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# The Distribution of Information through Online Meeting after COVID-19: Examining the Effect of Past Behavior

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** Online meeting is chosen instead of face-to-face conferences as a solution that ensures both effectiveness and legality during times of strong epidemic outbreaks. In the current period, managers can have different types of meeting options for information distribution. This study has examined the effect of past behavior on the managers' intention of organizing online meetings. **Research design, data and methodology:** Data were collected from a survey with 475 managers and put into SmartPLS 4.0 for analysis. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to test relationships in the research model. **Results:** The findings indicated that past behavior plays the most critical role in explaining the organizing online meeting intention of managers, followed by attitude and subjective norms. Meanwhile, the perceived behavioral control factor has absolutely no effect on intention in the context of this study. Notably, attitude and subjective norms also remarkably mediated the impact of past behavior on managers' intention. **Conclusions:** This study has added to the understanding of the meeting organization behavior of managers. Even if the epidemic is under control, the administrators should still organize some meetings in the form of online because it will affect the social perceptions of future behavior and behavioral intention.

**Keywords :** Information Distribution, Online Meeting, Past Behavior

**JEL Classification Code:** M10, M15, M54

## 1. Introduction

Meetings and conferences internally and with external partners are always crucial in the governance of each agency and enterprise. The organizer will choose the appropriate organization method depending on the intended purpose, content, and requirements. Face-to-face meetings (traditionally) increase interactivity and the capacity to transmit equivocal information and build a personal and

authentic atmosphere (Daft & Lengel, 1986; Trevino et al., 1990). Business excursions to face-to-face meetings enhance transportation and tourism growth on a macro level (Müller & Wittmer, 2023). However, those business trips are an administrative expense for each agency or enterprise, so administrators must consider reducing this cost content to improve the company's operational efficiency apparatus.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a striking impact on the technology landscape, particularly with the widespread

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adoption of online meeting platforms. These platforms have become an important alternative for face-to-face meetings in a variety of circumstances, ranging from informal office talks to conference events on a large scale (Botha & Furnell, 2021). As in-person gatherings became unfeasible, online platforms emerged as a vital solution, serving to bridge the gap and meet the growing demand for virtual interactions.

Furthermore, business travel has been significantly influenced and changed by new trends in the workplace (Gustafson, 2014; Cohen et al., 2018). Many agencies and businesses have promoted the application of online meetings because of their advantages compared to previous traditional meetings. Currently, online meetings are chosen to be organized more and more in agencies and businesses, both in the public and private sectors. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused agencies and businesses to rethink their travel behavior, especially international travel radically; also rely more on online communication due to health issues and travel restrictions (Gosling et al., 2020, Becken & Hughey, 2021). In this context, online meetings through different application platforms are held even by many agencies and businesses that have never been done before, and attendees have never experienced. It is critical to evaluate changes in their behavior, particularly during the pandemic (Zenker & Kock, 2020).

Research on online meetings has received the attention of many scholars in recent years. However, previous studies frequently focus on the link between business travel and video conferencing, rather than considering them in a variety of social contexts (Lu & Peeta, 2009; Denstadli et al., 2013; Poom et al., 2017). Several studies have analyzed the relationship between formal meetings and online meetings, focusing on the advantages and disadvantages respectively (Arnfolk & Kogg, 2003; Storper & Venables, 2004; Asheim et al., 2007; Jones, 2007; Larsen et al., 2008; Denstadli et al., 2012; Lyons, 2013; Roby, 2014). An integrated decision-making model of video conferencing and the business trip has been proposed to study and explain these selection influences (Müller & Wittmer, 2023). Pedaste and Kasemets (2021) pointed out the challenges of organizing online conferences in their research.

Adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic has shaped new ways of operating managers. Social distancing including travel limitations and cost-cutting demands have caused a serious downturn in the conference and event business, resulting in a rise in the usage of indirect modes of communication. Administrators have gradually formed the habit of organizing online meetings in the working environment, even outside office hours. Kusonwattana et al. (2022) also proposed a research model for determining factors affecting behavioral intention to organize an online event during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is worth noting here that there are no studies examining the influence of past

behavior of managers on the intention to organize online meetings in the future. In the current context, a question arises: What determines whether managers continue to organize online meetings? Therefore, the research question of this article is (1) What psychological factors of managers influence the intention to organize online meetings? (2) Did their past behavior influence their intention to organize the line meetings?

