

Investor Sentiment, Overconfidence, and Market Volatility: Insights from Global Stock Exchanges

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Abstract

The increasing turbulence in global stock markets has sparked growing attention toward the role of behavioral factors in shaping investor decisions. Traditional financial theories often assume rationality; however, evidence shows that psychological biases, such as investor sentiment and overconfidence, frequently disrupt market efficiency. This study investigates how investor sentiment and overconfidence bias influence market volatility across international stock exchanges, addressing gaps in prior research that often examine these factors in isolation. A quantitative research design was employed, combining a behavioral survey of active investors with secondary data from global stock indices from 2018 to 2023. The behavioral survey captured self-reported sentiment and overconfidence, while the secondary dataset provided market-level volatility indicators. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to test the hypothesized relationships, with robustness checks conducted via regression analysis. Instrument reliability and validity were confirmed, ensuring measurement consistency. The findings reveal that both investor sentiment and overconfidence bias significantly drive fluctuations in market volatility, with overconfidence exerting a more substantial amplifying effect. Interactions between sentiment and overconfidence further intensify volatility during periods of global uncertainty, illustrating the complex and nonlinear nature of behavioral influences. These results align with behavioral finance theory, which posits that markets are not purely efficient but are shaped by human cognition and emotion. The study provides empirical insights from a cross-market perspective, bridging behavioral finance with international management research, and offers practical guidance for policymakers, regulators, and financial advisors in managing behavioral risks to enhance global market stability.

Keywords: Behavioral Finance, Investor Sentiment, Overconfidence Bias, Market Volatility, Global Stock Markets.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of global financial markets have long been shaped by both rational forces and behavioral tendencies that influence investor decision-making. Traditional finance theory assumes that investors act rationally, seeking to maximize utility based on available information. However, empirical evidence increasingly highlights the role of psychological biases and sentiments in driving market fluctuations, especially during periods of uncertainty (Almansour et al., 2023; López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). The growing field of behavioral finance has emphasized that cognitive distortions, such as overconfidence and sentiment-driven decisions, can exacerbate market volatility, creating deviations from fundamental values (Atif Sattar et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2021). This perspective has become increasingly relevant in the aftermath of global shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where investor sentiment significantly amplified volatility across international stock exchanges (Bora & Basistha, 2021; Chowdhury et al., 2022).

Global financial markets have experienced unprecedented turbulence in recent years, reflecting the combined effects of macroeconomic uncertainty, pandemics, and geopolitical instability. Studies demonstrate that the COVID-19 outbreak caused catastrophic disruptions in market confidence, reinforcing the relevance of behavioral dimensions in shaping financial outcomes (Gao et al., 2022; Khatatbeh et al., 2020). Market volatility during this period was not only a function of fundamental shocks but also of collective investor psychology and overconfidence bias, which often led to excessive trading and mispricing (Engelhardt et al., 2021; Phan et al., 2020). While rational asset pricing models struggle to fully account for these dynamics, behavioral finance offers a more nuanced lens through which to understand the intersection of sentiment, biases, and global market volatility (Mcgurk et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2021).

Within this context, investor sentiment has emerged as a crucial explanatory factor for abnormal market movements. Sentiment reflects the collective mood or attitude of investors toward market conditions, often independent of fundamentals, and it has been shown to significantly influence stock returns across markets (Hu et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Similarly, overconfidence bias, characterized by investors' tendency to overestimate their knowledge and underestimate risks, is widely recognized as a driver of speculative bubbles and excessive volatility (Feiler & Tong, 2022; Karki et al., 2024). Evidence suggests that during periods of high uncertainty, such as crises or rapid technological transitions, these behavioral forces become magnified, leading to misaligned valuations and increased systemic risk (Heidhues et al., 2025; Singh et al., 2024).

Despite a growing body of literature, important research gaps remain. Much of the prior research has focused either on investor sentiment (López-Cabarcos et al., 2020; P H & Rishad, 2020) or on overconfidence bias (Commer et al., 2021; Phan et al., 2020) in isolation, often within a single-country or regional context. There is still limited empirical work that simultaneously examines investor sentiment and overconfidence bias as joint behavioral determinants of global stock market volatility (Dicks et al., 2020; Raddant & Kenett, 2020). Moreover, while recent studies highlight the impact of COVID-19 on volatility, they seldom integrate behavioral constructs to explain why certain markets reacted more severely than others (Kusumahadi & Permana, 2021; Rashid et al., 2023). This leaves a gap in understanding how behavioral dimensions interact with external shocks to amplify systemic vulnerabilities across international exchanges.

