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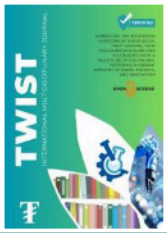

Moderating Effects of Consumer Corporate Identification on the Determinants of Purchase Intention for Local Brand Automobiles in Nigeria

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Abstract
The Nigerian government's keenness to sacrifice local automobile manufacturing in exchange for rents from the international capital has heightened Nigerian consumers' dependence on fairly used vehicles popularly known as *tokunbo*. These unpatriotic practices by successive governments have affected economic development and triggered changes in consumers' product evaluation criteria by adopting mechanisms that reflect their values. Consequently, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Social Identity Theory (SIT) were used to reinforce the moderating effects of consumer corporate identification (CCI) on the effects of attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) on purchase intention for local brand automobiles in Nigeria. About 382 usable questionnaires were collected from Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company's potential consumers in the quantitative and cross-sectional study through a mall-intercept approach. The structural model explained a 60.3% variance in purchase intention. Consumer ethnocentrism (β =.58, p < .001) significantly influenced attitudes; attitudes (β =.71, p < .001) significantly predicted purchase intention for local brand automobiles more than PBC (β =.141, p < .007). Multiple group analyses revealed that CCI (low β =.21, p =.047; high β = .05, p = .426) significantly moderated only the effect of PBC on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria. The integration of SIT enhanced the robustness of TPB in strengthening purchase intention. Companies must ensure that consumers trust their CCI to increase its benefits and further align the levels to perceived expectations.

Keywords
Automobile purchase intention, Consumer corporate identification, Innoson vehicle manufacturing, Local brands, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The role of automobile industries in the economic development of many countries has been extensive. Yet, Africa seems to be a laggard in global automobile production (Ugwueze, Ezeibe, & Onuoha, 2020) and remains the second fastest-growing market for used vehicles imported from outside the continent (Xcom Africa, 2015). Although South Africa, Morocco, Algeria, and Egypt have somewhat well-established automobile manufacturing centers (Carmody, 2017; Maturana, Salmon, Espinosa, & Brekelmans, 2015), other countries in the continent, including Nigeria, serve as sales outlets for new and used vehicles, popularly known as *tokunbo* (International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers, 2016).

Nigeria's automobile industry has operated for over five decades (Ugwueze et al., 2020). The sector was prompted by private non-indigenous operators in the early 1960s (Agbo, 2011). However, local and international observers undoubtedly profile the industry as a nursery or at a beginning stage. This is consequent to the Nigerian government's keenness to sacrifice local automobile manufacturing in exchange for rents accruing from international capital (Albert, 2018; Ikpe, 2014). For instance, there was a grand conspiracy by some international automobile manufacturers, Guarantee Trust Bank, and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to strangulate the operations of the only local brand automobile firm, Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing (IVM) at all costs because of IVM's inroads into Nigeria's automobile market which is capable of dislodging foreign automobiles in local markets (Osigwe, 2017).

As a result, the automobile market in Nigeria is yet to experience major success capable of generating competitive industrial development (Ugwueze et al., 2020). Certainly, if Nigeria strengthens local automobile production through the enactment of pro-local products' usage/adoption policies, many significant feats such as offering jobs to the citizenry and contributing reasonably to gross domestic product (GDP) would be achieved. Hence, both scholars and practitioners are mystified by Chang, Liao, and Wu's (2017) statement: automobile advancements have greatly contributed to the economic development of many countries and significant changes to consumers' lives. The feasibility of Chang and Co's statement in the Nigerian context is a paradox due to horizontal sentiments in the government's stance towards the only local automobile manufacturer; thus, it is important to understand the landscape of purchase intention for local brand automobiles in Nigeria.

Purchase intention is among the most common ways marketers adopt to gain an understanding of consumers' actual purchases (Ghalandari & Norouzi, 2012). Research shows that attitude toward purchase intention, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) affect automobile (both conventional and alternative fuel/new energy vehicles) purchase intention (Adnan, Nordin, Amini, & Langove, 2018; Du, Liu, Sovacool, Wang, Ma, & Li, 2018).

In the wake of the above empirical evidence, attitude is the most dominant predicting factor of automobile purchase intention among other psychological constructs (cf. Wang, Wong, Elangkovan, & Chee, 2019; Hamilton & Terblanche-Smit, 2018; Wang, Wiegerinck, Krikke & Zhang, 2013). Moreover, we assert that where a study is focused on citizens' or residents' purchase intention for local products in the same country, beliefs (such as consumer ethnocentrism) are the center point of consumers' decision-making. Therefore, an antecedent (consumer ethnocentrism) of the most dominant predictor of purchase intention among other psychological constructs will be investigated.

Consumer ethnocentrism (CE) influences attitudes/preferences toward purchase intention for local automobiles/products (Chinedu, Haron, Hashim, & Ho, 2021; Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019). Besides, highly ethnocentric consumers have more favorable attitudes toward locally manufactured products (Yildiz, Heitz-Spahn, & Belaud, 2018).

In addition, CCI moderates the effects of different predictors on consumer purchase intention (Marin, De-Maya, & Rubio, 2018; Verlouw, 2015; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003), and different levels of CCI moderate purchase intention (Wu & Tsai, 2008). However, the CCI levels of automobile companies are nebulous. Thus, while CCI reawakens consumers' cognitive state concerning purchase intention, its moderating capacity or the particular level that moderates automobile purchase intention is unclear.

Our literature search identified four issues worthy of consideration: change in consumers' product evaluation criteria from what it used to be in the past (Medley, 2019) through the adoption of mechanisms that reflect their values or beliefs to gain specific benefits (Lee, Tesfayohannes, & Kuo, 2020); lack of studies that investigated CE in the Nigerian automobile sector; lack of studies that explained purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria; researchers' inability to explore Bhattacharya and Sen's (2003) proposition on CCI and its implications on purchase intention in Africa and automobile setting. Therefore, the objectives of this study are: (i) to test the influence of CE on attitudes toward purchase intention, (ii) to determine the predictive effects of attitudes toward purchase intention, subjective norm, and PBC on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria, and (iii) to test the moderating effect of CCI on the effects of attitudes toward purchase intention, subjective norm, and PBC on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria.

