

OPPONENT'S REVIEW

of the Doctoral Dissertation Thesis

Title of the Thesis: Examining the Effect of Short Product Placement Videos on Brand Image: A Three-Way Interaction Model

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Year: 2026

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1. Relevance and Timeliness of the Topic

The dissertation addresses a highly relevant and timely topic within the field of digital marketing. With the exponential growth of short-form video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, the phenomenon of product placement embedded in this type of content has become a significant area of both academic inquiry and practical marketing strategy. The author identifies a genuine gap in the existing literature, noting that while product placement has been extensively studied in traditional media contexts (film, television), its manifestation within short-form video ecosystems remains underexplored. The focus on Vietnamese social media users further contributes to addressing a geographical gap, as the majority of existing research has been conducted in Western or East Asian (Chinese, Korean) contexts. The integration of the Information Adoption Model (IAM) with Social Influence Theory (SIT) to examine this phenomenon represents a theoretically grounded approach to a rapidly evolving area of consumer behaviour research.

2. Fulfilment of Research Objectives

The thesis clearly formulates five research questions and their corresponding research objectives. Research Objective 1 aimed to examine the effect of short video product placement on brand image via the IAM, which was addressed through hypotheses H1–H7 and confirmed through PLS-SEM analysis. Research Objective 2, concerning the mediating role of advertising adoption (H8), was also supported. Research Objectives 3 and 4, investigating the moderating effects of social media influence (H9) and brand familiarity (H10), were successfully tested. Finally, Research Objective 5, examining the three-way interaction (H11), was likewise supported. All eleven hypotheses were confirmed, providing a comprehensive answer to the

stated research questions. The stated objectives of the thesis can therefore be considered fulfilled.

3. Methodology, Procedure, and Results

The research employs a mixed-methods sequential design consisting of a qualitative exploratory phase followed by a quantitative confirmatory phase. In the qualitative phase, the author conducted 23 semi-structured in-depth interviews with Vietnamese content creators and applied the Gioia Methodology with NVivo 14 software, yielding 72 first-order concepts, 11 second-order themes, and 5 aggregate dimensions. This phase served to confirm constructs and refine measurement items, which is a commendable approach to ensuring contextual validity.

In the quantitative phase, a two-wave time-lagged survey was administered to Vietnamese social media users, collecting 1,217 valid responses. The use of a time-lagged design is a notable methodological strength, as it helps mitigate common method bias, a frequent concern in cross-sectional survey research. The data were analysed using SmartPLS-4, with bootstrapping employed for hypothesis testing. The measurement model demonstrated satisfactory convergent validity (AVE: 0.719–0.844), internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha: 0.759–0.909; composite reliability: 0.891–0.936), and discriminant validity. VIF values (1.599–2.866) indicated no multicollinearity concerns.

All eleven hypotheses were supported. The results confirm that product relevance, emotional appeal, product-influencer fit, trustworthiness, and influencer popularity positively influence perceived usefulness (H1–H5). Perceived usefulness, in turn, drives advertising adoption (H6), which enhances brand image (H7). The mediating role of advertising adoption between perceived usefulness and brand image was confirmed (H8). Social media influence was shown to moderate the perceived usefulness–advertising adoption link (H9), and brand familiarity moderated the advertising adoption–brand image relationship (H10). The three-way interaction (H11) revealed that the combined presence of high social media influence and high brand familiarity amplifies the positive effect of advertising adoption on brand image.

The author's specific contribution lies in extending the IAM framework to short-form video advertising contexts, demonstrating the mediating mechanism of advertising adoption, and introducing a novel three-way interaction model that integrates social media influence and brand familiarity as joint moderators.

4. Significance for Practice and the Development of the Scientific Field

From a theoretical standpoint, the thesis makes a meaningful contribution to the marketing and advertising literature. The reconceptualisation of IAM constructs (argument quality and source credibility) into five specific antecedents relevant to short-form video advertising is well-conceived and adds explanatory specificity. The introduction of brand familiarity as a moderator within the IAM–SIT integration and the demonstration of a three-way interaction

effect represent novel contributions that advance the understanding of boundary conditions under which product placement influences brand image.

From a practical perspective, the findings offer actionable insights for digital marketers and brand managers. The research provides a clear framework for designing effective product placements on short-form video platforms: ensuring product relevance, leveraging emotional appeal, selecting influencers with a strong fit and credibility, and cultivating social proof. The three-way interaction finding is particularly relevant for marketing strategy, suggesting that campaigns should simultaneously nurture both brand familiarity and social media engagement to maximise brand image enhancement.

