

Building a Theoretical Model of Trust in Direct-to-Consumer Advertising

Jennifer G. Ball, Danae Manika, and Patricia A. Stout

Abstract Direct-to-consumer pharmaceutical advertising (DTCA) is believed to empower consumers, but national surveys indicate declining trust in DTCA. Given the unique characteristics of this category, it is unclear what the likely consequences are of reduced trust in these ads. Furthermore, previous research is inadequate to discern the basis of trust toward DTCA. To address this issue, a model of the antecedent and consequent factors connected to trust in DTCA was developed based on prior empirical findings and the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM). This paper presents survey findings testing the model. SEM results show trust is predicted by perceptions of mediated health information sources, advertising in general, pharmaceutical companies, and the perceived value and informativeness of prescription drug ads. Regarding outcomes, results were mixed for the relationship of trust with attention, attitudes, and behavioral intent. Overall, findings suggest trust plays a complex role in shaping consumer reactions to prescription drug ads. Implications and future research directions are discussed.

References: Available upon request

J.G. Ball (✉)

School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Minnesota,
Minneapolis, MN 55455, USA
e-mail: jgball@umn.edu

D. Manika

School of Business and Management, Queen Mary University of London, London, UK
e-mail: d.manika@qmul.ac.uk

P.A. Stout

Department of Advertising and Public Relations, The University of Texas at Austin,
Austin, TX 78712, USA
e-mail: pstout@mail.utexas.edu

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