Center for Advanced Multimodal Mobility Solutions and Education

Project ID: 2022 Project 09

PEDESTRIAN BEHAVIOR AND INTERACTION WITH AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES (PHASE II)

Final Report

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September 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was funded by the Center for Advanced Multimodal Mobility Solutions and Education (CAMMSE @ UNC Charlotte), one of the Tier I University Transportation Centers that were selected in this nationwide competition, by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology (OST-R), U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT), under the FAST Act.

DISCLAIMER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ongoing integration of autonomous vehicles (AVs) into our urban environments represents a fundamental shift in the way cities function and how pedestrians navigate them. Historically, pedestrians have relied on non-verbal cues to interact with human drivers. However, with the rise of AVs, this traditional method of communication is undergoing a transformative change. Infrastructure needs are evolving in tandem with this technology. Modern urban spaces must be designed with both pedestrians and AVs in mind, from crosswalks equipped with new signaling mechanisms to city structures that are compatible with AV sensors. These modifications aim to ensure safety and seamless interaction between AVs and humans. Furthermore, while AVs have the potential to streamline traffic and reduce congestion due to their precision and data-driven capabilities, there are concerns. An uptick in vehicle usage, possibly as a result of the convenience of AVs, could counteract these benefits. Simultaneously, mixed-traffic zones, where human-driven vehicles coexist with AVs, present unique safety challenges that necessitate innovative solutions. Public education emerges as a critical element in this transition. Both pedestrians and traditional vehicle drivers need to understand AV behavior to coexist harmoniously. Similarly, the cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds of different urban populations will impact how they interact with these vehicles, necessitating a flexible and inclusive approach to AV design and policy. On the policy front, as AVs become more prevalent, legal frameworks will require updates to address new challenges related to liability, safety protocols, and data privacy. Environmental considerations also come to the fore, with questions about the carbon footprint of AVs and the sustainability of the accompanying infrastructure. The integration of AVs is reshaping cities, both technologically and culturally. Achieving a harmonious urban future will require a delicate balance between embracing this new technology and catering to the diverse and ever-evolving needs of city inhabitants.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

Pedestrians heavily rely on continuous communication with drivers to gauge immediate reactions [1]. Surveys indicate that pedestrians use eye contact and hand gestures to discern the right moment to cross safely. The majority of human sensory perception is visual, encompassing approximately 80% of our total sensory input, with a horizontal vision span of 170 degrees. When conveying visual information to humans, it's crucial for designers to consider factors such as color selection, brightness, contrast, and viewing angle [2]. Conversely, drivers often use informal cues like turn signals, braking, and flashing hazard lights. Interactions between pedestrians and drivers at intersections commonly involve eye contact, facial cues, and hand signals [3]. Such indicators, including body language and stance, are pivotal in pedestrian-driver interactions [4]. This unspoken exchange determines crossing priority. Implementing overt communication methods with Autonomous Vehicles (AV) could present challenges in traffic dynamics.

While advancements in autonomous driving are progressing rapidly, the nuances of AV and pedestrian interactions remain under exploration. Thus, understanding how pedestrians engage with AVs is crucial. Pedestrians' responses and perceptions towards vehicles under varied circumstances can lay the groundwork for designing effective AV-pedestrian interactions. This leads us to the research inquiry: Do pedestrian behaviors at crossings undergo notable shifts when encountering autonomous vehicles?

1.2 Objectives

The primary goal of this study revolves around understanding the effects of autonomous vehicles on pedestrian behaviors. The first objective of this study is to analyze the influence of autonomous vehicles on pedestrian decision-making factors, including gap acceptance, waiting time, and acceleration rate during road crossings. The 2nd objective is the research will contrast pedestrian responses relative to varying levels of vehicle automation. Finally, the study will investigate the psychophysiological reactions of pedestrians, such as changes in Electrodermal Activity (EDA), blood pressure, and heart rate, when interacting with vehicles of different automation degrees. To enhance the comprehensiveness of the findings, the study will employ a virtual reality lab and compare results across diverse demographic variables, such as age, gender, and income.

1.3 Expected Contributions

This research will advance the current practices in transportation planning, offering deeper insights into emerging technologies and community perspectives. Moreover, the findings from this study have the potential to bolster pedestrian safety at both signalized and non-signalized crossways.

1.4 Report Overview

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2 is a literature review of the previous works on substantive research questions. This section briefly discusses pedestrian behavior while interacting with human-driven or autonomous vehicles.
- Chapter 3 describes in detail the methodology of this project and the data sources that were used.
- Chapter 4 is a synthesis of previously published survey results related to autonomous vehicles technologies was conducted. This study may help provide insights into how public perceptions towards AVs have changed over time and the components that change public perceptions.
- Chapter 5 describes how pedestrians' behavior towards autonomous vehicles can change the transportation planning perspective.
- Finally, the discussion and conclusions are presented in chapter 6.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The emergence of autonomous vehicle technology prompts inquiries regarding its effects on pedestrian behaviors and their interactions with CAVs. Establishing eye contact between drivers and pedestrians has been shown to enhance the likelihood of vehicles yielding to those on foot [5]. In a naturalistic analysis by Nathanael et al. [6], it was observed that when a pedestrian turned their head towards a vehicle, it enabled drivers to confidently deduce the pedestrian's intentions in about 52% of the observed interactions. Direct eye contact between the two parties was noted in only 13% of these cases, with clear signaling occurring in a mere 2%.

Pedestrians often signal their intent to cross the street and engage with drivers through various means. As previously mentioned, these engagements can involve sharing cues, such as establishing an eye connection or using gestures to communicate intentions [7]. Human drivers are equipped to interpret these pedestrian cues and respond appropriately [4]. Similarly, pedestrians have an innate ability to gauge drivers' intents based on driving patterns or hand signals.

However, when dealing with autonomous vehicles (AVs), pedestrians might make inaccurate decisions regarding crossing. They might struggle with perception or comprehension, being uncertain about whether they're interacting with a manually operated vehicle or an AV [8]. Grasping this informal traffic "language" remains a hurdle for autonomous vehicles. Even if a human is present in the driver's seat of an AV, direct communication with a pedestrian may be non-existent. This "driver" could be engaged in non-driving activities, like reading, hence not being attentive to the surroundings [8]. This can lead to ambiguity for pedestrians, who might find it challenging to distinguish between an inattentive driver and someone in an AV. Additionally, regional variances in road communication can complicate decision-making processes for robotic vehicles.

