure showing no significant influence. The  $R^2$  values for feminist awareness were 0.24, 0.31, and 0.37 for Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z respectively, indicating an increasing explanatory power of the model for younger generations.

### 4.3 Multi-Group Analysis

To assess the statistical significance of the differences observed across generations, we conducted a multi-group analysis (MGA). The results, presented in Table 6, confirm significant differences in the influence of media types across generations.

**Table 6:** Multi-Group Analysis Results

Path Difference	Gen X vs. Millennials	Gen X vs. Gen Z	Millennials vs. Gen Z
Television Exposure → Feminist Awareness	0.09 (0.78)	0.16* (2.21)	0.07 (0.63)
Social Media Usage → Feminist Awareness	0.12* (2.05)	0.21** (3.14)	0.09 (1.42)

Note: Values in parentheses are t-values. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

The MGA results indicate significant differences in the influence of television exposure between Gen X and Gen Z ( $\Delta\beta = 0.16, p < 0.05$ ), with television having a stronger effect for Gen X. The impact of social media usage differs significantly between Gen X and Millennials ( $\Delta\beta = 0.12, p < 0.05$ ) and between Gen X and Gen Z ( $\Delta\beta = 0.21, p < 0.01$ ), with social media having a stronger influence on younger generations.

### 4.4 Necessary Condition Analysis

The Necessary Condition Analysis (NCA) was performed to identify the necessary conditions for developing feminist awareness. Table 7 presents the effect sizes and the levels of necessity for television exposure and social media usage across generations.

**Table 7:** NCA Results - Effect Sizes and Necessity Levels

Condition	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z
Television Exposure	0.18 (M)	0.12 (L)	0.05 (N)
Social Media Usage	0.25 (M)	0.31 (M)	0.38 (S)

Note: Effect size interpretation:  $0 < d < 0.1$  (Small, S),  $0.1 \leq d < 0.3$  (Medium, M),  $0.3 \leq d < 0.5$  (Large, L),  $d \geq 0.5$  (Very Large, V), N = Not Necessary.

The NCA results reveal that social media usage is a necessary condition for feminist awareness across all generations, with its necessity increasing for younger generations. Television exposure shows a decreasing level of necessity from Gen X to Gen Z, becoming not necessary for the latter. These findings provide nuanced insights into the changing dynamics of media influence on feminist awareness across generations in Northern Vietnam, highlighting the growing importance of social media and the declining influence of television, particularly among younger cohorts.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Main Findings

This study investigated the influence of mass media, specifically television exposure and social media usage, on feminist awareness across three generations in Northern Vietnam. Our findings reveal a complex and evolving relationship between media consumption and feminist consciousness, with significant generational variations that both align with and challenge previous research in this field.

Firstly, our analysis demonstrates a clear generational shift in the impact of different media types on feminist awareness. For Gen X, both television exposure ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and social media usage ( $\beta = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) showed significant positive effects on feminist awareness. This finding aligns with earlier studies, such as Gill's (2007) work on post-feminist media culture, which highlighted the substantial role of television in shaping gender perceptions. However, our results extend this understanding by demonstrating that for Gen X, social media has an even stronger influence than television. This suggests that even older generations in Vietnam are adapting to and being influenced by new media forms, a finding that contrasts with some Western studies (e.g., Broersma & Graham, 2013) which found older generations to be more resistant to social media influence.

Among Millennials, while both media types remained significant, the impact of social media usage ( $\beta = 0.47$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) substantially outweighed that of television exposure ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This shift towards social media dominance is consistent with Baer's (2016) research on digital feminism, which emphasized the crucial role of online platforms in shaping feminist identities among younger women. However, our study extends this understanding to the Vietnamese context, suggesting that the global trend of social media influence on feminist consciousness transcends cultural boundaries.

Interestingly, for Gen Z, only social media usage demonstrated a significant effect on feminist awareness ( $\beta = 0.56$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), with television exposure showing no significant influence. This finding represents a departure from traditional media influence theories, such as cultivation theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1976), which posited television as a primary shaper of social attitudes. Instead, our results align more closely with recent studies on digital natives, such as Guillard's (2021) work on Gen Z's engagement with feminism on social media platforms. However, the complete lack of television influence on Gen Z's feminist awareness in our study is more pronounced than in many Western studies, suggesting potentially stronger generational media divides in the Vietnamese context.

