

# Factors Affecting the Avoidance of Online Advertising on Facebook of Gen Z in Hanoi

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## Abstract

Online media has become a primary platform for brands to reach consumers, but the proliferation of advertisements has led to a surge in ad avoidance behaviors, especially among Generation Z. This study examines the factors influencing Generation Z's ad avoidance behavior on Facebook. Quantitative data from 180 Hanoi-based Gen Z respondents were collected and analyzed using SPSS, while qualitative preliminary research provided additional insights. The findings indicate that perceived goal impediment (PGI), privacy concerns (PC), negative experiences (NE), ad skepticism (AS), and ad overload (AO) significantly contribute to ad avoidance. These results offer valuable implications for online advertisers to improve the effectiveness of their campaigns and reduce ad avoidance among Gen Z consumers.

**Keywords:** Avoidance advertising, Social networks, Gen Z, Hanoi.

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, both small and large businesses utilize advertising to raise awareness among consumers and promote their brands. Online advertising has become particularly crucial for businesses due to its significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions. In today's digital age, it is regarded as a vital tool for achieving business objectives. Research indicates that people often turn to the internet to gather information about products and prices before making purchasing decisions. Social media platforms such as Facebook have become an integral part of daily life. For businesses, these platforms offer unprecedented opportunities to engage with their target audiences. However, while online advertising provides a convenient way to deliver messages, it can also be time-consuming and disruptive to user experiences. This has resulted in increasing ad avoidance behaviors, which can hinder businesses from achieving their marketing goals. Ad avoidance manifests in various ways, such as users limiting ad visibility or employing ad-blocking software (Duff & Faber, 2011). Moreover, the ease of online advertising has led to an oversaturation of ads, causing consumers to become desensitized or ignore them altogether (Duff & Faber, 2011). This not only compromises the effectiveness of advertising campaigns but also incurs significant costs for businesses.

Research on ad avoidance has been widely conducted in the world. In Vietnam, the authors have found relatively few related studies. Tran and Nguyen's study examines users' attitudes towards advertising on Facebook (Tran & Nguyen, 2020). Another study indicates that advertising activities negatively impact (Luu & Hoang, 2020). Another study by Ho, and Phan aimed at examining the impact of ad avoidance behavior on brand awareness among young people (Ho & Phan, 2018). Ho and Phan's study focused on young people to assess their reactions to advertising on Facebook (Ho & Phan, 2019). Dinh et al. studied both avoidance and continued viewing behaviors of YouTube users based on different characteristics of the advertisements (Dinh, et al., 2022).

Through the references, the author found that there are still few studies focusing on the Facebook social networking platform and that have not considered users' skepticism about advertising. In addition to privacy concerns, skepticism about advertising can also affect avoidance behavior because users may not know if the advertisement is truthful and whether they might be violated, lose information, or be scammed when clicking on the advertisement. Therefore, the author conducted research on the topic: "Factors affecting online advertising avoidance behavior on Facebook of Gen Z in Hanoi" in which the research was expanded with the Advertising Skepticism scale. The research was conducted in Hanoi, focusing on the Gen Z Gen Z individuals who live and work there. After conducting both qualitative and quantitative research,

the author proposed several managerial implications to help businesses and advertisers improve the effectiveness of advertising activities on Facebook to minimize advertising avoidance behavior.

This study aims to understand the factors influencing Generation Z's ad avoidance behavior on Facebook in Hanoi. By examining the motivations behind this behavior, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on consumer behavior and provides valuable insights for marketers seeking to engage this increasingly important demographic.

The paper has 5 parts including:

Part 1: Introduction

Part 2: Materials and methods

Part 3: Results

Part 4: Discussion

Part 5: Conclusion

## **2. Materials and methods**

### **2.1. Conceptual Background**

#### **2.1.1. Facebook social network**

Founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook quickly grew into a popular social networking platform. Initially, user profiles were simple, displaying basic information such as hobbies, relationship status, and interests on a single page. The introduction of the News Feed in 2006 revolutionized the way users interacted with the platform, enabling them to share updates, photos, and videos with friends and family. Over the years, Facebook has evolved into a powerful advertising tool, allowing businesses and organizations to reach vast audiences through targeted ads and engaging content on their fan pages.