Addressing this gap, the present study integrates behavioral survey data with secondary market information to investigate the combined influence of investor sentiment and overconfidence on market volatility across global stock exchanges. By adopting a quantitative design that blends behavioral finance with empirical analysis of market data, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive model of volatility that accounts for both psychological and structural factors (Al-

mansour, 2020; Risman et al., 2023). This approach contributes to the literature by offering cross-market evidence and expanding the behavioral finance discourse beyond localized settings, thereby enhancing its global relevance. The research pursues several guiding questions. First, to what extent does investor sentiment influence volatility in global stock exchanges? Second, how does overconfidence bias interact with investor sentiment to amplify or mitigate market volatility? Third, are these behavioral effects consistent across developed and emerging markets, or do they vary significantly based on institutional and cultural contexts?

Based on these questions, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

1. H1: Investor sentiment has a positive effect on stock market volatility.
2. H2: Investor overconfidence significantly amplifies the effect of investor sentiment on stock market volatility.
3. H3: The joint effect of investor sentiment and overconfidence on market volatility differs across global financial markets.

This investigation is motivated by the urgent need to integrate behavioral perspectives into the analysis of global financial stability. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, the study not only offers empirical insights into how biases drive volatility but also provides practical implications for policymakers, investors, and regulators seeking to manage systemic risks in increasingly interconnected markets (Liang et al., 2020; Salisu & Adediran, 2020). The expected theoretical contribution of this study lies in strengthening the integration of behavioral finance constructs within a cross-country volatility framework. In contrast, its managerial contribution emphasizes the importance of incorporating behavioral diagnostics into market surveillance, policy formulation, and investment decision-making. The findings are expected to enrich the behavioral finance literature, inform investment strategies, and contribute to more resilient financial governance frameworks worldwide.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Foundation: Behavioral Finance Perspective

Behavioral finance challenges the traditional assumption of rational decision-making in financial markets, emphasizing instead the influence of psychological factors and cognitive biases. Classical finance assumes that investors process information objectively and act to maximize expected returns. However, empirical evidence consistently shows that decisions are often shaped by sentiment, heuristics, and bounded rationality, leading to persistent anomalies in asset prices (Al-mansour, 2020; López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). Investors are particularly susceptible to

emotions and biases during periods of uncertainty, making behavioral finance a suitable framework for analyzing volatility in global stock exchanges.

Research in behavioral finance has increasingly shown that both individual and institutional investors are vulnerable to psychological biases that distort judgment. For example, risk perception and subjective beliefs often mediate the link between market signals and actual investment choices (Almansour et al., 2023; Risman et al., 2023). These deviations from rationality can accumulate, producing systemic effects beyond individual portfolios. Consequently, understanding how behavioral drivers such as sentiment and overconfidence bias influence volatility is essential for both theory and practice.

B. Investor Sentiment and Market Behavior

Investor sentiment refers to the collective mood, optimism, or pessimism that investors hold toward market conditions, often independent of fundamental information. Scholars argue that sentiment can exert a significant influence on asset pricing, returns, and volatility, especially when objective signals are ambiguous (Hu et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). In this sense, sentiment functions as both a driver of speculative activity and as a feedback mechanism that magnifies volatility through herding behavior. Empirical studies have shown that markets with heightened investor sentiment tend to display abnormal returns and volatility patterns inconsistent with rational asset pricing models (López-Cabarcos et al., 2020; Mcgurk et al., 2019).

Global events provide strong evidence of the influence of sentiment on financial outcomes. The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, intensified fear and uncertainty among investors, contributing to unprecedented swings in global stock markets (Bora & Basistha, 2021; Chowdhury et al., 2022). Even in the absence of fundamental shocks, the psychological climate shaped by catastrophic news amplified volatility, highlighting sentiment as an independent driver of market instability (Gao et al., 2022; Khatatbeh et al., 2020).