2.2 Intent Perception and Communication

The behavioral psychology of pedestrians is complex, influencing their crossing decisions [9], [10]. Studies show that pedestrian demographics, social, dynamic, and traffic conditions significantly impact pedestrians' crossing intentions [11]. However, pedestrians might behave more unpredictably when confronted with self-driving vehicles than conventional vehicles. Understanding pedestrians' intentions on the road are crucial for autonomous vehicle to infer their possible actions. Future vehicles' challenge is incorporating various contextual information into their pedestrian intention estimation algorithms [12]. Vice-versa, the vehicle's intent should be clear to pedestrians. Hence, another challenge is building a helpful communication mode to communicate the vehicle's intent to human road users [13]. A quasi-experiment conducted by Gueguen et al. [5] states that pedestrians stare or not stare at drivers while approaching an intersection impacts their behavior. Pedestrians are aware of the approaching vehicle, if they are automated or not, and their walking pattern changes. Some participants in this study stopped at the path after noticing an automated vehicle.

Rothenbücher et al. [14] tested their "ghost driver" platform by hiding a human driver inside a seat suit in a car labeled as an automated vehicle. They found that the Wizard-of-Oz automated vehicle did not alter pedestrians' interactions and road-crossing behavior as long as the vehicle did not behave unpredictably at pedestrian crossings and roundabouts. Participants in this study mentioned that they had lower expectations of autonomous cars than human drivers. One participant walking in front of the vehicle stated, "*The risk I took by crossing the intersection was higher than I realized because nobody is behind the wheel of the car*." The result from this study shows that the participants remarked that they "*didn't feel very comfortable*," "*wanted to make sure that it wasn't going to hit me,*" or "*kept an eye out while crossing.*" Furthermore, a study conducted by Rodríguez Palmeiro et al. [27] reported similar results. When pedestrians interacted with Wizard-of Oz automated vehicles where drivers were distracted by other activities or when a car was marked as self-driving, their willingness to cross did not change but altered their behavior.

2.3 Autonomous Vehicle Visual Signals Concepts

Visual Signals have been used on conventional vehicles to communicate driver intention; similarly, the automotive industry is embracing the idea that autonomous vehicles can also use visual signals to communicate their intentions. Some researchers proposed some conceptual solutions for AV and pedestrian communication, including display, light, and projector [15]. Lagstrom and Lundgren (2015) [16] worked with a video-based approach and considered LED strips in different sequences to communicate the different modes of the vehicle (for example, 'about to start: LED strips shrink down toward the center or 'about to yield: LED strips expands toward the sides'). The results indicated that the pedestrians understood the signals after only a short training. The interface replaced the informal communication of a human driver with clearer and more prompt notifications.

These features do not provide a message about the vehicle's intention defined and understood by the general public (without previous training). In 2016, using an online survey with 182 participants, Deb et al. [17] identified pedestrians' expectations for AVs' external features, considering both visual and audible features, and solicited participants' suggestions. Most respondents preferred a visual sign, such as a 'walking pedestrian sign' or a 'timer clock,' indicating the vehicle's intention to stop at a crosswalk. The respondents also recommended including audible interacting features for distracted and visually impaired pedestrians.

In a survey study, Fridman et al. [18] tested 30 design interfaces for different states of an autonomous vehicle using responses from 200 participants. The study recommended using a green 'walk' in text with a pedestrian silhouette for a safe crossing while using 'do not walk' in red and an upraised hand to stop pedestrians from crossing. However, using color alone may confuse based on different road-user perspectives. In another study, Clamann et al. [19] tested various designs for 'walk' and 'don't walk' signs. They concluded that pedestrians are more likely to base their road-crossing decisions on legacy behaviors (for example, the gap between them and the vehicle/s and the vehicle speed) rather than information presented on the external display. However, in this study, a human passenger was present in the driver's seat to control an adverse situation. The human driver's presence in an autonomous vehicle will confuse the pedestrians regarding the vehicle's control. This situation can result in more unpredictable conditions like near misses or crashes. To better understand pedestrians' perception of AV, the researchers used a validated pedestrian simulator [20], which used Unity 3D and an HTC Vive headset. This study's validation results showed that the participants' walking speeds in the simulator matched the average pedestrian crossing rates with a human-driven vehicle. The survey responses also revealed that participants experienced a good sense of presence in the virtual environment and rated the simulator with high usability and realism points.

2.4 Autonomous Vehicles and Pedestrian Trust

Pedestrians may have misplaced trust in AVs and incorrect expectations about the behavior of AVs. For example, if a pedestrian believes that the approaching vehicle is a self-driving vehicle. They may accept a short gap believing that AVs will yield in all cases. On the other hand, pedestrians may cross with a large gap, because they do not trust the AV's capabilities, so the waiting time will increase significantly for pedestrians. Jayaraman et al. [20] used the uncertainty reduction theory (URT) to explain pedestrians' trust in an autonomous vehicle is proportional to their knowledge of it. However, the latest robotics trust researchers suggest that a user's trust in a robot is not entirely dependent on its performance [21] but on its perceived capabilities [22].

2.5 Phyco-Physiological Study of Pedestrians With AV

Despite the progress being made in the pedestrian behavior of pedestrian–AV interaction, there remain several areas that are underexplored. This research will focus on understanding the pedestrians' psychophysiological (e.g., Electrodermal Activity-EDA, blood pressure, and heart rate change) changes while interacting with AV. The psychological response to any changes in daily life is crucial. The psychology of pedestrians will be critical to adjust to this emerging technology. The researchers of the psychological domain are always keen to understand the psychological changes of a person in different situations. It is because psychological changes trigger various decision-making activities for every person. The traditional method of understanding a person's psychological process utilizes the traditional survey or self-reporting-based approaches [23]. However, self-reporting-based approaches possess disadvantages like highly subjective, interpretability issues, variability in replicability, and so on. Hence, different modes of methods are required to overcome these issues.

