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Navigating the Future of Mobility: EV Consumer Preferences and Business Model Development in Selected Chinese Cities

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Abstract

China's expansion of electric mobility has heightened the importance of understanding consumer preferences and the commercial conditions that may support electric vehicle (EV) adoption. This study examined individual characteristics, perceived financial, technical, and infrastructure attributes, and purchase preferences among 300 respondents in Shenzhen, Changsha, and Shanghai, China, and developed a consumer-informed business model for the EV sector. Data were gathered through an electronically distributed questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, group comparisons, and correlation analysis. Respondents reported relatively high intentions to purchase an EV (mean = 7.82) and to own one in the long term (mean = 7.24), but lower intentions to shift from conventional vehicles in the near term (mean = 4.26). Most respondents (91.7%) reported no prior EV experience. Charging time, driving range, charging-station availability, battery-related costs, and warranty provisions were prominent considerations. Purchase preferences did not differ significantly across most demographic comparisons, although selected financial attributes varied by income and educational attainment. Several psychological and brand-related associations with purchase intention were statistically significant but weak. The findings suggest a gap between interest in EV ownership and readiness to transition. A proposed business model consequently integrates consumer education, financial accessibility, charging infrastructure, industry partnerships, and targeted marketing. The model is a strategic proposal rather than an empirically validated intervention.

Keywords: *electric vehicles; consumer preferences; purchase intention; charging infrastructure; business model development; China*

1. Introduction

The transition toward sustainable transportation has accelerated the development and adoption of electric vehicles (EVs), particularly in countries seeking to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels and address the environmental consequences of conventional transportation. China has emerged as a major participant in this transition, supported by government initiatives promoting new energy vehicles, technological innovation, and charging infrastructure development. The expansion of China's EV industry has created opportunities for automotive manufacturers, technology providers, infrastructure developers, and other enterprises operating within the electric mobility ecosystem. Related scholarship has also examined the institutional capacity supporting the clean-technology industry, including green technology research and development (Y. Wu & Encio, 2026). However, the continued development of this market depends not only on technological advancements and government support but also on consumers' willingness to adopt electric vehicles and integrate them into their transportation practices.

Consumer preferences constitute an important consideration in the development of electric mobility markets. The decision to purchase an EV involves multiple economic, technical, psychological, and infrastructural considerations that distinguish electric vehicles from conventional automobiles. Liao et al. (2017), in their review of consumer preferences for electric vehicles, identified financial, technical, infrastructure, and policy attributes as relevant dimensions of consumer evaluation. Their findings also highlighted the importance of socioeconomic characteristics, psychological factors, mobility conditions, and social influences in understanding EV preferences. These considerations suggest that electric vehicle adoption cannot be adequately understood through technological performance or purchase cost alone.

Financial considerations remain relevant to consumer acceptance of EV technology. Although electric vehicles offer potential advantages in operating costs and energy efficiency, their initial acquisition costs, battery replacement expenses, and uncertainties concerning long-term ownership may influence purchase decisions. Tarei et al. (2021) identified financial, technological, infrastructural, and behavioral barriers as interconnected considerations affecting EV adoption. Similarly, Jaiswal et al. (2021) demonstrated the relevance of perceived usefulness, attitudes, perceived risks, and financial incentives in explaining consumer intentions to adopt electric vehicles. These findings indicate that economic accessibility and perceived consumer value are important considerations for firms developing EV products and related services.

Technical and infrastructural attributes also influence consumer preferences. Battery performance, vehicle range, charging duration, charging-station availability, and charging convenience affect the practicality of EV ownership. Globisch et al. (2019) found that charging duration and the characteristics of public charging infrastructure influenced consumers' evaluations of charging systems. Schulz and Rode (2022) likewise demonstrated the relevance of public charging infrastructure to battery electric vehicle adoption in Norway. These studies indicate that charging infrastructure should be considered alongside vehicle characteristics when examining consumer preferences and developing strategies to support electric mobility.

Beyond financial and technical considerations, psychological and behavioral factors contribute to EV purchase intentions. Consumers' environmental attitudes, perceptions of technological innovation, social influences, and previous experiences with electric vehicles may shape their willingness to adopt the technology. Chu et al. (2019), in their comparative investigation of EV users in China and South Korea, found differences in the motivations associated with electric vehicle adoption, particularly concerning environmental awareness and operating costs. Within the Chinese market, Ye et al. (2021) identified configurations of psychological attributes associated with purchase intention, emphasizing the importance of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These findings reinforce the relevance of behavioral considerations in explaining consumers' evaluations of electric mobility.

The relationship between consumer preferences and business model development represents another important dimension of EV market expansion. Business models influence how electric vehicle manufacturers and service providers communicate value, structure ownership arrangements, address affordability, and deliver complementary services. Liao et al. (2019) examined consumer preferences for alternative EV business models, including vehicle leasing, battery leasing, and mobility assurance, and demonstrated that consumer attitudes toward convenience and ownership were relevant to business model preferences. Consequently, developing commercially appropriate approaches to EV adoption requires an understanding of consumer expectations alongside the operational and technological characteristics of electric vehicles.

The theoretical foundation for examining these considerations draws on the Theory of Planned Behavior, the Technology Acceptance Model, and the Diffusion of Innovations Theory. The Theory of Planned Behavior provides a perspective on the roles of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in shaping behavioral intentions. The Technology Acceptance Model emphasizes perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, which are relevant to consumer evaluations of EV technology and charging infrastructure. Technology-adoption perceptions have also been examined through the Technology–Organization–Environment framework, in which usability was strongly endorsed while cost-related perceptions were more cautious (Carandang et al., 2026). The Diffusion of Innovations Theory further explains how characteristics of technological innovations and social systems may affect their acceptance. Xia et al. (2022) applied the Diffusion of Innovations Theory to electric vehicle adoption and identified economic, functional, and social considerations associated with consumers' adoption decisions. Together, these perspectives provide a conceptual basis for examining individual characteristics, perceived EV attributes, and purchase preferences.

