



The Mediating Role of Perceived Risk in Shaping Vietnamese Consumers' Trust in Social Media Advertising: Evidence from the Furniture Industry

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Abstract

This study investigates the mediating role of perceived risk in shaping Vietnamese consumers' trust in social media advertising for furniture products. Survey data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms and disseminated across social media platforms, yielding 234 valid responses. The data were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS. The findings indicate that information transparency and peer reviews exert the strongest influence on advertising trust, while source credibility and interactivity serve as supporting factors. Perceived risk partially mediates the relationship between information transparency and consumers' trust in advertising.

Keywords:

Social media, advertising trust, perceived risk, consumer behavior, Vietnamese consumers, furniture products.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of digital transformation, social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and Zalo have become important advertising tools that enable businesses to reach customers and expand market opportunities. According to statistical reports in 2024, Facebook reached 2.93 billion monthly active users, with Facebook Messenger advertising alone covering 54.5 million users in Vietnam—equivalent to nearly 55% of the population. TikTok, which dominates the short-video market, generated revenues of USD 2.7 billion in 2023. In Vietnam, 77.8% of users aged 16 to 64 regularly engage with TikTok, creating an effective and promising communication channel for businesses to promote their products, particularly through affiliate marketing and creative advertising formats.

For the furniture industry, customers often make careful considerations prior to purchase, as furniture belongs to the category of durable goods with high economic value. The consumer decision-making process is typically prolonged, involving extensive comparisons and evaluations. The inability to physically experience products when shopping online compels consumers to rely heavily on advertising to assess product quality, design, durability, and usability.

Within the realm of social media advertising, where information is transmitted rapidly and diversely but often contains misleading or non-transparent content, perceived risk emerges as a crucial psychological factor influencing customer behavior and decision-making. When consumers perceive high levels of risk, they tend to doubt the accuracy and authenticity of advertising claims. This defensive psychology leads to a decline in advertising trust. Conversely, when perceived risk is low, consumers feel more secure in processing information, experience less concern over potential adverse outcomes, and thus develop stronger trust in advertising.

Customer trust not only directly shapes purchasing behavior but also determines long-term brand loyalty. Previous studies [1] [2] [3] consistently affirm that trust positively influences loyalty, reduces perceived risk, and fosters consumer behavior. Although numerous domestic and international studies have explored customer trust, research specifically addressing the furniture industry in the context of social media in Vietnam remains limited. This study therefore focuses on key factors including information transparency, source credibility, interactivity, peer reviews and particularly the mediating role of perceived risk in shaping consumer trust in social media advertising.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH MODEL

2.1. Social Media Advertising

In the digital era, social media advertising has emerged as a dominant marketing channel. Unlike traditional advertising, social media advertising facilitates two-way interactions between businesses and consumers, while allowing message personalization based on behavioral and demographic data. Platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Zalo not only enable rapid reach and cost efficiency but also provide robust systems for measuring effectiveness through indicators such as click-through rate, conversion rate, and cost per conversion.

2.2. Customer Trust

Trust is defined as the willingness of one party to accept vulnerability based on the expectation that the other party will act in a favorable manner [4]. Trust is inherently associated with expectations, vulnerability, and risk [5]. In online environments where customers cannot physically evaluate products, trust becomes particularly critical. For high-value goods such as furniture, trust strongly determines purchasing behavior. Transparent and authentic advertisements, supported by positive community feedback, reduce uncertainty, facilitate purchase decisions, and foster customer loyalty [6].

2.3. Perceived Risk

Perceived risk refers to consumers' subjective assessment of the likelihood of encountering unfavorable outcomes when receiving and acting upon advertising information. Such risks may include poor product quality, payment fraud, loss of personal data, or unsatisfactory service experiences. Perceived risk thus functions as a negative mediating factor that directly influences customer trust in online settings [2] [7]. High perceived risk reduces trust in advertising, whereas low perceived risk provides a favorable foundation for trust development.

2.4. Theoretical Models of Customer Trust

Mayer et al.'s Model [4]: Trust is formed through three elements ability (competence), benevolence (concern for consumer interests), and integrity (honesty and transparency). This framework integrates both rational and emotional evaluations of trust.

