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Intercultural Communication and Purchase Behaviour Towards Japanese Electric Vehicles Among the Chinese Young Generation

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Abstract: Previous studies have mainly investigated the influence of intercultural communication on consumer purchase behaviour based on the theory of planned behaviour within a single cultural setting. This study aims to investigate how intercultural communication influences the attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and willingness to buy Japanese electric vehicles among the Chinese young generation. A purposive sampling method was employed to select students from various academic disciplines at six bachelor's universities in Xuzhou city, China. A survey method was used to collect data, and a total of 398 university students were included in the analysis. The results showed that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control positively influenced willingness to buy. Intercultural communication positively influenced attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and willingness to buy, respectively. The current study extends the existing knowledge on how intercultural communication influenced the Chinese young generation's willingness to buy Japanese electric vehicles and benefited the Japanese electric vehicle industry and key stakeholders in marketing.

Keywords: Chinese Young Generation, Intercultural Communication, Japanese Electric Vehicles, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Willingness to Buy.



1. Introduction

The automobile industry is an important reflection of a country's level of economic development and scientific and technological strength [1]. In recent years, accompanied by the continuous increase in the number of automobile owners, many consumers are now looking for more pro-environmental transportation tools [2]. This is because road transport generates 11.9% of greenhouse gas emissions, mainly from vehicle fossil fuel combustion, and the traditional internal combustion engine is unable to solve this growing contradiction [3]. Therefore, a significant contradiction has emerged between the growth of the automobile industry and rising environmental concerns. This conflict now critically restricts the sustainable development of the automobile sector [4].

In this regard, the replacement of traditional vehicles by new electric vehicles (EVs) has been promoted by many countries [5] because EVs can significantly contribute to carbon reduction, energy transition, achieve the carbon peaking and carbon neutrality goals, which promotes the sustainable development of the transport sector [6]. With the growing consensus on global energy structure transformation and environmental protection, EVs have become one of the most promising methods to alleviate the serious environmental problems [7].

China's new EV industry has been developing rapidly, and China has become one of the largest EV markets in the world [8]. This is because the Chinese government has played a key role in policy support, technological progress, infrastructure construction, industry chain improvement, and market cultivation through the implementation of a number of favourable policies such as financial subsidies, tax incentives, and support for technological innovation, and many others [9]. For example, according to the 2023 White Paper on the Development of China's New Energy Vehicle Industry, the global sales of new EVs in 2022 amounted to 10,824 million vehicles, a year-on-year increase of 61.6%. Among them, 6,884 million units were sold in China, accounting for 63.6% of global sales.

In this circumstance, many foreign vehicle companies have launched their new EVs campaigns to enter the Chinese market. For example, in April 2025, Toyota Motor's wholly-owned Lexus pure EVs and battery R&D and production company landed in Shanghai, which means that the localisation of Lexus, a Japanese luxury brand, has taken another key step. However, China's new EVs market has entered a phase of rapid expansion with a stable and sizable user base, which poses certain challenges for foreign new EVs companies to enter the Chinese market [10]. In particular, as a result of globalisation, trade wars between countries have intensified, leading to increased animosity between nations and evoking the revival of nationalism and patriotism among people of different nationalities to reject or avoid purchasing foreign-made products and services [11]. For example, Chinese consumers are clearly hostile to Japan, and this negative attitude reduces their intention to buy Japanese products [12]. Therefore, it is a challenge for Japanese EV companies to capture the Chinese market.

The internal factors affecting the development of new EVs can be attributed to three major players: government, consumers, and manufacturers [6]. Among them, the influence of consumers' perceptions on the new EVs markets is the most important [13]. Indeed, willingness to buy has been proven to be a good predictor of consumer behaviour in the automotive sector [14]. According to Li, et al. [15], the factors affecting consumers' willingness to buy EVs can be grouped into three main categories: demographic characteristics (e.g., individual and family factors); situational factors (e.g., technological features, costs, environmental attributes and government policies); and psychological factors (e.g., experience, attitudes, emotions, perceived behavioural control, social influences and symbolic meaning). Although a large number of existing studies showed that those factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions of new EVs, it is basically from a mono-cultural perspective. There is no research that investigates how factors influencing consumers' willingness to buy EVs from a cross-cultural perspective.