#### **2.1.2. Online Advertising**

Harker defines online advertising as “any form of commercial content available on the Internet, delivered through any channel, in any format, designed to inform customers about a product or service at any level of depth” (Harker, 2008). Online advertising can be found in a number of forms, including banner ads, pop-up ads, interstitial banners, hyperlinks, targeted websites, video ads, sponsorships, affiliate marketing, and more. (Cho & Cheon, 2004). According to Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong, online advertising is the effort to market products, services and build relationships with customers through the Internet, members within the scope of their management (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). Online advertising on the Facebook social network is a form in which we use social media systems to market, advertise, sell online, promote products, brands, and answer questions. Since online advertising is believed to encourage more interaction, dissemination of information, and is considered a goal- and task-oriented medium (Chen & William, 1999); (Li, Edwards, & Lee, 2002), it has allowed marketers to personalize advertising messages (Li & Huang, 2016).

#### **2.1.3. Advertising Avoidance**

Abernethy defines advertising avoidance as the various strategies media that users employ to reduce exposure to advertising (Abernethy, 1991). Avoidance is a negative response to advertising that often arises from interruptions, distractions, or other communication issues (Speck & Elliott, 1997). It involves ignoring irrelevant or annoying ads rather than avoiding all advertising. With the rise of online advertising, individuals can easily ignore banner ads, pop-up ads, or click away from them (Cho & Cheon, 2004); (Edwards, Li, & Lee, 2002). In the age of social media advertising (SMA), native ads blend seamlessly into the feed, making it easier for users to overlook them. Li and Huang identified two aspects of ad avoidance: avoidance behavior and the use of avoidance tools. Advances in technology, such as remote controls and ad-blocking software, have made it easier for consumers to control their exposure to advertising (Li & Huang, 2016).

Previous researchers also conceptualized the influencing factors as follows:

*Perceived Goal Impediment*: Ferreira et al., referred goal impediment to “the perception that one’s goal while online (e.g. web browsing, searching for content) cannot be met as a result of online ads, hence leading to ad avoidance” (Ferreira, Moraes, Michaelidou, & Mcgrath, 2017).

*Privacy concerns:* Privacy is the freedom from unwanted observation or scrutiny (Debatin, Lovejoy, Horn, & Hughes, 2009). Westin defines privacy as the degree to which individuals are concerned about the potential disclosure of personal information (Westin, 1968).

*Negative experience:* Negative experiences include unattractiveness, lack of usefulness, lack of specificity, and lack of incentives (Li & Huang, 2016).

*Advertising skepticism:* Advertising skepticism is defined as the tendency to doubt/disbelieve advertising claims (Obermiller & E. R., Development of a scale to measure consumer skepticism toward advertising, 1998); (Khuhro, Khan, Humayon, & Khuhro, 2017).

*Advertising overload:* According to Shao, advertising overload is when consumers are exposed to too much advertising information in a short period of time, making it impossible for them to process all of the messages effectively (Shao, 2005).

## **2.2. Research hypothesis**

### ***2.2.1. The Relationship Between Perceived Goal Impediment and Gen Z's Avoidance Behavior***

When a consumer uses the Internet with particular browsing goals, online ads divert the consumer's attention, causing irritation (Chatterjee, 2008). Research by Speck and Elliott suggests that ads interrupting content can increase avoidance (Speck & Elliott, 1997). Li et al. found a correlation between ad avoidance and interruptions caused by ads (Li, Edwards, & Lee, 2002). Cho and Cheon also proposed that ads making users perceive as goal impediments can lead to ad avoidance (Cho & Cheon, 2004). Furthermore, Baek and Morimoto identified intrusive ads as a cause of avoidance (Baek & Morimoto, 2012). Building on these findings, Li and Huang, Ho and Phan, and Singaraju et al. argued that when ads impede perceived goals, users are more likely to adopt avoidance behaviors (Li & Huang, 2016); (Ho & Phan, 2019); (Singaraju, Rose, Arango-Soler, D'Souza, & Khaksar, 2022). Based on this evidence, the author proposes the following research hypothesis:

H1: Perceived goal impediment has a positive impact on advertising avoidance behavior.