Although previous investigations have examined numerous determinants of EV adoption, the integration of individual-related variables, perceived vehicle attributes, and distinct dimensions of purchase preference remains important for understanding consumer responses within specific market settings. Existing studies have approached the issue through financial and technological considerations, psychological influences, charging infrastructure, and alternative business arrangements (Liao et al., 2017; Chu et al., 2019; Liao et al., 2019; Ye et al., 2021). However, insights from these separate dimensions require further integration to inform business strategies addressing consumer expectations and barriers to adoption.

In China, where consumers encounter different financial circumstances, transportation requirements, technological experiences, and charging conditions, examining these dimensions together provides a basis for understanding differences in consumer evaluations. Furthermore, purchase intention, willingness to maintain long-term EV ownership, and readiness to shift from conventional vehicles may represent distinct aspects of consumer preference. Distinguishing among these dimensions is relevant to identifying barriers that may persist even when consumers express favorable attitudes toward electric vehicles.

Accordingly, this study examined electric vehicle consumer preferences among respondents in Shenzhen, Changsha, and Shanghai, China. It investigated individual-related characteristics, perceived financial, technical, and infrastructure attributes, and purchase preferences. The analysis also considered group differences and relationships among the study variables to inform the development of a proposed business model addressing consumer needs and market considerations within the EV industry.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine consumer preferences for electric vehicles in selected Chinese cities and develop a proposed business model informed by consumers' characteristics, perceptions, and purchase intentions. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify individual-related characteristics in terms of socioeconomic characteristics, psychological factors, mobility and car-related conditions, and EV experience.

2. Examine perceptions of EV financial, technical, and infrastructure attributes.

3. Assess purchase intention, long-term EV ownership intention, and intention to transition to EVs in the near term.

4. Determine whether EV attribute evaluations and purchase preferences differ by individual-related characteristics.

5. Examine the relationships among individual-related characteristics, perceived EV attributes, and purchase preferences.

6. Develop a proposed business model informed by consumer preferences, perceived attributes, and market considerations.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Consumer Characteristics, Psychological Factors, and Electric Vehicle Acceptance

Consumer acceptance of electric vehicles (EVs) is influenced by the interaction of individual characteristics, psychological orientations, social influences, and perceptions of technological innovation. Liao et al. (2017), in their review of consumer preferences for electric vehicles, identified socioeconomic characteristics, psychological factors, mobility conditions, and social influences as important dimensions of consumer evaluation. These factors provide a foundation for understanding differences in consumers' attitudes toward electric mobility and their willingness to consider EV ownership.

Psychological considerations are particularly relevant because purchasing an electric vehicle involves perceptions extending beyond its functional characteristics. Chawla et al. (2023) identified charging time, innovation, perceived quality, affordability, awareness, and comfort as factors associated with EV acceptance. Their findings emphasized the importance of environmental awareness and perceived product benefits in shaping consumer preferences.

Evidence from Asian markets further illustrates the contextual nature of EV motivations. Chu et al. (2019), in a comparative investigation of consumers in China and South Korea, found that environmental concern was an important motivation among Chinese EV adopters, whereas operating-cost considerations were particularly relevant among Korean adopters. These differences suggest that consumer motivations may vary across markets despite similarities in the technologies being adopted.

The behavioral dimension of adoption is also reflected in the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Diffusion of Innovations Theory. Ye et al. (2021), examining purchase-intention configurations in China, demonstrated the importance of psychological attributes, including attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Similarly, Xia et al. (2022) identified perceived compatibility, complexity, and relative advantage as relevant considerations within an innovation-diffusion framework.

Socioeconomic circumstances may also interact with these psychological influences. Brückmann et al. (2021) found that income, homeownership, and technological affinity were associated with battery electric vehicle adoption in regions with limited policy support. Collectively, these studies indicate that EV acceptance reflects both consumer characteristics and perceptions of the technology, supporting the examination of individual-related variables alongside purchase preferences. Related evidence from another Chinese consumer market likewise indicated that consumer economic behavior and brand perception were positively and significantly related to purchasing decisions (Cai, 2026).

2.2 Financial, Technical, and Infrastructure Attributes of Electric Vehicles

Financial considerations remain important in consumers' assessments of electric vehicles. Purchase price, operating expenses, battery replacement costs, and available incentives influence the perceived affordability and economic attractiveness of EV ownership. Tarei et al. (2021), investigating barriers to EV adoption in India, identified technological, financial, infrastructural, and behavioral barriers that interact in shaping adoption conditions. Their findings emphasized vehicle performance, total ownership cost, range anxiety, and insufficient charging infrastructure.

Similarly, Agyemang et al. (2022) identified financial, technical, social, policy, and infrastructure barriers in Ghana. High acquisition costs, restricted driving range, and inadequate supporting infrastructure were among the major obstacles examined. Michael et al. (2022) also identified financial barriers, vehicle performance concerns, charging infrastructure deficiencies, environmental considerations, and social awareness as relevant factors in the Indian market.

Technical attributes constitute another dimension of consumer evaluation. Battery range, charging speed, vehicle reliability, and performance affect the practical suitability of electric vehicles for everyday transportation. Jung et al. (2021) found that purchase price, charging subsidies, and infrastructure conditions were important considerations in consumer preferences in South Korea. These findings suggest that the perceived benefits of electric vehicles must be evaluated alongside potential limitations in vehicle capabilities and ownership requirements.

Charging infrastructure is particularly important because EV ownership depends partly on access to reliable charging facilities. Globisch et al. (2019) found that charging duration influenced German consumers' evaluations of public charging infrastructure, highlighting the importance of fast-charging facilities. Schulz and Rode (2022), examining Norwegian municipalities, found that the introduction of public charging infrastructure was associated with increased battery electric vehicle adoption.