Theoretical Background

This study is based on two theories (the Theory of Planned Behavior, and Social Identity Theory). TPB's main argument is that attitude towards behavior, subjective norm, and PBC predict behavioral intention, while behavioral intention determines actual behavior (Haustein & Jensen, 2018). PBC can also directly influence behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In line with our earlier stance that attitude is the most dominant psychological construct in predicting automobile purchase intention (cf. Hamilton & Terblanche-Smit, 2018; Wang, Wiegerinck, Krikke & Zhang, 2013), and the study's focus on local brand products manufactured locally, we incorporate consumer ethnocentrism (CE) as an antecedent of attitude towards intention. Notably, more than 4,200 studies in the Web of Science database have empirically scrutinized TPB and found it to have received extensive attention in areas such as the health sciences, environmental science, business and management, and educational research studies (Bosnjak, Ajzen, & Schmidt, 2020). While we concur with TPB's robustness in diverse fields, we consider Ajzen's nod to modify TPB, and prioritize Eagly and Chaiken's (1993) argument that measures of ethical/moral obligation be added to TPB. This is because the original TPB does not include ethical or social issues, and adding such a measure represents an individual's internalized moral rules, which reflect their personal beliefs about right and wrong (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, Shiu, & Shaw, 2006). Moreover, moral obligation should be a two-way factor, especially in a marketing context (Chinedu, Haron, Hashim, & Ho, 2023). Consequently, the study

incorporates moral obligations from a social identity perspective that addresses the concerns of consumers and companies simultaneously.

Social Identity Theory (SIT), proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), is a three-dimensional theory: social categorization, social identification, and social comparison. Social categorization implies consumers being categorized for easy identification and understanding of group members, social identification entails consumers adopting the identity of the group that one belongs to and following the actions or behaviors of perceived members based on the group's norms, while social comparison bothers on discriminating against non-member group and is carried out by a particular group against another group. Social identification and social comparison support consumer ethnocentrism through consumers' understanding that a local manufacturing company logically identifies itself and shares the burdens of local consumers via the employment of locals and manufacturing of products that stand for local consumers' interests, and consumers socially compare local companies against foreign companies via enforcement of borders through boycotts of foreign products. On the other hand, the three dimensions reinforce CCI through a firm's categorization of a certain consumer group as people that will benefit from their philanthropic gestures, the realization that they share a certain identity (e.g., low carbon emission) with the consumer group and address the social issues to boost group esteem, and thereafter, the identified consumers enforce social comparisons. Furthermore, due to consumers' adoption of mechanisms that reflect their values or beliefs to gain specific benefits (Lee et al., 2020), we reason that CCI will moderate the effects of attitude, subjective norm, and PBC on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Attitude is the degree to which the performance of a behavior is estimated positively or negatively (Haustein & Jensen, 2018); a product of knowledge and utility functions (Katz, 1960). In an automobile purchase setting, attitude is the function of individual and ecological concerns (Afroz, Masud, Akhtar, Islam, Duasa, 2015). This is an indication that individual concerns shape consumers' attitudes toward automobile purchase intention, with the favorability and vice versa of a certain attitude based on ecological concerns. Several links between attitude and automobile purchase intention have been established in the literature. For example, a two-stage study that identified and characterized potential electric vehicle adopters in Canada revealed that vehicle adoption intention is mostly influenced by attitude towards vehicle adoption intention (Mohamed, Higgins, Ferguson, & Kanaroglou, 2016). A Chinese study conducted by Wang, Fan, Zhao, Yang, and Fu, (2014) found that consumers' attitudes influenced the intention to adopt hybrid electric vehicles. This underscores the implicit relevance of consumers' attitudes toward automobile purchase intention. Many other studies have empirically established the significant influence of attitudes toward automobile purchase intention (Chinedu et al., 2023), and emphasize the distinctions in consumers' deliberation of attitudinal worries about automobile purchase intention. Sequel to the above, attitude is also believed to influence local brand automobiles' purchase intention. Against this backdrop, it is hypothesized that:

> **H_1.** Attitude towards purchase intention significantly predicts purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria

In line with attitude's dominance in predicting automobile purchase intention among other psychological variables (Wang et al., 2019; Hamilton & Terblanche-Smit, 2018), and to highlight the importance of behavioral beliefs (a component of attitude), the study delves into a perceived antecedent of consumers attitude in respect to local brand automobiles manufactured locally. Consumer ethnocentrism (CE) influences attitudes toward local products (Karoui & Khemakhem, 2019; Shu Kumar, Fairhurst, & Kim, 2013), and local brand vehicles produced in Malaysia (Chinedu et al., 2023). A consumer with a high degree of ethnocentrism has a more favorable attitude toward local products than a person committed to his/her place of life (Yildiz et al., 2018). This indicates that CE is crucial in developing attitudes toward purchase intention for local products. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

> **H_{1a}.** Consumer ethnocentrism significantly influences attitudes toward purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria

Subjective norm is an individual's view about the things that should or should not be done in line with the compensation or penalty that may follow the performance of a certain behavior (Pena-Garcia, Gil-Saura, Rodriguez-Orejuela & Siqueira-Junior, 2020). Subjective norm has a significant influence on purchase/adoption intention for environmentally friendly vehicles (Afroz et al., 2015), and green purchase intention (Wang, Zhang, & Wong, 2022). According to Peters and Dutschke (2014), subjective norm only had a significant influence on individuals with little or no interest in battery electric vehicles' purchase, and no influence on battery electric vehicle potential users' intention. It is a construct that is usually used as an antecedent in decision-making (Sandve & Ogaard, 2014) because people are likely to engage in certain actions if their role models think they should do so (Schepers & Wetzels, 2007). This shows the subjectivity inherent in the perceptions of consumers according to their bonds and loyalty to role models. As a result, if subjective norm could influence purchase intention for environmentally friendly vehicles as noted by Afroz et al. (2015), purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured locally could also be influenced by subjective norm because brand endorsers propagating the image of local brand autos manufactured locally will expect their fans to develop purchase intention for local brand automobiles. Given that, it is hypothesized that:

> **H_2.** Subjective norm significantly predicts purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria

Perceived behavioral control (PBC) is the extent to which consumers perceive a behavior or behavioral intention to be under their control (Chinedu et al., 2023). PBC influences the purchase intention of new energy vehicles in China (Du et al., 2018), and conventional automobiles in Malaysia (Chinedu et al., 2023). In a study that identified and characterized potential electric vehicle adopters in Canada, Mohamed et al. (2016) found that PBC is a dominant predictor of electric vehicle adoption, while Hamilton and Terblanche-Smit (2018) evidenced that PBC is the least predictor of green vehicles' purchase intention in South African automobile market. While the sequence of PBC's predictive influence on purchase intention is in contention in the literature, this study posits that the two factors of PBC (beliefs about controllability and self-efficacy) as suggested by Ajzen (2002) could determine a consumer's PBC over automobiles. Hence, where a consumer's belief about controllability and self-efficacy decreases, PBC will likely exert little or no influence on purchase intention and vice versa. Based on the above literature, it is hypothesized that:

H_3. Perceived behavioral control significantly predicts purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria

Consumer corporate identification (CCI) is a cognitive state of self-classification existing between companies and consumers (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003), which encompasses feelings of solidarity and support for the company, sharing of characteristics with the company, and sharing of characteristics with other consumers of a company (Hildebrand, Fernandes, Veloso, & Slongo, 2010). Identification occurs when people perceive atoms of attributes that align with their defining characteristics in an organization (e.g., personality traits, values, demographics) with those that define the category (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994). According to Ran and Zhou (2019), consumers often come into the possession of a sense of identity in the process of relating with companies. This study posits that consumers' sense of identity with a company could only be activated upon the realization of a common value or principle between consumers and the company.

The higher the CCI is, the higher the consumer purchase intention will be (Marin, De-Maya, & Rubio, 2018; Wu & Tsai, 2008); implying that, consumer purchase intention tends to increase based on a high level of CCI and vice versa. While the effects of attitude, subjective norm, and PBC on automobile purchase intention are consistently proven (cf. Du et al., 2018; Hamilton & Terblanche-Smit, 2018; Mohamed et al., 2016; Afroz et al., 2015), we rely on Marin, De-Maya, and Rubio (2018), Wu and Tsai (2008), and Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) to assume that CCI will moderate the effects of the three main constructs of the study. As illustrated in Figure 1, the study's conceptual framework shows the relevant variables and the links between them with their corresponding hypotheses. According to Kenny (2018), a moderator (CCI) would alter the causal effects of attitude towards purchase intention, subjective norm, and PBC on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria. Moderation implies an interference of causal effect: a moderator can increase or even reverse the effects of a predictor variable on an outcome variable (Kenny, 2018). Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H_4. CCI significantly moderates the effects of attitude towards purchase intention on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria

H_5. CCI significantly moderates the effects of subjective norm on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria

H_6. CCI significantly moderates the effects of PBC on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria

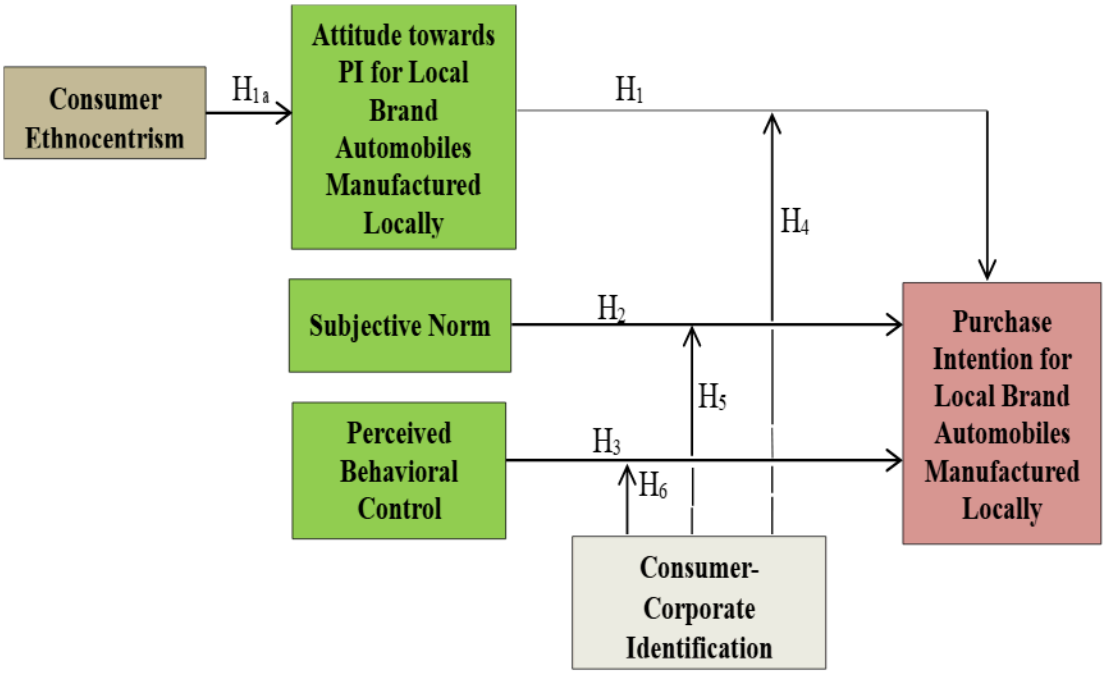

Fig. 1 Conceptual framework

METHODOLOGY

To test the hypotheses of this study, a quantitative research approach was adopted with a cross-sectional survey design.

