Measuring the Purchase Intention of Visitors to the Auto Show

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Abstract

Purpose - One purpose of this paper is to examine several factors that potentially influence a consumer's purchasing decision when visiting an auto show. The other is to empirically test the hypothesized relationship between cause's attributes and purchase intention in such an environment. Design/methodology/approach - This paper develops a measure for exploring the cause's attributes influencing consumer's purchasing intention.

A questionnaire was designed to investigate the relationship between these attributes and consumer's intention. SEM was used to test each of the hypotheses with the endogenous variables. The study was conducted on 740 respondents while they were visiting the Auto show.

Findings - The study reveals the existence of a positive and significant relationship between the consumer's attributes and *buying intentions*. Practical implications - The Auto Show management should seek to foster these consumer's attributes in order to enhance consumer *buying intentions*, which may be viewed as the pragmatic side of consumer behavior, an expression of the behavioral side of their attitude, and a reflection of their actions and future behavior.

Introduction

Research has shown that by asking purchasing intentions from consumers has a significant impact on their actual purchase decisions. In forecasting demand for expensive consumer products, direct questioning of potential consumers about their future purchasing plans has had considerable predictive success (Armstrong and Overton, 1971). The standard assumption in consumer research is that surveys measure respondent's existing attitudes, opinions and behavior (Fitzsimmons and Morwitz, 1996). To apply any such "intention to purchase" methods to measure intentions for consumer products or services, manufacturers or dealers must first determine some way to relay this product information to the potential consumers.

Indeed, for an auto show, all visitors are aware about the product. What is not clear is whether or not this type of show can reinforce or alter existing attitudes, influence opinions and measure future behavior such as intention to buy.

Fitzsimons and Morwitz (1996) stated that measuring intentions affect which brands consumers purchase. These results suggest that somehow, the act of measuring intentions can affect consumers' cognitions about the potential purchase and change their subsequent purchase behavior. The objective of this research is to measure the effect of the auto show on visitors and to determine if the show may influence their future behavior. Purchase intentions are routinely

measured and used by marketing practitioners as an input for sales or market share forecasts. Academic researchers often measure and use purchase intentions as an alternate for actual choice.

It is hypothesized that predicting patterns of intentions rely on measuring the respondents on several critical factors. The objective in the current research is to explore the measurement effect by probing the purchase intentions of merely visiting an auto show.

Relevant Literature

Fitzsimons and Morwitz (1996) suggest three different alternative explanations for why the mere measurement effect occurs when consumers are asked category-level purchase intentions questions (e.g., "How likely are you to buy a new car?"). The first explanation is that measuring intentions increases thoughts about the product category and in turn, thoughts about the most salient brands in the category.

Subsequent changes in behavior may be caused by this enhanced brand name accessibility (Nedungadi 1990). The second explanation is that measuring purchase intentions increases the accessibility of the respondent's attitude toward the product category and increases the accessibility of attitudes toward the most salient brands in the category. Changes in subsequent behavior might therefore be a function of this increased attitude accessibility. The third explanation is that consumers have pre-formed purchase intentions which are recalled and become more accessible when consumers are asked purchase intentions questions. Choice behavior may be influenced through the increased purchase intention accessibility.

It is also possible that the effect of measuring purchase intentions operates through some combination of these three processes. Presumably, which process operates for a given consumer will be a function of which stage in the choice process the consumer has reached: the generation of alternatives, consideration or selection (Nedungadi, Mitchell and Berger 1993). This research attempts to determine through which, if any, of these proposed mechanisms the mere-measurement effect operates.

Purchase intention can be classified as one of the components of consumer cognitive behavior on how an individual intends to buy a specific brand or product. Laroche, Kim and Zhou (1996) suggest that variables such as customers' consideration in buying a brand and expectation to buy a brand can be used to measure consumer purchase intention. These consideration factors can include the customer's interest, attending, information and evaluation as part of the overall process in determining intention.

Piron (1991) defines impulse purchase as an unplanned action that results from a specific stimulus. Rook (1987) argues that the impulse purchase takes place whenever customers experience a sudden urge to purchase something immediately, lack substantive additional evaluation, and act based on the urge. Several researchers have concluded that customers do not

view impulse purchase as wrong; rather, customers retrospectively convey a favorable evaluation of their behavior (Dittmar, Beattie, and Friese, 1996; Hausman, 2000; Rook, 1987). Therefore, Ko (1993) reports that impulse purchase behavior is a reasonable unplanned behavior when it is related to objective evaluation and emotional preferences in shopping.