### ***2.2.2. The relationship between privacy concerns and Gen Z's avoidance behavior***

The risk of privacy invasion on the Internet has led to skepticism and distrust of online advertising (Kelly, Kelly, & Kerr, 2010). For example, consumers may hesitate to click on online ads or provide personal information for online purchases due to concerns about data security (Moore & Rodgers, 2005).

Research indicates that privacy concerns have a significant negative impact on advertising outcomes. Privacy issues can lead to negative attitudes toward advertising (Shin & Lin, 2016), decreased purchase intentions (Yang & Ha, 2021), increased advertising skepticism, and heightened ad avoidance (Bang, Kim, & Choi, 2018); (Jung, 2017). Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Privacy concern has a positive impact on advertising avoidance behavior.

### ***2.2.3. The relationship between negative experience and Gen Z's avoidance behavior***

Previous experiences can influence consumers' current attitudes and decisions (Hong & Sternthal, 2010); (Rosengren & Dahlén, 2014). Negative past experiences with online advertising, such as ineffective or irrelevant ads, can lead to avoidance behaviors (Cho & Cheon, 2004); (Obermiller, Spangenberg, & MacLachlan, Ad skepticism: The consequences of disbelief, 2005). Consumers may avoid providers that consistently deliver poor experiences (Li & Huang, 2016). They often rely on personal experiences to form judgments and opinions (Hoch & Deighton, 1989). Russell and Zanna found that past experiences have a significant influence on consumer attitudes and behaviors (Zanna, Olson, & Fazio, 1980). Cho and Cheon identified negative experiences as a factor influencing Internet advertising avoidance (Cho & Cheon, 2004). Negative experiences, characterized by frustration, lack of benefits, and low motivation, can lead to avoidance behaviors. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Negative experience has a positive impact on advertising avoidance behavior.

### ***2.2.4. The relationship between advertising skepticism and Gen Z's avoidance behavior***

There is a direct correlation between advertising skepticism and the frequency with which people avoid seeing ads. It also leads people to seek information from multiple sources related to the same product (Obermiller, Spangenberg, & MacLachlan, Ad skepticism: The consequences of disbelief, 2005). Previous

research examining the link between advertising skepticism and avoidance has found a positive correlation between the two concepts (Khuhro, Khan, Humayon, & Khuhro, 2017); (Munir, Aqdas, & Bhatti, 2017); (Raziq, Ahmed, Ahmad, Yusaf, Sajjad, & Waheed, 2018). Similar results were observed by Baek and Morimoto, who used advertising skepticism as a mediating variable and found a positive correlation between advertising skepticism and advertising avoidance (Baek & Morimoto, 2012). Cho and Cheon demonstrated that skepticism influences advertising avoidance behavior (Cho & Cheon, 2004). Kelly et al. further demonstrated that the higher the skepticism toward advertising, the stronger the advertising avoidance behavior (Kelly, Kelly, & Kerr, 2010). Therefore, the hypothesis proposed is as follows:

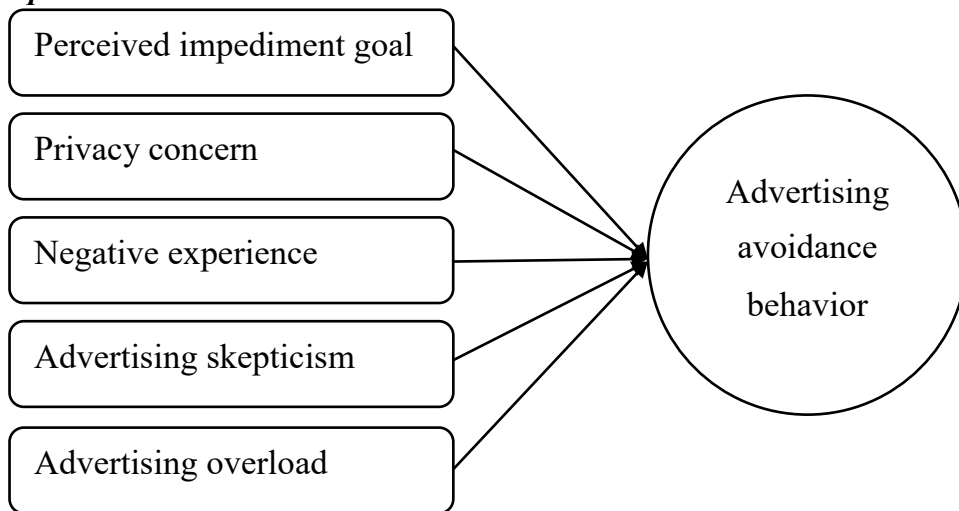
H4: Advertising skepticism has a positive impact on advertising avoidance behavior.

**2.2.5. The relationship between advertising overload and Gen Z's avoidance behavior**

The excess of advertising reduces the ability to pay attention and the effectiveness of the message conveyed. Research by Na and Kim shows that when there are too many advertisements, consumers may become inattentive or indifferent, leading to a decrease in their ability to respond positively to advertising strategies (Na & Kim, 2014). Cho and Cheon show that advertising overload has a significant impact on the refusal to watch advertising (Cho & Cheon, 2004). Overload, as identified by Cho and Cheon, includes the number of advertisements received, the variety of advertising information, too many businesses and brands advertising (Cho & Cheon, 2004). This scale raises related issues such as the number of advertisements is too much, users are easily disturbed by information, users becoming confused about their shopping behavior. As these numbers increase, confusion also increases in receiving or making a purchase decision, so the most optimal choice for users is to avoid advertising. Ho and Phan pointed out that advertising overload is the pressure that governs viewers' responses (Ho & Phan, 2019). Also according to Cho and Cheon, advertising overload and noise lead to negative attitudes and avoidance of advertising (Cho & Cheon, 2004). Based on the above-discussed literature, the hypothesis established is as follows:

H5: Advertising overload has a positive impact on advertising avoidance behavior.

**Proposed research model**



**Figure 1: Proposed research model**

**2.3. Research Methodology**

**2.3.1. Measures**

A five-point Likert-scale questionnaire ranging from ‘Strongly Agree’ (i.e., 5) to ‘Strongly Disagree’ (i.e., 1) was developed to analyze the factors influencing advertising avoidance behavior on Facebook among Generation Z, which is the dependent variable in this case. Through a comprehensive review of relevant literature and consultations with experts, the initial research model was built upon the model of Cho and Cheon, incorporating domestic and international studies (Cho & Cheon, 2004). This study proposes several measures to quantify five influencing factors. Ad avoidance behavior was measured using four scales proposed by Cho and Cheon (Cho & Cheon, 2004); Kelly, Kerr, and Drennan (Kelly, Kelly, & Kerr, 2010); and Ho and Phan (Ho & Phan, 2019). The influencing factors on ad avoidance behavior include: (1)

Perceived Goal Impediment, measured by four scales proposed by Cho and Cheon (Cho & Cheon, 2004); Li and Huang (Li & Huang, 2016); Ho and Phan (Ho & Phan, 2019); and Singaraju et al. (Singaraju, Rose, Arango-Soler, D’Souza, & Khaksar, 2022); (2) Privacy Concern, measured by three scales proposed by (Hoy & Milne, 2010); (3) Negative Experience, measured by five scales proposed by Cho and Cheon (Cho & Cheon, 2004); Li and Huang (Li & Huang, 2016); and Ho and Phan (Ho & Phan, 2019); (4) Ad Skepticism, measured by nine scales proposed by Dobrinic et al. (Dobrinic & Gregurec, 2021); and (5) Ad Overload, measured by three scales proposed by (Cho & Cheon, 2004).