New technologies are gradually emerging to measure or quantify the psychological responses of a person. Electro Dermal Activity (EDA) is one of them. The EDA is the electrical response of human skin, which is directly related to the sympathetic nervous system of the human body. Hence, a person's psychological changes are correlated with dermal activity [24]. The EDA response data is collected from an EDA sensor, which is often a watch-like device wearied on the hand. This device can record various psychophysiological parameters of its users, which includes EDA, skin temperature (using infrared thermopile), movement of the hand (using 3D accelerometer), and Blood Volume Pulse (using Photo Platysma Graph (PPG) sensor) [25].

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study aims to recognize how a pedestrian understands and measures the response to autonomous vehicles. Pedestrians and other non-motorized users will have to rely on the new technology to understand vehicle intention. This insight into pedestrian behavior could help design the interface for autonomous vehicles. In addition, the effectiveness of a warning system and external features in the interaction of human-driven vehicles and pedestrians can also help inform intersection design for vehicle fleets containing AVs.

3.2 Overall Study Design

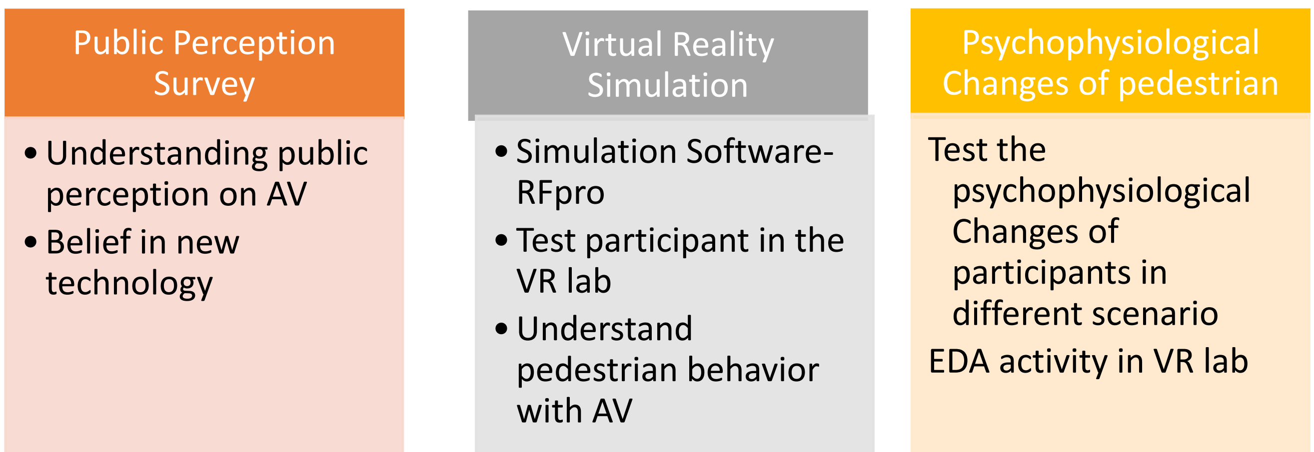

Figure 3-1: Study Design.

This study will be conducted in three phases. In the first phase, the study will complete a questionnaire survey to understand the public perception and pedestrians' expectations of AV technology. The questionnaire survey is developed and deployed via Qualtrics. The 2nd phase of the project involves VR data collection. Finally, phase 3 of this project involves psychophysiological data collection of the pedestrian while interacting with AV in a virtual reality simulation lab to understand pedestrian behavior in the presence of autonomous vehicles.

The study has several categorical independent variables (Intersection type, vehicle type, automation level) and three objective measures as dependent variables. The objective measures include the minimum gap between vehicle and participant, waiting time, and pedestrian walking speed. In addition, the trials included various scenarios for VR study in RFPro.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Public Perception Data Collection via Questionnaire Survey

A questionnaire survey was administered to understand the knowledge and public perception with autonomous vehicle (AV) while crossing an intersection as a pedestrian. This study will help discover more about the expected behavior patterns and challenges experienced by pedestrians with AV technology. From this stated preference survey, we are interested to know about the public perception, challenges, and expectations of AV technology. Survey questions cover knowledge about AV, faith in this technology, transportation preference, and demographic information. The survey questions are in multiple-choice and short answer forms.

3.3.2 Pedestrian Behavior Data Collection in Virtual Reality Simulation

A pedestrian simulator using an RFPro environment and virtual reality headset (available through the Connecticut Transportation Institute's (CTI) VR and Simulation Lab) is utilized in this study. RFPro is a low-cost and easily navigated simulator capable of providing free-movement opportunities for the participants.

RFpro contains several features, including dynamic lighting, spatial audio, physics modeling, and scripting support, to enable the interactions between the objects in the virtual environment. This interface can be used to design a traffic environment like the real world, which could be visually and audibly experienced by wearing a VR headset and walking around a large room free of obstacles. In addition, the head-mounted device provides stereoscopic images, consisting of two images of the same object taken at slightly different angles that are viewed together, creating an improved immersion experience.

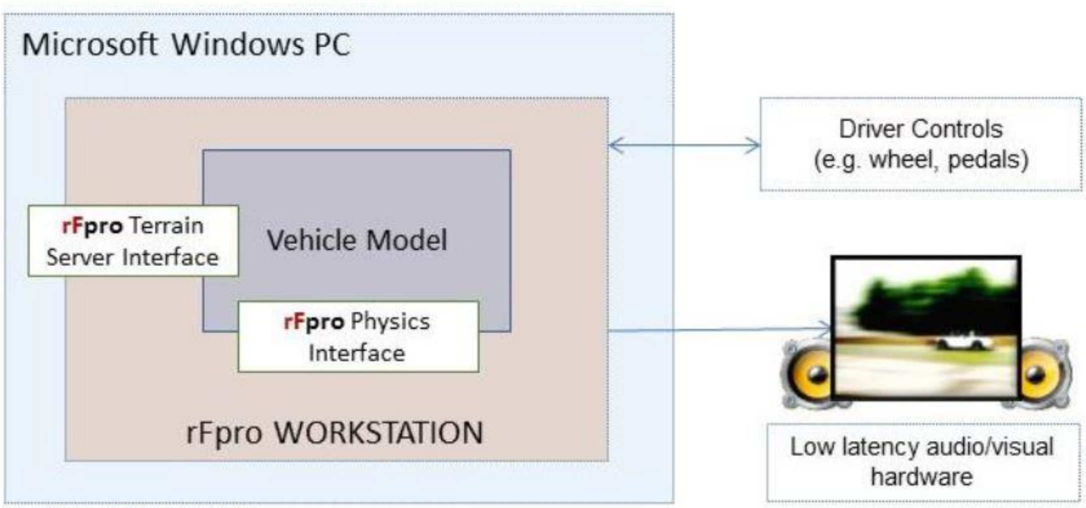

Figure 3-2 An Example of a Generic RFpro Workstation instance.