Wolman (1973) frames impulsiveness as a psychological trait that result in response to a stimulus. Weinberg and Gottwald (1982) state that impulse purchase is generally emanated from purchase scenarios that feature higher emotional activation, less cognitive control, and largely reactive behavior. Impulse purchasers also tend to be more emotional than non-purchasers. Consequently, some researchers have treated impulse purchase as an individual difference variable with the anticipation that it is likely to affect decision making across situations (Beatty and Ferrell, 1998; Rook and Fisher, 1995).

Therefore, it is crucial to evaluate the concept of purchase intention in this study. In order to trigger customer's purchase intention, manufactures/retailers have to explore the impact of shopping orientations on customer purchase intention.

In the next section, we review previous findings on the effect of asking questions on subsequent actions while visiting the auto show to measure intentions and develop hypotheses.

Theory development and hypotheses

Theory of reasoned action and planned behavior

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) posits that, people intend to behave in ways that allow them to obtain favorable outcomes and meet the expectations of others (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977). According to TRA, a decision to engage in a behavior (i.e. buying) is directly predicted by an individual's intention to perform the behavior. Furthermore, an individual's intention to perform the behavior can be predicted if their attitude and subjective norms are known. However, there are debates over the discriminant validity of attitude and subjective norms components. These arguments propose that the two components are not conceptually distinct because it is not possible to distinguish between personal and social factors of an individual's behavioral intention (O'Keefe, 1990).

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) was developed by Ajzen (1991) to compensate for the main flaw of TRA, a lack of control for volitional control. These two models are largely similar except that perceived behavioral control has been added as a predictor for intentions and behavior. Hence, there exists the possibility that obstacles or impediments can be inculcated in the measurement of perceived behavioral control (Gentry and Calatone, 2002).

The TPB can be largely used in this context to explain the decision to purchase. As explained in TRA, both personal and social factors influence intentions towards purchasing. Personal factors are those that accrue attitudes towards a behavior and in this context, these are value interest, attending and information. However, it can be inferred that instead of social factors influencing

intentions directly, it passes through attitudes (mediator) before impacting on intentions (Andrews and Kandel, 1979; Ang, Cheng, Lim and Tambyah, 2001).

Overall discussions from the two theories have helped to conceptualize the inter-relationship between the relevant constructs. Through the arguments proposed in the literature on the linkages between these constructs, the TPB will be modified and adapted to the context of intention to buy.

Personal factors

Interest

Interest involves having some personal feelings about the products and brands being displayed. Whether or not buying is the final outcome, interest simply measure a person's liking for being around the auto show.

Attending

Attending involves actual physical presence at the auto show, regardless of whether being included in a group or by oneself. It outlines the purpose for being present at the auto show.

Information

Information pertains to any additional data that we may gather while attending the auto show, that wasn't already know to us or available to us. This adds knowledge to our thought process about our intentions for this auto show.

Evaluation

An individual assessment of the auto show will directly impact their future intentions, not only towards other auto shows, but their buying behavior. The overall assessment of the auto show is directly related to future behavior that is being predicted.
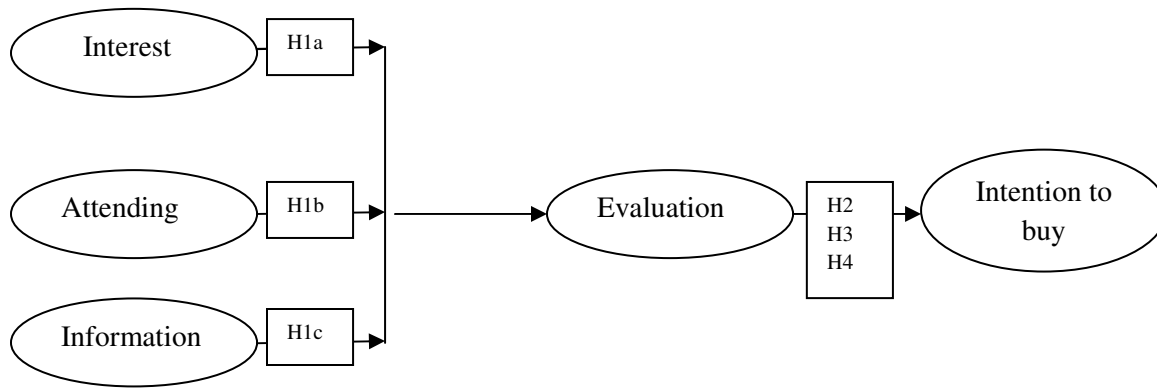
Figure 1. Conceptual model. The measurement model for the study based on TPB

The structural paths for the model (Figure 1) represent the following hypothesis to be tested.

H1a: Highly interested persons are more likely to have a favorable attitude towards purchasing.

H1b: Individuals attending the auto show are more likely to have a favorable attitude towards purchasing.