Sample

In order to determine the purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria, about 385 potential consumers of Innoson vehicle manufacturing (IVM) company were targeted based on Cochrane's (1977) sample size calculation formula. Specifically, a systematic sampling technique was utilized. Before data collection, ethical approval was obtained from Universiti Putra Malaysia's Ethics Committee on Research involving Human Subjects. More so, the researchers sought permission from the management of all the selected malls.

Materials and Data Collection

Measurement scales for the six multi-item constructs (purchase intention, consumer corporate identification (CCI), attitude towards purchase intention, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control (PBC), and consumer ethnocentrism) were adapted from previously validated instruments in the literature. Each construct was measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree. Seven-point Likert scale enables a high volume of variance in a dataset (Chinedu et al., 2021). Apart from purchase intention, which was measured with five items, other constructs were measured with four items respectively. Measures for purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured locally were adapted from Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991). The scale to measure CCI was adapted from Hildebrand et al. (2010); attitude towards purchase intention scale was adapted from Taylor and Todd (1995), and Kim and Han (2010). Subjective norm and PBC were measured with items adapted from Taylor and Todd (1995), and Ajzen (2013). Lastly, the measures for consumer ethnocentrism were adapted from Shimp and Sharma (1987).

Data were collected from potential consumers of IVM through a mall intercept survey with questionnaires at three locations (Jabi Lake Mall, Next Cash and Carry, and Silver Bird Mall) in Abuja, Nigeria between October and December 2019. These malls were selected among the seven biggest malls in Abuja, Nigeria. Previous consumer researchers (cf. Jin-Lee, Phau & Roy, 2013) have validated mall intercept as a robust and reliable means of data collection. In practice, data were collected from every fourth person at the designated data collection posts; where a potential respondent refused to participate, the interval sequence was repeated to get another respondent. However, about 99% valid responses were received from potential consumers of IVM for onward analyses.

Common method bias assessment

Common method bias (CMB) is a measurement concern that arises from response tendencies across measures with similarities in item structure which encourage similar answers via proximity of items in an instrument, resemblances in the medium, timing, or location in which measures are collected (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Thus, in survey research involving a one-time data collection approach, common method bias is of great concern (Dupuis, Khadeer, & Huang, 2017). Concerns about CMB were triggered by the researchers' adoption of a 7-point scale in all the study measures.

CMB was assessed in the study with Harman's single-factor test. The Harman single factor test requires loading all the measures of a study into exploratory factor analysis, with the assumption that the presence of common method variance is indicated by the emergence of a single factor accounting for more than 50% of the variances in the measures (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In all instances, the total variance explained by the single factor with the study's dataset was 40.67%, indicating that CMB is not a pervasive issue in this study.

Model Validation

To validate the model, a pooled confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted with 382 potential consumers of IVM in Nigeria using AMOS version 24. To achieve a good fitness index, RMSEA must be <.08 (Byrne, 2001); Relative Chi-square <5.0 (Bentler, 1990; Marsh & Hocevar, 1985); CFI >.90 (Bentler, 1990); NFI >.90 (Bollen, 1989b; Bentler & Bonett, 1980); and TLI >.90 (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). However, Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010), and Holmes-Smith, Coote, and Cunningham (2006) recommend the use of at least one fitness index from each category of model fit (absolute fit; incremental fit; and parsimonious fit). Based on Hair et al (2010)'s recommendation, the model exhibited satisfactory fit indices: Relative Chi-Sq = 2.396; CFI=.935; TLI= .925; RMSEA= .061 as depicted in Figure 2.

