



Advance Journal of Econometrics and Finance

Vol-4, Issue-1, 2026

Advance Journal of Econometrics and Finance

Online ISSN

2959-8990

Print ISSN

2959-8982

<https://ajeaf.com/index.php/Journal/About>

Name of Publisher: SCHOLAR CRAFT EDUCATION & RESEARCH HUB

Review Type: Double Blind Peer Review

Journal Frequency: Quarterly Research Journal



Accelerating Customer Purchase Intention in The Commercial Automotive Sector: An Interplay Between Brand Image, Trust, Sustainable Advertising, And Employee Engagement

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	Abstract
<p>Syed Muhammad Habib Ur Rehman¹ PhD Students of ILMA University, Karachi Email: habi13d2@gmail.com</p> <p>Khan Khalil Akhtar Khan^{*2} PhD Students of ILMA University, Karachi Email: khalil.s.akhtar@gmail.com</p>	<p>The commercial automotive sector has become more competitive and challenging due to its transformation from simple to digitised technology, making marketing strategies intensive and demanding. Understanding consumer purchase intention is pivotal for devising a result-oriented marketing strategy in the commercial automotive sector. This quantitative study evaluates the impact of brand trust and image on consumer purchase intention, with sustainable advertisement attitude as a mediating actor. We approached 350 commercial automotive users of various demographics, of which 292 have replied. Data was collected via structured questionnaires and analysed using the SmartPLS structural equation model. The study provided valuable insights into how brand trust and image significantly impact consumer purchase intention. The study also suggests how moderation and mediation analysis of employee engagement and sustainable advertisement influence the relationships positively, highlighting the importance of considering advertising sustainability and employee engagement in strategy to enhance consumer purchase decisions.</p>
Keywords:	Brand Image, Brand Trust, Sustainable advertisement, Purchase Intention

Introduction

Due to increased consumer concern for sustainability and ethical practices, the commercial automotive industry is going through a shift (Montemayor & Chanda, 2023). Actors like brand trust (BT) and brand image (BI) occasionally influence consumer purchase intention (CPI) (Liang et al., 2024). However, growing concern over environmental responsibilities needs to evaluate how sustainable advertisement attitudes influence these relationships (Sander et al., 2021). The automotive industry has now been subject to sustainable sector performance. Sustainable advertisements attitude (SAA) prioritises the outcomes in the context of environmental performance (Jasiński et al., 2021). Engaged employees can win the customer purchase intention to gain credibility and trust (Khan & Fatma, 2023). The automotive sector is aware that stakeholders are conscious that customer behaviour can not only be regulated by brand trust or brand image but also requires sustainable initiatives, which must be advertised to engage them (Singh et al., 2022). Marketing standards have changed over time, and customers are becoming part of a sustainable environment (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021). The automotive sector must set strategies to gain value by producing environment-friendly autos to drive customers' purchase intention (He et al., 2021). Evaluating customers' intention to buy a new vehicle is not simple, but many motivational and derivational aspects work behind a single purchase (Chin et al., 2024). A marketing strategy must be devised to address this complex phenomenon. Many studies have been conducted in the field of the automotive sector to evaluate the purchase intention phenomena, e.g., (Fu, 2024; Sánchez-Iglesias et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024; Ayub & Kusumadewi, 2021) they have tried best to know the purchase intention and factors affecting such purchase intention, but they examine it from brand image or brand loyalty and purchase intention for used cars. However, this study looks at how growing concern over environmental responsibilities has to be addressed by grasping the sustainable advertisement attitudes and engaging employees that influence purchase intention by creating relationships between brand image, brand trust and customer purchase intention and how these relationships can effectively be made in line with their marketing strategies while evolving consumer values within the commercial, automotive sector.

The study is arranged in the following sequence. The Theoretical sequence offers hypothesis development following the evaluation of the prevailing literature. Consequential to the prevailing literature. The study results are based on the empirical analysis of the collected data. Discussion has been generated on the results. The study's implications are confined to practical and theoretical ones. Conclusions and limitations have been defined based on the research.

1.1 Theoretical Foundation

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Ajzen (1991) is a suitable theoretical framework for your study. TPB explains how individual attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence behavioural intentions, which aligns well with the study on consumer purchase intention in the commercial automotive sector (Asyraf et al., 2023). Since the study involves brand trust, brand image, and sustainable advertisement attitude as factors affecting consumer purchase intention, TPB can explain how these factors shape consumer behaviour (Shah et al., 2023).

3. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Brand Image and Customer Purchase Intention.

Brand image encompasses the perceptions and associations consumers hold regarding a brand. A positive brand image can enhance consumer preference and loyalty, increasing purchase intentions (Parris & Guzmán, 2023). In the commercial automotive sector, brand image has the same characteristics as in the fields of other products and services, e.g., the logo is considered an ownable asset, and customers believe in the logo as compared to slogans and colours (Fiocchi & Esfahani, 2024). The brand is a way to communicate to the market to capture the mental structure of the buyer and drive his buying intention (Arora et al., 2019). A strong Brand image strengthens competitive advantages, and consumer inspiration positively impacts production (Alam et al., 2021). However, the effect of consumer pressure is more considerable, and it always raises awareness among decision-makers (Zaman & Kusi-Sarpong, 2024). Although production and inventiveness have a constructive role in strengthening competitive advantages in the commercial automotive sector, they have become more assertive. At the same time, it contributes to competitive advantage through the brand image to win the customer's purchase intention (Sánchez-Iglesias et al., 2024). Literature predicts that a company's brand image positively drives the customer's intention to purchase products and services (Tahir et al., 2024). Keeping in view the analysis of the above-mentioned studies, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Brand image significantly influences the customer purchase intention.

3.2 Brand Trust and Customer Purchase Intention.

Regarding commercial vehicles, trust in the brand strongly influences purchase decisions. Brand trust is crucial to driving customer buying decisions in the commercial automotive sector (Alfakih et al., 2022). Individuals invest in vehicles that are thought reliable, cost-effective and efficient in progress. They prefer to buy from the brand they

trust as trust is associated with quality, performance, and sale services (Tsai et al., 2025). In the commercial automotive sector, brand trust is a key factor because purchasing a vehicle is a significant investment, and customers need assurance that their investment will provide value over the long term (Alfakih et al., 2022). Several factors, including product quality, brand reputation, customer service, and past experiences, influence trust in a brand (Cardoso et al., 2022). Brands that consistently deliver high-quality vehicles, offer excellent after-sales service and maintain strong customer relationships tend to earn higher customer trust (Vigneshwaran & Mathirajan, 2021). Customers who trust a brand will likely become repeat buyers (Hamzah & Pontes, 2024). Businesses that rely on commercial vehicles prefer to stick with brands they trust rather than take risks with unfamiliar brands. This loyalty promotes positive word-of-mouth marketing (Alharbi et al., 2022). Following the literature evaluation, the mentioned hypotheses below are proposed.

H2: Brand trust significantly influences the intention of customers to purchase.

3.3 Moderating Role of Employee Engagement.

Employee engagement is a commitment to doing jobs for the organisation, emotionally and congenitally. Engaged employees strongly play the role of brand ambassadors, and their efforts create trust and credibility for the customers' beliefs toward their organisation (Van Nguyen et al., 2021). Brand trust and brand image have shown links between internal branding and the psychological engagement of employees (Zhang & Xu, 2021). Employee Expression for demonstrating the brand image and trust drives the promising attitude for brand-building activities (Kaur et al., 2020). External brand loyalty can only be gained when internal branding or internal customers (employees) are empowered, not disputed and motivated (Eid et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2025). Studies like (Ahmad et al., 2014; Park et al., 2014; Salamzadeh et al., 2016) suggested that quality role, commitment, clarity, and effectiveness of employee intention are the basics to make the brand trustworthy and create its influencing image to stay impactful for deriving customers buying intention. Employee engagement influences the relationship between brand trust, brand image, and customer purchase intention and either strengthens or weakens the impact of brand trust and brand image on customer purchase intention (Soleimani et al., 2023). Creating an impactful and engaging environment in an organisation, brand equity, driving customer satisfaction, and increasing purchase intention should be in line (Chen et al., 2021). In conclusion, employee engagement plays a crucial moderating role in the relationship between brand trust, brand image, and customer purchase intention. Based on the review of previously available literature, the following hypotheses have been developed.

H3: Employee engagement moderates the relationship between brand trust and consumer purchase intentions.

H4: Employee engagement moderates the relationship between brand image and consumer purchase intentions.