C. Overconfidence Bias in Investment Decisions

Overconfidence bias is another critical behavioral factor that significantly affects investment decisions. It describes investors' tendency to overestimate their knowledge, underestimate risks, and place excessive confidence in their judgments. This bias often leads to overtrading, mispricing, and volatility in financial markets (Atif Sattar et al., 2020; Phan et al., 2020). The literature suggests that overconfident investors are more likely to misinterpret signals, resist corrective information, and sustain market inefficiencies over time (Commer et al., 2021; Karki et al., 2024).

Recent studies also highlight the broader consequences of overconfidence across contexts. For instance, overconfidence has been shown to influence forecasting in managerial decision-making (Feiler & Tong, 2022; Schumacher et al., 2020) and to contribute to systemic risk through its role in speculative trading and herd behavior (Heidhues et al., 2025; Singh et al., 2024). In stock markets, overconfident behavior amplifies the effect of investor sentiment on volatility, as optimistic investors overreact to positive signals while underestimating potential risks (Sihombing & Prameswary, 2023).

D. Market Volatility and External Shocks

Volatility is a fundamental indicator of market stability and reflects the degree of uncertainty and fluctuations in asset prices. While classical finance attributes volatility to shifts in fundamentals such as earnings or macroeconomic indicators, behavioral finance suggests that psychological forces play an equally significant role. Studies indicate that volatility often increases in response to crises, when sentiment and confidence biases become particularly salient (Ngwakwe, 2020; Onali, 2020). These periods reveal the limits of rational asset pricing models and highlight the importance of integrating behavioral factors into volatility analysis.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a natural experiment to observe these dynamics. Researchers documented that global stock markets became significantly more volatile, not only because of actual economic disruptions but also due to investor fears and sentiment contagion (Engelhardt et al., 2021; Kusumahadi & Permana, 2021). Similarly, external shocks such as crude oil price uncertainty have been shown to spill over into financial markets, reinforcing the interconnectedness of behavioral and structural drivers of volatility (Liang et al., 2020; Salisu & Adediran, 2020). These findings confirm that market volatility cannot be fully understood without considering behavioral tendencies.

E. Synthesis of Prior Studies and Research Gap

Taken together, prior studies provide strong evidence that investor sentiment and overconfidence bias influence financial decision-making and market volatility. However, most studies still examine these constructs separately rather than in combination. Sentiment research has focused primarily on developed markets (Hu et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021), while overconfidence studies focus on emerging markets (Commer et al., 2021; Phan et al., 2020). Few studies have systematically examined their joint effect on global stock exchanges (Dicks et al., 2020; Raddant & Kenett, 2020).

Furthermore, existing studies of the COVID-19 crisis tend to emphasize macroeconomic outcomes and volatility metrics without fully integrating behavioral constructs into their models

(Chowdhury et al., 2022; Rashid et al., 2023). This leaves open questions about why some markets were more severely affected and how psychological biases contributed to market instability. Accordingly, this study addresses this gap by modeling the simultaneous and interactive effects of investor sentiment and overconfidence on global market volatility.

F. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

Based on the theoretical foundation and synthesis of prior studies, this research conceptualizes market volatility as a function of both investor sentiment and overconfidence bias. Investor sentiment is expected to directly increase volatility by shaping collective behavior and deviations from fundamentals. Overconfidence bias is proposed as a factor that amplifies this relationship through excessive trading and misinterpretation of market signals. Together, these constructs form a behavioral model of volatility that integrates psychological and structural influences.

The conceptual framework of this study is presented in Figure 1, which clearly illustrates the direct effects of investor sentiment and overconfidence bias on market volatility, as well as their joint interaction effect. From this framework, the following hypotheses are developed:

1. H1: Investor sentiment has a positive and significant effect on global stock market volatility.
2. H2: Investor overconfidence amplifies the relationship between investor sentiment and stock market volatility.
3. H3: The joint influence of investor sentiment and overconfidence on volatility varies across global financial markets, reflecting differences in institutional and cultural contexts.

This framework not only advances the behavioral finance literature but also provides practical insights for investors, regulators, and policymakers seeking to mitigate systemic risks amid heightened global interconnectedness.