This study was conducted to explain the intention of managers to organize online meetings from a psychological perspective. We have surveyed managers in different organizations (state agencies, enterprises, hospitals, and schools...). The extended TPB is proposed as a theoretical framework, and the analysis of structural equation modeling (SEM) is to evaluate the psychological factors affecting the intention to organize online meetings. This study is expected to shed more light on critical psychological factors and propose some suggestions to promote the intentions of politicians further when organizing online meetings in the current period.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Intention to Organize an Online Meeting after the COVID-19 Pandemic

Since the 70s of the twentieth century, when remote working and meetings became more and more popular, online meetings have been considered a very essential tool for businesses (Denstadli, 2004). Along with the strong development of information and communication technology, online meeting is also used to organize different levels of technology. Online meeting has changed how meetings are held, promoting virtual experience in social life activities.

An online event, also known as a virtual event or virtual experience, is an event where people interact in an online environment on the Internet). Organizing online meetings is now quite familiar to organizations, internally and in working relationships with external partners. Administrators can quickly organize online meetings based on several platforms (including paid and free ones). Some advantages of online meeting might include saving time and costs by reducing travelling costs; the opportunity for rapid decision-making among spatially segregated key actors (Roy & Filiatrault, 1998). In addition, the online meeting creates advantages for the attendance and health of the attendees. However, the organization of online meetings is also limited by factors such as communication requirements, the capacity of attendees, the regulatory environment, and the availability of infrastructure (Urry, 2002; Arnfolk & Kogg, 2003; Lindeblad et al., 2016). In addition, agencies and

businesses also have specific concerns about information security.

There has been a dramatical change in the business travel sector since the COVID-19 shock (Müller & Wittmer, 2023). Health issues and policies encouraging remote-working have made online meetings more common. Administrators decided to organize online meetings not only to ensure legality during the pandemic but also because of the advantages of this meeting form form of meeting. In the operation of organizations today, online meetings are still widely held, ensuring content, legality, and in line with administrators' goals.

Based on Ajzen's TPB (1991), the intention to organize an online meeting is an individual's willingness to make plans that they think they will make in the future. The higher the intention to organize an online meeting, the greater their ability to do it later. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, administrators and staff have had significant experiences with online meeting, so they play an essential role in driving the continuation of meetings in this format. The intention to organize an online meeting of the administrators is reflected in their motivation and the fact that they think about choosing this form when they determine the main issues of the meeting. When the epidemic was under control, the intention and behavior of administrators to choose online meetings clearly changed.

**2.2. Theory of Planned Behavior and Research Hypothesis**

Several psychological models to study individual behavior have been proposed, but Ajzen's TPB model is still the most popular and is applied in different fields. TPB uses three psychological variables to explain behavioral intention: Attitude (AT), Subjective Norm (SN), and Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC). According to Ajzen, attitude describes a person's general evaluation of a particular behavior; subjective norms reflect an individual's perception of how others feel about the behavior, often having a major influence on the individual's decision-making, and perceived behavioral control is an individual's perception of how easy or difficult it is to perform a behavior.

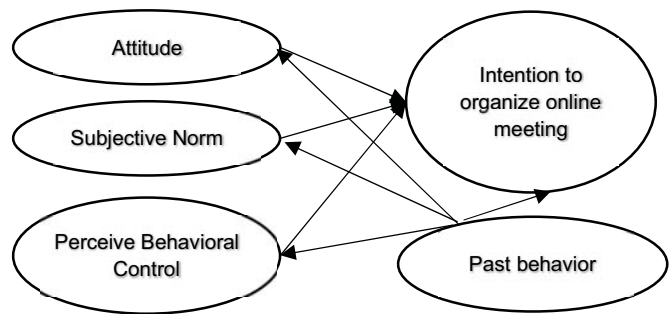
TPB has proven helpful in many other case studies and has helped several sectors, such as politics, businesses, healthcare, and organizations (Kusonwattana et al., 2022). Müller and Wittmer (2023) argue that norms and attitudes determine the organization of online meetings. At the same time, the TPB model can explain more deeply and predict better both voluntary, the authors choose this model to explain the intention to organize an online meeting of the administrators.