Infrastructure planning also has implications for resource allocation and service accessibility. Ouyang and Xu (2022), using a transportation network in Zhejiang Province, China, investigated charging-station placement while considering EV users' travel behavior and infrastructure investment constraints. Taken together, these studies demonstrate that financial, technical, and infrastructure attributes are interrelated considerations. Their combined evaluation is relevant to understanding consumer preferences and developing strategies addressing the practical requirements of EV ownership.

2.3 Purchase Intentions, Behavioral Influences, and Policy Support

Purchase intention represents an important behavioral indicator in electric vehicle adoption research. However, favorable perceptions of electric vehicles do not necessarily establish actual purchasing behavior or immediate readiness to replace conventional vehicles. Research on EV purchase intentions has therefore considered psychological, economic, technological, and policy-related influences.

Jaiswal et al. (2021) employed an extended Technology Acceptance Model to examine consumer adoption intentions in India. Their findings indicated that attitudes, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived risks, and financial incentives were relevant to EV adoption intentions. The study also identified a mediating role of attitudes in selected relationships involving technology acceptance.

Lashari et al. (2021) similarly examined consumer intentions to purchase electric vehicles and found that environmental and economic perceptions were important predictors, while technological concerns were negatively associated with purchase intention. Bhutto et al. (2021) reported the relevance of Theory of Planned Behavior variables and environmental concerns in explaining consumers' intentions to purchase EV technology and their willingness to pay a premium.

Evidence from China further highlights the interaction of behavioral and policy conditions. Ye et al. (2021) found that psychological attributes appeared in configurations associated with high EV purchase intention. Their findings also indicated that purchase subsidies alone did not necessarily correspond to high purchase intention when important psychological conditions were absent.

Policy and infrastructure interventions may affect consumer responses differently across settings. Haustein et al. (2021), examining battery electric vehicle adoption in Denmark and Sweden, reported differences in the relationships between charging infrastructure, information initiatives, and adoption intentions. The findings indicated that interventions effective in one setting may not produce equivalent responses elsewhere.

These studies suggest that purchase intention involves multiple dimensions of consumer evaluation. Policy incentives, technological accessibility, environmental attitudes, and perceived benefits may influence consumers' willingness to consider EV ownership, but their relative importance can vary across populations and market environments. Consequently, distinguishing general purchase intention, long-term ownership preference, and near-

term transition intention may provide a more differentiated understanding of consumer readiness for electric mobility.

2.4 Electric Vehicle Business Models and Market Development Strategies

The expansion of electric vehicle markets requires business models capable of addressing consumer preferences, technological requirements, and market constraints. Unlike conventional automobile markets, electric mobility involves complementary services and infrastructure that may influence the overall ownership experience. Business model development therefore extends beyond vehicle manufacturing and sales to include financing arrangements, charging accessibility, service delivery, and alternative ownership structures. In the Chinese enterprise context, business model transformation has also been described as one pathway to competitive advantage that is shaped by the institutional and policy environment (Chen & Atento, 2026).

Liao et al. (2019) examined consumer preferences for alternative business models in electric vehicle adoption, including battery leasing, vehicle leasing, and mobility assurance. Their findings indicated that consumer preferences differed across vehicle types and were associated with attitudes toward convenience, ownership, and leasing arrangements. Vehicle leasing was more favorably evaluated for battery electric vehicles than battery leasing, suggesting that ownership flexibility may represent a relevant consideration in electric mobility markets.

Financing arrangements have also been examined in established plug-in electric vehicle markets. Hoogland et al. (2022), investigating purchasing and leasing decisions among plug-in electric vehicle owners in California, identified relationships involving vehicle characteristics, residential circumstances, financial incentives, and financing preferences. These findings suggest that alternatives to conventional purchasing arrangements may serve different consumer segments.

Business model innovation is particularly relevant in settings characterized by affordability constraints and limited charging infrastructure. Bitencourt et al. (2023), examining business models for EV adoption and charging stations in Brazil, identified opportunities associated with electric vehicle sharing and charging infrastructure development. Their analysis emphasized the importance of government support, economic conditions, and stakeholder coordination in assessing the feasibility of alternative business arrangements.

Liao and Correia (2022) further examined shared electric mobility services, including electric carsharing, e-bike sharing, and e-scooter sharing. Their review demonstrated the relevance of travel patterns, consumer characteristics, and transportation connectivity to the demand for shared electric mobility.

Infrastructure investment and business development are also interconnected. Ouyang and Xu (2022) demonstrated the importance of considering travel behavior and investment limitations when planning charging-station locations. Meanwhile, Rajper and Albrecht (2020) highlighted the economic challenges associated with electric vehicle adoption in developing countries, particularly the affordability of different vehicle categories. At the firm level, research among environmental protection companies in Shandong Province, China, found that innovation investment, including technology adoption and green innovation initiatives, was positively associated with business growth (Guan, 2026).

Collectively, these investigations indicate that effective EV business models must consider consumer financing preferences, accessibility, infrastructure requirements, ownership arrangements, and market-specific constraints. Integrating these considerations offers a basis for developing consumer-oriented business strategies that address barriers to electric mobility adoption.

2.5 Synthesis and Research Gaps

The reviewed literature demonstrates that electric vehicle adoption involves multiple interacting considerations rather than a single determinant of consumer preference. Individual characteristics and psychological orientations influence consumers' evaluations of EV technology, while financial, technical, and infrastructure attributes shape perceptions of affordability, convenience, and practicality (Liao et al., 2017; Chu et al., 2019; Chawla et al., 2023).

Studies of purchase intentions further emphasize the relevance of attitudes, perceived benefits, risks, and government incentives (Jaiswal et al., 2021; Lashari et al., 2021; Ye et al., 2021). Meanwhile, business model research demonstrates that financing structures, alternative ownership arrangements, shared mobility, and infrastructure investment are important considerations in developing electric mobility markets (Liao et al., 2019; Bitencourt et al., 2023).