3.3.3 EDA Data Collection

As stated before, this study will investigate the participants' psychophysiological responses in the virtual environment while interacting with AV. The EDA (Electro Dermal Activity) sensor will measure the psychophysiological changes. The EDA sensor uses skin conductance to record stress levels. The EDA sensor uses a small electrical charge to measure the amount of skin conductivity an individual has on their finger. The greater the control, the greater the skin conductance. The EDA sensor will be synced with the simulation environment in RFpro to collect VR and stress data simultaneously. The participant is expected to wear a VR headset and an EDA sensor on two fingers in one hand. Shimmer3 GSR + Unit SR 48- 3- 0 and Shimmer3 EXG Unit SR 47- 4- 0, these two devices from imotion will be used to collect the EDA data.

3.4 Participant Selection

A total of 30 participants will be recruited from the University of Connecticut and the surrounding community. All participants should be fluent in English. In addition, they need to have a standard or full-color vision. Participants are expected to walk at an average pace and should be able to walk for a speed of 1.5 miles per hour. We hope to have the user age range between 18-35 with minimum experience with virtual reality. Participants could move around all the different areas, including the sidewalks, the road lanes, and the wait areas. Participants will encounter AVs while crossing in either direction.

3.5 Statistical Analyses

The data will be analyzed using Rstudio for the objective measures (minimum gap between vehicle and participant, waiting time, and pedestrian walking speed). Results for objective measures are expected to report as means. Two types of analysis will be done for this study. The first one will be hypothesis testing to compare the effect of objective measures in different scenarios. The second one will be observing the impact of significant variables on the dependent variable and finding how strong the relationship is between two or more independent variables and one dependent variable.

3.5.1 Hypothesis Testing

Statistical inference aims to conclude a population based on data obtained from a population sample. Hypothesis testing is used to evaluate the strength of evidence from the sample and provides a framework for making determinations related to the population. In addition, it provides a method for understanding how reliably one can extrapolate experimental findings in a sample under study to the larger population from which the sample is drawn. The researcher formulates a specific hypothesis, evaluates data from the sample, and uses these data to decide whether they support the hypothesis.

The hypothesis for the experiments are stated below:

Hypothesis 1: The walking speed of pedestrians will be higher for AV compared to HDV

Hypothesis 2: The waiting time of pedestrians will be reduced for AV compared to HDV

Hypothesis 3: The gap acceptance of pedestrians will be reduced for AV compared to HDV

Hypothesis 4: The walking speed of male pedestrians will be lower compared to female pedestrians when interacting with AV

Hypothesis 5: We hypothesize that dermal response will be higher for the first half of the crossing compared with the second half of the crossing since AV will be near the pedestrian in the first half of the crossing.

Hypothesis 6: The dermal responses will be higher if the knowledge about AV is less and vice versa.

Hypothesis 7: The participant's blood pressure will be higher while interacting with AV than HDV.

Hypothesis 8: The participant's heart rate will be higher while interacting with AV than HDV.

We will perform a Z test for our analysis.

3.6 Anticipated Results

This study is expected to identify factors influencing pedestrian behavior when interacting with AV. The study of the VR environment is expected to determine the influence of AV on pedestrian behavior. These AV interactions will provide transportation authority insight into potential safety issues associated with pedestrian-AV interactions, ideas for intersection design to mitigate these issues, and an increased understanding of effective pedestrian-AV communication methods. The study is expected to determine the influence of AV on pedestrian emotion and anxiety. These AV interactions will provide transportation authority insight into potential AV adjustment and acceptance. Finally, the outputs from this study will provide visions into the pedestrians' way of thinking about AV

Chapter 4: Understanding the Changes in Public Perception Towards Autonomous Vehicles Over Time

4.1 Introduction

Social acceptance is the primary key to the success of any new technology. It is found in a study that some people cannot trust machines (ScienceDaily, 2019) [26]. This subsection sheds light on the public perception of the safety of AVs and the level of trust in AVs. In a different survey, more than four out of five respondents ranked safety as the most important concern resulting from the emergence of AVs [27]. Howard and Dai (2014) [28] concluded that safety and liability concerns play a critical role in adopting AVs.

People worldwide and throughout the years have expressed a high safety concern. Schoettle and Sivak's (2014) [29] survey found that 92% of respondents in the US, UK, and Australia were highly concerned about the safety of the AV in bad weather and pedestrian safety. Casley et al. (2013) [27] surveyed in the US with 467 respondents to understand how public acceptance of AVs is affected. Results show that Respondents are very concerned about the safety aspects of the AV system. According to the survey, 74% of respondents believe AVs are prone to malfunction, 57% are concerned about the system's inability to sense its surroundings, 52% are concerned about programming issues, and 50% are concerned about poor control of the system, only 6.9% have no concerns about AVs. A survey by Schoettle and Sivak (2015) [30] found that 69% of respondents were highly concerned about the safety of the AV system in the US. Kyriakidis et al. (2015) survey, which received responses from 109 countries, also found that 76% of respondents are highly concerned about AV system safety [31].