Based on the above analysis, this study put forward the following hypotheses:

- H1:** Attitude has a positive influence on the intention to organize an online meeting of managers.
- H2:** Subjective norm has a positive influence on the intention to organize an online meeting of managers.
- H3:** Perceived behavioral control has a positive influence on the intention to organize an online meeting of managers.

In research, TPB can be extended or modified in different contexts (Ajzen, 2020). Past behavior is an essential factor potentially contributing to the psychosocial theoretical framework (Corlton et al., 2012; Han et al., 2016). Past behavior refers to the considered behavior that participants performed in the past (Yuriev et al., 2020). Integrating past behavior can significantly improve the interpretation of predictive models of decision-making or behavior (Knussen et al., 2004). In addition, several studies have posited and experimentally tested the critical role of past behavior on behavioral intention in different contexts (Hagger et al., 2001; Han et al., 2001; Associates, 2016; Wang et al., 2021). Past behavior was entered as a covariate in the regression of intention on the variables of the TPB (Terry & O'Leary, 1995). Therefore, it is necessary to study the influence of past behavior on the intention to organize online meetings after the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that controlling past behavior by including past behavior as a predictor of all the model variables would influence attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on intentions. This study introduces four additional hypotheses in the extended model:

- H4:** Past behavior has a positive influence on the intention to organize an online meeting of managers.
- H5:** Past behavior has a positive influence on the attitude of managers towards organizing online meetings.
- H6:** Past behavior has a positive influence on managers' subjective norms about organizing online meetings.
- H7:** Past behavior has a positive influence on the perceived behavioral control of managers about organizing online meetings (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Research Model

### 3. Research Methods

#### 3.1. Measure

In addition to the respondents' demographic information (age, gender, education), the main content of the questionnaire includes questions about attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, past behavior, and intention to organize the meeting online. The measurement variables in the TPB model used in this study are inherited from the study of Ajzen and Madden (1986), Kaiser (2006), and Chen et al. (2022). The authors had also edited and proposed some more observed scale variables to suit the context of the research on online meeting organization behavior. These variables are measured on a 5-point Likert scale, from "1 = Totally disagree" to "5 = Totally agree". For the past behavior scale, the frequency of organizing online meetings in the past was assessed using the question, "How often did you organize online meetings in the past six months?". This observed variable is measured based on respondents' responses from "1 = Rarely" to "5 = Always". Although managers self-assessed past behavior with only one observed variable, it must be more comprehensive and detailed. However, the scale with only one observed variable has proven its validity and reliability (Godin & Shephard, 1985).

#### 3.2. Sample and Data Collection

Survey subjects in this study are managers at all levels in different types of organizations. We have contacted 52 organizations in four cities in Vietnam, including Hanoi, Hai Phong, Da Nang, and Ho Chi Minh City. We receive support from these agencies and businesses in sending the Google Form link to the person who needs the survey. We ask respondents to focus on a meeting (the format of which has

yet to be determined) that they will be organized shortly. These administrators will answer a questionnaire we have prepared online (via email and social media). After two months of information gathering, we received 475 responses.

Among the respondents, men account for 61.3%; the rest are women. In terms of age, there are 76 managers under 30 years old (accounting for 16.0%); from 30-45 years old, there are 271 people (accounting for 57.1%); from 45 years old and over, there are 128 people (accounting for 26.9%). In terms of qualifications, out of 475 respondents, 92 people have a graduate degree (19.4%), a university degree, 341 people (a rate of 71.8%), and the remaining 42 respondents have a bachelor's degree or another degree.

#### 3.3. Data Analysis

This study uses least squares structural model analysis (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0 software. Collected data is included in the analysis to check the reliability and validity of the scale and test the research hypotheses. Tests were evaluated at the 5% significance level. The analysis of Bootstrap with sample 5000 when evaluating relationships in the research model.

### 4. Data Analysis Results

#### 4.1. Measurement Modelling Evaluation

The results of data analysis with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and item loadings allow evaluation of the reliability of the scales in the research model. The four scales have Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, and the loading coefficients of the observed variables are all greater than 0.7, so they are significant (see Table 1).