Despite these contributions, several issues warrant further investigation. First, financial, technical, psychological, and infrastructure attributes are frequently examined through different analytical approaches, creating a need for studies that consider these dimensions within a common consumer-preference framework. Second, general purchase intention, long-term ownership preference, and readiness for near-term transition merit

separate examination because favorable evaluations of EVs may not correspond directly to immediate purchasing decisions. Third, translating consumer-preference findings into a coherent business model requires attention to the relationships between consumer expectations and the practical conditions affecting EV ownership.

The study addresses these concerns by examining individual-related variables, perceived EV attributes, and purchase preferences among respondents in Shenzhen, Changsha, and Shanghai, China. By investigating group differences and relationships among these variables, the research provides context-specific evidence for understanding consumer preferences and informing the development of a proposed EV business model. The study thereby connects behavioral and attribute-based perspectives with business model development while recognizing that its proposed framework requires subsequent implementation and empirical evaluation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine consumer preferences for electric vehicles in selected Chinese cities. The research investigated individual-related characteristics, perceptions of EV attributes, and purchase preferences to identify patterns, group differences, and relationships among the variables.

A structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument. The quantitative approach enabled the examination of respondents' socioeconomic characteristics, psychological considerations, mobility conditions, experiences with electric vehicles, and evaluations of financial, technical, and infrastructure attributes. Purchase preferences were assessed through intentions to purchase an EV, maintain long-term ownership, and transition from conventional vehicles to EVs in the near term. The findings also informed the formulation of a proposed business model addressing consumer expectations and perceived barriers to EV adoption. The model was developed as a strategic framework rather than subjected to implementation or experimental validation.

3.2 Respondents and Study Setting

The study involved 300 respondents from Shenzhen, Changsha, and Shanghai, China. These locations provided the geographic setting for examining consumer preferences within China's electric vehicle market. The target population comprised current and potential EV consumers, including individuals with previous experience using electric vehicles and those considering future adoption. Respondents represented different socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, including age, sex, income, educational attainment, household composition, vehicle ownership, and mobility requirements.

The sample also included respondents with different levels of exposure to EV technology. This distinction allowed the research to examine purchase preferences among individuals with varying familiarity with electric vehicles. The geographic coverage was limited to the three selected cities. Accordingly, the findings characterize the surveyed respondents and should not be interpreted as nationally representative estimates of Chinese consumer preferences.

3.3 Sampling and Data Collection

Data were collected through an electronically distributed questionnaire targeting respondents in Shenzhen, Changsha, and Shanghai. Electronic administration facilitated the collection of responses concerning consumer characteristics, vehicle attributes, and purchase preferences. The research considered socioeconomic and demographic characteristics in examining differences among respondents. These characteristics included sex, income, and educational attainment, which subsequently served as grouping variables in the statistical comparisons.

The survey generated 300 observations used in the reported analyses. Respondents provided information about their personal circumstances, transportation practices, experience with EVs, and assessments of attributes relevant to electric vehicle ownership. The data collection process produced a cross-sectional dataset representing consumer preferences during the study period. Given the geographic and recruitment scope, the findings are interpreted within the surveyed sample rather than generalized to all consumers in China.

3.4 Research Instrument and Measures

A structured questionnaire was used to collect information concerning three principal groups of variables: individual-related characteristics, electric vehicle attributes, and purchase preferences.

Individual-related characteristics. The first component gathered socioeconomic and demographic information, including age, sex, annual income, educational attainment, household size, number of children, number of drivers, vehicle ownership, vehicle type, and number of vehicles. Mobility-related measures included expected horsepower, reported driving range, annual or expected mileage, commuting distance, commuting

frequency, and previous experience with electric vehicles. Psychological measures examined environmental concern, battery-related costs and technical risks, innovativeness, perceived status associated with EV ownership, and household charging conditions. Social influence items addressed the perceived importance of family and friends, social media, community adoption, status, and endorsements.

Electric vehicle attributes. The second component measured respondents' evaluations of three attribute categories: financial attributes (purchase price, fuel efficiency, warranty coverage, and battery leasing cost); technical attributes (driving range, charging duration, acceleration, carbon emissions, brand, and speed); and infrastructure attributes (distance to charging stations, number of charging stations, and charging-station availability across locations). The attribute items used four-point importance ratings, with higher values indicating greater perceived importance.

Purchase preferences. The third component assessed three dimensions of consumer intention: purchasing an electric vehicle, maintaining long-term EV ownership, and shifting from conventional vehicles to EVs in the near term. These items used a ten-point response scale, with higher scores representing stronger stated intentions. The questionnaire also included five-point psychological ratings and four-point social influence ratings. These measures provided the basis for the descriptive and inferential analyses.

3.5 Statistical Treatment of Data

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistical procedures. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize categorical respondent characteristics, including sex, income, educational attainment, vehicle type, and EV experience. Means, medians, standard deviations, and observed ranges were used to describe quantitative characteristics and responses to the psychological, social influence, attribute, and purchase-preference measures.

Welch's one-way analysis of variance was used to examine differences in financial, technical, and infrastructure attributes and purchase preferences across respondent groups classified by sex, income, and educational attainment. Statistical significance was evaluated using a threshold of $p < .05$. Pearson product–moment correlation coefficients were used to examine reported linear relationships between purchase preferences and selected psychological, technical, and individual-related variables. The coefficients were interpreted according to their direction, magnitude, and statistical significance. Because the research employed an observational, cross-sectional design, the analyses do not establish causal relationships.