Another survey conducted by Zmud et al. (2016) [32] in Austin found that 41% of respondents won't consider AVs due to a lack of trust in the technology, 24% due to safety concerns, and 22% due to the high price. A survey by Bansal and Kockelman (2016) [33] related to respondents' perceptions about AVs and safety showed mixed results. While around one out of five respondents indicated that they would be liable if an accident were to occur, some participants agreed that automation has great potential to decrease the occurrence of accidents. Even in a survey in Australia, 68% of the respondents are highly concerned about the safety of AV systems [34]. Rezaei and Caulfeld (2020) [35] found that people weren't likely to believe in the safety and security of AVs. Among the respondents, 44% do not believe AVs are safer than normal human drivers, while 25% do. Additionally, 66% of respondents said they would not feel safe if the driver was not at the steering wheel.

Thus, the safety of AVs should be the utmost priority. Vehicles that are not safe are significantly less desirable, regardless of their benefits. The perceived safety will sway AV buyers' opinions, or rather the perceived lack of safety, of these vehicles. Therefore, AV manufacturers must emphasize their safety and prove to the public that operating an autonomous vehicle is not risky. When Sinko et al. [36] compared their survey results with those of Schoettle and Sivak (2014) [29], they showed that public acceptance did not increase with time. People became more pessimistic about AVs in 2017, with an average acceptance of 3.3 out of 5 as opposed to 3.6–4.3 out of 5 in 2014. It is undeniable that the public will ultimately play a crucial role in purchasing vehicles with AV-related technology and supporting policies that will make it easier for AVs to share the roadways with other users. Thus, the main objective of this section is to understand and analyze the main factors that influence the public acceptance of AVs as follows:

- Public perception of AVs' safety and trust in AVs
- Level of awareness about AV and the shift over years.
- Impact of economic conditions on public acceptance of AVs and how it changes over the years
- Reviewing the small but growing body of work examining public attitudes to AVs with time, which has tended to focus on a range of predictor variables including demographic characteristics, specific psychographic attributes, and willingness to pay additional amounts for AV technology.

4.2 Public perception of AVs' safety and trust in AVs over the year

Social acceptance is the primary key to the success of any new technology. A study found that some people cannot trust machines [26]. While technology and road infrastructure will dictate the actual safety of AV systems, public perception of safety is significant in understanding how travel behavior may respond to the introduction of AVs on roads around the world. This subsection sheds light on the public perception of AVs' safety, the level of trust in AVs, and how it has changed over the years. Several studies have identified that the same socio-demographic factors correlated with increased perceptions of AV safety are also associated with increased intention to adopt AV technology [38].

Literature indicates that safety perceptions (of AVs and conventional modes) lead travelers to shift mode choice and other travel behavior [39]. Furthermore, other research has suggested that perceptions of safety are associated with interest in and intended use of AVs, meaning an understanding of safety helps understand the potential future adoption of the technology. In one survey conducted in the U.S. in 2013, 59.5% of respondents indicated that the safety of AVs had a positive influence on their desire to purchase the technology, and 82% of respondents indicated that safety was the most influential appeal of AVs, ahead of cost [40]. Howard and Dai [41] also concluded that safety and liability concerns play a critical role in adopting AVs. The survey by Schoettle and Sivak [29] found that 92% of respondents in the US, UK, and Australia were highly concerned about the safety of the AV in bad weather and pedestrian safety. Kyriakidis, Happee, and de Winter [42] found that 64.5% of respondents agreed that automated driving worries them because of safety and reliability concerns. A survey by Schoettle and Sivak [30] found that 69% of respondents were highly concerned about the safety of the AV system in the

US. Kyriakidis et al. [42] survey, which received responses from 109 countries, also found that 76% of respondents are highly concerned about AV system safety.

However, other studies have found much smaller proportions of people who rate safety as a primary motivation for interest in AV technology. For example, Bansal and Kockelman [33] surveyed respondents' perceptions about AVs safety, showing mixed results. While around one out of five respondents indicated that they would be liable if an accident were to occur, some participants agreed that automation has great potential to decrease the occurrence of accidents.

Even in a survey in Australia, 68% of the respondents are highly concerned about the safety of AV systems, according to Bazilinskyy, et al. [43]. Hulse et al [44] included questions about the perceived risk associated with different transportation modes, defining perceived risk as the potential for an accident that negatively influences the intention to ride in AVs. Panagiotopoulos and Gkartzonikas [45] indicated that safety concerns about AVs can negatively impact the intention to use and, hence, the adoption of AVs. Rezaei and Caulfeld [46] found that people weren't likely to believe in the safety and security of AVs.

Thus, the literature suggests that safety perceptions constitute a significant barrier to AV adoption but may also motivate adoption among certain groups. One thing the author wants to mention here, the safety concerns about AV haven't changed much over the years. Individual perceptions, socio-demographic structure, intention to use AVs, and travel mode play an important role rather than time. Public acceptance did not increase with time. One study found that people have become more pessimistic about AVs nowadays compared to previous years [46].

4.3 Components affecting opinions and attitudes toward AVs

This section presents the key takeaways from the reviewed studies on surveys about AVs in terms of the study objective in the reviewed papers. Within a large number of the reviewed studies that included surveys about AVs, few concepts were identified that could potentially impact an individual's intention to use an AV by evaluating the reviewed studies. Each study on AVs had a different objective and included different categories of questions targeting different focus group (general population or transportation experts) in different countries. As such, the studies were classified based on their objectives. However, different common themes have emerged and hence, the studies were divided into the following categories: (a) the Level of awareness of AVs, (b) the consumer comfort Zone, (c) the impact of economic conditions on public acceptance of AVs (d) Perception of AVs for different age groups (e) Perception of AV based on gender, (f) Impact of Educational level (g) the willingness to pay for fully AVs. The current study did a thorough review of these components over the years.

4.3.1. Level of Awareness of AVs

Public acceptance of AVs is greatly influenced by previous experience with them. Simulations are one of the way to evaluate public response to AVs. The surveys by Bansal et al. [33] and Schoettle and Sivak [29] included questions on technology-based predictors, such as respondents' level of awareness of Google's driverless car, whether ABS is considered a form of automation and respondents' familiarity with ride-hailing and car-sharing services. Schoettle and Sivak [29], Shabanpour, et al. [47] indicated that respondents with a higher level of awareness of AVs were more likely to have a stronger intention to adopt them. Using an online survey and telephone interview, Piao et al. [48] examined public opinion about AVs in France to understand the impact of previous experience with the technology on public acceptance. According to the survey, 73% of people with previous experience with AVs prefer trips on AVs. Wintersberger et al. [49] used a driving simulator to study user acceptance with 48 participants riding an AV to analyze the participants' emotions. There was a higher optimism about AVs among respondents with previous experience.