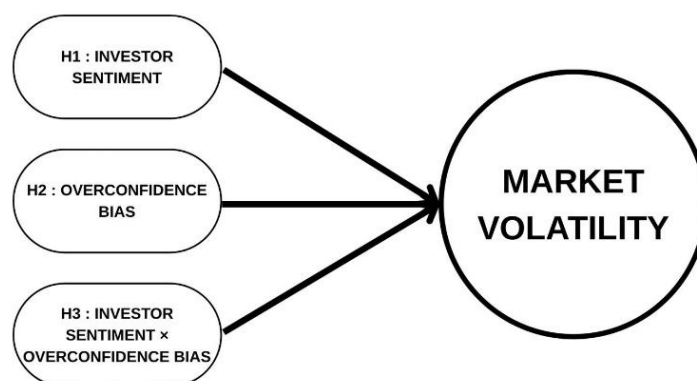


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Relationship between Investor Sentiment, Overconfidence Bias, and Market Volatility

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative research design that integrates behavioral survey data with secondary market information from global stock exchanges. The quantitative approach was selected to allow for rigorous statistical testing of relationships among investor sentiment, overconfidence, and market volatility, while providing insights that are generalizable across markets (Almansour et al., 2023). By combining perceptual survey data with archival stock market indicators, the methodology ensures both behavioral and empirical depth. Prior research has confirmed the effectiveness of this design in exploring behavioral finance biases and their interaction with financial market outcomes (Atif Sattar et al., 2020; López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). The overall stages of the research are visually summarized in the research flowchart presented in Figure 2.

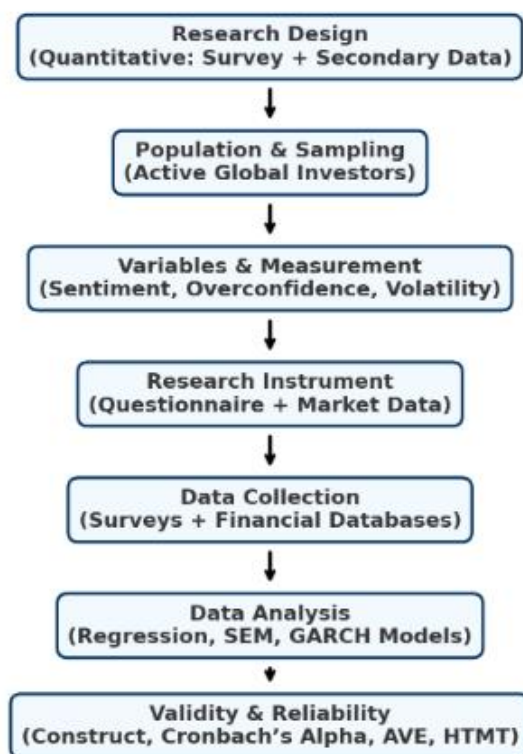


Figure 2. Research Flowchart

(Flow of research from design, population & sampling, variables, instruments, data collection, analysis, to validity & reliability testing)

The study population comprises active investors and market participants across leading global stock exchanges in North America, Europe, and Asia. Given this diverse scope, purposive sampling was employed to select participants who actively engage in investment decision-making

and have exposure to international equity markets. A sample size of 350 respondents was targeted to ensure adequate representation of institutional and retail investors. This number aligns with prior behavioral finance studies that emphasize capturing a heterogeneous investor base to assess cognitive biases across contexts (Sihombing & Prameswary, 2023; Singh et al., 2024). Complementing the survey data, secondary data on stock volatility were retrieved from market indices to enable multi-source triangulation and enhance analytical robustness (Bora & Basistha, 2021; Chowdhury et al., 2022).

The study's variables are investor sentiment, overconfidence bias, and market volatility. Investor sentiment was measured through validated proxies such as trading volume, put-call ratios, and investor survey indices, which are well-established in literature (Hu et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Overconfidence bias was assessed through psychometric items focusing on self-attribution tendencies and overestimation of investment accuracy, adapted from earlier frameworks (Commer et al., 2021; Heidhues et al., 2025). Market volatility was operationalized using statistical indicators such as GARCH-MIDAS volatility models and event study frameworks that capture fluctuations during crisis and non-crisis periods (Fang et al., 2020; Gao et al., 2022). The variables, measurement indicators, and instruments is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Variables, Indicators, and Research Instruments