Multinational enterprises have become key players in the global economy because they conduct business activities in different countries with different cultural backgrounds, languages, and social norms, and their globalisation can enable them to access resources, markets, and opportunities that are not available in their home countries [16]. Nevertheless, with the intensification of global competition, multinational enterprises are facing various challenges, and they need to use intercultural communication (IC) to reduce cultural conflicts and enhance consumer identification [17]. IC is defined as all communication between people with different linguistic or cultural backgrounds [18]. IC has both a direct effect on customer satisfaction and an indirect effect through interpersonal interactions, which is achieved through the mediation between interpersonal interactions and customer satisfaction on purchase intentions [19]. However, in the face of Chinese consumers with a certain degree of historical hostility towards Japan, the products will naturally be biased in a certain way. Chinese consumers'

ethnocentrism and historical hatred towards Japan have a significant negative impact on the willingness to buy Japanese products [12]. Therefore, studying the impact of cross-cultural communication on consumers' purchase behaviours will help these foreign new EV companies to succeed in the Chinese new EV market.

More specifically, Chinese young generation with strong market purchasing power (i.e., the new generation, also known as Millennials and Generation Z) [20] have shown strong interest in IC, and they believe that digitalisation has significantly simplified the process of IC, including alleviating the problem of language barriers [21]. Therefore, in the digital era, the IC for Chinese young generation to make shopping decisions may play a more critical role. Hence, it is necessary to investigate how IC influences Chinese young generation's perceptions regarding buying Japanese EVs.

In addition, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), originally proposed by Ajzen [22], is a theory aimed at predicting and explaining human behaviour in a given context. It postulates the conceptualisation of three independent determinants of the decision-making process: the attitude, subjective norm (SN), and perceived behavioural control (PBC). Certain studies have investigated consumers' willingness to buy EVs based on TPB [4] [23]. However, existing studies on new EVs purchase behaviour based on the TPB mostly focus on single-culture scenarios, and the mechanism of how IC influences new EVs purchase behaviour through the three elements of the TPB has not yet been fully verified.

Therefore, this study is one of the few studies that incorporates the antecedent variable of IC in the TPB model to explore the mechanism of IC on consumers' attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and willingness to buy Japanese EV brands among the Chinese young generation from a cross-cultural perspective. The findings of this study can help multinational enterprises of new EVs to better understand the Chinese young generation in target countries, formulate marketing strategies, and create value for EVs enterprises.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theory of Planned Behaviour

The TPB was developed from the theory of reasoned action [22] because the theory of reasoned action was unable to fully predict one's behaviour that was entirely determined by an individual's volitions [24]. Hence, the TPB supplemented with the addition of PBC to predict an individual's given behaviour, and finally, the TPB contains three key variables: attitude, SN, and PBC (see Figure 1). Together, these three variables determine the strength of an individual's intention to perform a behaviour when the opportunity arises [25].

The TPB is widely used as a theoretical framework in the field of green marketing and pro-environmental marketing [26], such as new EVs purchase behaviour (Wang et al., 2022), green hotel stay intention [27], and many others. It is worth mentioning that the TPB is also generally applicable in cross-cultural contexts, such as applying the TPB to understand the cross-cultural behaviours of students in Hong Kong [28], and extending the TPB to study the influence of cross-cultural adaptation tendencies on the attitudes of internet viewers towards live broadcasts of minority cultures [29]. Hence, the TPB is a robust framework for understanding the purchase behaviour of new EVs, and its core constructs are stable predictors of purchase behaviour in different contexts [30].

2.2. Attitude

In the TPB, the primary factor influencing intention is attitude, which refers to the degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation or appraisal of the behaviour under discussion [22]. It reflects the extent to which an individual holds a positive or negative assessment of his or her adoptive behaviour, and measures the degree to which a behaviour is valued [31]. The behavioural attitude of an individual is an important criterion for predicting his or her behavioural intention; if the behavioural attitude is more positive, the greater the likelihood that the individual will implement the behaviour [32].

Consumers' attitudes towards new EV are positively influenced when they perceive new EVs technology to be more beneficial at an individual level or when they perceive it to be easier to use than conventional vehicles [9]. Previous studies have demonstrated that a positive attitude significantly influences the purchase intention of new EVs [33]. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis for testing:

H1: Attitude positively influences willingness to buy Japanese EVs.