Nordhoff et al. [50] found that people's awareness of mobility-related developments can increase the acceptance of driverless shuttles. So the core idea is that the level of awareness has a significant role in people's acceptance of AV. The studies revealed the level of awareness increases over time AV but the acceptance level hasn't changed much. Previously, people were scared cause they didn't know about it; now, people are concerned cause they know AV can make mistakes.

4.3.2 Consumer Comfort Zone

Shin et al. [51] found that older respondents were less comfortable adopting emerging vehicular options than other respondents. However, in a different survey, Bansal and Kockelman [39] found that around 55% of the respondents indicated that the emergence of AVs is a valuable advancement in transportation. In contrast, approximately 60% indicated that they have some apprehension. Over the past few years, surveys have explored consumers' perceptions and willingness to accept different levels of automation [52, 53]. There is widespread acceptance of driver assistance features among drivers, but fewer are comfortable with fully self-driving vehicles. In 2017, self-driving vehicle comfort was significantly lower than in 2016. According to the 2016 and 2017 surveys, comfort levels with self-driving vehicles narrowed with age. In both years, younger adults were significantly more likely to be comfortable with self-driving vehicles than older adults. Haboucha et al. [54] included attitudinal questions asking about respondents' technology-related interests, which can be related to respondents' comfort with innovation, such as their tendency to try new products before friends and family or buy new technologies even though such products are expensive. Author couldn't find a specific trend concerning the perception of AV in relation to comfort zone.

4.3.3 Impact of economic conditions on public acceptance of AVs

The income factor is related to the country where the surveys were conducted; most were conducted in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Asian countries, including China, Japan, and Pakistan. Kyriakidis et al. [42] found that people from more developed countries worry more about cybersecurity and sharing their data. In contrast, developing countries see these as benefits for their safety and improving road safety. Overall, Chinese and Indian people positively perceive AVs more positively than Americans and British [29]. Also, vehicle data transmission was less welcome in developed countries than in developing countries. Since Asian countries are focused on reducing emissions caused by traffic, this technology is more likely to be perceived positively [26].

In addition, we can correlate this factor with the household income and location of survey participants. Since most surveys are conducted in the United States, people with higher education tend to live in the suburbs and have higher incomes. A greater perception of AVs is also linked to these factors. But a study shows that lower-income people are particularly concerned about safety and giving up control [55]. Rahman et al. [56] found that suburban residents are more optimistic about the new mobility option than those living in rural or urban areas. Studies found that rich people are more inclined to AV than middle-class families in the last five years.

4.3.4. Perception of AVs for different age groups

Younger people are more enthusiastic about AVs, according to surveys analyzing age. Researchers from Piao et al. [48] found that 56% of respondents aged 65 and older would consider making trips using AVs, as compared to 62% and 61% for those aged 18 to 34 and 35 to 64, respectively. They also found that older adults are less excited about owning an AV. Among the 25–34-year-old participants, 40% preferred AVs, while only 12% of the 65-74-year-old participants considered using AVs. Only 12.7% of Americans aged 75 or older would feel comfortable driving a fully autonomous car, compared with 40% of those aged 25-34 [52]. Older generations also consider AVs less beneficial [57]. Richardson and Davies [58] found that people with more driving experience became less enthusiastic about automated vehicles. Alternatively, seniors consider integrating AVs into their routines if they cannot drive in the future [56]. As a result of these findings, it is evident that the elderly are reluctant to accept autonomy in the transport environment due to the unfamiliarity and lack of information about this new technology. In some cases, it's also found that some young people didn't choose AV, cause they feel AVs are boring, as AV is instructed to drive in posted speed limit. In general, age group has a slight positive shift in perception towards AV over time.

4.3.5 Perception of AV based on Gender

Several studies indicated that gender could also influence perceptions of AVs. According to surveys, there is always a greater level of optimism towards AVs among males than among females. According to Schoettle and Sivak [29], males are likelier to adopt AVs than females. AVs are more popular among males; according to the results, 19% of males completely adopt AV compared to 12.4% of females. Additionally, females expressed greater concerns about fully automated vehicles than males. Only 30% of males express concern about fully automated vehicles.

According to Howard & Dai [55], men are more concerned about liability and less concerned about the vehicle's control. According to Schoettle & Sivak [29], women have a low expectation of the benefits of AV use. These results indicate that females have yet to gain confidence in autonomous vehicles. Whereas, Piao et al. [48] found that males are more likely to use AVs than females. It has been reported that 64% of male respondents are comfortable making AV trips, compared to 55% of female respondents. Abraham et al. [52] found that only 14.3% of women would feel comfortable with full autonomy, compared to 30% of men. A study by Richardson and Davies [58] indicated that females were more concerned about the safety risks associated with AVs than males, with 3/5 of the males believing that AVs would improve safety as opposed to 2.37/5 of the females. So, the gender perspective is different from study to study. However, the shift over the years remained pretty unchanged concerning gender; this acceptance depends more on individuals.

4.3.6 Impact of Educational Level

People's perceptions can change due to educational levels. According to Schoettle & Sivak [29], higher expectations of AVs are tied to higher academic degrees. Respondents with bachelor's are less concerned than those with lower education levels. This suggests that more educated people perceive the new technology more positively. In addition, people in higher education have a greater awareness of AVs' benefits and concerns [30]. According to Piao et al. [48], higher education levels are associated with a more positive attitude toward AVs. In general, 71% of respondents with high education stated that they preferred AVs, whereas 52% of respondents with low education stated that they preferred AVs. Education level has a huge influence on the acceptance of AV over the years.

4.4 Summary

Before AV's entrance into the market, surveys are the primary approach to measure public acceptance, preferences, and contributing factors [59]. However, both the measures of acceptance and their corresponding explanatory variables vary substantially across research articles.