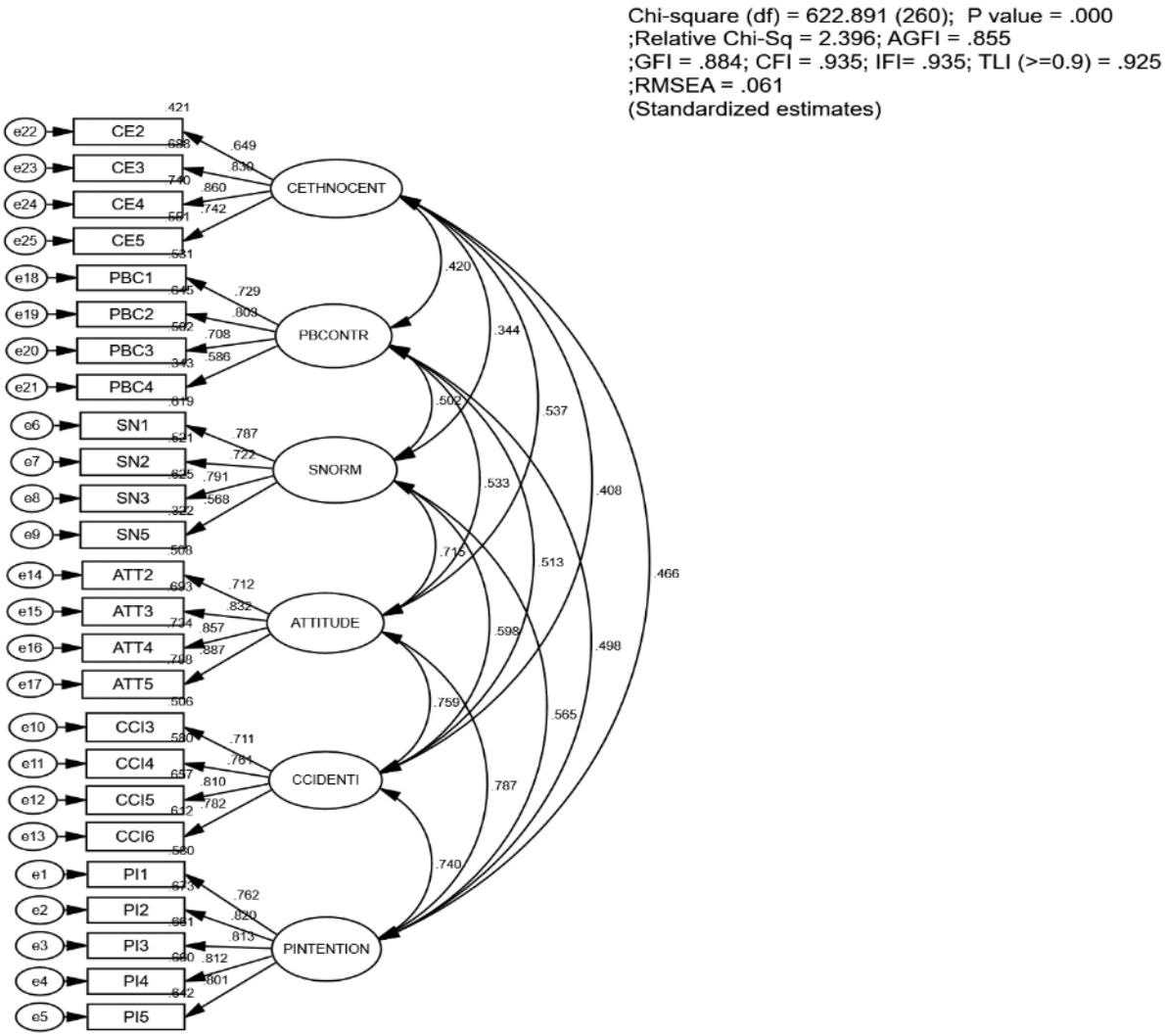

Fig. 2 Measurement model

The internal consistency of the measures was assessed with composite reliability. A reliability value of .70 is sufficient for research purposes (Hair et al., 2010). All the study constructs' reliability ranged between .801 and .902; thus, all the measures are reliable. Also, convergent validity is achieved when all the standardized factor loadings of an instrument are ≥.50 (Hair et al., 2010), and with average variance extracted (AVE) >.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Results revealed that the standardized factor loadings for all the study constructs and their AVE values were >.50. Therefore, the convergent validity of the measures was achieved.

Discriminant validity was examined by comparing the inter-construct squared correlation with individual construct AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 1 shows that all the study constructs' AVEs are greater than their inter-construct squared correlations; therefore, the measures exhibited satisfactory discriminant validity.

Table 1 Reliability, Average Variance Extracted (on the diagonal), and Inter-construct Squared Correlation Coefficients of the Study (on the off-diagonal)

	CR	PI	SN	CCI	ATT	PBC	CE
PI	0.902	**0.649**					
SN	0.811	0.319	**0.522**				
CCI	0.851	0.548	0.358	**0.588**			
ATT	0.894	0.619	0.511	0.576	**0.680**		
PBC	0.801	0.248	0.252	0.263	0.284	**0.505**	
CE	0.856	0.217	0.118	0.166	0.288	0.176	**0.600**

Note: CR= Construct reliability; PI= Purchase intention; CCI= Consumer corporate identification; ATT= Attitude; SN= Subjective norm; PBC= Perceived behavioral control; CE= Consumer ethnocentrism

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS AND RESULTS

The respondents' characteristics (gender, age, educational level, and monthly income) are summarized in Figure 3. It covers the respondents' age and monthly income mean.

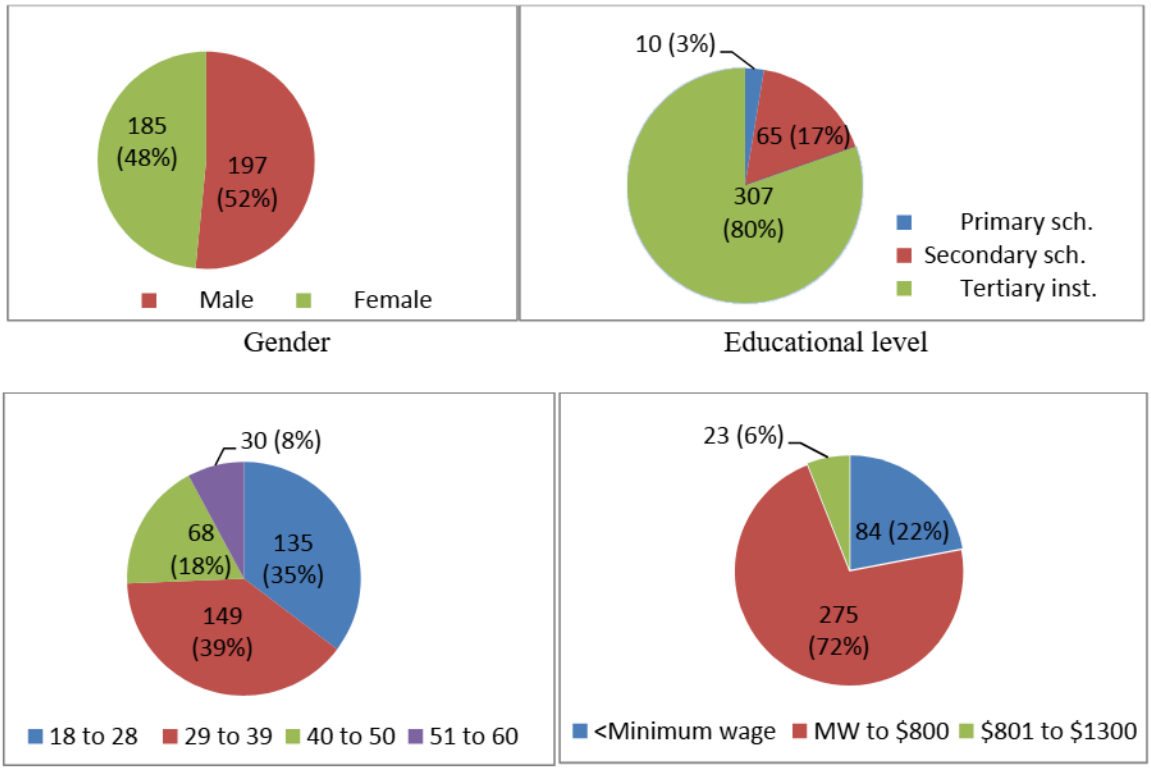

Fig. 3 Charts of respondents' characteristics

Results

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted to determine the influence of consumer ethnocentrism (CE) on consumers' attitudes towards purchase intention, and the predictive effects of attitude towards purchase intention, subjective norm, and PBC on purchase intention for Innoson automobiles manufactured in Nigeria. As depicted in Figure 4, CE explained a 33.4% variance in attitudes toward purchase intention, while the entire constructs in the model (CE, attitude, subjective norm, and PBC) explained a 60.3% variance in purchase intention for Innoson automobiles manufactured in Nigeria. This shows the theoretical compatibility and relevance of the constructs in the model.