3.6 Development of the Proposed Business Model

A proposed business model for the electric vehicle industry was formulated using the consumer-preference findings and the considerations identified in the literature. The framework addressed five areas: consumer education and engagement, financial accessibility, charging infrastructure development, strategic industry partnerships, and targeted marketing and community building. These components were intended to address perceived barriers involving consumer awareness, affordability, technological concerns, infrastructure accessibility, and market engagement. The proposed model represents a strategic application of the research findings; its commercial feasibility, implementation effectiveness, and influence on actual EV purchasing behavior require further evaluation. This approach parallels strategic design proposals in other service industries that present a conceptual model and identify pilot implementation and empirical validation as necessary next steps (Benosa et al., 2026).

3.7 Ethical Considerations and Study Limitations

The questionnaire included a privacy and confidentiality notice indicating that information obtained from respondents would be used for research purposes. The reported findings were presented in aggregate form. The study was subject to limitations associated with self-reported survey responses, geographic coverage, and its cross-sectional design. Respondents' answers reflected their stated perceptions and intentions rather than verified purchasing transactions or observed adoption behavior. Consumer preferences may also change in response to technological developments, market conditions, government incentives, and charging infrastructure expansion. Consequently, the findings represent the circumstances and perceptions captured during the survey period.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Socioeconomic Characteristics and Electric Vehicle Experience

The study examined responses from 300 participants in Shenzhen, Changsha, and Shanghai, China. The mean age was 40.4 years (SD = 9.75), with respondents ranging from 19 to 66 years old. Of the participants, 191 (63.7%) were male and 109 (36.3%) were female. In terms of educational attainment, 156 respondents (52.0%) held bachelor's degrees, 130 (43.3%) had completed high school, and 7 respondents each (2.3%) reported master's and doctoral qualifications.

The largest income category was RMB 60,001–75,000 annually, accounting for 112 respondents (37.3%). This was followed by RMB 30,001–45,000 (23.3%), RMB 45,001–60,000 (23.0%), and RMB 75,001 and above (16.3%). The average household comprised 3.84 members, with a mean of 1.54 children and 0.753 reported drivers. Respondents reported an average of 1.04 vehicles per household. Hatchbacks predominated in the vehicle-type classification, representing 281 respondents (93.7%), while sedans and sport utility vehicles accounted for 1.7% and 4.7%, respectively.

The mean reported annual or expected vehicle mileage was 8,360 kilometers (SD = 6,034). Respondents reported an average commuting distance of 23.7 kilometers and a mean commuting frequency of 5.12 times per week. A substantial proportion had limited direct experience with electric vehicles: 275 individuals (91.7%) reported no prior EV experience, 10 (3.3%) were in a trial period, and 15 (5.0%) reported varying experience from one year to five years or more. Consequently, the results largely reflect the stated intentions of respondents with limited EV exposure rather than established EV ownership behavior.

4.2 Psychological Factors and Social Influences

Respondents evaluated psychological considerations associated with electric vehicle ownership, including environmental concern, battery-related risks, technological innovativeness, perceived status, and household charging conditions. Social influence measures assessed interpersonal opinions, online information, community adoption, status considerations, and endorsements. Table 1 summarizes these ratings.

Table 1. *Psychological Factors and Social Influences Associated with EV Preferences*

Variable	Mean	SD
Psychological factors (1–5 scale)		
Environmental concern	2.19	0.627
Battery expense	4.41	1.09
Battery-related technical risk	4.83	0.503
Innovativeness	4.49	1.03
EV ownership as status symbol	4.21	1.37
Availability of home charging facilities	4.42	1.04
Availability of a garage	4.42	1.11
Social influences (1–4 scale)		
Opinions of family and friends	3.45	0.907
Social media and online reviews	3.58	0.872
Community EV adoption	1.84	1.18
Status associated with EV ownership	3.46	0.934
Celebrity or influential-person endorsements	1.41	0.878

Note. N = 300 for all indicators. The two constructs used different response scales and should not be compared directly.

Battery-related technical risk received the highest psychological rating (M = 4.83), followed by innovativeness (M = 4.49), home charging availability (M = 4.42), garage availability (M = 4.42), and battery expense (M = 4.41). Environmental concern received the lowest psychological rating (M = 2.19). This pattern indicates that technical reliability, financial implications, and practical ownership conditions were more prominent than environmental concern in the reported psychological ratings.

Social media and online reviews received the highest social influence rating (M = 3.58), followed by perceived EV status (M = 3.46) and opinions of family and friends (M = 3.45). Community adoption (M = 1.84) and celebrity endorsements (M = 1.41) received lower ratings. These evaluations identify perceived sources of influence but do not independently establish their effects on purchasing behavior.

4.3 Financial, Technical, and Infrastructure Attributes

Respondents assessed the importance of financial, technical, and infrastructure attributes in considering electric vehicle ownership. Table 2 consolidates the results.

Table 2. *Perceived Importance of Electric Vehicle Attributes*

Attribute	Mean	SD
Financial attributes		
Purchase price	3.54	0.926
Fuel efficiency	3.69	0.751
Warranty coverage	3.82	0.505
Battery leasing cost	3.83	0.503
Technical attributes		
Driving range after full charge	3.84	0.476
Time required for full charging	3.87	0.414
Acceleration time	1.37	0.818
Carbon emissions per kilometer	1.36	0.857
Brand	3.73	0.668
Speed	1.56	0.998
Infrastructure attributes		
Distance from home to charging station	3.62	0.781
Number of charging stations	3.70	0.705
Charging stations in different areas	3.62	0.828

Note. N = 300. Importance was measured on a four-point scale; higher scores indicate greater perceived importance.

Financial attributes. Battery leasing cost (M = 3.83) and warranty coverage (M = 3.82) received slightly higher importance ratings than fuel efficiency (M = 3.69) and purchase price (M = 3.54). These findings suggest that respondents considered both acquisition and continuing financial requirements. Although purchase price remained important, perceptions of financial accessibility extended beyond the initial acquisition cost.