H1c: Individuals who collect or amass new information from the auto show are more likely to have a favorable attitude towards purchasing.

H2: The impact of attitudes towards the auto show is expected to be affected by the individual's overall evaluation and directly impact the future intentions towards purchasing in the next 1-3 months.

H3: The impact of attitudes towards the auto show is expected to be affected by the individual's overall evaluation and directly impact the future intentions towards purchasing in the next 4-6 months.

H4: The impact of attitudes towards the auto show is expected to be affected by the individual's overall evaluation and directly impact the future intentions towards purchasing in the next 7-12 months.

Measuring Intent

What happens when an intent question is asked? Does this affect the consumer's buying or choice selection process? Most consumers follow a simple three-stage model of choice proposed by Nedungadi, Mitchell and Berger (1993). First, consumers will generate alternatives, in a stimulus-based manner, a memory-based manner, or most likely, some combination of the two. Second, consumers will determine which alternatives to consider selecting. Lastly, they will then select. Brand-related thoughts, such as attitudes and intentions may not as yet be fully developed at each of these stages. However, as consumers progress through each stage of choice process, it becomes increasingly likely that they will form these cognitions. The effects of asking an intent question may well depend on the stage of the choice process in which the consumer is engaged.

These stages that the consumers are progressing through are measured by the factors that are derived from being at the auto show. As the consumer moves through the various cognitive stages their learning increases and so do their attitudes and eventually their intentions. These measurements of Interest, Attending and Information all direct a consumer to a specific behavior for the auto show. For these consumers, measuring intent may cue and increase attitudes or lead to a direct retrieval of a preformed intention.

Moriwitz et al. (1993) demonstrated the behavioral consequences of measuring intentions for a large group of consumers who presumably were at different stages in the decision-making process. Overall, they found that the purchasing behavior of respondents whose intentions were measured was significantly different from those who were not. Two reasons were suggested for this. First, asking intent questions will in some cases make a preexisting attitude more accessible. Second, measuring intentions will lead consumers to engage in thinking that will lead to changes in attitude, behavior or intentions.

In this study, the focus is on consumers that are visiting the auto show and engage in some cognitive process during the visit. These cognitive processes will, when measured, attempt to assess their intentions about the auto show. Measuring these intent are important on two bases; first, intent may make underlying product/brand related judgment, such as attitudes, or behavior more reachable. Second, measuring intention can lead the respondents to engage in thinking that may result in the changing or creating of these judgments. In either scenario the respondents thought process about the auto show may be stimulated to the point of positive intention towards purchasing.

The measurement of intent is particularly interesting given that the product category is an expensive high-involvement product, an automobile. The fact that asking intent questions may have an impact in future purchasing decisions strongly suggest that further study about the influence of the auto show is warranted.

Methodology

Data Collection

The data for the study was gathered through an undisguised questionnaire. It was pre-tested several times among various faculty members as well as personnel in the automotive sector with special responsibility for the Auto show in order to verify face validity of the items. The purpose of the pretest was to address any misunderstanding in the wording of the questions.

The questionnaire was formalized using literature that would be synonymous with an Auto Show, measuring customer behavior, satisfaction and service quality. The survey instrument was made up of 2 parts: the introductory/general questions and the demographics information. For part 1 all questions were measured on a 5 point interval scale.

The main purpose of the questionnaire was to measure the short-term and long-term future intentions to purchase an automobile after attending the Auto Show.

A probability sampling technique was developed, where questionnaires were distributed to attendees of the 2010 Northwood's Auto Show. The survey was administered over a period of three days to visitors of the auto show after they had the chance to visit the displays. A total of 851 surveys were collected of which 740 were usable.

Data analysis

In analyzing the questionnaire, means, frequencies and reliability were initially calculated using Minitab software, and content validity of the questionnaire was established by reviewing existing literature. Also the test for 'goodness of fit' SEM was performed. The multivariate technique of SEM was chosen for this study because, it can:

- analyze the relations between both the unobservable (latent) and observable variables; and
- test the validity of the causal structure

The technique has two stages. The first is the measurement model, which specifies how well the constructs are measured in terms of the observed variables. The second is the structural model, which focuses on the relationships among the constructs.

The survey questionnaire captured background data from the participants as they were visiting the show. The respondents in this study were relatively older adults, with 23.8% of the respondents between 22-35 years of age and 38.6% of the respondents between 36-59 years of age. There were more male respondents than females, with 60.9% of the respondents being male and 39.1% females. In terms of residency, about 29.4 per cent of respondents were from the immediate region (zip code – 48640), which would indicate that there were a high percent of visitors to the show from other cities.