2.3. Subjective Norm

In the TPB, the second influencing factor is SN, which refers to the perceived expectations and social pressures to perform or not to perform the behaviour [22]. It reflects the individual's social situation; depending on the various situations, social pressure may be more influential than the individual's attitude towards the behaviour [34]. Especially in a highly collectivistic country, people often tend to conform to imitate others' behaviours in order to gain recognition and acceptance [35].

SN is considered influenced by normative beliefs and social pressure factors, which are positively related to behavioural intention [22]. It has been shown that the higher the strength of SN, the stronger the intention to purchase a new EV [36], which suggests that SN has a significant effect on the intention to purchase a new EV. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed for testing:

H2: Subjective norm positively influences willingness to buy Japanese EVs.

2.4. Perceived Behavioural Control

In the TPB, the third influential factor is PBC, which refers to the degree to which it is perceived to be easy or difficult to perform the behaviour [22]. This factor is centred on an individual's perceptions of the challenges and obstacles to performing a particular behaviour based on past experiences [37]. Furthermore, the perception of behavioural control is of more importance than the actual degree of control [22].

It is important to note that PBC varies across situations and behaviours, and the higher the level of PBC possessed, the stronger the intention to adopt a particular behaviour [25]. In addition, it has been shown that PBC has a significant effect on new EV purchase intention in green marketing [36]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed for testing:

H3: Perceived behavioural control positively influences willingness to buy Japanese EVs.

2.5. Intercultural Communication

Traditionally, IC is defined as communicative behaviours between people of all different linguistic or cultural backgrounds [18], such as transferring, exchanging, and understanding each other's information, knowledge, and emotions. This definition assumes that cultural groups have specific attributes that not only explain communicative behaviour, but also predict potential misunderstandings in multicultural situations [38].

In marketing, IC refers to the strategy of multinational enterprises to convey information and adapt to the local culture through language localisation, adjusting symbols and symbols, and other behaviours in cross-cultural scenarios. For example, Lexus has integrated religious elements into its advertisements in the Middle East market in order to reduce the cultural distance, enhance brand familiarity, and influence consumers' attitudes and behaviours. In the localisation process of multinational enterprises, the effectiveness of IC directly affects their adaptation to the host market. For example, the Yili Group has significantly improved the localisation adaptation ability of its overseas subsidiaries by establishing an intercultural integration project team and carrying out Chinese and Thai cultural experience activities. Therefore, cross-cultural communication is the core of multinational business activities [16].

A range of cross-cultural factors were examined for their impact on consumer behaviour, and it was confirmed that cross-cultural online contact, social interaction, and cultural adaptation moderated negative prejudice and cross-cultural shopping intentions [17]. From the consumer's point of view, the inability of multinational business organisations to communicate effectively with local audiences will lead to a decline in sales, loss of market share, and even product boycotts, and poor IC can damage the relationship between firms and their customers [16]. Therefore, IC plays a key role in determining the consumers' purchase decision-making process across a cross-cultural background.

In the marketing activities of multinational enterprises, IC is not only an important competence for internal management and international cooperation, but also a core element for external market communication and enhancing consumer relations. Existing research suggests that IC is a key determinant of intercultural adaptation and attitudes [39]. For example, Turkish scholars have studied how IC significantly enhances positive attitudes, empathy, and altruistic behaviour towards refugees [40]. A study in Indonesia found that participation in an IC video task significantly increased participants' critical intercultural awareness and that IC was effective in stimulating attitudinal change [41]. Meanwhile, some studies have confirmed that IC directly affects customer satisfaction [19].

Based on the cultural adaptation theory [42], multinational enterprises need to help consumers adapt to foreign cultures through cultural adaptation (such as product localisation design, using expressions preferred by the target market, and symbols in line with the local cultural values). This cultural adaptation not only reduces the sense of cultural distance but also enhances the consumers' positive evaluations of the enterprise and its products, which in turn form a positive attitude. Based on the above discussion, it is suggested that IC is an important antecedent to changing an individual's attitude towards a particular subject. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Intercultural communication positively influences attitude to buy Japanese EVs.

When multinational enterprises do business in international markets, good IC is not only about verbal communication, but also about understanding and fitting the cultural norms, values, social expectations, and norms of the target market in information dissemination and communication [43]. Existing research suggests that cultural context significantly affects the strength of the influence of SN on behavioural intentions, and that individuals in collectivist national cultures are more inclined to make consumption decisions based on the expectations of significant others or groups [44]. Advertisements that are consistent with local cultural values are more likely to elicit consumer identification and behavioural intentions, and this cultural value adaptation is essentially a manifestation of IC competence [45].