5. Formal Quality and Language Level

The thesis is well-structured and logically organized across 245 pages, with clearly delineated chapters for introduction, literature review, methodology, results, contributions, conclusion, and limitations. The figures and tables are generally clear and appropriately referenced. The list of references is extensive and includes recent publications, which demonstrates the author's engagement with current scholarly discourse.

The language level of the thesis is generally acceptable for an academic work written in English. However, there are occasional grammatical inconsistencies, sentence constructions, and minor stylistic issues that could benefit from more thorough proofreading. These issues do not impair understanding of the content, but should be noted.

6. Publication Activity of the Candidate

The author's publication record is evaluated in relation to the requirements of the doctoral programme at Tomas Bata University in Zlín. Based on the information provided in the thesis, the candidate has demonstrated the ability to produce research outputs aligned with the dissertation topic.

Compared to the publications presented in journals, the candidate also demonstrated higher publication activity in conference proceedings.

The candidate is encouraged to publish the core findings, particularly the three-way interaction model, in a high-quality indexed journal.

7. Remarks and Suggestions for Improvement

While the thesis is generally well-executed, several areas warrant discussion:

Sample scope and generalisability: The exclusive focus on Vietnamese social media users limits the generalisability of the findings. Cultural values, media consumption habits, and

attitudes toward influencer marketing vary considerably across cultures. The author acknowledges this limitation, but it remains a significant constraint.

Self-reported data: Despite the two-wave design, the study relies entirely on self-reported measures, which are susceptible to social desirability bias and inaccurate recall. Incorporating objective behavioural data (e.g., engagement metrics, click-through rates) would have strengthened the study's validity.

Lack of product category differentiation: The thesis does not differentiate between product categories (e.g., luxury goods vs. everyday items) or influencer types (micro vs. macro). These variables are known to influence advertising effectiveness, and their omission may obscure important moderating effects.

Measurement scale: Some constructs are measured with only two items (e.g., Ad Adoption, Brand Familiarity), which may limit the construct's content validity and reliability, even though statistical thresholds were met.

Use of 5-point Likert scale: In PLS-SEM contexts with a large sample, a 7-point Likert scale may provide greater variance and more nuanced response differentiation.

8. Questions for the Candidate

Question 1: You found that all five antecedents positively influence perceived usefulness. Could you elaborate on which of these factors has the strongest effect and discuss whether there is a hierarchy among them in practical terms? How would you advise a brand manager with a limited budget to prioritise these factors?

Question 2: Your study focuses on the Vietnamese context, where platforms such as TikTok dominate. To what extent do you believe the proposed model is transferable to Western or other cultural contexts where consumer scepticism toward influencer marketing may be higher?

Question 3: You measured brand familiarity using only two items. How do you justify this operationalisation, and do you believe a broader multi-item scale would have captured additional dimensions of familiarity (e.g., experiential familiarity vs. mere exposure-based familiarity)?

Question 4: The three-way interaction (H11) is the most novel finding of this thesis. Could you discuss the practical implications of this finding in more detail? Specifically, how should emerging or unfamiliar brands approach product placement in short-form videos if both brand familiarity and social media influence are initially low?

Question 5: Your study treats advertising adoption as a mediator between perceived usefulness and brand image. Did you consider alternative mediation pathways, for example, the mediating roles of perceived credibility or consumer engagement? What was the rationale for selecting advertising adoption as the sole mediating variable?

Question 6: The qualitative phase identified platform algorithms as a relevant factor (the fifth aggregate dimension: Platform-Mediated Consumer Experience). However, this dimension does not appear to be incorporated into the quantitative model. Could you explain why this was excluded and whether you see potential for integrating algorithmic platform effects into the conceptual framework in future research?

9. Overall Assessment and Recommendation

The dissertation thesis by Kim Anh Dao represents a substantive contribution to the scholarly understanding of product placement in the context of short-form video marketing. The work demonstrates the candidate's ability to conduct independent scientific research, synthesise relevant theoretical frameworks, apply appropriate research methods, and interpret empirical findings in a meaningful way. The mixed-methods design, the large sample size, the time-lagged data collection approach, and the novel three-way interaction model are particular strengths of this work.

Based on the above assessment, I recommend the dissertation thesis for defence.

Date: April 15, 2026



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Opponent