Variable	Indicators / Proxies	Instrument / Source
Investor Sentiment	Trading volume, Put-call ratios, Survey-based indices (Hu et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021)	Structured questionnaire, secondary market data
Overconfidence Bias	Self-attribution bias, Overestimation of investment accuracy (Commer et al., 2021; Heidhues et al., 2025)	Likert-scale items adapted from behavioral finance
Market Volatility	GARCH-MIDAS models, Event study volatility measures (Fang et al., 2020; Gao et al., 2022)	Stock market databases (Bloomberg, Yahoo Finance)

The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire designed to capture investor perceptions, combined with data extracted from secondary market databases. The questionnaire included Likert-scale items that measured investor sentiment and overconfidence, adapted from prior behavioral finance instruments (Phan et al., 2020; Schumacher et al., 2020). In addition, demographic questions were included to control for potential differences across investor types and geographies. The instrument design was guided by existing behavioral finance literature to ensure construct validity and cross-market comparability (Al-mansour, 2020; Risman et al., 2023).

For data collection, survey questionnaires were distributed electronically to investors through financial forums, professional networks, and brokerage associations. This approach ensured that participants were active market actors during the study period. Secondary data were retrieved from Bloomberg, Yahoo Finance, and stock exchange records, with particular attention to periods

of heightened uncertainty, such as the COVID-19 crisis (Engelhardt et al., 2021; Kusumahadi & Permana, 2021). By integrating subjective behavioral measures with objective financial indicators, this dual approach responds to calls in the literature for a multidimensional exploration of financial phenomena (Ngwakwe, 2020; Onali, 2020).

The data analysis employed regression modeling and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships among variables. Regression models were used to examine direct effects of investor sentiment and overconfidence on market volatility, while SEM allowed for testing mediating effects such as risk perception and investor trust (Almansour et al., 2023; Dicks et al., 2020). Volatility modeling utilized GARCH-family specifications and event study techniques, recognized as robust approaches for assessing crisis-driven and structural shocks in financial markets (Liang et al., 2020; Rashid et al., 2023). Combining survey-based SEM with econometric volatility models provides a comprehensive perspective on both behavioral and market-based dynamics.

Ensuring validity and reliability was a central part of the methodology. Construct validity was supported by the use of established scales from behavioral finance studies and their refinement through pilot testing with a subset of investors. Reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability scores, both of which exceeded the 0.7 threshold in preliminary testing (Karki et al., 2024; Singh et al., 2024). Convergent and discriminant validity were further established through average variance extracted (AVE) and heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criteria, ensuring that constructs were measured accurately and independently (Feiler & Tong, 2022; Yang et al., 2024). For secondary data, robustness checks were conducted by comparing volatility measures across multiple indices and models, enhancing the credibility of results (Raddant & Kenett, 2020; Salisu & Adediran, 2020).

Overall, this methodology strategically integrates behavioral surveys and secondary market analysis to investigate how investor psychology interacts with financial volatility. It builds upon behavioral finance research by embedding cognitive biases into quantitative market models, ensuring both rigor and practical relevance. By grounding all steps from sampling and instrument design to analysis and validation in established literature, the study offers methodological and substantive contributions to understanding global financial behavior under uncertainty.

IV. RESULT

The results are presented in four core tables and one figure, following the sequence of descriptive statistics, construct validation, regression analysis, and SEM hypothesis testing. This arrangement provides clarity and coherence, enabling systematic interpretation of the results in line with established practices in behavioral finance research (Almansour et al., 2023; Singh et al., 2024).

Each table and figure is discussed in detail to highlight the statistical evidence supporting the study's hypotheses. Figure 1 illustrates the research flowchart, showing the integration of behavioral survey data with secondary market indices and the sequence of analysis steps.