When multinational enterprises fully integrate local social norms and values in IC (e.g., highlighting family, friends, and social group recognition in marketing advertisements), they can make consumers feel more strongly that their surroundings are supportive of their purchasing behaviour [46]. Therefore, multinational enterprises can enhance consumers' SN perceptions through IC strategies (e.g., by fully integrating social norms cues that fit with local culture and values in their communication content, such as important family and friends' recommendations, and the majority of society's choices), which will enhance their purchase intentions. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Intercultural communication positively influences subjective norm to buy Japanese EVs.

In addition, multinational enterprises reduce language, information, and institutional barriers through IC, such as providing multilingual translated customer service, shopping processes suitable for local habits, and localised after-sales policies. This can enhance consumers' self-confidence in purchasing cross-cultural products and their perceptions of convenience, and can significantly reduce consumers' uncertainty and psychological resistance in cross-cultural transactions [47, 48].

In cross-cultural consumption scenarios, PBC is not only influenced by individual experience and competence, but also by external environmental factors such as language barriers, information transparency, and institutional convenience [47]. IC emphasises the use of language, symbols, and cultural knowledge to reduce barriers to intercultural understanding, thus creating a smoother and more convenient purchasing environment for consumers [43]. Meanwhile, communication styles that fit local cultural practices can enhance consumers' familiarity and sense of control over the transaction process, thus improving PBC [49]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Intercultural communication positively influences perceived behavioural control to buy Japanese EVs.

Furthermore, in cross-cultural scenarios, IC has a combined effect in reducing cultural friction, enhancing emotional trust, and shaping brand perception. A high level of IC not only conveys product information but also enhances consumers' emotional engagement through cultural resonance and value recognition, thus shortening the psychological distance from perception to purchase [48]. When a company demonstrates a high degree of cultural sensitivity and communication adaptability in cross-cultural contexts, consumers perceive the company as a more professional, reliable, and socially responsible brand, and these positive impressions can directly drive the formation of purchase behaviour [50]. Therefore, it is possible that IC may also have a significant direct effect on willingness to buy, and the following hypothesis is proposed for testing:

H7: Intercultural communication positively influences willingness to buy Japanese EVs.

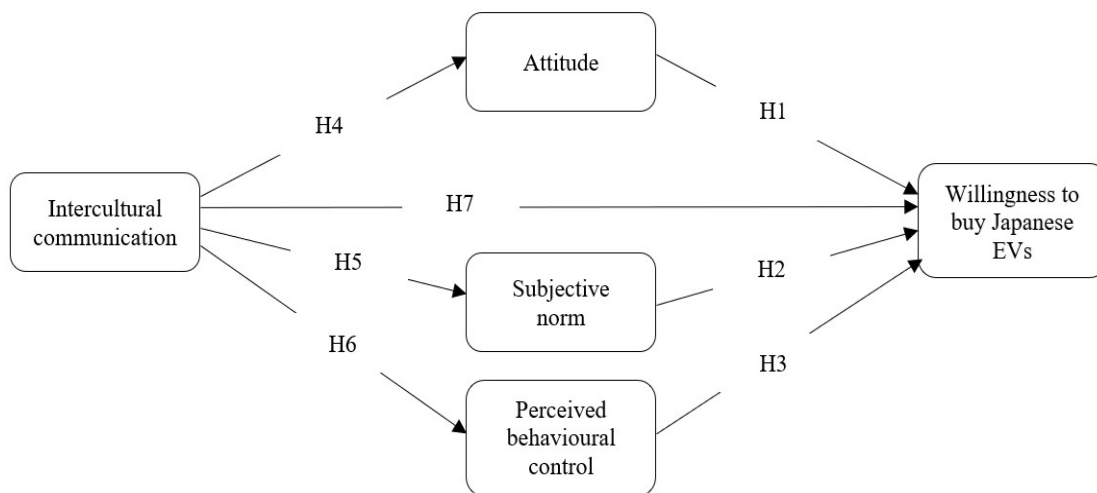


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Collection

A purposive sampling technique was used in this study to collect data because it enables researchers to determine what information is necessary and seeks out individuals who can and are willing to supply the information based on their knowledge and experience [51]. Young generations typically have high purchasing power [11] because they will influence future spending patterns [52] and show a strong desire to purchase new products and services in the future [53]. For example, they like sustainable lives and are frequently prepared to embrace cutting-edge, environmentally friendly technology as well as green products and services [54]. More importantly, they can offer more insightful information about studies on green purchasing behaviour [4].