3.4 Mediating Role of Sustainable Advertisement Attitude

Sustainable advertisement attitude refers to consumers' perceptions and evaluations of a brand's advertising efforts concerning environmental responsibility (Sander et al., 2022). Positive attitudes towards sustainable advertising can enhance brand credibility and appeal, potentially influencing purchase intentions (Zhang et al., 2025). Sustainable advertisement has gained immense attention recently, and companies integrate sustainability into their marketing orientation strategies to build strong brand trust and a positive brand image in the automotive commercial sector (Acciarini et al., 2022; Sander et al., 2021; Javed & Yasin 2025). Customers develop a positive attitude toward a brand's sustainability-focused advertisements; it enhances its overall image and trustworthiness, leading to stronger purchase intentions (Vogel et al., 2024). When the commercial automotive sector highlights sustainability in its advertisements, consumers associate it with responsibility and ethical business practices. This strengthens the brand image, making it more appealing to eco-conscious consumers—a more substantial brand image results in increased customer preference and purchase intention (Mathiyazhagan et al., 2023). The sustainable advertisement promotes eco-friendly, ethical, and responsible business practices, which enhances consumer brand trust, image, and loyalty, leading to stronger purchase intentions in the minds of consumers (Chandran, 2024). Sustainable advertising reassures customers that the brand operates with integrity, further strengthening trust; ethical advertising practices and transparent sustainability initiatives reassure consumers, strengthening brand trust (Günther, 2024). A high level of trust increases customers' willingness to purchase from the brand (Guerreiro & Pacheco, 2021). This paper discusses how a sustainable advertisement attitude influences the relationship between brand image and trust with customer purchase intention. The following the literature analysis below mentioned hypotheses have been developed:-

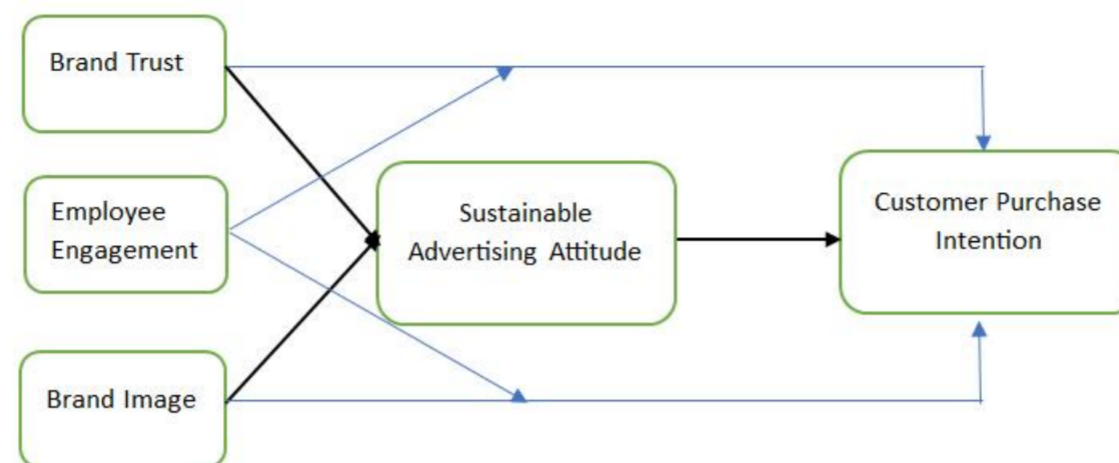
H5: Sustainable advertisement attitude mediates the relationship between brand trust and consumer purchase intentions.

H6: Sustainable advertisement attitude mediates the relationship between brand image and consumer purchase intentions.

3.5 Research Framework

The proposed research framework has been developed based on the hypotheses derived from the literature analysis and empirical inputs of previous studies.

Figure 1.



Resource: Author Created

3.6 Variable Description

Brand image and trust are the independent variables influencing customer purchase intention. Employee engagement is the moderator, and sustainable advertising attitude is a mediator that mediates the relationship between independent and dependent variables, i.e., customer purchase intention.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design using structured questionnaires to collect data from consumers in the commercial automotive sector.