Regarding planning to attend the show, 38.1% of the attendees planned to attend the show within the past month, while 28.6% planned more than three months before the show (See Table 1).

Age	Under 21 years old	152
	Between 22-35 years old	176
	Between 36-59 years old	286
	Over 60 years old	126
Gender	Male:	451
	Female:	289
Residency	Zip code	48640/48642: 218
		Other: 522
Planning for the Show	Less than 1 week	25
	Within the past month	282
	Within the past 3 months	212
	Within the past 6 months	90
	More than 6 months	131

Table 1: *Demographics of Study Sample-740 Subjects*

The measurement model: Testing for internal consistency

Reliability Analysis

PLS (Partial Least Squares) was used to assess the reliability of the measures in addition to the Cronbach's alpha (See Table 2). The Cronbach's alpha evaluates the proportion of variance attributable to the true score of the variable the researcher intends to measure. It reflects the consistency of the measure and the homogeneity of the items in the scale. PLS evaluates the individual item reliability and presupposes no distribution form (like multi-normality) of the data (Gopal, Bosrom and Chin, 1992). PLS is recommended to evaluate the loadings of each item with its construct. These loadings should be higher than 0.5 (ideally higher than 0.70) which indicates that significant variance is shared between each item and the construct. In this study, to further increase the reliability levels, items were dropped when their removal meant that the level of reliability would increase.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was calculated as a measure of reliability of the construct (See Table 3), the acceptable level of AVE is 0.50 (Chin, 1998). This indicates that more than 50% of the variance of the indicators has to be accounted for by the latent variables. All the constructs exceed the minimum AVE level and therefore demonstrate sufficient reliability.

Construct/Latent Variables	Mean	Reliability Cronbach's alpha
Interest in1, in2, in3		.788
Learning about automobiles	3.79	
Learning about specific automobile model	3.85	
Learning about automobile manufacturer	3.50	
Attending at1, at2, at3, at7		.693
I am interested in automobiles	4.32	
It provides a better understanding of automobiles for me	3.86	
It provides with knowledge to choose a new automobile	3.97	
Because my friends/family was attending	3.53	
Information if1, if2, if3		.865
Provided the information that I needed	3.95	
Provided detailed information about different automobile models	4.04	
Provided detailed information about different automobile manufacturer	3.90	
Evaluation ev1, ev2, ev3, ev4, ev5		.808
I learned a lot after looking at automobiles	4.16	
I learned a lot after speaking with the assistants	3.87	
I learned a lot after reading printed materials at the show	3.58	
I learned a lot after attending and will return to the show next year	4.33	
I learned a lot and will encourage others to attend the show next year	4.37	
Intention in2, in3, in4		.724
Influenced to purchase in the next 1-3 months	2.87	
Influenced to purchase in the next 4-7 months	2.81	
Influenced to purchase in the next 8-12 months	3.12	

Table 2: *Construct and associated latent variables; mean scores and reliability scores*

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Factor Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Number Of Items
Interest	0.788	0.887	0.723	3
Attending	0.693	0.886	0.661	4
Information	0.865	0.906	0.764	3
Evaluation	0.808	0.964	0.844	5
Intention to Buy	0.724	0.904	0.759	3

Table 3: *Reliability of Study*

Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept that the researcher is attempting to measure. While reliability is concerned with the accuracy of the actual measuring instrument or procedure, validity is concerned with the study's success at measuring what the research sets out to measure. There are two types of validity used to analyze scale evaluation: content and construct validity.

Content validity refers to the representativeness and comprehensiveness of the items used to create a scale. It is a qualitative assessment of whether the items in a scale capture the real nature of the construct as it is in the real world. To establish content validity of the scale, an initial set of items was compiled from previous literature dealing with online trust in ability, integrity and benevolence. The entire set of items was examined and a suitable subset of the items that applied to online consumer behavior was then chosen for this study. This consists of definitions of user participation, user attitude and user beliefs.

Construct validity looks at the extent to which a scale measures a theoretical variable of interest. It seeks agreement between a theoretical concept and a specific measuring device or procedure, such as a questionnaire. To understand whether a research has construct validity, three steps should be followed. First, the theoretical relationships must be specified. Second, the empirical relationships between the measures of the concepts must be examined. Third, the empirical evidence must be interpreted in terms of how it clarifies the construct validity of the particular measure being tested. Construct validity can be broken down into two sub-categories: convergent validity and discriminant validity.

Convergent validity refers to the extent to which multiple measures of a construct agree with one another or is the actual general agreement among ratings, gathered independently of one another, where measures should be theoretically related. In this study, convergent validity was assessed through the use of Partial Least Squares Method. Under this method, the item loadings of the indicators for each construct, called item reliability, were evaluated (See Table 4). These item loadings should be greater than 0.71 for each individual loading (Chin, 1998).