**Table 1:** Convergent validity results of the models

Construction	No of Items	TPB Model				Research Model			
		Loading Range	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	Loading Range	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
AT	3	0.880 - 0.911	0.883	0.927	0.808	0.882 - 0.909	0.883	0.927	0.808
SN	3	0.812 - 0.898	0.839	0.902	0.754	0.815 - 0.897	0.839	0.902	0.754
PBC	3	0.853 - 0.897	0.847	0.907	0.764	0.855 - 0.900	0.847	0.907	0.764
PB	1					1,000			
BI	2	0.952 - 0.958	0.904	0.954	0.913	0.955 - 0.956	0.904	0.954	0.913

Besides, the validity of the scale is also evaluated through composite reliability (CR), mean extracted variance (AVE), and variance exaggeration factor (VIF). All CR coefficients have values greater than 0.7; The AVE of the scales has a value from 0.754 to 0.913 (greater than 0.5), so

the scales have convergence. The VIF value of the constructs of the model was between 1.000 and 3.316, which indicates that the structure had no collinearity issues (see Table 2).

**Table 2:** The results of Collinearity statistics

Constructs	VIF	Constructs	VIF
AT1	2.787	PBC1	1.826
AT2	2.561	PBC2	2.161
AT3	2.258	PBC3	2.328
SN1	2.035	BI1	3.315
SN2	2.287	BI2	3.316
SN3	1,784	PB	1.000

For discriminant analysis, a comparison of the relationship between factors with mean extracted variance was performed. The square root values of AVE are all larger than the maximum value of the correlation between concept pairs (see Table 3). Heterotrait - Monotrait (HTMT) correlation coefficients are all less than 0.85. Therefore, the proposed scales have convergent validity, and the concept structure has discriminant validity.

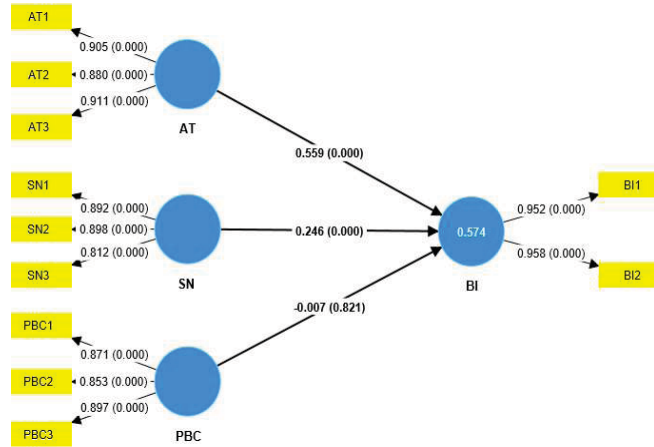
**Table 3:** Discriminant validity results

Concept	AT	BI	PBC	SN	PB
AT					
BI	0.806				
PBC	0.498	0.404			
SN	0.843	0.745	0.590		
PB	0.760	0.831	0.417	0.697	

**4.2. Structural Analysis Results**

We conduct Bootstrap analysis with sample 5000 when evaluating the relationships in the research model with a 5% significance level. We conducted two structural analyses to clarify past behavior's influence on managers' intention to organize online meetings. First, the analysis with only variables in the TPB model, and second, we add the variable past behavior.

The TPB model (see Figure 2) included three attributes of the original TPB model. The coefficient of determination explained 57.4% of the variance in intention to organize meeting online of managers. In Figure 2, the analysis results show that two of three TPB attributes derived the managers' intention: AT and SN. AT ( $\beta = 0.559, p = 0.000$ ) had a more significant effect on behavior intention than SN ( $\beta = 0.246, p = 0.000$ ). The results suggest that PBC ( $\beta = -0.007, p = 0.821$ ) did not correlate with managers' behavior intention.



**Figure 2:** PLS-SEM analysis results of the TPB Model

The results of data analysis when adding past behavioral variables show that the model has a better predictive ability when  $R^2$  is adjusted when explaining the influence of concepts on the intention to organize online meetings is 80.5%. The results of the structural analysis are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Results of testing hypotheses

Hypothesis	Concept (X)	Concept (Y)	Effect Factor (X→Y)	Level of significance	Result
H1	AT	BI	0.157	0.000	Supported
H2	SN	BI	0.091	0.004	Supported
H3	PBC	BI	-0.037	0.142	Rejected
H4	PB	BI	0.726	0.000	Supported
H5	PB	AT	0.728	0.000	Supported
H6	PB	SN	0.647	0.000	Supported
H7	PB	PBC	0.390	0.000	Supported