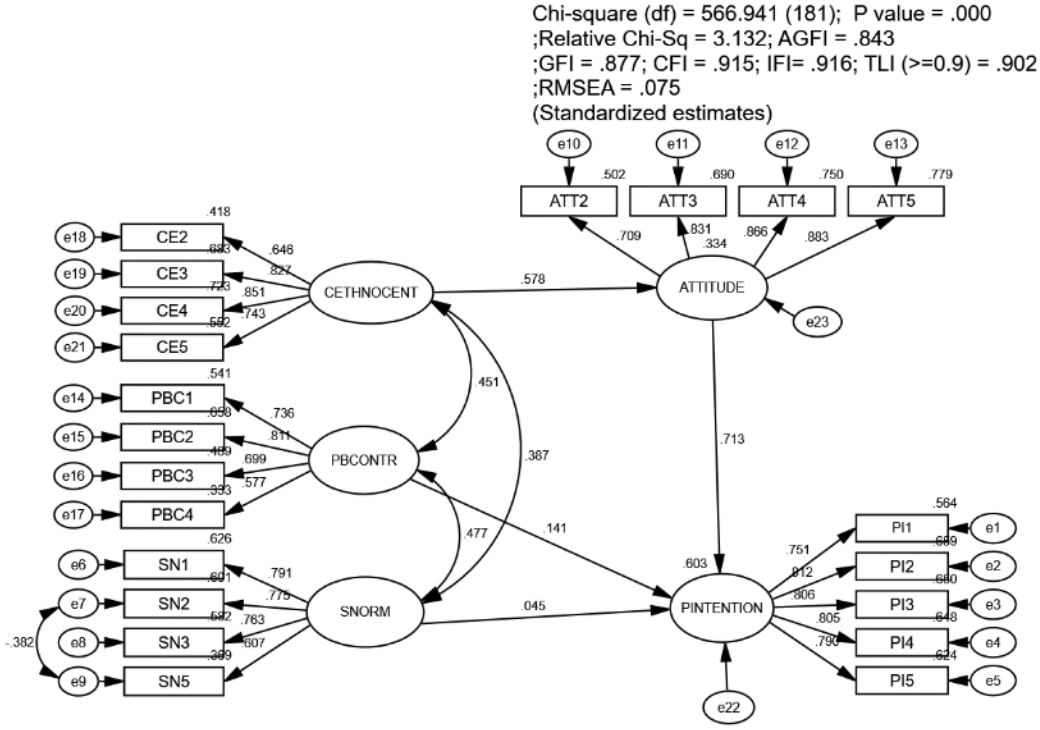

Fig. 4 Structural model

Accordingly, consumer ethnocentrism (CE) was entered into the current research model as an antecedent of attitude towards purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria, whereas attitude towards purchase intention, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) were added into the same model as direct predictors of purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria. Attitude towards purchase intention (β =.71, p

< .001) significantly and positively predicted purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria. Sequel to this finding, H_1 was supported: Attitude towards purchase intention significantly predicts purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria.

Similarly, consumer ethnocentrism (β =.58, p < .001) significantly and positively influenced attitudes toward purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria. Based on this outcome, H_{1a} was supported: Consumer ethnocentrism significantly influences attitudes toward purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria.

Surprisingly, subjective norm (β =.045, p = .370) was unable to significantly predict purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria. In line with this result, H_2 was not supported: Subjective norm does not significantly predict purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria.

As shown in Table 2, PBC (β =.141, p = .007) significantly and positively predicted purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria. Following this, H_3 was supported: PBC significantly predicts purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria.

Table 2 Summarized Results of Structural Paths

Path	Hypotheses	β standardized	Cr	p value	Results
Attitude → PI	H1	.713	11.057	.001	Accepted
CE → Attitude	H1a	.578	8.513	.001	Accepted
SN → PI	H2	.045	.897	.370	Rejected
PBC → PI	H3	.141	2.687	.007	Accepted

Note: PI=Purchase intention; CE= Consumer ethnocentrism; SN= Subjective norm; PBC= Perceived behavioral control; Cr= Critical ratio

To test hypotheses 4 to 6, the study employed multiple group analyses (MGA) with the full model to estimate the moderating effects of consumer corporate identification (CCI) on the predictive effects of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control (PBC) on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria. MGA is a statistical method that allows testing the differences in path coefficients between two groups (Bae, 2011). For this purpose, CCI was categorized into two (low and high), and further employed in different models to test their respective moderating effects. The difference between the effects of the two categories of CCI was estimated by comparing significant Chi-Square (χ^2 <.05) between unconstrained and measurement residual models. Where the unconstrained model is better (with smaller χ^2) than the measurement residual, it is concluded that moderation exists and vice versa (cf. Hair et al., 2010). The difference in the Chi-Square value between the measurement residual and unconstrained model = 149.160, p < .001. Therefore, it is concluded that the structural model is moderated by CCI. This result is in line with the findings of Marin, De-Maya, and Rubio (2018). Table 3 depicts moderation decision criteria and the moderation results of the structural paths.