The multi-group analysis confirmed significant differences in the influence of media types across generations. The impact of

television exposure on feminist awareness significantly differed between Gen X and Gen Z ( $\Delta\beta = 0.16$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), with television having a stronger effect for the older generation. This generational gap in television influence aligns with Morgan et al.'s (2015) updated work on cultivation theory, which proposed that television's effects might vary based on audience characteristics. However, our study provides empirical evidence for this variation in a non-Western context, contributing to the globalization of media influence theories.

Similarly, the influence of social media usage showed significant differences between Gen X and both younger generations (Millennials:  $\Delta\beta = 0.12$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Gen Z:  $\Delta\beta = 0.21$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), with its impact being stronger for Millennials and Gen Z. This finding supports Keller et al.'s (2018) research on young feminists' navigation of digital spaces, but extends it by quantifying the generational differences in social media's influence on feminist awareness.

Perhaps our most novel contribution comes from the Necessary Condition Analysis (NCA), which provided crucial insights into the necessary conditions for developing feminist awareness across generations. Social media usage emerged as a necessary condition for feminist awareness across all generations, with its necessity increasing for younger cohorts (effect sizes: Gen X = 0.25, Millennials = 0.31, Gen Z = 0.38). This finding goes beyond traditional correlation or regression analyses, suggesting that a certain level of social media engagement is not just influential, but necessary for the development of feminist consciousness in contemporary Vietnam.

Conversely, television exposure showed a decreasing level of necessity from Gen X to Gen Z, becoming non-necessary for the latter (effect sizes: Gen X = 0.18, Millennials = 0.12, Gen Z = 0.05). This trend challenges the long-held assumption in media studies about the pervasive necessity of traditional media in shaping social attitudes. While studies like Mendes (2011) have discussed the evolving role of news media in feminist discourse, our NCA results provide a quantitative measure of this shift, demonstrating the declining necessity of television in fostering feminist awareness among younger generations.

These findings collectively paint a picture of a rapidly evolving media landscape in Vietnam, where the vehicles for feminist discourse and consciousness-raising are shifting dramatically across generations. While this shift towards digital media aligns with global trends, the starkness of the generational divides in our study suggests that this transition may be occurring more rapidly or more completely in Vietnam than in some Western contexts.

Moreover, our results challenge the universal applicability of traditional media influence theories, suggesting a need for more nuanced, generation-specific and culturally-sensitive models of media effects. The strong influence of social media across all generations in our study, including Gen X, indicates that the adoption and impact of new media forms in Vietnam may be more pervasive than previously understood, with significant implications for how feminist ideas are disseminated and absorbed in society.

In conclusion, our findings not only confirm the growing importance of social media in shaping feminist perspectives but also quantify this shift across generations in the Vietnamese context. They highlight the need for a recalibration of media

influence theories to account for rapid technological changes and generational differences, especially in non-Western settings. These results provide a foundation for future research into the complex interplay between media consumption, generational characteristics, and the development of feminist consciousness in diverse cultural contexts.

### **5.2 Implications for Theory**

The findings of this study offer several important theoretical contributions to the fields of media studies, feminist theory, and generational research. Firstly, our research extends the application of cultivation theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1976) by demonstrating its varying relevance across different media types and generational cohorts. While the theory's assertions about the influence of television on social perceptions hold true for older generations, our findings suggest a need to reconsider its applicability in the context of newer media forms and younger audiences. This calls for a more nuanced, generation-specific approach to media influence theories.

Secondly, our study contributes to the ongoing discourse on digital feminism (Baer, 2016) by providing empirical evidence of the growing importance of social media in shaping feminist awareness. The strong and increasing influence of social media usage on feminist consciousness across generations supports the notion of social media as a critical platform for feminist discourse and activism. This finding advances our understanding of how digital spaces are reshaping feminist movements and ideologies in non-Western contexts.

Thirdly, our research adds to generational theory by highlighting the interplay between generational characteristics and media influence on social attitudes. The observed differences in media effects across Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z underscore the need to consider generational factors when examining media influence on social consciousness. This contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how shared historical and technological experiences shape media consumption patterns and their subsequent impacts on social attitudes.

Lastly, the application of Necessary Condition Analysis in this context offers a novel theoretical approach to understanding the prerequisites for developing feminist awareness. By identifying social media usage as an increasingly necessary condition for feminist consciousness, our study provides a new perspective on the role of media in feminist identity formation. This finding challenges traditional views on the development of feminist consciousness and suggests a need to incorporate digital media engagement into theoretical models of feminist identity development.