Jiangsu Province was chosen because it had more than 1.1 million undergraduate students, the third-largest number of university students in China, with nearly one-fifth of the students studying in Xuzhou City [55]. Therefore, an online survey in the Chinese language was posted on the largest free online platform (www.wenjuan.com) and distributed to students through WeChat or Alipay to scan the QR code who were studying and enrolled bachelor's degree student personas 18 years of age and older in six bachelor's degree universities in Xuzhou City, Jiangsu Province, China, from 1 May to 31 May 2025. In addition, ethical approval was required for this study according to the regulations of the authors' institution (Human Research Ethics Review Committee of Business School, Xuzhou University of Technology, decision of April 14, 2025), and informed consent (decision of April 15, 2025) was obtained from all participants prior to their participation concurrently with the questionnaire distribution. To confirm the questionnaire items' clarity and order, 30 respondents participated in a pilot test. Finally, a total of 398 valid questionnaires were returned for analysis, and the response rate is not available for QR distribution, which exceeds Kline's [56] proposed minimal sample size for structural equation modelling be 200 respondents.

3.2. Questionnaire Operationalisation

The closed-ended questionnaire with a seven-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree, was used to measure the constructs. The first section focused on TPB-related variables: attitude, SN, and PBC. Three items used to measure attitude, four items used to measure SN, and three items used to measure PBC were adapted from Wang, et al. [2]; three items used to measure willingness to buy Japanese EVs were adapted from Saleem [57]. The second section focused on the newly added variable: IC. Four items used to measure IC were adapted from Ihtiyar and Ahmad [58]. The last section focused on demographic characteristics such as gender, age, monthly spending, and educational level.

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1. Data analysis and results

A total of 398 valid questionnaires were obtained for data analysis. Table 1 shows detailed information on the demographic characteristics. Most of the respondents were female (55.5%) and aged 20 years

old (26.9%). The majority of them spent between 1001 – 2000 Chinese yuan each month (42.2%) and were studying in their second year (34.2%) at the university.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics (N = 398)

Items	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18	68	17.1
	19	80	20.1
	20	107	26.9
	21	85	21.3
	22	41	10.3
	Above 22	17	4.3
Gender	Male	177	44.5
	Female	221	55.5
Monthly spending	Below 1000¥	87	21.9
	1001¥ - 2000¥	168	42.2
	2001¥ - 3000¥	76	19.1
	Above 3000¥	67	16.8
Educational level	Freshmen	99	24.9
	Sophomore	136	34.2
	Junior	74	18.6
	Senior	56	14.0
	Master and above	33	8.3

1) Measurement Model Test

The next step performed was a confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling test with AMOS version 24. High factor loadings mean that the factor extracted sufficient variance from that variable [59]. After dropping a low factor loading item (i.e., intercultural communication3, IC3), the rest of the factor loadings were higher than 0.5, which exceeded what Hair, et al. [60] demonstrated that factor loadings should be higher than 0.5 and ideally be higher than 0.7. To test internal reliability, Cronbach’s alpha values should be higher than 0.7. The results showed that all Cronbach’s alpha values were higher than 0.7 (see Table 3).

Table 2. Discriminant Validity of The Measurement Model

Construct	AVE	1	2	3	4	5
1. PBC	0.690	0.831				
2. IC	0.514	0.095	0.717			
3. Attitude	0.688	0.663	0.404	0.829		
4. subjective norm	0.712	0.048	0.271	0.259	0.844	
5. Willingness to buy	0.634	0.384	0.478	0.568	0.382	0.796

Note: bold and italics denotes square root of AVE

To test convergent validity of the measurement model, the composite reliability (CR) should be higher than 0.7 and the average variance extracted (AVE) should be higher than 0.5 [60]. Table 3 showed that convergent validity of the measurement model was achieved. To test the discriminant validity of the measurement model, the square root of AVE of each variable should be higher than its correlation with other constructs [61]; meanwhile, the correlation between constructs should be less than 0.9 [62]. Therefore, the discriminant validity of the measurement model was achieved (see Table 3).