Table 3 Moderation Decision Criteria and Results for the Model

Constructs	CCI(β)		Measurement Residual	Unconstrained model	$\Delta\chi^2$
	Low (n=85)	High (n=297)			
χ^2			990.663	841.503	149.160***
DF			412	362	50
ATT	.857***	.570***			
SN	-.043	.042			
PBC	.212*	.052			

***Note*:** CCI= Consumer corporate identification; β= standardized coefficient; χ^2= Chi-Square; $\Delta\chi^2$= Change in Chi-Square; ***= Significant at <.001; *= Significant at <.05; DF= Degree of freedom; ATT= Attitude; SN= Subjective norm; PBC= Perceived behavioral control

Specifically guided by Hair et al. (2010) criteria: A structural path is moderated if the beta for group 1 is significant while a beta for group 2 is not, or beta for both groups is significant; however, one of the groups is positive while the other is negative. A comparison of the standardized coefficients between the two groups of CCI (low and high) with the related probability values was used to decide the constructs that were moderated by CCI. MGA results revealed that CCI (low β=.21, p =.047; high β= .05, p = .426) significantly moderated the predictive effects of PBC on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria. Based on this result, H_6 was supported. CCI significantly moderates the effects of PBC on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria. On the other hand, levels of CCI did not moderate the predictive effects of attitude and subjective norm on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria. As such, H_4 and H_5 were not supported: CCI does not significantly moderate the effects of attitude, and subjective norm on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria respectively.

Discussion

The result on the effects of attitudes toward purchase intention on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured locally is supported by Chinedu et al. (2023) and Wang, Zhang, and Wong (2022) who established that

attitudes influence the intention to purchase local brand vehicles in Malaysia, and green purchase intention respectively. This implies that potential consumers' attitudes are significant determinants of purchase intention for local autos manufactured in Nigeria. In addition, it demonstrates that the more favorable consumers' attitudes toward purchase intention are, the higher the purchase intentions for local automobiles manufactured in Nigeria will be. This is undoubtedly a product of knowledge and utility functions of attitude (Katz, 1960). Consumers' attitudes are bound to change when they compare recent information to previous notions held about a product (Novack, 2010), and how the usage of a product maximizes the happiness and well-being of the majority (Sidgwick, 1907). If consumers are aware of the benefits they will derive from the usage/intention to purchase a local brand auto and the satisfaction that comes from it, they will likely exhibit positive and significant attitudes toward purchase intention.

The positive and significant influence of CE on attitudes toward purchase intention for local brand automobiles is in tandem with Chinedu et al. (2021) and Yildiz et al. (2018) who found that CE influences attitudes toward local brand vehicles produced in Malaysia and that a consumer with a high degree of ethnocentrism has a more favorable attitude toward local products. This implies that IVM's potential consumers are resolved in their quest to exhibit positive attitudes toward purchase intention of IVM autos that transcend individual love for certain foreign automobile brands, with higher CE tendencies leading to more favorable attitudes. It also indicates consumers' commitment to their place of life. From a social identity lens, CE reinvigorates consumers' attitudes by establishing social identification and comparison in consumers' psyche in form of a value-expressive function. CE triggers positive-significant attitudes among automobile consumers through the approval of local brand autos based on the benefits and association (perceived) such a product gives to them.

Contrary to extant studies (cf. Chinedu et al., 2023; Wang, Zhang, & Wong, 2022), the insignificant effect of subjective norm on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured locally signifies a relational gap between potential consumers of IVM automobiles and the people around them. Nigerian consumers are fond of imperious display of status symbols via product usage (Vincent-Osaghae & Ugiagbe, 2018), and Nigerian automobile consumers believe in gaining social recognition through the acquisition of classic foreign automobiles. For instance, Punch Newspaper (2020) noted that Nigerian lawmakers ordered foreign exotic cars as their official vehicles. In such instances, potential consumers' subjective norm is sacrificed on the altar of societal recognition.

The present result is consistent with Chinedu et al. (2023) and Du et al. (2018) who found that PBC significantly predicts purchase intention for local brand vehicles and purchase intention of new energy vehicles respectively. The study posits that PBC has an incidental profile undertone. Nigerians often purchase automobiles in cash after saving for a long time (BusinessDay, 2018), and most consumers resort to used cars (The Wall Street Journal, 2011). In spite of IVM's car loan scheme with Sterling Bank of Nigeria (Pulseng, 2016), potential consumers must fulfill a 25% down payment and other conditions (Mrpepe.com, 2016), while other potential consumers are also expected to purchase IVM automobiles on a cash payment basis. This is the main reason why most Nigerian auto users buy *tokunbo* (second-hand) vehicles. It also depends on consumers' ability to either afford the total automobile cash value or a 25% down payment and some other conditions (such as good job security). In any case, it requires a potential consumer to have the ability to order or purchase an IVM auto via the demonstration of confidence in fulfilling the obligatory requirements.

The significant moderating effect of CCI on the effects of PBC on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria implies that shared identity between firms and consumers, and its embeddedness diminishes the hitches that impede purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured locally among IVM potential consumers. As stated in the literature, purchase intention of identified consumers is higher than that of less identified consumers (Marin, De-Maya, and Rubio, 2018). The significant moderating effect of CCI on the effects of PBC on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured locally suggests that CCI dampens the effects of PBC on IVM potential consumers' purchase intention. Consumer corporate identification begets several organizational benefits (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Hence, in the wake of the establishment of CCI, behavioral controls on consumers' purchase intentions diminish. This could be achieved through consumer-corporate agreements that embed an attractive and similar identity between them and thereafter, enhance consumer well-being.

In line with Marin, De-Maya, and Rubio (2018), a high level of CCI ought to moderate the effects of PBC on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured locally. However, this study found a synergistic interaction effect based on the significant standardized coefficients as reported in Table 3 above. One reason for the significantly low CCI that moderated the effects of PBC on purchase intention could be a mismatch in perceived identity between IVM Company and its potential consumers' beliefs. Identification transpires when a person's beliefs about a relevant Organization become self-defining (Pratt, 1998). IVM potential consumers tend to misconceive high CCI as a ploy to subject them to the whims of the firm which could be contrary to their dispositions. In such a situation, Kramer's (1991) assertion of consumers' identification with firms in a contextual manner comes into operation. More so, potential consumers of IVM may perceive the high CCI of the company as contrary to their identity beliefs due to their marginal monthly income which may inhibit full compliance with the IVM car loan scheme. Consequent to the conditions (25% down payment or complete cash purchase scheme and other obligatory requirements), the study asserts that IVM potential consumers are doubtful and skeptical of the high CCI engagement of IVM Company that may diminish their PBC. This suggests that potential IVM consumers have no identity trustworthiness on IVM high CCI engagements. Hence, PBC remained significant in the face of zero or low CCI towards IVM potential consumers.