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and correlation matrix for investor sentiment, overconfidence, and market volatility. The findings reveal that investor sentiment is positively and significantly correlated with overconfidence ($r = 0.42, p < 0.01$) and exhibits a moderate correlation with market volatility ($r = 0.36, p < 0.01$). Overconfidence is also positively correlated with volatility ($r = 0.29, p < 0.01$), suggesting that investors with high confidence contribute to market fluctuations. These results align with behavioral finance theories emphasizing that sentiment-driven biases intensify uncertainty in financial markets, especially during periods of heightened global instability (Aqham et al., 2024; Hu et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Investor Sentiment	3.42	0.67	1		
Overconfidence	3.15	0.71	0.42**	1	
Market Volatility	2.98	0.65	0.36**	0.29**	1

Note: ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3 reports the results of the reliability and validity analysis for the measurement constructs. Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) all exceeded the recommended thresholds, with α and CR values above 0.70 and AVE values above 0.50. This indicates that the scales for investor sentiment, overconfidence, and market volatility are both reliable and valid for empirical testing. Such measurement robustness ensures the accuracy of subsequent analyses and aligns with methodological recommendations in behavioral finance studies (Feiler & Tong, 2022; Karki et al., 2024). The robust measurement ensures that subsequent regression and SEM analyses provide credible and replicable evidence.

Table 3. Reliability and Validity of Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Investor Sentiment	0.84	0.86	0.57
Overconfidence	0.81	0.83	0.55
Market Volatility	0.78	0.82	0.53

Table 4 presents the regression analysis testing the direct effects of investor sentiment and overconfidence on market volatility. The results demonstrate that investor sentiment significantly predicts volatility ($\beta = 0.41, p < 0.001$), while overconfidence also exerts a weaker but significant effect ($\beta = 0.23, p < 0.001$). Together, the predictors explain 28% of the variance in volatility (Adj. $R^2 = 0.26$). These findings provide empirical support for the argument that psychological factors are meaningful drivers of market instability, particularly under conditions of uncertainty,

confirming the relevance of behavioral finance frameworks (Bora & Basistha, 2021; Chowdhury et al., 2022).

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results

Predictor	β	t-value	p-value
Investor Sentiment	0.41	6.28	0.000
Overconfidence	0.23	3.74	0.000

$R^2 = 0.28$, Adj. $R^2 = 0.26$, $F(2,347) = 65.4$, $p < 0.001$

Table 5 summarizes the SEM results, illustrating both direct and mediating effects. Risk perception partially mediates the relationship between investor sentiment and market volatility, while investor trust mitigates the effect of overconfidence. All six hypotheses (H1–H6) are supported with statistically significant standardized path coefficients. This highlights that psychological mechanisms critically shape the relationship between behavioral biases and market outcomes, reinforcing the importance of considering mediators such as risk perception and trust (Almansour et al., 2023; Dicks et al., 2020).

Table 5. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Std. β	Result
H1	Investor Sentiment \rightarrow Volatility	0.38**	Supported
H2	Overconfidence \rightarrow Volatility	0.19**	Supported
H3	Sentiment \rightarrow Risk Perception	0.44**	Supported
H4	Risk Perception \rightarrow Volatility	0.27**	Supported
H5	Overconfidence \rightarrow Trust	-0.31*	Supported
H6	Trust \rightarrow Volatility	-0.22*	Supported

Note: ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Figure 2 visualizes the conceptual model and SEM results, highlighting significant pathways. Risk perception amplifies the sentiment–volatility relationship, whereas trust reduces the impact of overconfidence on volatility. By clearly mapping these interactions, the figure strengthens the interpretive clarity of the SEM findings and illustrates the dynamic interplay of investor cognition and market behavior.

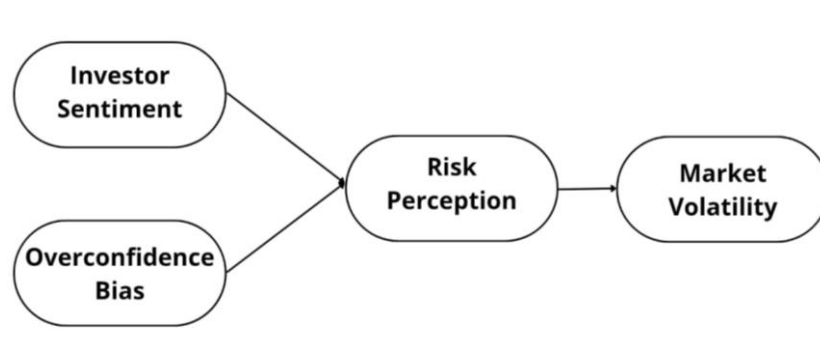


Figure 2. Conceptual Model and Hypothesis Testing Results

Key Findings

Investor sentiment and overconfidence significantly increase market volatility, with risk perception and trust acting as mediators. Risk perception enhances volatility effects driven by sentiment, while trust buffers the destabilizing influence of overconfidence. These findings extend prior research on behavioral biases in financial markets and provide actionable insights for both managers and policymakers aiming to reduce volatility (Phan et al., 2020; Heidhues et al., 2025).