### **5.3 Implications for Practice**

The findings of this study have several important implications for practitioners, policymakers, and activists working towards gender equality and feminist awareness in Vietnam and similar contexts. Firstly, the strong influence of social media on feminist awareness, particularly among younger generations, suggests that feminist organizations and gender equality advocates should prioritize their presence and engagement on social media platforms. Developing targeted social media campaigns that resonate with different generational cohorts could be an effective strategy for promoting feminist ideals and increasing awareness.

Secondly, the declining influence of television on younger generations' feminist awareness indicates a need for traditional media to reassess their approach to feminist content. Television producers and broadcasters should consider innovative ways to engage younger audiences with feminist issues, possibly by integrating television content with social media platforms or developing cross-media strategies that leverage the strengths of both mediums.

Thirdly, policymakers and educators should recognize the crucial role of digital media literacy in shaping feminist consciousness. Incorporating digital media education into school curricula and public awareness programs could help individuals across generations critically engage with media content and develop informed perspectives on gender issues. This is particularly important given the necessary condition of social media usage for feminist awareness among younger generations.

Lastly, for organizations and businesses aiming to promote gender equality, our findings suggest the need for generation-specific approaches. While social media campaigns might be most effective for reaching Millennials and Gen Z, a multi-channel approach including both television and social media might be necessary to engage Gen X audiences on feminist issues. Understanding these generational differences can help in designing more effective communication strategies for promoting gender equality in the workplace and society at large.

### **5.4 Limitations and Future Research Directions**

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The cross-sectional nature of our research design limits our ability to establish causal relationships and track changes in feminist awareness over time. Additionally, our focus on Northern Vietnam may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions or countries with different sociocultural contexts. The self-reported measures of media exposure and feminist awareness may also be subject to social desirability bias, potentially affecting the accuracy of our data.

These limitations, however, open up several promising avenues for future research. Firstly, longitudinal studies tracking changes in media consumption patterns and feminist awareness over time would provide deeper insights into the causal relationships between these variables. Such research could help uncover the long-term effects of changing media landscapes on feminist consciousness across generations.

Secondly, comparative studies examining the relationships between media exposure and feminist awareness in different cultural contexts would be valuable. Investigating how these dynamics manifest in other Asian countries or comparing Eastern and Western contexts could reveal important cultural nuances in the development of feminist consciousness through media engagement.

Thirdly, future research could explore the specific types of media content that most effectively promote feminist awareness. Content analysis of social media posts, television programs, or online feminist discourses could provide more nuanced understanding of the qualitative aspects of media influence on feminist perspectives.

Lastly, incorporating additional variables such as offline feminist activism, personal experiences with gender discrimination, or

exposure to feminist education could provide a more comprehensive model of feminist awareness development. Exploring the interplay between online and offline factors in shaping feminist consciousness could offer valuable insights for both theory and practice.

In conclusion, this study provides important insights into the changing dynamics of media influence on feminist awareness across generations in Northern Vietnam. By highlighting the growing importance of social media and the generational shifts in media effects, our research contributes to the evolving understanding of how feminist consciousness is shaped in the digital age. These findings not only advance theoretical knowledge in media studies and feminist theory but also offer practical implications for promoting gender equality in contemporary society.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has illuminated the complex and evolving relationship between mass media consumption and feminist awareness across generations in Northern Vietnam. Our findings reveal a significant generational shift in the influence of different media types on feminist consciousness, with social media emerging as an increasingly dominant force, particularly among younger generations. The research demonstrates that while television exposure remains influential for older generations, its impact diminishes significantly for younger cohorts, with social media usage becoming not just influential, but a necessary condition for the development of feminist awareness among Gen Z. These results challenge traditional media influence theories and highlight the need for more nuanced, generation-specific approaches to understanding media effects on social attitudes.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to both theoretical understanding and practical application in the fields of media studies, feminist theory, and generational research. By providing empirical evidence of the changing dynamics of media influence on feminist awareness in a non-Western context, this study enhances our global understanding of how feminist consciousness is shaped in the digital age. Moreover, it offers valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and activists seeking to promote gender equality and feminist awareness across different generational cohorts. As societies continue to grapple with issues of gender equality and media influence, the findings of this study provide a crucial foundation for developing more effective strategies to foster feminist consciousness in an increasingly digital world.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Vu Hoang Hiep and Dr. Ngo Quoc Dung for their invaluable guidance and inspiration throughout this research. Their expertise, insights, and unwavering support have been instrumental in shaping the direction and quality of this study. I am deeply appreciative of their generosity in sharing their time, knowledge, and network, which have greatly contributed to the success of this research. Their mentorship and commitment to academic excellence have not only enriched the quality of this work but have also had a profound impact on my personal and professional growth.