Variables that are correlated with public acceptance and opinions are mainly of three types: people's demographic factors, mobility behavior factors, and psychological factors [60]. Yet, the conclusions in the literature vary by sample, measure, geography, and method; some are even found to be contradictory. In terms of socio-demographics determinants, some scholars [17]. They stated that age was negatively associated with AV adoption. But it was observed to be positively correlated to use, according to Rahman et al., [56]. At the same time, men were found to be less concerned with using AVs [29]. In contrast, Bansal et al. [39] reported that gender had no significant relationship with the intention to use. High educational attainment is found to negatively affect AV acceptance. Meanwhile, the impact of income on attitudes varies. Shabanpour et al. [47] showed a positive correlation between income and interest in adopting AV. Conversely, negative and nonsignificant correlations were also noted by Wang and Akar [61], respectively.

Transport disadvantaged populations (e.g., disabled) and people who cannot drive in certain situations (e.g., non-licensed, drunk, fatigued, inattentive, etc.) exhibit a higher level of intention to use AVs. Technology-based knowledge is repeatedly recognized as a significant determinant affecting AV adoption intention. Nevertheless, the joy of driving adversely influences the likelihood of using AVs [54].

Based on behavioral theories, researchers have extensively investigated behavior intention (of adopting AVs) with its theoretical antecedents such as perceived usefulness, perceived benefits, perceived risk, subjective norm (social influence), and trust.

Chapter 5: Pedestrian Behavior towards Autonomous Vehicles: A Paradigm Shift in Transportation Planning

5.1 Introduction

The evolution of urban landscapes with the emergence of autonomous vehicles (AVs) has fostered an urgent need to comprehend their integration into existing transportation networks. While much of the focus has been on the technological and infrastructural facets of this integration, an equally imperative dimension remains somewhat underexplored: human behavior, especially pedestrian behavior. Pedestrians have, for decades, interacted with traditional vehicles in ways deeply rooted in human instincts, socio-cultural contexts, and urban frameworks [62]. With the introduction of vehicles that operate without human intervention, this traditional interplay is set to undergo significant changes.

Pedestrians, as an integral component of urban ecosystems, have historically employed non-verbal cues, such as eye contact or gestures, to negotiate traffic-ridden paths [63]. These intuitive interactions between drivers and pedestrians have been instrumental in shaping urban traffic dynamics. However, as AVs make their mark, the established paradigm is disrupted, given the lack of human drivers to engage in these interactions [64]. Recognizing, analyzing, and addressing these shifts is of paramount importance not merely from a research standpoint but as a vital blueprint for urban planners, policymakers, and AV designers. The overarching goal is to ensure AVs' smooth integration while retaining, if not enhancing, pedestrian safety and confidence [65].

This chapter embarks on an in-depth exploration of pedestrian behaviors in the burgeoning era of AV technology. Beginning with historical antecedents, it chronicles the trajectories of pedestrian-vehicle interactions, emphasizing the tacit communication modes that have prevailed. Navigating the core of contemporary dynamics, the chapter elucidates the myriad challenges and prospects AVs introduce from a pedestrian standpoint. Gleaning insights from global endeavors, a series of case studies provide tangible illustrations of the strategies various urban centers employ in adapting to these technological innovations [66]. Concluding with actionable solutions, the chapter bridges cutting-edge technological strides with behavioral cognizance, offering recommendations aimed at orchestrating a symbiotic coexistence of pedestrians and AVs.

5.2 Implications for Transportation Planning

The arrival of autonomous vehicles (AVs) on our streets is not just a technological transition; it symbolizes a seismic shift in the paradigm of transportation planning. This transformation necessitates reconceptualizing various facets of our transportation frameworks to ensure that

AVs and humans coexist harmoniously. Here, we explore the various implications of this emergent vehicular technology on transportation planning.

5.2.1 Infrastructure Modifications for Accommodating AV-Pedestrian Interactions

The seamless interplay between pedestrians and AVs mandates substantial infrastructural modifications. Traditional crosswalks, for instance, may need to integrate sensory or signaling mechanisms to facilitate smooth pedestrian crossings [67]. Likewise, curb designs might evolve to cater to the specific pickup and drop-off behaviors of AVs while ensuring pedestrian safety. In urban centers, where sidewalks often intertwine with vehicular pathways, delineation mechanisms like smart barriers can provide real-time adaptability based on pedestrian and AV density. Moreover, with AVs primarily relying on sensors, ensuring infrastructural elements are sensor-friendly and do not cause reflection or interference becomes critical [68].

5.2.2 Impact on Urban Traffic Flow and Congestion

One of the promises of AVs is the potential for optimized traffic flow and reduced congestion. With their precision and data-driven operation, AVs can adjust speeds, maintain consistent gaps, and reduce erratic driving behaviors, thereby promising smoother traffic flows [69]. However, this optimization can also lead to increased vehicle usage, potentially offsetting some congestion relief benefits. Furthermore, the dynamics of pedestrian-AV interactions, especially in busy urban intersections, can introduce novel congestion patterns, warranting a reevaluation of traffic modeling and predictions4.

5.2.3 Reinventing Safety Protocols in Mixed-Traffic Zones

Mixed-traffic zones, where AVs coexist with human-driven vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists, present intricate challenges. Traditional safety protocols might be rendered obsolete as AVs introduce new dimensions of predictability and variability. Road signage, for instance, which has been historically designed for human interpretation, might need an overhaul to cater to both human drivers and AV sensors [70]. Furthermore, as AVs strictly adhere to traffic rules, ensuring that other road users (especially human drivers) do not exploit this predictability becomes essential. Protocols might need to integrate mechanisms that deter aggressive driving around AVs.

5.2.4 The Role of Public Education and Awareness Campaigns

A pivotal element in ensuring harmonious AV-pedestrian coexistence is public understanding. Educating pedestrians on the capabilities and limitations of AVs can mitigate potential apprehensions and uncertainties [71, 72]. Campaigns could focus on elucidating the behavioral patterns of AVs at crosswalks or intersections, ensuring pedestrians can anticipate AV actions. Additionally, integrating AV education into driver training programs can prepare human drivers to share the road with these autonomous counterparts effectively.