### 2.3.2. Methods and Sample

The sample size depends on the analysis method (Gorsuch & Venable, 1983). According to the rule of thumb by Nguyen Dinh Tho, the number of observations is (at least) 5 times the number of observed variables (Tho, 2014). Thus, with 28 observed variables, the study requires a minimum sample size of 140.

The survey subjects of this study are Generation Z individuals living and working in Hanoi. The authors collected data using a questionnaire designed on Google Forms and used a convenience sampling method. Between September 1, 2024, and October 1, 2024, the authors collected 200 responses. After removing 20 responses due to incomplete answers, the final sample size for analysis was 180 with 45.6% male and 54.4% female.

Using SPSS 24, the data were analyzed to test the proposed hypotheses. The research concept scales were first evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient and exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Regression analysis was then used to test the theoretical model.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Reliability Assessment

#### 3.1.1. Cronbach's Alpha

*Table 1: Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis*

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Perceived Goal Impediment	0.866	4
Privacy Concern	0.810	3
Negative Experience	0.945	5
Advertising Skepticism	0.954	9
Advertising Overload	0.823	3
Advertising Avoidance Behavior	0.865	4

*(Source: Output from SPSS data analysis)*

The analysis results indicate that all Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceed 0.6. Additionally, the Corrected Item-Total Correlation coefficients for all observed variables are greater than 0.3. These findings suggest that the research constructs derived from the observed variables are reliable and suitable for further factor analysis.

#### 3.1.2. Exploratory factor analysis on independent variables

**Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.884
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3799.533
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

*(Source: Output from SPSS data analysis)*

The results of factor analysis show that the KMO index is 0.884, which is greater than 0.5, indicating that the data used for factor analysis is appropriate. All observed variables had factor loadings greater than 0.6, supporting the initial research model. The observed variables and factors in the independent variable group remain intact, meeting the conditions for subsequent analysis. The total extracted variance is 76.683%, which is greater than 50%, meeting the requirements. This means that these five factors explain 76.683% of the variation in the data. The Eigenvalues of the factors are all greater than 1. The above results demonstrate the observed variables are correlated with each other in the whole and exploratory factor analysis is appropriate.

### 3.1.3. Model fit assessment

The model fit is evaluated using the adjusted R-squared.

**Table 3: Model Summary**

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.747	0.558	0.545	0.53232	1.676

*(Source: Output from SPSS data analysis)*

The adjusted R-squared of 0.545 suggests that the model explains 54.5% of the variance in ad avoidance behavior, accounting for the five independent factors. This indicates that the research model is a good fit and exhibits a strong correlation. Moreover, the adjusted R-squared being lower than the regular R-squared, provides a more reliable estimate of the model's fit. However, while the adjusted R-squared reflects the fit of the regression model to the sample data, its generalizability may be limited. Therefore, an F-test should be conducted to assess the overall fit of the regression model.

**Table 4: ANOVA**

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	62.160	5	12.432	43.873	0.000
	Residual	49.305	174	0.283		
	Total	111.465	179			

*(Source: Output from SPSS data analysis)*

By conducting an ANOVA, the author tested the null hypothesis that the regression model does not explain a significant portion of the variance in the dependent variable. The significant F-test result ( $p < 0.05$ ) led to the rejection of this null hypothesis, implying that the model is a good fit, and the independent variables collectively contribute to explaining the variation in the dependent variable.

### 3.2. Hypothesis test

In multiple linear regression analysis, the author employed t-tests at the 5% significance level (with Sig. < 0.05) and regression coefficients (B and Beta) to test the research hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5).