The traditional methodological complement to convergent validity is discriminant validity, which represents the extent to which measures of a given construct differ from measures of other constructs in the same model. One criterion for adequate discriminant validity is that a construct should have a higher variance with its own measures than it shares with other constructs in a given model. To assess discriminant validity, the use of Average Variance Extracted is employed (i.e., the average variance shared between a construct and its measures).

Discriminant validity was evaluated using Partial Least Squares method by examining the following: (1) item loadings and cross loadings of the indicators within its' own construct and other constructs and (2) comparing the correlation among the construct scores against the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE). The item loadings on its own construct should be higher than on other constructs and the correlation scores should be lower than the square root of the AVE for its own construct (See Table 5)

Indicator	Interest	Attending	Information	Evaluation	Intent to Buy
in1	**0.8571**	0.087	0.000	0.029	0.000
in2	**0.8691**	0.048	0.011	0.030	-0.042
in3	**0.8236**	0.071	-0.058	-0.066	0.000
at1	-0.009	**0.8006**	-0.006	-0.024	0.013
at2	-0.043	**0.8297**	-0.027	-0.005	-0.019
at3	0.006	**0.8129**	0.004	-0.036	0.012
at7	-0.015	**0.8094**	0.007	-0.016	0.022
if1	0.003	-0.013	**0.9737**	-0.038	0.071
if2	-0.039	0.026	**0.8129**	-0.015	-0.029
if3	-0.005	0.039	**0.8265**	0.026	0.021
ev1	0.007	-0.039	-0.045	**0.9744**	-0.046
ev2	-0.023	-0.012	-0.037	**0.9389**	-0.009
ev3	-0.054	-0.039	-0.007	**0.8951**	-0.013
ev4	-0.073	-0.021	0.013	**0.8934**	-0.045
ev5	0.036	0.006	-0.024	**0.8891**	0.021
in_2	0.018	0.005	0.014	0.004	**0.8412**
in_3	0.017	0.047	0.008	0.009	**0.8956**
in_4	0.004	0.025	0.017	0.005	**0.8754**

Table 4: *Loading and Cross Loading of Model Latent Variables*

Indicator	Interest	Attending	Information	Evaluation	Intent to Buy
Interest	**0.850**				
Attending	0.171	**0.813**			
Information	0.232	0.125	**0.874**		
Evaluation	0.396	0.284	0.442	**0.918.**	
Intent to Buy	0.176	0.311	0.068	0.360	**0.871**

Table 5**:** *Correlation among Variable Scores (Square Root of AVE in Diagonals)*

The structural model: Testing for significance

In order to validate the theoretical model and make inferences with regards to the hypotheses, data analysis was performed using the Path Analysis method. Model fit was analyzed as a measure of the validity of the model and statistical significance of the path coefficients were used to make conclusions about the hypotheses. Table 7 shows the standardized regression coefficients (β) named "path coefficients" in SEM terminology as well as the T-statistics and R^2 values.

Under PLS, R^2 values of endogenous variables are used to determine the fit of the model. Interpretation of the R^2 values is similar to ordinary least squares method regression. The results of the data analysis including the R^2 values are pictorially presented in Figure 6.

R^2 values measure the construct variance explained by the model. The R^2 for " intention," the endogenous variable to be explained is 0.314 for H2, 0.591 for H3 and 0.434 for H4.