4.2 Population and Sample Selection

The study population was nationwide, predominantly including the commercial sector, serving the transportation, construction, and mining industries. Out of an unlimited population, three hundred fifty commercial users were selected as respondents through stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different demographics, including age, gender, income level, and geographic location. However, only 292 respondents have replied, which is 83 % of the sample, and this is considered the optimal sample of the population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

4.3 Data Collection

Data were collected using an online survey platform, an impactful way of collecting data (Lefever et al., 2007). The questionnaire comprised sections measuring brand trust, brand image, sustainable advertisement attitude, and purchase intentions, utilising validated scales from existing literature. Out of 350 respondents, 292 respondents replied, which is 83 % of the sample. So, the data portrays an accurate picture of the sample. Out of 292 respondents, 129 were female, and 163 were male.

4.4 Measuring Instrument

The measuring instrument was developed based on the previously available measures. To measure the independent variables, i.e., brand trust, e.g., the brand is trustworthy and promising (Butt et al., 2016). Moreover, brand image, e.g., the green products of this company are credible and stable (Chang & Fong, 2010), are measured using five items for each. The sustainable advertisement attitude is a mediator and is measured using five items, e.g., I think the green advertisement is generally reliable (Balaskas et al., 2023). The customer purchase intention is the dependent variable, and it is measured by using four items, e.g., There is a strong likelihood that I will buy from this company (Butt et al., 2016). A five-point Likert scale has been used to measure the construct as “1” strongly disagree to “5” strongly agree (Joshi et al., 2015).

5. Results

5.1 Data Analysis and Descriptive Statistics

The sample comprised 53% males and 47% females, aged 18 to 65. Most respondents held at least a bachelor's degree. The study demonstrates the demographic characteristics in Table 1.

Demographics Characteristics

Categories	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender			
Female	129	47	47
Male	163	53	100
Total	292	100	100
Age (in years)			
20-39	121	41	41
40-49	113	38	79
50-59	43	15	94
60 Above	15	6	100
Total	292	100	-
Education			
Graduation	153	52	52
Above	139	48	100
Total	292	100	-

5.2 Model Fitness

The structural model is the portrayal of the path theorised in the research framework, and it is assessed based on R², Q², and the significance of the path (Guenther et al., 2023). The goodness model is determined by the value of R², which should be equal to or over 0.1. Moreover, the value Q² and SRMR are also used to establish the path of the model, and Table 2 depicts that the value of Q² is above “0” and SRMR is 0.057, which is a sign of model predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2016). The significance of the path is based on the defined relationships of the variables.

Table 2
Values for Structural Model

	R ²	Q ²	SRMR
CPI	0.371	0.271	0.057

5.3 Construct Reliability and Validity

Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5 depict the loading, reliability and construct validity. Loading of each item is well established, composite reliability (CR) is well above its recommended value, convergent validity (CV) is based on average variance extracted (AVE), i.e., well above the threshold, discriminant validity is evaluated by Hetrotrait-monotrait ratio of correlation, i.e., well established in Table 5.

Table 3.
Loadings, Reliability, and Validity

	Loadings	Cronbach alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
BT * CPI	0.851	0.941	0.962	0.754
BT1	0.842			
BT2	0.856			
BT3	0.854			
BT4	0.823			
BT5	0.835			
BT*SAA	0.932	0.843	0.937	0.826
BT1	0.821			
BT2	0.839			
BT3	0.847			
BT4	0.873			
BT5	0.851			
BI *CPI	0.912	0.883	0.937	0.816
BI1	0.875			
BI2	0.841			
BI3	0.853			
BI4	0.871			
BI5	0.843			

BI*SAA*CPI	0.931	0.853	0.907	0.913
BI1	0.857			
BI2	0.863			
BI3	0.873			
BI4	0.891			
BI5	0.843			
SAA* CPI	0.913	0.862	0.917	0.819
SAA1	0.875			
SAA2	0.861			
SAA3	0.843			
SAA4	0.871			
SAA5	0.893			
EE* BI	0.953	0.862	0.917	0.819
EE1	0.885			
EE2	0.863			
EE3	0.847			
EE4	0.881			
EE5	0.873			
EE*BT	0.943	0.862	0.917	0.819
EE1	0.865			
EE2	0.867			
EE3	0.873			
EE4	0.861			
EE5	0.883			

Table 4.
Fornell Larcker Criterion (Construct Reliability)

	CPI	SAA	BI	BT	EE
CPI	0.872				
SAA	0.892	0.878			
BI	0.881	0.893	0.857		
BT	0.792	0.826	0.624	0.851	
EE	0.782	0.856	0.664	0.871	0.861

Note:- Values in italics represent the square root of AVE

Table 5.
HTMT Ratio (Discriminant validity)