Technical attributes. Charging time received the highest rating (M = 3.87), followed by driving range (M = 3.84) and brand (M = 3.73). Speed (M = 1.56), acceleration (M = 1.37), and carbon emissions per kilometer (M = 1.36) received lower ratings. Practical operating characteristics were therefore more prominent than the selected performance and emissions-related attributes. Brand received a high importance score, but descriptive ratings alone do not establish an effect on purchase intention.

Infrastructure attributes. The number of charging stations received the highest mean (M = 3.70), while distance from home to a charging station and charging availability across areas both received ratings of 3.62. The respondents thus considered charging accessibility and network coverage important elements of EV ownership. These ratings describe perceptions and do not establish infrastructure investment needs at specific locations.

4.4 Electric Vehicle Purchase Preferences

Purchase preferences were assessed through general EV purchase intention, intention to maintain long-term ownership, and intention to transition from conventional vehicles in the near term. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics.

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics for Electric Vehicle Purchase Preferences*

Purchase preference	Mean	Median	SD
Intention to purchase an EV	7.82	9.00	2.80
Intention to own an EV long-term	7.24	9.00	3.56
Intention to transition to an EV in the near term	4.26	2.00	3.69

Note. N = 300. Purchase intentions were assessed using a ten-point response scale.

General EV purchase intention was relatively high (M = 7.82; median = 9.00), as was long-term ownership intention (M = 7.24; median = 9.00). In contrast, near-term transition intention was substantially lower (M = 4.26; median = 2.00), with considerable variation in responses (SD = 3.69). These findings show a distinction between favorable interest in EV ownership and stated readiness to replace conventional vehicles immediately. Financial commitments, charging arrangements, vehicle ownership, and technological uncertainties may be relevant considerations, although these descriptive findings cannot establish which explains the difference.

4.5 Differences in EV Attributes and Purchase Preferences Across Respondent Groups

Welch's one-way analysis of variance examined differences in attribute evaluations and purchase preferences across sex, income, and educational attainment. The analyses comprised 48 comparisons: three statistically significant results, 42 nonsignificant results, and three undefined tests. Table 4 identifies the significant and undefined outputs.

Table 4. *Significant and Undefined Welch ANOVA Results*

Attribute × grouping variable	F	df1	df2	p	Result
Purchase price × Income	56.021	3	126	< .001	Significant
Fuel efficiency × Income	6.050	3	127	< .001	Significant
Purchase price × Education	9.661	3	15.1	< .001	Significant
Warranty coverage × Education	—	3	—	—	Undefined
Charging time × Education	—	3	—	—	Undefined
Number of charging stations × Education	—	3	—	—	Undefined

Note. Undefined outputs were reported as NaN (not a number); these are not nonsignificant test results. The 42 other estimable comparisons were nonsignificant.

Financial attributes. Income was associated with significant differences in purchase-price importance, $F(3, 126) = 56.021$, $p < .001$, and fuel-efficiency importance, $F(3, 127) = 6.050$, $p < .001$. Educational attainment was associated with significant differences in purchase-price importance, $F(3, 15.1) = 9.661$, $p < .001$. These omnibus findings indicate differences among group means without identifying the specific pairs of groups that differed. No significant sex-based differences were identified for the four financial attributes; remaining estimable financial comparisons were nonsignificant.

Technical and infrastructure attributes. The estimable technical and infrastructure comparisons did not identify significant differences by sex, income, or educational attainment. However, charging time and the number of charging stations grouped by education returned undefined tests, preventing conclusions for those particular comparisons. Warranty coverage by education was also undefined. These outputs cannot be characterized as nonsignificant results.

Purchase preferences. No statistically significant differences were detected for general purchase intention, long-term ownership intention, or near-term transition intention when grouped by sex, income, or educational attainment. For example, general purchase intention did not differ significantly by sex ($p = .953$), income ($p = .217$), or educational attainment ($p = .210$). Failure to reject a null hypothesis does not establish equivalence among groups, and the significant financial differences qualify any claim that all demographic groups evaluate EV ownership identically.

4.6 Relationships Among Purchase Preferences and Selected Variables

Pearson correlation analyses examined relationships involving purchase preferences and selected psychological, technical, and individual-related variables. Table 5 presents statistically significant correlations reported in the study.

Table 5. *Selected Statistically Significant Correlations Involving Purchase Preferences*

Variable pair	Pearson r	p
General purchase intention with:		
Environmental concern	−0.135	.019
Battery-related technical risk	0.145	.012

Variable pair	Pearson r	p
Innovativeness	0.155	.007
EV ownership as a status symbol	0.151	.009
Carbon emissions per kilometer	−0.150	.009
Brand	0.122	.035
Educational attainment	0.119	.040
Relationships among purchase preferences		
General purchase intention × Long-term ownership intention	0.696	< .001
General purchase intention × Near-term transition intention	−0.599	< .001
Long-term ownership intention × Near-term transition intention	−0.494	< .001

Note. N = 300. Pearson correlation coefficients and corresponding p-values are reported as calculated.

Psychological attributes. Environmental concern was negatively correlated with general EV purchase intention ($r = -.135$, $p = .019$). Battery-related technical risk ($r = .145$, $p = .012$), innovativeness ($r = .155$, $p = .007$), and perceived status associated with EV ownership ($r = .151$, $p = .009$) showed weak positive correlations. The positive correlation involving technical risk is notable but does not imply that perceived risk causes stronger purchase intentions. The remaining psychological measures did not show significant correlations with the purchase-preference indicators.

Technical attributes. Carbon-emissions importance exhibited a weak negative correlation with general purchase intention ($r = -.150$, $p = .009$), whereas brand importance had a weak positive correlation ($r = .122$, $p = .035$). Other technical-attribute correlations were nonsignificant. Although charging time and driving range received high importance ratings, they did not exhibit significant linear relationships with general purchase intention in the reported correlation analysis. Thus, high perceived importance should not be conflated with a statistically established association.