A standardized path coefficient analyzes the degree of accomplishments of the hypotheses. Chin (1998) suggests that they should be greater than 0.3 to be considered significant.
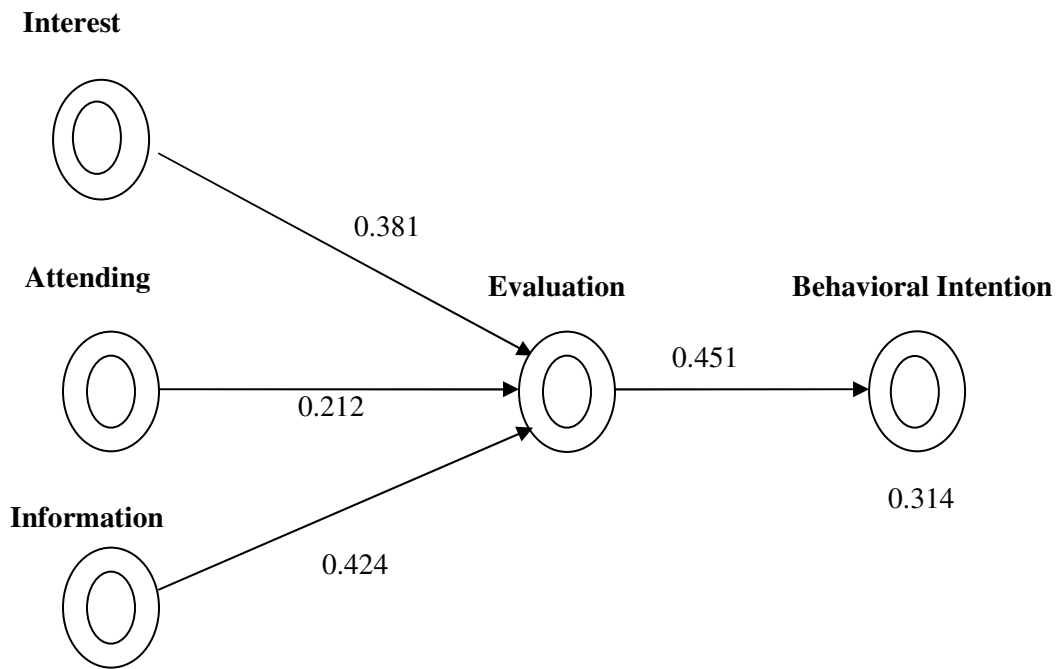
Interest

Attending

0.381

Evaluation

Behavioral Intention

0.451

0.212

Information

0.424

0.314

Figure 2: The structural model for the study based on TAM – for H2

Interest

Attending

0.381

Evaluation

Behavioral Intention

0.451

0.212

Information

0.422

0.591
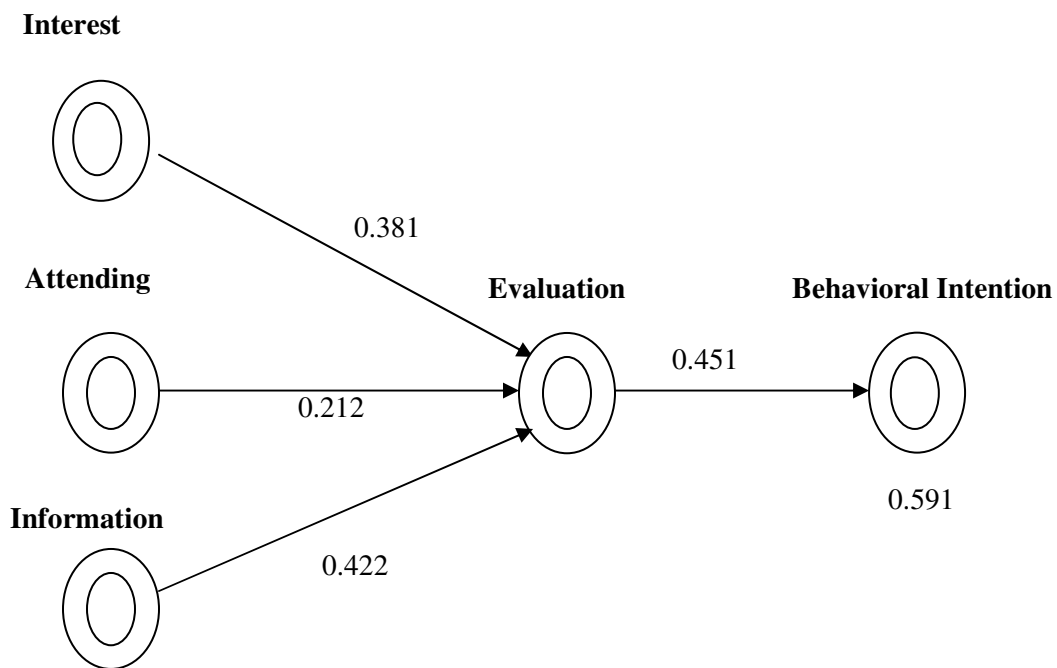
Figure 3: The structural model for the study based on TAM – for H3