**Table 5: Hypothesis testing**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Decision</b>
H1: PGI -> AAB	0.332	0.000	Accept
H2: PC -> AAB	0.191	0.001	Accept
H3: NE -> AAB	0.151	0.024	Accept
H4: AS -> AAB	0.248	0.000	Accept
H5: AO -> AAB	0.127	0.030	Accept

*(Source: Output from SPSS data analysis)*

The standardized regression coefficients indicate that the independent variables have varying degrees of influence on the dependent variable. Furthermore, the standard deviation of the dependent variable changes differently as the standard deviation of the independent variables increases or decreases by one unit. The impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable, in descending order, is as follows: Perceived goal impediment, followed by Advertising skepticism, then Privacy concerns, then Negative experiences, and, finally, Advertising overload.

## **4. Discussion**

### **4.1. Discussion**

The study found that perceived goal impediment was the strongest factor influencing Gen Z's Facebook advertising avoidance behavior, consistent with the conclusions of Cho and Cheon and Baek and Morimoto (Cho & Cheon, 2004); (Baek & Morimoto, 2012). When users perceive that Facebook ads interfere with their ability to consume other valuable information they are viewing, avoidance behavior occurs. In fact, users feel hindered or interrupted by ads that appear unexpectedly on Facebook. Ad skepticism is the second factor influencing avoidance behavior, as reported by Kelly et al., Loureiro, and Luu and Hoang (Kelly, Kelly, & Kerr, 2010); (Loureiro, 2018); (Luu & Hoang, 2020). When ads repeatedly appear for the same product and have many excessive promises, users become skeptical of those ads. And of course, they will no longer pay attention to them when they no longer trust them. Privacy concerns are the third factor influencing ad avoidance behavior, aligning with the findings of Madhobi Hossain and Ho and Phan (Madhobi, 2018); (Ho & Phan, 2019). Previous studies have also shown that when consumers feel that their online behavior is being tracked and used to display ads, they feel uncomfortable and lose trust in the platform. This leads them to find ways to limit the sharing of personal information and avoid ads. In addition, negative experiences also have a significant impact. The more users encounter irrelevant and misleading ads, the stronger their avoidance response becomes. Ad overload has the lowest impact, consistent with the conclusions of Li et al., Cho and Cheon, Kelly et al., and Li and Huang (Li, Edwards, & Lee, 2002); (Cho & Cheon, 2004); (Kelly, Kelly, & Kerr, 2010); (Li & Huang, 2016). Some users believe that advertising is increasingly lacking effective control and this creates a feeling of overload because ads appear repeatedly, leading to fatigue and boredom, leading to increased ad avoidance behavior.

### **4.2. Limitations and future research**

The limitations of this study include a small, convenience-based sample size, primarily focused on a few areas in Hanoi, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the model explains only 54.5% of the variance in ad avoidance behavior, suggesting that other factors may be at play. Future research could address these limitations by expanding the geographic scope, increasing sample size, and incorporating additional variables such as environmental, cultural, and individual characteristics. For example, exploring the influence of age, gender, income, education, interests, and attitudes toward advertising could provide a more nuanced understanding of ad avoidance behavior.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study aims to propose a research model and scale for investigating the relationship between factors influencing Gen Z's online advertising avoidance behavior on Facebook in Hanoi. In doing so, the study assesses the impact of these factors on avoidance behavior and suggests managerial implications for organizations and marketers to enhance the effectiveness of online advertising on Facebook.

Despite its market significance, scholarly research on online advertising remains limited, particularly regarding the factors influencing ad avoidance, which is crucial for understanding the effectiveness of online advertising. Through this research, which analyzes empirical data on online advertising and avoidance behavior, we aim to better understand online advertising avoidance and contribute to the expansion of future research on online advertising.

This study has important practical implications. Ad avoidance behavior during consumers' online advertising consumption significantly diminishes advertising efficacy. Therefore, uncovering the factors that contribute to online ad avoidance can greatly facilitate the development of strategies to improve the effectiveness of online advertising from the standpoint of advertising companies and practitioners. The results emphasize the necessity for organizations to balance the delivery of appropriate amounts of online advertising and develop strategies for effective online advertising tactics tailored to their target audience.

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