Online Trust Model [8]: Highlights three components trust in the vendor, trusting intention, and trust in technology (security, safety, and system reliability). This model is particularly relevant in e-commerce and social media contexts.

Trust–Risk Model [7]: Emphasizes that trust mitigates perceived risk, thereby encouraging purchase intention and information sharing in online transactions.

2.5. Research Hypotheses and Model

2.5.1. Effect of Information Transparency (*MBTT*)

Wang and Emurian [9] argue that in digital contexts where physical interaction is absent, transparency constitutes a fundamental component of online trust. Clear, consistent, and verifiable information reduces perceived risk and enhances customer confidence. Accordingly, transparent advertising is more likely to be perceived as useful, credible, and relevant.

H1a: Information transparency negatively influences perceived risk.

H1b: Information transparency positively influences customer trust in social media advertising for furniture products.

2.5.2. Effect of Source Credibility (*XTP*)

Source credibility extends beyond the “truthfulness” of information to encompass perceived ethics, motives, and transparency of the message sender.[10] demonstrated that the

persuasiveness of an advertising message is strongly affected by consumers' perception of spokesperson credibility. When information sources are perceived as trustworthy, consumers are more likely to accept advertising messages and form positive brand attitudes.

H2a: Source credibility negatively influences perceived risk.

H2b: Source credibility positively influences customer trust in social media advertising for furniture products.

2.5.3. Effect of Interactivity (TTT)

Interactivity manifests in multiple forms such as comments, shares, likes, surveys, direct questions, and instant messaging. Active engagement allows consumers to verify and compare information, thereby reducing ambiguity and concerns about product quality or advertising reliability. Higher interactivity provides consumers with a greater sense of control, which reduces perceived risk. Prior research [11] indicates that interactivity enhances customer engagement and awareness, improving acceptance and attitudes toward online advertising.

H3a: Interactivity negatively influences perceived risk.

H3b: Interactivity positively influences customer trust in social media advertising for furniture products.

2.5.4. Effect of Peer Reviews (DGK)

On social media platforms, consumers receive not only corporate information but also peer feedback and reviews. These evaluations serve as a form of “social proof,” reinforcing trust and reducing perceived risk in decision-making [12]. Positive and transparent peer reviews based on real experiences help consumers assess safety and reliability, thereby reducing skepticism and perceived risk.

H4a: Peer reviews negatively influence perceived risk.

H4b: Peer reviews positively influence customer trust in social media advertising for furniture products.

2.5.5. Effect of Perceived Risk (NTRR)

High levels of perceived risk lead customers to doubt advertising accuracy and honesty, making them more cautious in accepting information or making purchase decisions. Conversely, low perceived risk fosters a sense of security, reduces concerns about adverse outcomes, and strengthens trust in advertising. This mechanism is supported by the online trust model [2] and Pavlou's research [7], which identify perceived risk as a negative mediating factor influencing trust in digital environments.

H5: Perceived risk negatively influences customer trust in social media advertising for furniture products.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design. Measurement scales were adapted from prior studies [1] [2] [3] and modified to suit the Vietnamese context and the furniture industry. The survey was conducted with 234 respondents who were either current or potential customers interested in furniture products and residing in Vietnam. A non-probability convenience sampling method was applied.

The collected data were processed using SPSS and AMOS software. The analytical procedure consisted of three main steps:

1. Reliability Testing: Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales.
2. Factor Analysis: Both Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were conducted to evaluate the construct validity of the measurement model.
3. Structural Model Testing: Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to examine the hypothesized relationships among constructs and to test the mediating role of perceived risk.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. Scale Reliability Testing

According to [13] the quality of measurement scales can be assessed based on the following criteria: (i) Composite Reliability (CR) should be at least 0.7; (ii) Convergent validity is confirmed if the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) reaches 0.5 or higher, ensuring that the scale captures a majority of the variance of observed variables; (iii) Discriminant validity is established when the Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) is smaller than the AVE for each construct, and the square root of AVE (SQRTAVE) is greater than the inter-construct correlations.

The analysis results presented in Table 1 indicate that the measurement scales employed in this study satisfied these conditions and were therefore deemed reliable for subsequent analyses.