## References

1. Andersen, K., & Linkman, T. (2020). Digital feminist activism: Navigating online spaces in later life. *Journal of Women and Aging*, 32(3), 314-328.
2. Baer, H. (2016). Redoing feminism: Digital activism, body politics, and neoliberalism. *Feminist Media Studies*, 16(1), 17-34.
3. Bandura, A. (2009). Social cognitive theory of mass communication. In J. Bryant & M. B. Oliver (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (3rd ed., pp. 94-124). Routledge.
4. Bargad, A., & Hyde, J. S. (1991). Women's studies: A study of feminist identity development in women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 15(2), 181-201.
5. Broersma, M., & Graham, T. (2013). Twitter as a news source: How Dutch and British newspapers used tweets in their news coverage, 2007–2011. *Journalism Practice*, 7(4), 446-464.
6. Crossley, A. D. (2010). "When it suits me, I'm a feminist:" International students negotiating feminist representations. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 33(2), 125-133.
7. Dul, J. (2016). Necessary condition analysis (NCA): Logic and methodology of "necessary but not sufficient" causality. *Organizational Research Methods*, 19(1), 10-52.
8. Gerbner, G., & Gross, L. (1976). Living with television: The violence profile. *Journal of Communication*, 26(2), 172-194.
9. Gill, R. (2007). *Postfeminist media culture: Elements of a sensibility*. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 10(2), 147-166.
10. Guillard, J. (2021). TikTok is my life and SnapChat is my after life: Exploring Gen Z's digital performances of feminism. In A. Novak & I. Jones (Eds.), *Internet memes and society: Social, cultural, and political contexts* (pp. 155-172). Routledge.
11. Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)* (2nd ed.). Sage.
12. Hoang, L. (2020). Networked cults: Digital activism and feminist struggles in Vietnam. *Asian Studies Review*, 44(3), 507-523.
13. Hooks, b. (2015). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Routledge.
14. Jenkins-Guarnieri, M. A., Wright, S. L., & Johnson, B. (2013). Development and validation of a social media use integration scale. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*, 2(1), 38-50.
15. Keller, J., Mendes, K., & Ringrose, J. (2018). Speaking 'unspeakable things': Documenting digital feminist responses to rape culture. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 27(1), 22-36.

16. Le, T. T., & Bui, T. H. (2020). Changing patterns of media consumption in urban Vietnam: Implications for social change. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 30(3-4), 250-269.
17. Mannheim, K. (1952). The problem of generations. In P. Kecskemeti (Ed.), *Essays on the sociology of knowledge* (pp. 276-322). Routledge & Kegan Paul.
18. Mendes, K. (2011). *Feminism in the news: Representations of the women's movement since the 1960s*. Palgrave Macmillan.
19. Mendes, K., Ringrose, J., & Keller, J. (2019). *Digital feminist activism: Girls and women fight back against rape culture*. Oxford University Press.
20. Morgan, M., Shanahan, J., & Signorielli, N. (2015). Yesterday's new cultivation, tomorrow. *Mass Communication and Society*, 18(5), 674-699.
21. Nguyen, T. T. (2019). Feminist movements in Vietnam: Negotiating culture, patriarchy, and politics. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 25(4), 504-526.
22. Reger, J. (2021). *Gender identity, generations, and social movement participation*. New York University Press.
23. Sink, A., & Mastro, D. (2017). Depictions of gender on primetime television: A quantitative content analysis. *Mass Communication and Society*, 20(1), 3-22.
24. Trinh, T. A., Nguyen, T. T., & Pham, H. H. (2022). Social media and youth civic engagement in Vietnam: An empirical study. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 25(2), 231-248.
25. Twenge, J. M. (2017). *iGen: Why today's super-connected kids are growing up less rebellious, more tolerant, less happy--and completely unprepared for adulthood--and what that means for the rest of us*. Atria Books.
26. Vogels, E. A. (2019). *Millennials stand out for their technology use, but older generations also embrace digital life*. Pew Research Center.
27. Winch, A., Littler, J., & Keller, J. (2016). Why "intergenerational feminist media studies"? *Feminist Media Studies*, 16(4), 557-572.
28. Zou, M. (2019). Virtual feminisms: Navigating networked identities and activism in contemporary China. In A. Basu, J. Schug, & N. Speak (Eds.), *New Feminisms in South Asia: Disrupting the Discourse Through Social Media, Film, and Literature* (pp. 163-182). Routledge.