Interest

Attending

Evaluation

Behavioral Intention

Information

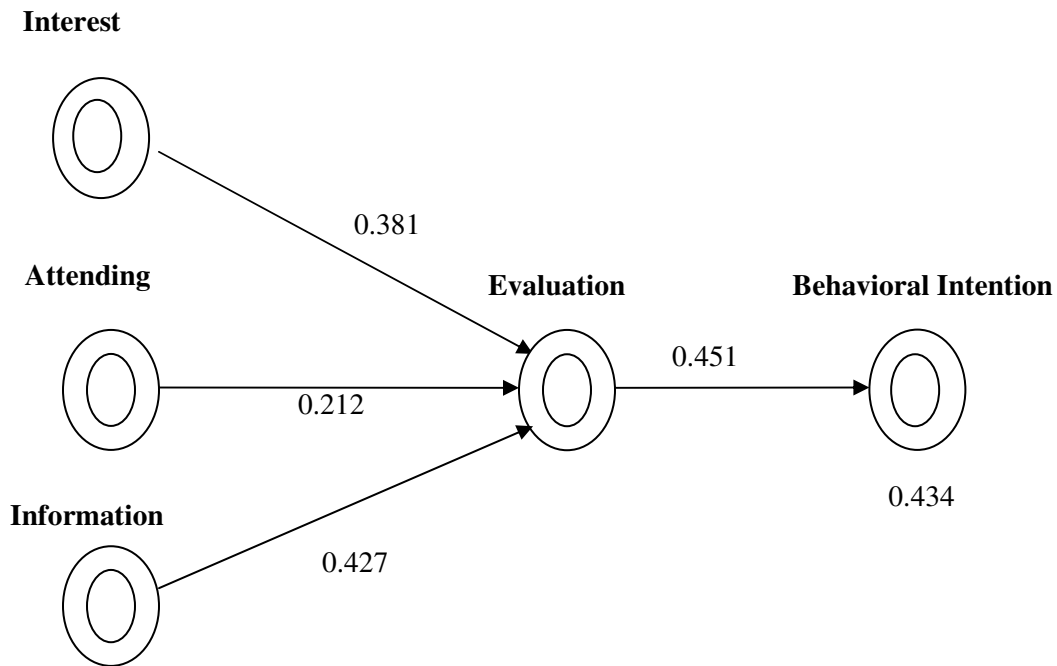0.381

0.212

0.427

0.451

0.434

Figure 4: The structural model for the study based on TAM – for H4

Endogenous Variable	R²	Independent Variable	Standardized Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value less than
		Interest	0.124	1.315	0.021*
Evaluation	0.451	Attending	0.120	1.598	0.030*
		Information	0.073	1.327	0.027*
Intention to buy 1-3 months	0.314	Evaluation	0.216	4.672	0.001***
Intention to buy 4-6 months	0.591	Evaluation	0.216	4.672	0.001***
Intention to buy 4-6 months	0.434	Evaluation	0.216	4.672	0.001***

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Table 6: *Statistical Significance of Coefficients*

H1a: *Highly interested persons are more likely to have a favorable attitude towards purchasing*

As shown in Table 6, the path coefficient from Interest to Evaluation is 0.124 (p-value < 0.021), which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that the hypothesis is not supported and that interest in the auto show does have any effect on evaluating the show. As a result, hypothesis H1a is accepted.

H1b. *Individuals attending the auto show are more likely to have a favorable attitude towards purchasing*

As shown in Table 6, the path coefficient from Attending to Evaluation is 0.120 (p-value < 0.030), which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that the hypothesis is supported and that attending the auto show does have an effect on evaluation. As a result, hypothesis H1b is accepted.

H1c: *Individuals who collect or amass new information from the auto show are more likely to have a favorable attitude towards purchasing*

As shown in Table 6, the path coefficient from Information to Evaluation is 0.073 (p-value < 0.027), which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This suggests that the hypothesis is supported and that collecting information provided at the Auto show does have an effect on how consumers evaluate the auto show. As a result, hypothesis H1c is accepted.

H2. *The impact of attitudes towards the auto show is expected to be affected by the individual's overall evaluation and directly impact the future intentions towards purchasing in the next 1-3 months*

As shown in Table 6, the path coefficient from Evaluation to Intention is 0.216 (p-value < 0.001), which is statistically significant at the 0.001 level. This suggests that the hypothesis is supported and that the consumer's attitude is affected by their evaluation, which does impact their intention. As a result, hypothesis H2 is accepted.

H3. *The impact of attitudes towards the auto show is expected to be affected by the individual's overall evaluation and directly impact the future intentions towards purchasing in the next 4-7 months*

As shown in Table 6, the path coefficient from Evaluation to Intention is 0.216 (p-value < 0.001), which is statistically significant at the 0.001 level. This suggests that the hypothesis is supported and that the consumer's attitude is affected by their evaluation, which does impact their intention. As a result, hypothesis H3 is accepted.

H4. *The impact of attitudes towards the auto show is expected to be affected by the individual's overall evaluation and directly impact the future intentions towards purchasing in the next 7-12 months*

As shown in Table 6, the path coefficient from Evaluation to Intention is 0.216 (p-value < 0.001), which is statistically significant at the 0.001 level. This suggests that the hypothesis is supported and that the consumer's attitude is affected by their evaluation, which does impact their intention. As a result, hypothesis H4 is accepted.