Individual-related characteristics. Educational attainment showed a weak positive correlation with general purchase intention ($r = .119$, $p = .040$). Current car condition and vehicle type did not exhibit significant correlations with purchase preferences.

Relationships among intention measures. General purchase intention and long-term EV ownership intention were positively correlated ($r = .696$, $p < .001$). By contrast, near-term transition intention was negatively correlated with general purchase intention ($r = -.599$, $p < .001$) and long-term ownership intention ($r = -.494$, $p < .001$). The inverse associations indicate that stronger stated interest in EV purchase and long-term ownership tended to accompany weaker intentions to make the transition in the near term. This pattern is consistent with a distinction between prospective EV ownership and immediate switching readiness; the observational results do not establish the reasons for the difference.

4.7 Discussion

The findings reveal a distinction between consumers' favorable evaluations of electric vehicles and their stated readiness to transition from conventional transportation. Respondents generally expressed strong intentions to purchase and maintain EV ownership, yet reported lower intentions to transition in the near term. This distinction suggests that consumer acceptance involves different dimensions of intention that should not automatically be treated as interchangeable.

The difference between general interest and near-term transition is consistent with literature identifying practical, financial, and technological considerations in EV adoption. Liao et al. (2017) emphasized that consumer preferences encompass financial, technical, infrastructure, and psychological dimensions. Similarly, Tarei et al. (2021) identified interconnected barriers involving ownership cost, vehicle performance, infrastructure availability, and consumer behavior. These studies provide a conceptual basis for understanding why favorable attitudes toward EV ownership may coexist with hesitation regarding immediate adoption.

The respondents' emphasis on charging time, driving range, and charging infrastructure reinforces the relevance of operational convenience in electric mobility. Globisch et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of charging duration in consumer evaluations of public charging systems, while Schulz and Rode (2022) demonstrated the relevance of infrastructure development to EV adoption. However, the high descriptive ratings

for charging-related attributes should not be equated with predictive relationships: charging time and driving range were not significantly associated with general purchase intention in the reported correlations.

Financial considerations emerged as relevant dimensions of consumer evaluation. Battery leasing cost, warranty coverage, fuel efficiency, and purchase price all received high ratings. Importantly, income was associated with significant differences in purchase-price and fuel-efficiency evaluations, while educational attainment was associated with differences in purchase-price importance. Similarities in stated purchase intention therefore do not imply identical evaluations of the financial requirements of EV ownership. Profile-based differences in consumer evaluations, including differences by income, have also been reported in other consumer markets (Mendoza & Magnaye, 2026).

The psychological findings provide further evidence of consumer acceptance complexity. Innovativeness, battery-related technical risk, and perceived status were positively but weakly correlated with purchase intention, whereas environmental concern showed a weak negative relationship. Previous investigations emphasized the relevance of attitudes, perceived risks, and psychological attributes in EV adoption (Jaiswal et al., 2021; Ye et al., 2021). The limited magnitude of the present associations cautions against explaining adoption primarily through any single psychological attribute. Modest associations of this kind are not unusual in intention research: an extended Theory of Planned Behavior study of investment decisions reported weak positive correlations with attitude and a model explaining 16.2% of the variance (Lantin-Magana et al., 2026). In particular, the weak negative correlation for environmental concern should not be construed as evidence that environmental awareness discourages EV adoption.

Social media, online reviews, and opinions of family and friends received higher descriptive ratings than community adoption and celebrity endorsements. These findings suggest channels for consumer education, but the effectiveness of particular communication strategies was not tested. Related research among young adult social media users reported that perceived influencer credibility did not significantly predict purchase intention (A. G. Atento & Atento, 2026), while a study of college-bound learners found that social media was the dominant channel of attention but brand trust was the strongest predictor of intention (Espelita et al., 2026). Similarly, the proposed model's components—consumer education, financial accessibility, infrastructure development, industry partnerships, and marketing—are practical applications of the observed concerns rather than validated interventions.

Liao et al. (2019) demonstrated that consumers assess alternative ownership and leasing arrangements differently according to vehicle characteristics and attitudes toward convenience. Bitencourt et al. (2023) identified the importance of market conditions, infrastructure arrangements, and stakeholder coordination for EV business models. Within this literature, the present findings support further evaluation of financially accessible ownership arrangements and coordinated charging services. Nevertheless, implementation outcomes, commercial viability, and changes in actual purchases remain to be evaluated.

Overall, the study contributes context-specific evidence concerning the distinction between purchase intention and near-term transition readiness, the relative importance of practical ownership attributes, and the limited magnitude of selected psychological and technical correlations. It shows that demographic similarities in purchase intentions can coexist with significant differences in financial evaluations. The cross-sectional design, limited geographic coverage, and self-reported measures constrain generalization and causal interpretation.

5. Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

5.1 Conclusions

The study examined EV consumer preferences among 300 respondents in Shenzhen, Changsha, and Shanghai, China, focusing on individual characteristics, perceived vehicle attributes, purchase intentions, and implications for business model development. Consumer evaluations involved financial, technical, infrastructural, psychological, and social considerations, but statistically significant associations should be distinguished from attributes perceived as important.

First, respondents represented different socioeconomic characteristics and mobility circumstances but had limited direct EV experience: 91.7% reported none. The findings thus primarily describe respondents' expectations and intentions, not verified EV purchasing behavior. Battery-related technical risks, battery expense, innovativeness, and home charging conditions were prominent psychological considerations, whereas environmental concern received a comparatively low rating.

Second, respondents assigned high importance to battery leasing cost, warranty coverage, charging duration, driving range, brand, and charging-station accessibility. These findings indicate that consumers consider continuing ownership requirements and operating convenience alongside initial purchase price.