At the  $p = 0.05$  significance level, six of the seven initial hypotheses were accepted (except for H3). The coefficients of the paths in the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables are as follows: Past behavior has the strongest impact on the intention with a coefficient of 0.726, followed by the attitude with a coefficient of 0.157, and subjective standard with a coefficient of 0.091. In addition, past behavior positively influences all three concepts in the TPB model. Past behavior strongly influences attitude, followed by normative standards and perceived behavioral control (with coefficients of 0.728, 0.647, and 0.390, respectively). Notably, perceived behavioral control did not affect behavioral intention in this study (see Figure 3).

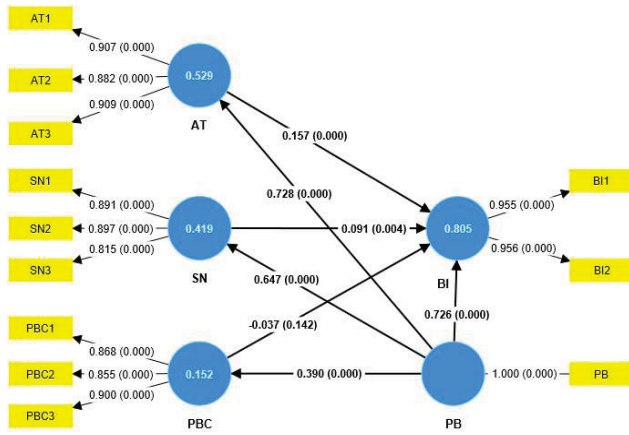


Figure 3: PLS-SEM analysis results of the research framework

In addition to the direct effects of past behavior, this study presents the analysis results of the influence of this variable on the intention to organize online meetings of managers through the intermediary role of managers, three concepts in the TPB model (see Table 5). Accordingly, PB has no indirect influence on BI through the role of PBC. However, the indirect influence of PB on BI through AT and SN is statistically significant. PB directly impacts AT and SN (H5 & H6 have been accepted), but these two variables directly impact BI (H1 & H2 have been accepted). At the same time, PB directly influences BI (H4 has been accepted). This result indicates that AT and SN partially mediate the relationship between PB and BI.

Table 5: Analysis of indirect effects

Indirect effects	Original Sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	Level of significance (p-value)
PB → AT → BI	0.115	0.114	0.028	4.148	0.000
PB → PBC → BI	-0.015	-0.014	0.010	1.441	0.150
PB → SN → BI	0.059	0.059	0.021	2.820	0.005

### 5. Discussion

The present study aimed to assess the influence of past behavior on managers' intention to organize online meeting after COVID-19 in an augmented version of Ajzen's TPB. The results of this study confirm that the addition of past behavioral components sheds more light on the influence of these factors on managers' intentions.

The use of TPB as the theoretical foundation to explain the behavioral intention to organize online meeting is entirely consistent with the results of this study. As expected, attitudes and subjective norms could predict managers' behavioral intentions while controlling perceived behavior

could not. Of these two factors, the attitude towards the behavior of the managers has a more significant influence. Examining the influence of attitude is consistent with previous research when it was shown that the more positive the attitude toward online meeting, the more often participants choose the virtual option (Kusonwattana et al., 2022; Müller & Wittmer, 2023). Notably, in the context of this study, the subjective norm influences managers' intentions. This is also consistent with some previous research in the business travel context, which shows that industry norms (a component of social norms) are relevant influencing factors, as proposed by Storper and Venables (2004), Grove (2019), and Haynes (2010). However, empirical research by Kusonwattana et al. (2022) on the intention to organize online events has showed that subjective norms did not significantly affect the BI.

During the global lockdown, governments instructed citizens to adhere to social distancing measures and stay at home. Consequently, there was a significant surge in the Internet usage to facilitate the adoption of remote working. While remote working had been previously employed (Hafermalz, 2020), the COVID-19 crisis led to an unprecedented situation where numerous organizations had to mandatorily implement work-from-home arrangements for their employees worldwide. This had far-reaching implications for organizations, particularly regarding how managers could exert management control, which involves directing employees' behaviors in desirable ways to achieve organizational goals (Merchant & Van der Stede, 2007). With conventional forms of management control, like face-to-face meetings, no longer feasible, the crisis accelerated the adoption of new technologies for work, organization, and communication, providing managers with innovative avenues for exercising control. According to Van der Stede (2011), management control undergoes changes in response to crises and their impacts on behavior and motivation (Hall, 2016).