Table 1. Results of Reliability and Validity Assessment (CR, AVE, MSV, SQRTAVE)

| 1 | CR | AVE | MSV | MaxR(H) | DGK | NTRR | TTT | NTQC | XTP | MBTT |
|------|-------|-------|-------|---------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----|------|
| DGK | 0.930 | 0.769 | 0.290 | 0.939 | 0.877 | | | | | |
| NTRR | 0.915 | 0.729 | 0.314 | 0.917 | -0.351 | 0.854 | | | | |
| TTT | 0.884 | 0.656 | 0.392 | 0.889 | 0.392 | -0.341 | 0.810 | | | |
| NTQ | 0.911 | 0.720 | 0.398 | 0.915 | 0.538 | -0.560 | 0.562 | 0.848 | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------------|--------------|
| C | | | | | | | | | | |
| XTP | 0.843 | 0.573 | 0.100 | 0.846 | 0.110 | -0.073 | 0.285 | 0.293 | 0.757 | |
| MBT T | 0.851 | 0.589 | 0.398 | 0.856 | 0.514 | -0.429 | 0.626 | 0.631 | 0.316 | 0.767 |

Source: AMOS 24 analysis results

4.2. Hypothesis Testing

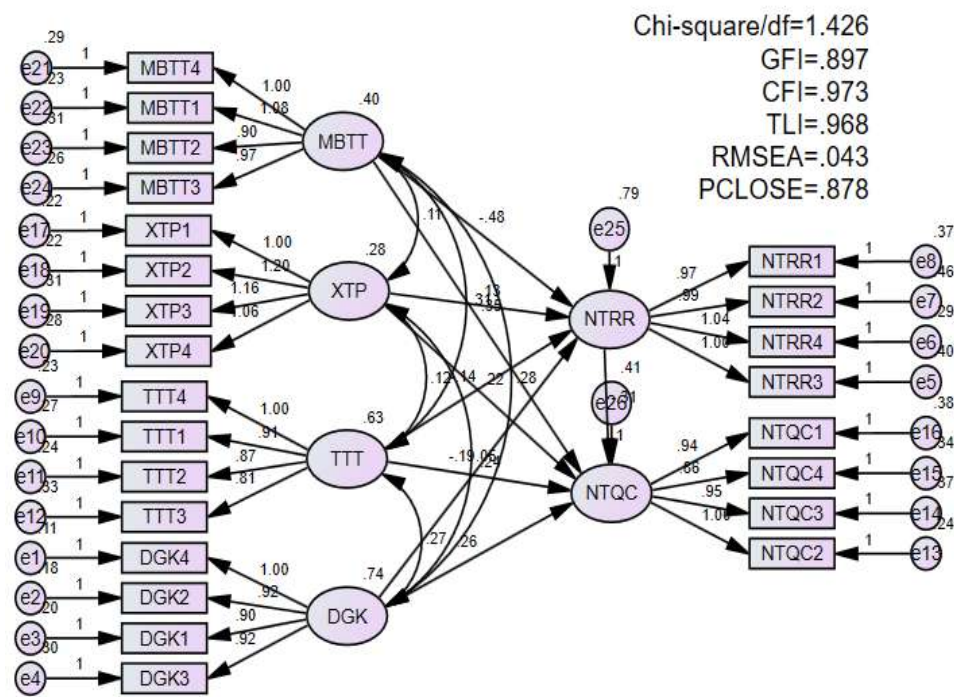


Figure 1. Results of the Standardized Structural Equation Model Analysis

Source: AMOS 24 analysis results

The analysis results indicate that the evaluation criteria of the structural model all meet the required thresholds, confirming that the research model is well-fitted to the collected data. Specifically, the Chi-square/df ratio was 1.426, which is lower than the recommended threshold of 2. The Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) reached 0.897; the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0.973; and the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) was 0.968. Both CFI and TLI exceeded 0.9, while GFI was within the acceptable range of 0.8–0.9. In addition, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.043, lower than the 0.06 threshold suggested by Hair et al. [13]. These results demonstrate that the proposed structural model is statistically valid and fits the data well.