Hypotheses		Supported
H1a	Highly interested persons are more likely to have a favorable attitude towards purchasing	Yes
H1b	Individuals attending the auto show are more likely to have a favorable attitude towards purchasing	Yes
H1c	Individuals who collect or amass new information from the auto show are more likely to have a favorable attitude towards purchasing	Yes
H2	The impact of attitudes towards the auto show is expected to be affected by the individual's overall evaluation and directly impact the future intentions towards purchasing in the next 1-3 months	Yes
H3	The impact of attitudes towards the auto show is expected to be affected by the individual's overall evaluation and directly impact the future intentions towards purchasing in the next 3-6 months	Yes
H4	The impact of attitudes towards the auto show is expected to be affected by the individual's overall evaluation and directly impact the future intentions towards purchasing in the next 7-12 months	Yes

Table 6: *Summaries of Hypotheses Results*

Results: structural model

The PLS construct level statistics (AVE and CFR, previously explained) indicate a fit for the manifest variables to the latent variables; however, they do not give an indication of overall model fit or how the latent variables co-vary with one another. Since PLS is designed to maximize prediction, the emphasis is put on explanatory power to maximize variance in the dependent variables based on the independent variables in the model. Consequently, the degree to which PLS models accomplish this objective is evaluated based on prediction oriented measures (R^2; instead of covariance fit as is attempted in SEM)

The structural path coefficients show the results for the hypothesized model: variance explained for each dependent construct is shown, along with an indication of the significance of the hypotheses.

Consistent with *H1a,* buying intention was significantly related to interest in the auto show ($ß1=0.124$, $p >0.05$). Also, the consumer attending and information gathering was significantly related to buying intention ($ß2=0.120$, $p <0.05$; $ß3=0.073$, $p <0.05$; respectively), supporting *H1b* and *H1c*. Consumer evaluation positively impacted impulse buying behavior ($ß4=0.216$, $p <0.001$), which impacted each of the hypotheses for intention to buy. Each of the 'intended' hypotheses was significant in revealing that each of the latent variables did impact buying intentions

Conclusion discussion and implications

In evaluating the determinants for a successful marketing strategy, it is theoretically and managerially important to understand and test the boundary conditions for any variable. Understanding the relationship between cause's attributes and consumer's purchase intention is essential to maximizing the effectiveness of that specific environment – Auto Show. A primary goal of this research was to develop a conceptual framework and, given certain variables, to identify how consumers perceive and process their visit to the auto show and how this influences them in their future decisions.

This research attempts to analyze consumers' buying intention tendencies and behavior for a specific product: automobiles.

We draw on the theory of planned behavior as a theoretical foundation in building our model of buying intention of a product. Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) framework is adopted by arguing that, in the context of purchase, intention is not a significant mediator. In other words, purchases are unplanned, unexpected, and spontaneous; hence, the determinants of behavior influence buying directly rather than indirectly through intentions.

The model is empirically analyzed for purchase intention. The determinants of purchases include consumers' characteristics (i.e. interest, attending, information and overall assessment of the Auto show (as influenced by evaluation).

One may describe the overall picture that emerges as follows. First, consumer characteristics do exert a significant impact on buying intention. This result shows that the drivers of the auto show directly influence such behavior.

Consumers' interest in the activities encourages both their overall evaluation and buying intention. Clearly, consumers' curiosity and need for participation promotes their intentions. Attending the auto show is also useful in formulating their future intention and, their willingness to attend affects their overall evaluation. As consumers need to be present during the show to collect and assess details about the products. As well, the information gathered at the show promotes a positive feeling in the minds of the consumer that affects their overall evaluation of the show.

Our research provides a number of suggestions for manufacturers of automobiles. To promote an auto show, consumers must be able to attend; therefore awareness of the show is critical to inform them of the date and time. They must also generate interest in the show with the brands that are available. As well, attending consumers must have the ability to absorb and process information about the products, to develop future behaviors. These conditions lead to a favorable evaluation of the show, which then leads to a greater intention to buy.

Future Study

Measuring consumers purchase intentions is a broad area of study, and in this research it's only investigated from a modest part of this area. Attendees at the Auto Show may be inclined either through being overwhelmed or through kindness to overstate their future intentions so as not to hurt the feelings of the organizers.

For a true measurement of evaluating the accuracy of the attendees intention a follow-up study is required where an assessment is made to see if the individuals surveyed initially did actually make purchases or in the very least did show some interest in visiting a dealership. An example could be targeting individuals this year, who attended the auto show last year and measuring what actions they performed towards a purchasing an automobile in that time span. This would be a true indication of the impact of the Auto Show on those attending. At the same time new visitors could still be surveyed as to their awareness and evaluation of the show and the impact it will have on them.

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