

What does an electronic Buddha mean for senior consumers

H-Y. LO. What does an electronic Buddha mean for senior consumers: Inspiring or assisting? *Gerontechnology 2014;13(2):255*; doi:10.4017/gt.2014.13.02.071.00 **Purpose** Although research suggests that relationships with family are described more positively and rates of depression and anxiety are lower among elderly people¹, seniors may be less motivated to maintain well-being in their remaining life. This study investigates the role of an electronic Buddha to examine (i) whether an affective-oriented technology product can inspire elderly people to age happily and (ii) whether seniors are more willing to purchase such a technology product if they perceive benefits based on their needs, values, and interests. **Method** An electronic Buddha that differs from a traditional static Buddha was used as a study object. The object provides a variety of functions and services such as sutra broadcast, Buddhist holiday reminders, real-time messaging, and other functions. A paper-based questionnaire was used to recruit 240 senior participants. The filter questions were used to distinguish Buddhist and non-Buddhist followers. Based on the literature, this study examined four factors that are considered to correlate with the intent of seniors to purchase the product (i.e., gratification, attachment, perceived value, and appearance). **Results & Discussion** Appearance and gratification are the two most important factors that affect the decision by seniors to purchase the electronic Buddha. There is a significant relationship between attachment behavior and purchase intent in the Buddhist group, but not in the non-Buddhist group. The top five service functions for the Buddhist group (i.e., divination, sutra broadcast, prayer ritual, community dialogue, and inspiring reaction) are related to psychological value. These functions lead to psychological pleasure. The Buddhist group also desires sensory stimulation, which indicates that they derive sensory happiness from the electronic Buddha. For the non-Buddhist group, physiological and ideographic pleasures are of greater importance rather than psychological pleasure. Lastly, if there is improved design of innovative technologies, age will not limit the number of products adopted. The assumption that elderly adults wish to avoid new technology is largely a fallacy. For marketers and manufacturers, the design of new products must be adapted to the needs and preferences of the increasing number of elderly people and focus particularly on psychological factors.

Reference

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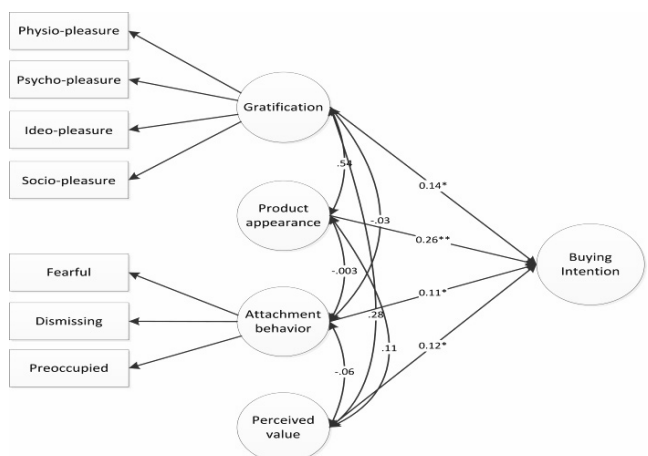


Figure 1. Model 1 (Buddhist); n=120; R²=0.32; ** = p<0.01; * = p<0.05

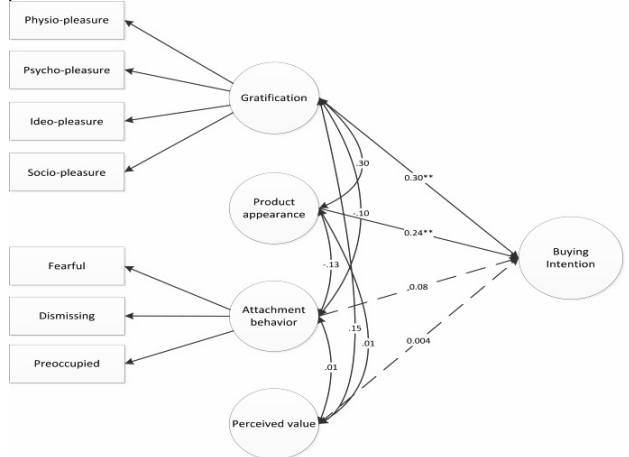


Figure 2. Model 2 (non-Buddhist); n=120; R²=0.41; ** p <0.01; - - =not significant