In Vietnam, with the need to adapt to changes in operations during the recent pandemic, the attitude of administrators towards online meetings has changed significantly. The pressure to organize online meetings (without any other options) has made them pay more attention and positively evaluate online meetings. Requests from state management agencies, heads of organizations, or even from executives have motivated grassroots managers to organize online meetings instead of meetings in the traditional form.

To the extent of our knowledge, this study is the first to evaluate the influence of past behavior on the behavioral intention to organize an online conference of administrators. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is very high, with 0.805, showing the good predictive ability of the variables in the model. According to the research results, the influence of AT and SN on BI was

strongly reduced when adding the past behavioral variable into the analytical model. This is consistent with previous research results when controlling past behavior in the Theory of Planned Behaviour results in the influence of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on intentions being attenuated but not completely extinguished (Hagger et al., 2001). Research results on the intention to organize online meetings of managers show that past behavior has the most substantial direct effect on behavioral intention than the other two variables of the TPB model (attitude) subjective levels, and standards. The influence of past behavior on managers' intentions is also through the mediating role of attitudes and subjective norms. This shows the past behaviors that have affected the current assessments of managers about subjective standards and attitudes toward the organization of online conferences. At the same time, this suggests that current evaluations of attitudes and subjective norms are necessary to translate past actions into intentions to participate in the future.

There is only a limited substitution effect between face-to-face and online meeting (Roy & Filiatrault, 1998; Denstadli, 2004). Even after the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual communication will not wholly displace business travel (Müller & Wittmer, 2023). Therefore, from the above discussion, we have some practical implications. In order to continue promoting the intention of organizing online meetings, senior managers in the organization need to continue improving the positive attitude of administrators at all levels in the system. They must enjoy online meetings both as regular attendees and as meeting hosts. In addition to encouraging managers to increase the organization of online meetings, senior managers must also communicate well so that each employee understands the benefits of video conferencing. This will boost workers' expectations for online meetings rather than regular face-to-face meetings. In addition, when departments in the organization implement meetings online, it will also promote the intention of managers of other departments to perform the behavior.

Through actual observations in Vietnamese organizations, the operation of online meetings of managers were initially surprising. However, they feel more comfortable and proficient after adapting to the COVID pandemic. From the above points, it is suggested to the administrators that even if the epidemic is under control, the administrators should still organize some meetings in the form of online because it will affect the social perceptions of future behavior and behavioral intention.

## 6. Conclusion

This article has focused on explaining managers' psychological factors and examining past behavior's

influence on the intention to organize online meetings. The proposed research model has been tested using the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique with a data set collected from a survey of managers at several organizations in Vietnam. We have shown that perceived behavioral control does not affect managers' intentions. Meanwhile, attitudes and subjective norms about organizing meetings in online form affected behavioral intentions. The frequency of online meetings in the past also strongly influences the intention to conduct this type of meeting in the future. At the same time, attitudes and subjective norms also mediate the relationship between past behavior and behavioral intentions according to the data processing results of the study. This study has added to the understanding of the meeting organization behavior of managers. The article also gave some suggestions to promote organizing online meetings in the current context.

## 7. Limitations and Future Studies

This study also has some limitations. First, we have not covered meeting characteristics to examine how they might affect the intention to organize online meetings yet. While in order to better understand the decision on how the conference should be held, it is necessary to consider both the factors belonging to the attendees and the nature of the conference (Müller & Wittmer, 2023). In addition, data is collected from surveys from major cities in Vietnam. Because of the differences between cities and some other localities (provinces), cautions should be exercised when trying to generalize research findings on the behavioral intentions of managers. For example, managers in rural areas seem more interested in face-to-face meetings, and technological conditions are often not as modern as in urban areas.

Future research may continue to develop a research model on the behavioral intention of managers to more fully explain the managers' intention of organizing an online meeting. Besides, in this study, past behavior has only been tested in a direct and indirect relationship with behavioral intention. Meanwhile, it is necessary for future studies to consider the moderating influence of past behavior in the relationship of TPB components with behavior (Norman et al., 2000).

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