In addition, the model fit indexes showed that CMIN = 169.475, DF = 92, CMIN/DF = 1.842 < 3, CFI = 0.982 > 0.9, GFI = 0.948 > 0.9, AGFI = 0.923 > 0.8, RMSEA = 0.046 < 0.08, SRMR = 0.0433 < 0.1 [60], NFI = 0.961 > 0.9, RFI = 0.95 > 0.9, IFI = 0.982 > 0.9 [61], PCFI = 0.753 > 0.5 [62], TLI = 0.976 > 0.9 [63], PGFI = 0.641 > 0.5, PNFI = 0.737 > 0.5 [64], indicating a good measurement model fit.

Table 3. Convergent Validity of The Measurement Model

Construct (Cronbach's alpha)	Item	Factor loading	CR	AVE	Standard deviation
Attitude ($\alpha = 0.861$)	1. Buying Japanese EVs gives me pleasure.	0.757 0.961	0.867	0.688	1.392 1.402
	2. The process of buying Japanese EVs is important to me.	0.753			1.276
	3. Buying Japanese EVs makes it fun for me.				
SN ($\alpha = 0.908$)	1. My friends think buying Japanese EVs is the right choice.	0.832 0.866	0.908	0.712	1.012 1.022
	2. My classmates is very much in favour of buying Japanese EVs.	0.839 0.837			0.972 1.029
	3. My family think I should purchase Japanese EVs.				
	4. My relatives would prefer me to purchase Japanese EVs.				
PBC ($\alpha = 0.864$)	1. I am able to decide on my own whether to buy Japanese EVs.	0.751 0.989	0.868	0.690	1.336 1.359
	2. I am looking forward to buying Japanese EVs.	0.727			1.266
	3. I have no difficulty when I want to buy Japanese EVs.				
IC ($\alpha = 0.757$)	1. I am comfortable to staff who is of different ethnicity/country than mine.	0.711 0.768	0.760	0.514	1.265 1.230
	2. I think the Japanese EVs brands are well associated and adapted to local culture.	- 0.668			1.243
	3. I usually handle culture transitions very well (Delete).				
	4. The Japanese EVs staffs behave accordingly within their expected role.				
Willingness to buy ($\alpha = 0.835$)	1. It is acceptable to pay more for a Japanese EV that engages in green practices.	0.783 0.839 0.764	0.838	0.634	1.098 1.183 1.165
	2. I am willing to pay more for a Japanese EV.				
	3. I am willing to spend extra in order to buy a Japanese EV.				

2) Structural Model Test

The structural equation modelling was performed for hypothesis testing. The structural model fit indexes were CMIN = 393.738, DF = 95, CMIN/DF = 4.145 < 5, CFI = 0.93 > 0.9, GFI = 0.902 > 0.9, AGFI = 0.86 > 0.8, SRMR = 0.089 < 0.1 [60], NFI = 0.91 > 0.9, IFI = 0.93 > 0.9 [61], RMSEA = 0.089 < 0.1, PCFI = 0.736 > 0.5 [62], TLI = 0.911 > 0.9 [63], PGFI = 0.63 > 0.5, PNFI = 0.721 > 0.5 [64], the majority of values are exceeded their threshold, showing an acceptable structural model fit.

The results of this study are shown in Table 4 and Figure 2. Accordingly, attitude positively influenced willingness to buy since $\beta = 0.305$, $p < 0.05$, hence, H1 is accepted. The results showed that SN positively influenced willingness to buy since $\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$, indicating H2 is accepted. There is a positive correlation between PBC and willingness to buy since $\beta = 0.143$, $p < 0.05$; hence, H3 is accepted. In addition, the results showed that IC positively influenced one's attitude ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.05$), SN ($\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.05$), PBC ($\beta = 0.2$, $p < 0.05$), and willingness to buy ($\beta = 0.295$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, H4, H5, H6, and H7 are accepted.