Table 2. SEM Hypothesis Testing Results

| Hypothesis | Relationship | Estimate | P-value | Result |
|------------|------------------------|----------|---------|-----------------|
| H1a | NTRR \leftarrow BMTT | -0.300 | 0.005 | Supported |
| H2a | NTRR \leftarrow XTP | 0.070 | 0.336 | Rejected |
| H3a | NTRR \leftarrow TTT | -0.109 | 0.234 | Rejected |
| H4a | NTRR \leftarrow DGK | -0.161 | 0.039 | Supported |
| H1b | NTQC \leftarrow BMTT | 0.222 | 0.009 | Supported |
| H2b | NTQC \leftarrow XTP | 0.120 | 0.037 | Supported |
| H3b | NTQC \leftarrow TTT | 0.195 | 0.007 | Supported |
| H4b | NTQC \leftarrow DGK | 0.226 | *** | Supported |
| H5 | NTQC \leftarrow NTRR | -0.310 | *** | Supported |
| | NTRR | | | 0.218 |
| | NTQC | | | 0.580 |

Source: AMOS 24 analysis results

The results confirm that all proposed hypotheses (H1–H5) are supported at the 95% confidence level, except for H2a and H3a, which were rejected due to their p-values being greater than 0.05 ($p = 0.336$ and $p = 0.234$, respectively).

4.3. Mediation Analysis of Perceived Risk

The results of the Bootstrap mediation test indicate that perceived risk serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between information transparency and advertising trust (Table 3).

Table 3. Mediation Test Results of Perceived Risk

| Relationship | Standardized Estimate | P-value | Result | Mediation Effect |
|--|-----------------------|---------|-----------|-------------------|
| MBTT \rightarrow NTRR \rightarrow NTQC | 0.093** | 0.003 | Supported | Partial mediation |
| XTP \rightarrow NTRR \rightarrow NTQC | -0.022 | 0.286 | Rejected | No mediation |
| TTT \rightarrow NTRR \rightarrow NTQC | 0.034 | 0.239 | Rejected | No mediation |
| DGK \rightarrow NTRR \rightarrow NTQC | 0.050 | 0.058 | Rejected | No mediation |

Source: AMOS 24 analysis results

5. CONCLUSION

The study identifies information transparency, source credibility, interactivity, and peer reviews as key factors influencing trust in social media advertising. Among these, peer reviews exert the strongest effect on advertising trust (0.226), followed by information transparency (0.222), interactivity (0.195), and source credibility (0.120). Perceived risk was found to negatively affect advertising trust with a strong coefficient (-0.310). Additionally, perceived risk was negatively influenced by information transparency (-0.300) and peer reviews (-0.161). Importantly, perceived risk partially mediates the relationship between information transparency and advertising trust, but it does not mediate the effects of interactivity, source credibility, or peer reviews on advertising trust.

These findings provide empirical evidence for online trust theory while highlighting the unique characteristics of the furniture sector, a high-value industry with limited opportunities for direct product experience.

Managerial Implications

The results offer several important implications for businesses seeking to enhance customer trust and improve the effectiveness of social media advertising:

1. Ensure full disclosure of product information, including origin, materials, pricing, and warranty.
2. Maintain a professional brand image and collaborate with reputable KOLs/influencers to reinforce credibility.
3. Strengthen two-way interactions through comments, messages, and livestreams to foster customer engagement and a sense of care.
4. Develop mechanisms that encourage customers to leave positive feedback and reviews after purchase. Such “social proof” significantly influences trust and purchase decisions of prospective customers.
5. Establish clear return and warranty policies, and provide authentic product images and videos to create a greater sense of safety for consumers when engaging with advertisements.

Future Research Directions

Although this study yields valuable insights, several limitations remain. First, the focus on the furniture industry restricts the generalizability of the findings to other sectors. Second, the convenience sampling method and limited geographic coverage may not fully represent the diversity of the market. Third, the research model only examined four antecedent factors and one mediating variable, leaving out other potential influences such as satisfaction, brand attachment, and cultural factors. Additionally, online data collection may introduce bias, and SEM analysis remains static. Future research should extend to other industries and regions, incorporate additional variables, and apply more advanced analytical techniques to enhance generalizability and practical value.

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