Third, general purchase intention (M = 7.82) and long-term ownership intention (M = 7.24) were relatively high, whereas near-term transition intention (M = 4.26) was lower. Favorable stated interest therefore did not necessarily correspond to immediate readiness for transition. The survey did not determine the reasons for this difference or observe subsequent purchasing decisions.

Fourth, purchase preferences did not differ significantly across the examined sex, income, and education groups. Nevertheless, selected financial evaluations did differ: purchase-price and fuel-efficiency importance varied significantly across income groups, while purchase-price importance differed across education groups. It would therefore be inaccurate to conclude that all consumer considerations were uniform across these groups.

Fifth, several psychological and brand-related measures showed statistically significant but weak correlations with general purchase intention. Educational attainment also exhibited a weak positive correlation with general EV purchase intention. General purchase intention and long-term ownership intention were positively correlated, whereas near-term transition intention was negatively associated with both. Alongside the descriptive findings, these relationships suggest that interest in eventual EV ownership can coexist with limited immediate readiness to switch, without establishing the reasons for that pattern.

Finally, the research provides a basis for proposing a five-component EV business model integrating consumer education and engagement, financial accessibility, charging infrastructure, strategic industry partnerships, and targeted marketing. Its commercial feasibility, implementation outcomes, and effectiveness in increasing actual EV adoption have not been tested.

The findings indicate that favorable EV interest can coexist with practical ownership concerns and lower near-term transition intention. They support an integrated approach to consumer-preference analysis while distinguishing perceived importance, statistical association, and purchasing behavior.

5.2 Recommendations

Consumer education and engagement. Manufacturers, dealers, and consumer organizations should consider educational initiatives covering battery reliability, charging procedures, maintenance, warranties, and long-term ownership costs. Since most respondents lacked direct EV experience, demonstrations and test drives may address information gaps. Research on another emerging technology likewise found that acceptability was positively associated with exposure and use among respondents whose direct experience was limited (R. G. Atento et al., 2026). Their effectiveness should be evaluated through consumer knowledge, perceptions, and subsequent behavior rather than assumed.

Financial accessibility and ownership support. Manufacturers and financial institutions should assess installment arrangements, transparent total-cost-of-ownership comparisons, battery warranties, and alternative ownership structures. Significant income-related differences in purchase-price and fuel-efficiency evaluations suggest that financing options should be examined for different consumer segments. Commercial feasibility must be established prior to implementation.

Charging infrastructure. Infrastructure providers, automotive firms, and public authorities should consider charging duration, accessibility, station numbers, and network coverage in investment planning. Location-specific demand, utilization, power capacity, and investment feasibility require additional analysis; the survey does not establish optimal station sites or justify particular capital allocations.

Strategic industry partnerships. Manufacturers may explore partnerships with financial institutions, battery providers, charging operators, electric utilities, and technology firms to coordinate financing, warranty services, consumer information, and charging solutions. Such partnerships should be assessed for operational feasibility, financial sustainability, and measurable consumer benefits. Partnerships with vocational institutions may also be relevant to technical service capacity, as research on the training of motor vehicle safety and technical inspectors in Fujian, China, emphasized job-relevant content, adequate resources, and institutional support (Yu & Atento, 2026).

Marketing and community engagement. Communication should emphasize battery reliability, charging convenience, ongoing expenses, and warranties. The reported ratings for online reviews, social media, and interpersonal opinions suggest channels worth evaluating. Evidence from a Chinese vocational college, although outside the automotive sector, indicated that social media content, advertising, and sales promotion significantly influenced enrollment intentions (K. Wu & Magnaye, 2026). Weak correlations caution against assuming that branding or status-based messages will substantially increase actual purchases without intervention testing. This caution is consistent with conceptual work arguing that trust-centered, evidence-based marketing is more credible than prestige-oriented positioning (Espelita & Atento, 2026).

Further research. Longitudinal studies should assess whether stated intentions translate into verified purchasing decisions and how preferences change as EV technologies, prices, and infrastructure evolve. Broader geographic samples and comparisons between experienced users and first-time buyers would improve external

validity. The proposed business model should undergo feasibility review and pilot evaluation, with measures of consumer knowledge, affordability, charging utilization, satisfaction, and observed adoption.

5.3 Implications of the Study

Theoretical implications. The findings connect individual-related characteristics, perceived EV attributes, and distinct intention measures in a common analytical framework. The weak magnitude of several significant associations suggests that no single psychological or technical consideration offers a comprehensive explanation of consumer intention. Distinguishing general purchase interest, long-term ownership, and near-term transition provides a more differentiated view of consumer preferences and the timing of intended EV adoption.

Managerial implications. EV firms may benefit from integrating financial arrangements, after-sales services, and charging support into their value propositions. Case-based strategy research has similarly illustrated customer-centric redesign of value creation beyond price-based competition, with sustainability-oriented practices as a differentiating element (R. G. Atento et al., 2025). The high ratings for battery costs, warranties, and charging infrastructure highlight practical ownership requirements. Significant financial group differences identify opportunities to evaluate financing and ownership offerings for different consumer segments. The proposed business model organizes these considerations without establishing its commercial effectiveness.

Policy implications. Consumer concerns about affordability, charging infrastructure, information, and technical reliability are relevant to EV policy evaluation. Public authorities may consider them alongside infrastructure utilization, fiscal costs, grid capacity, and environmental outcomes. The data do not establish which subsidies or investments would be cost-effective or causally increase adoption.

Methodological implications. High attribute-importance ratings do not necessarily correspond to significant correlations with purchase intention, and nonsignificant demographic comparisons do not establish equivalence. Cross-sectional, self-reported data limit causal inference and leave actual purchasing behavior unobserved. Subsequent studies may benefit from longitudinal designs, observed behavioral outcomes, and multivariable analyses of the relationships among consumer characteristics and EV preferences.

Together, these implications position the research as a context-specific contribution to EV consumer-preference studies and a basis for subsequent examination of integrated market strategies, without claiming the proposed business model is validated.

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