Surprisingly, CCI did not significantly moderate the effects of attitude and subjective norm on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured locally. This could be attributed to Nigerian consumers' bossy proclivity (cf. Vincent-Osaghae & Ugiagbe, 2018) and a reflection of earlier results which revealed that subjective norm has no significant effect on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Despite the avowed strength of the extended model of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in buttressing automobile purchase/adoption intention (Chinedu et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2014), the incorporation of Social Identity Theory (SIT) to underpin an antecedent of attitudes (CE) and the moderating variable (CCI) has not just led to the explanation of greater variance in purchase intention; rather, it emphasizes tremendous contributions by providing valuable marketing insights on the influences of CE on attitudes and CCI's moderating roles on TPB's main constructs. Based on the results, it is concluded that CE positively influences attitude; attitude and PBC positively predict purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured locally. However, the study settled that in a developing country such as Nigeria where social affinity is sacrificed on the altar of status symbols via self-domineering dispositions, the predictive ability of subjective norm is insignificant. Furthermore, even though CCI moderated the effects of PBC on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured locally, the study submitted that the interaction effect was stronger with a low CCI level. Thus, different products' PBCs with varied consumer beliefs propel dissimilar interaction effects with various CCI levels. Consequently, several specific conclusions that are worthy of highlighting have been drawn from this study ranging from theoretical to practical.

One of the theoretical contributions of this study is that it empirically validated the integration of Social Identity Theory (SIT) to enhance the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). CE and CCI were reinforced in the study by SIT and thereafter improved the robustness of TPB. In line with Bhattacharya and Sen's (2003) propositions, the study specifically established the empiricism cum how social identification and comparison as enshrined in SIT reawakens consumers' consciousness in a decision-making process. In the wake of scanty literature on the influence of CE on attitudes toward purchase intention for local products in a developing country, this study supported Chinedu et al. (2021) and provided more insights on the usefulness of CE as an antecedent of attitudes toward purchase intention.

In addition, this study unveiled the overbearing effects of attitudes on purchase intention over other TPB constructs. Even though Wang et al. (2019) and Wang et al. (2013) noted it, certain gaps needed to be explained: Firstly, knowledge and utility functions of attitude (Katz, 1960) espouse decision processes to maximize individual happiness. Thus, when consumers compare recent information to previous notions held about a product (Novack, 2010) and its utility, their attitudes toward the product's purchase intention might change and become overbearing. Secondly, consumers' attitudes toward purchase intention could become overbearing as a result of ego-defensive tendencies. Ego-defensive attitude causes individuals to repudiate themselves from experiencing disturbing aspects of attitudes via compromised product standards (Narayan, 2010), and in turn undermine their social circle.

Furthermore, although the moderating role of CCI on purchase intention has been investigated in previous studies (Marin, De-Maya, & Rubio, 2018; Wu & Tsai, 2008), the interaction effect of various CCI levels varies on the bivariate relation between PBC and purchase intention in different contexts. Hence, the study offers a new piece of knowledge: A low CCI with identity trustworthiness catalyzes purchase intention more than a high CCI with identity mismatch.

In terms of practice, the results of this study indicated that CE positively and significantly influences attitudes toward purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured locally; attitudes and PBC positively and significantly predicted purchase intention; and CCI significantly moderated the effects of PBC on purchase intention for local brand automobiles manufactured locally. One fundamental implication of the findings is that in societies with high numbers of ethnocentric consumers, positive attitudes toward purchase intention for local brand products will surge because ethnocentric consumers' approval of local products is hinged on the perceived benefits they derive from them. Local companies could cash in on this edge by extending the perceived benefits for ethnocentric consumers via increased employment quota, advertisements, awareness campaigns on the products' value-expressive features, reduction in product prices, enhanced product quality, and incorporation of local icons. On the other hand, this poses a herculean task to marketers of foreign products as they will require more effort and strategies to neutralize the influences of value-expressive tendencies of CE.

The results of this study also imply that purchase intention for local brand autos will likely wane if potential consumers fail to improve their profiles. In a developing country like Nigeria with high economic uncertainties, purchase intention for a local automobile on a cash payment basis is unlikely to thrive; similarly, stringent conditions as prerequisites to purchasing a local automobile on a loan basis may not be met easily by a lot of prospective local auto purchasers due to factors such as lack of job security, high inflation rate, and inconsistency in government policies. In the wake of these precarious economic situations, local brand automobile purchase intentions tend to drop. To salvage this economic impasse, local brand auto manufacturers should reduce the down payment amount to less than 10 percent to rouse purchase intention for their products, and further embark on rent-seeking.

The last but not the least implication is that CCI will not be effective on consumers if trustworthiness is not entrenched. This transcends CCI levels in reawakening consumers' consciousness on the moderating effect of CCI on the effects of PBC on purchase intention. If consumer corporate identification is not self-defining and trusted, it will be misconceived by consumers. Therefore, companies ought to ensure that consumers trust their CCI to enhance its benefits

to the stakeholders and further align the levels to perceived expectations. Anything short of this will amount to futile efforts in their CCI engagements.

The major limitation of this study is the location and design. The collection of data in the Federal Capital Territory alone despite its diversity may have affected the results. In addition, being a cross-sectional study, no definite conclusions can be drawn on the causality of the relationships in this research. Lastly, although intention is a proximal antecedent of behavior, it may not always lead to actual behavior due to factors such as time. Therefore, future studies should extend their study locations to more cities besides Abuja to incorporate the views of potential consumers in other parts of Nigeria. They should also employ a longitudinal design for conclusive results on the causality of the relationships and interaction effects. Bearing in mind that time is a crucial factor in human life, the purchase behavior of consumers should be investigated to draw a definite posture of Nigerian consumers toward local brand automobiles.

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