	CPI	SAA	BI	BT
CPI				
SAA	0.964			
BI	0.961	0.991		
BT	0.528	0.586	0.566	
EE	0.528	0.586	0.566	0.671

5.4 Hypothesis Relationships

The structural model exhibited satisfactory fit indices and significance levels among the dependent, independent, and mediator variables, revealing good relations. Hypotheses H1 and H2 were supported, indicating that values of both brand trust ($\beta = 0.458$, $p < 0.001$) and brand image ($\beta = 0.438$, $p < 0.001$) show that both influence positively on consumer purchase intentions. Moderation analysis revealed that employee engagement moderates the relationships between brand trust and purchase intentions (indirect effect = 0.549, $p < 0.002$) and between brand image and purchase intentions (indirect effect = 0.340, $p < 0.001$), supporting hypotheses H3 and H4. Mediation analysis revealed that sustainable advertisement attitude mediates the relationships between brand trust and purchase intentions (indirect effect = 0.554, $p < 0.001$) and between brand image and purchase intentions (indirect effect = 0.495, $p < 0.001$), supporting hypotheses H3 and H4.

Table 6.
Hypothesis Assertion

	B	Std Deviation	t Statistics	P Values	2.50%	97.50%
H1 = BT > CPI	0.458	0.153	3.021	0.001	0.805	0.923
H2 = BI > CPI	0.438	0.168	3.091	0.001	0.402	0.280
H3 = BT > EE > CPI	0.549	0.046	3.033	0.002	0.054	0.121
H4 = BI > EE > CPI	0.340	0.042	3.045	0.001	0.053	0.123
H5 = BT > SAA > CPI	0.554	0.041	4.043	0.001	0.043	0.113
H6 = BI > SAA > CPI	0.495	0.158	2.093	0.001	0.403	0.281

6. Discussion and Future Research Directions

The study finds the significance of brand trust and image in shaping consumer purchase intentions within the commercial automotive sector. The mediation effect of a sustainable advertisement attitude suggests that while traditional brand attributes remain vital, integrating sustainability into advertising strategies enhances consumer engagement and purchase likelihood. These insights align with existing literature emphasising the consumer concern for environmentally responsible business practices has explored the impact of sustainable advertisement attitudes on consumer behaviour; an essential yet underexamined factor is the role of employee engagement as a moderator in this relationship (Mandliya et al., 2020; Ababneh, 2021; Raza et al., 2021; Wanget al., 2022; Gong et al., 2023; Qalati et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2024; Singh et al., 2024). Deeply engaged employees authentically communicate a company's commitment to sustainability and strengthen sustainable advertising efforts' trust and credibility (Yan et al., 2022). When deeply engaged with an organisation's sustainability initiatives, employees are more likely to communicate these values passionately and authentically. This reinforces brand trust among consumers, as they perceive sustainability efforts as genuine rather than superficial marketing tactics (Sobreiro, 2021). Moreover, employees who believe in their company's sustainability mission contribute to transparent and consistent messaging, further strengthening consumer confidence in brand trust and creating a brand image (Stoica & Hickman, 2022). The impact of a sustainable advertising attitude on employee engagement extends to consumer purchase decisions, especially in the commercial automotive sector (Hussain, 2023).

Hence, the study demonstrates the theory of planned behaviour, which means humans, either inner customers (employees) or outer customers, can be regulated by adopting employee engagement policies and sustainable advertisements to earn brand trust and image. These findings suggest businesses seeking to maximise brand trust and image's impact on customer decisions should invest in sustainable advertisements and foster employee engagement. This can be achieved through sustainability training programs, employee involvement in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, and internal communication strategies that reinforce the importance of sustainability efforts (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2021; Sahito et al., 2025). To enhance customer intention, well-known commercial automotive corporates Volvo, Toyota, Mercedes-Benz, and Ford should focus on sustainable advertisement strategies that reinforce brand trust and image while fostering positive consumer attitudes, with engaged employees serving as brand ambassadors to strengthen the impact of brand image and trust.

Future research should explore additional moderating factors such as corporate leadership commitment, industry-specific sustainability challenges, and consumer awareness levels to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the sustainable advertising landscape. Understanding how employee engagement interacts with sustainable advertising strategies across different industries can further enhance the effectiveness of such initiatives in driving consumer purchase intentions.

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