Table 4. Results of The Study

Item	Parameter	Coefficient	p-value	C.R.	Decision
H1	Attitude -----> willingness to buy	0.305	***	5.295	Accepted
H2	Subjective norm -----> willingness to buy	0.220	***	4.220	Accepted
H3	Perceived behavioural control ---> willingness to buy	0.143	0.003	2.967	Accepted
H4	Intercultural communication -----> attitude	0.470	***	7.576	Accepted
H5	Intercultural communication -----> subjective norm	0.298	***	4.857	Accepted
H6	Intercultural communication -----> perceived behavioural control	0.200	***	3.397	Accepted
H7	Intercultural communication -----> willingness to buy	0.295	***	4.244	Accepted

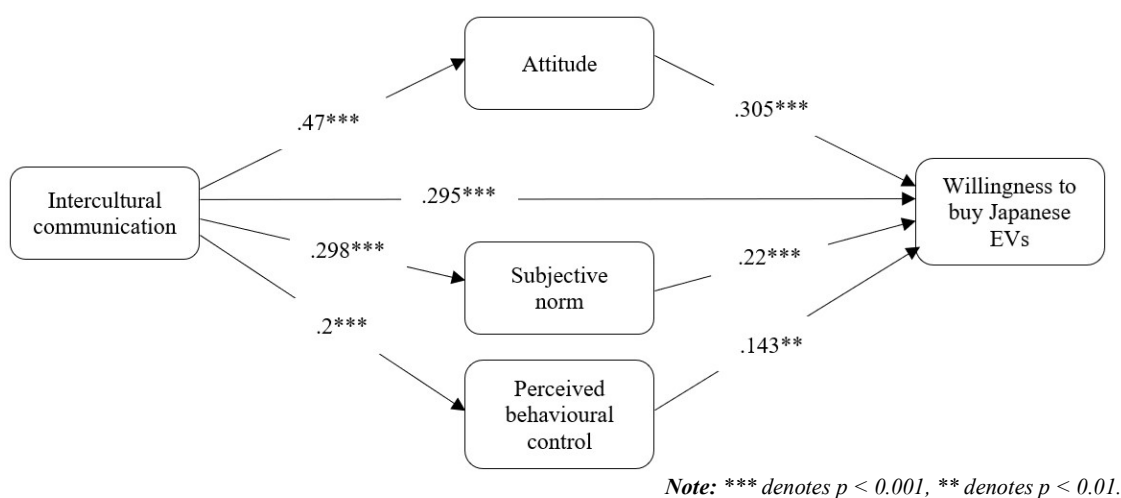


Figure 2. Results of The Study

4.2. Discussion

This study investigated the influence of IC on the Chinese young generation's attitude, SN, PBC, and willingness to buy Japanese EVs in Xuzhou city. The results showed that attitude positively influenced consumers' willingness to buy. This means that the students who are studying in Xuzhou perceive that buying Japanese EVs is a wise and desirable decision. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that attitude positively influenced consumers' intentions and behaviours to choose EVs [2] [65].

The results of this study showed that SN positively influenced the Chinese young generation's willingness to buy Japanese EVs in Xuzhou city. This shows that individuals perceived social influence, i.e., their friends, classmates, family members, and relatives, hold positive opinions on purchasing Japanese EVs. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that SN positively influenced one's willingness to purchase, intention, and behaviour in green marketing [66] [67].

Our results also showed that PBC significantly influenced the Chinese young generation's willingness to buy Japanese EVs. This indicates that students who are studying in Xuzhou city have the ability and confidence to buy Japanese EVs in the future when they want to purchase such products. This finding is consistent with certain studies showing that PBC can positively influence consumers' intentions to purchase green products or services [7] [35].

Furthermore, the results of this study showed that IC positively influenced the Chinese young generation's attitude, SN, PBC, and willingness to buy Japanese EVs in Xuzhou city. This shows that consumers who think the Japanese EVs are well associated and adapted to Chinese local culture, and

their staff can behave accordingly within the Chinese young generation's expectations, will have more positive attitudes and SN, and a higher PBC and willingness to make a decision regarding purchasing Japanese EVs. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that IC positively influenced one's attitude, SN, PBC, intention, and behaviour [41] [46] [48].

1) Theoretical Contributions

Certain theoretical contributions can be concluded from this study. First, most of the present studies have investigated the influence of IC on consumers' attitude, intention, and behaviour towards purchasing EVs based on TPB within a single culture setting. The current study investigated how IC influenced Chinese young generation's attitude, SN, PBC, and willingness to buy Japanese EVs, and the results showed that IC positively influenced their attitudes, SN, PBC, and willingness to buy.