5.2.5 Designing for Cultural and Socioeconomic Differences in Pedestrian Behavior

Different cultural and socioeconomic contexts can manifest in varying pedestrian behaviors, even within the same urban setting [73]. For instance, certain communities may rely more heavily on non-verbal cues or have culturally-specific pedestrian practices that impact how they interact with traffic. These nuances must be factored into the design and operation of AVs to ensure their effective integration across diverse urban populations. Moreover, equitable access and understanding of AV technology across different socioeconomic strata must be prioritized, so no group feels alienated or disadvantaged.

5.2.6 Evolving Policy Frameworks and Legal Implications

The inclusion of AVs within our urban fabric also demands a review and revision of the legal and policy frameworks governing transportation [74]. This includes defining liabilities in case of accidents, standardizing safety protocols across different AV models, and establishing mandates for data privacy given the extensive sensors and data collection methods employed by AVs. Additionally, zoning laws might need alterations to accommodate AV-specific infrastructure, such as dedicated lanes or pick-up/drop-off zones.

5.2.7 Environmental and Sustainable Implications

While AVs promise enhanced traffic efficiency, it is essential to evaluate their long-term environmental impacts. This includes assessing their carbon footprint, especially if the majority rely on non-renewable energy sources [75]. Transportation planning must also consider the sustainable design of infrastructure that supports AVs, ensuring it doesn't compromise green spaces or pedestrian-friendly zones. Furthermore, the potential for AVs to reduce the need for large parking spaces in city centers offers an opportunity to reimagine these spaces for greener or more community-centric purposes.

5.2.8 Challenges and Opportunities in Transition Phases

As cities transition towards a more AV-dominated landscape, they will experience phases where AVs and traditional vehicles coexist [76]. This interim period poses unique challenges, such as varying driving behaviors and the need for infrastructure that accommodates both types of vehicles. However, it also presents opportunities for iterative learning, allowing city planners to test and refine strategies before a full AV integration.

5.3 Summary

The evolution of urban landscapes with the advent of autonomous vehicles (AVs) brings critical challenges and considerations, particularly in the realm of pedestrian behavior and its integration into transportation networks. While AVs promise technological advancement and enhanced traffic flow, their introduction disrupts the traditional non-verbal cues and interactions pedestrians have long relied on when navigating alongside human-driven vehicles. This shift necessitates profound infrastructural modifications, novel traffic flow models, revised safety protocols, public education, and awareness campaigns. Furthermore, considerations of cultural and socioeconomic nuances, evolving legal frameworks, and sustainable implications are vital to ensure the harmonious coexistence of pedestrians, traditional vehicles, and AVs in urban ecosystems. This multi-faceted integration calls for a comprehensive approach in urban planning, keeping both technological advancement and human-centric perspectives at the forefront.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Discussion

6.1 Discussion

The evolution of autonomous vehicles (AVs) represents a paradigm shift in urban transportation, fundamentally altering the dynamics between vehicles and pedestrians. Historically, pedestrians have relied on non-verbal cues, such as eye contact and gestures, to navigate traffic. The advent of AVs, devoid of human drivers, disrupts this intuitive interplay. The implications of this shift are manifold, influencing transportation planning on multiple fronts. Infrastructure needs to evolve, incorporating signaling mechanisms for smoother pedestrian crossings and sensor-friendly elements. AVs promise optimized traffic flow, but the increase in vehicle usage might offset some benefits. As AVs strictly adhere to traffic rules, there's a potential challenge in ensuring human drivers don't exploit this predictability. Safety protocols in mixed-traffic zones, with both AVs and traditional vehicles, will need to be redefined.

Public education emerges as pivotal in ensuring harmony between pedestrians and AVs. Diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, which influence pedestrian behaviors, need to be factored into AV design and operation. Furthermore, the legal and policy frameworks around transportation will demand updates to address AV integration. While AVs could have positive environmental implications, their carbon footprint and the design of supporting infrastructure require thorough evaluation. Transitioning cities will face unique challenges during phases where traditional vehicles coexist with AVs, demanding iterative strategies for smooth integration. As AVs become increasingly prevalent, the intersection of technology and human adaptability will shape the future of urban transportation. It's not just about vehicles that drive themselves but how they harmoniously fit within the broader urban ecosystem.

6.2 Conclusion

The landscape of urban transportation stands at an epochal crossroads, where technological prowess meets human adaptability. As we've journeyed through this text, from the intricate mechanics of autonomous vehicles (AVs) to the profound impact on pedestrian behaviors and urban planning, a singular truth emerges: the integration of AVs is not merely a technological transition but a societal transformation. The narrative of this report has shown that AVs are more than the sum of their sensors and algorithms; they symbolize an interplay of technological ambition and human aspiration. From the historical genesis of transportation to the vision of future cities where pedestrians and vehicles share space in harmony, we've ventured deep into the multifaceted realm of autonomous mobility.

The discussions in earlier chapters, grounded in technology and infrastructure, have underscored the importance of robust and resilient systems. But as later chapters elucidated, especially the in-depth exploration in Chapter 5, it is the human element, with all its nuances and complexities, that will truly define the success of this autonomous revolution. The cities of the future will not just be characterized by vehicles that drive themselves, but by how they accommodate, understand, and enhance human lives. Moreover, the themes of equity, sustainability, and inclusivity that resonated throughout the chapters offer a salient reminder. The promise of AVs should not just be efficient transport but also a means to create more egalitarian and environmentally conscious urban spaces. This vision requires a collective effort—bridging policymakers, engineers, urban planners, and citizens.

While this study offers insights, recommendations, and observations, it is vital to remember that the journey of AV integration is ongoing. As technology evolves and societies adapt, new challenges and opportunities will emerge. The road to full autonomy is iterative, demanding continuous learning, adaptation, and collaboration. In conclusion, we stand at the precipice of a transformative era, with the promise of reshaping our urban landscapes, behaviors, and lifestyles. The road ahead for autonomous vehicles is long and winding, but with concerted effort, foresight, and empathy, it can lead to cities that are not just smarter, but also more humane, sustainable, and vibrant. Here's to the journey ahead, and may it be one of discovery, growth, and shared progress.

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