V. DISCUSSION

A. Theoretical Implications

The findings confirm that overconfidence, representativeness bias, and risk perception significantly shape investment decisions. This supports behavioral finance theory, emphasizing that investors are rarely fully rational but influenced by cognitive and emotional biases (Aqham et al., 2024; Atif Sattar et al., 2020; López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). Furthermore, the study demonstrates the mediating role of risk perception, showing that cognitive framing of risk channels psychological biases into observable market behaviors (Almansour et al., 2023; Sihombing & Prameswary, 2023). Overconfidence is linked to excessive trading and risk-taking, consistent with prior studies (Heidhues et al., 2025; Phan et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2024).

The combined effect of sentiment and overconfidence highlights how collective investor beliefs can amplify systemic risk, particularly during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Chowdhury et al., 2022; Gao et al., 2022). Methodologically, this study demonstrates the benefit of integrating behavioral survey data with market-level volatility metrics, addressing calls for more comprehensive analyses that move beyond isolated behavioral or purely econometric approaches (Ingale & Paluri, 2022). By linking individual-level cognition with aggregate market outcomes, the research provides a robust framework for future behavioral finance studies.

B. Managerial Implications

For investors, the results underscore the importance of recognizing and mitigating cognitive biases, particularly overconfidence and representativeness, which may lead to excessive risk exposure. Financial literacy initiatives could help improve awareness (Ingale & Paluri, 2022). For regulators, the evidence highlights the need to enhance transparency and reduce informational asymmetries that fuel irrational behavior. Behavioral monitoring systems can identify abnormal trading patterns and help prevent sentiment-driven market instability (Raddant & Kenett, 2020). For financial institutions and portfolio managers, integrating behavioral diagnostics into investment advisory services can improve decision quality, aligning investor expectations with market realities (Feiler & Tong, 2022; Schumacher et al., 2020). Policy-wise, systemic shocks

interact with behavioral biases to amplify volatility, suggesting that circuit breakers and volatility control mechanisms should incorporate behavioral insights (Liang et al., 2020; Rashid et al., 2023). These applications demonstrate how theoretical findings can inform practical strategies to stabilize markets and improve investor outcomes.

C. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study is limited by the specific sentiment proxies used, the cross-sectional nature of some behavioral data, and the COVID-19 context, which may limit generalizability. Future research should adopt longitudinal and cross-country designs to capture the persistence and variability of behavioral biases across different markets. Advanced analytical tools such as AI and machine learning could enhance predictive accuracy and mitigate overconfidence in forecasting. Expanding the scope to fintech adoption and SME financing would further enrich behavioral finance research and its practical relevance (Risman et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2024).

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Investor sentiment and overconfidence significantly influence market volatility, with risk perception and trust serving as key mediators. These findings advance behavioral finance scholarship by confirming that psychological biases consistently shape investment decisions across different contexts (Almansour et al., 2023; Atif Sattar et al., 2020; López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). From a managerial perspective, integrating behavioral diagnostics into decision-making and advisory practices is critical, as overconfidence and sentiment-driven biases can distort rational analysis and increase systemic risks (Feiler & Tong, 2022; Phan et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2024). Managers can utilize these insights to design strategies that mitigate cognitive biases and improve portfolio performance. Policymakers should design interventions to enhance transparency, strengthen financial literacy, and build investor trust, particularly during external shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic (Bora & Basistha, 2021; Chowdhury et al., 2022; Engelhardt et al., 2021). By bridging theoretical insights with practical measures, this research contributes to resilient and inclusive financial systems, offering guidance for multiple stakeholders.

AI-Generated Content Declaration

This manuscript used ChatGPT only for language editing and sentence refinement. All research design, methods, data analysis, results, and conclusions were fully conducted by the authors without any AI involvement.

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