Second, young generations have a strong purchasing power in future marketing because they are willing to try some new technological products and services, and they can shape future green marketing purchase patterns [4]. The results of this study showed that IC positively influenced Chinese young generation's attitude, SN, PBC, and willingness to buy Japanese EVs.

In addition, IC has both a direct effect on consumers' purchase behaviour and an indirect effect through interpersonal interactions, which is achieved through the mediation between interpersonal interactions and customer satisfaction on purchase intentions [19]. However, there is an insufficient investigation on how IC influences consumers' purchase behaviour through interpersonal interactions (e.g., attitude, SN, PBC) within a cross-cultural setting. The current study's findings showed that IC had a direct effect on attitude, SN, PBC, and willingness to buy and an indirect effect on willingness to buy through attitude, SN, and PBC.

2) Practical Implications

The findings of this study showed that attitude and SN positively influenced the Chinese young generation's willingness to buy Japanese EVs. Therefore, Japanese EV brands should publicise that purchasing Japanese EVs is a wise and good decision to the public, such as general consumers. For example, Japanese EV operators can publicise that they provide a good quality, technology-related service, and post-purchase service of their EV products to their potential consumers. Hence, potential purchasers and general consumers will have a positive evaluation of Japanese EVs, and they will spread that positive information to their peers.

Second, the results of this study showed that PBC positively influenced Chinese young generation's willingness to buy Japanese EVs. The Japanese EV companies should demonstrate that Japanese EVs are price-acceptable, and it is easy to find their sales stores and post-purchase service workrooms. For example, they can demonstrate that after-sales service is high-cost performance compared with other EVs. Therefore, potential consumers will have high confidence and perceive that they have the ability to purchase Japanese EVs in the future.

In addition, the findings of this study showed that IC positively influenced attitude, SN, PBC, and willingness to buy Japanese EVs. Japanese EV companies should educate their staff to provide comfortable service to customers, in particular, within the Chinese young generation's expectations. Meanwhile, Japanese EV operators should design certain aspects (e.g., language, display) in EVs that are well associated and adapted to certain Chinese culture. Therefore, potential consumers will perceive that Japanese EV companies highly appreciate their purchasing behaviour.

3) Limitations and Future Suggestions

Certain limitations in this study can be shown as follows. First, the target population in this study is the young generation. Although they have potential purchase power in green marketing and they may shape future purchase patterns. However, currently, they do not have the ability to make actual purchase decisions. Hence, future studies may consider investigating how IC influences whole Chinese consumers' attitude, SN, PBC, and willingness to buy Japanese EVs. Second, there is insufficient information to distinguish different Japanese EV brands in this study. However, there is a significant difference among Japanese EVs in China, e.g., Toyota, Lexus, and Honda have various kinds of EVs being sold in the Chinese vehicle market. Therefore, future studies can provide a deeper understanding of how IC influences Chinese young generation's perceptions towards a particular Japanese EV brand. Last, the current study recruited respondents from a single city, i.e., Xuzhou City, thus reducing the representativeness of the Chinese young generation. Future studies can recruit more Chinese

respondents to improve the representativeness and reliability, and replicability of the findings of this study.

5. Conclusion

The current study investigated the direct influence of Chinese young generation's intercultural communication on attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and willingness to buy Japanese EVs. Meanwhile, this study explored the effect of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control on willingness to buy Japanese EVs. The results of this study showed that intercultural communication had a positive influence on attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and willingness to buy Japanese EVs, respectively. Additionally, our results showed that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control positively influenced the willingness of Chinese young generation to buy Japanese EVs.

The current study is one of the few studies that examined the interrelationships among intercultural communication and the theory of planned behaviour that influence the young generation's willingness to buy EVs in a cross-cultural setting. Therefore, the findings of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the young generation's EV purchase behaviour based on an extended theoretical framework, which contributes to the growth of the EV industry. Future studies may consider replicating and expanding the current research framework to investigate the influence of IC, attitude, SN, and PBC on consumers' willingness to buy a specific EV brand based on a broader population.

In addition, based on the current study's findings, foreign EV managers and stakeholders should not only consistently publicise that they can provide high-quality, high-technology, and high-cost performance of their EVs, but also need to demonstrate that consumers can easily access their pre- or post-service, thus enhancing their confidence to purchase EVs. More importantly, foreign EV brands should educate their staff to provide high-standard service that adapts to and is associated with local culture, such as language, display, and publicity, thus increasing young generation's familiarity and acceptability.

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