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Plugged into Persuasion: How Digital Marketing Drives Electric Vehicle Preferences in Chhattisgarh

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Abstract. The current study examines the consumer behavior of the purchase of electric vehicles (EVs) in Chhattisgarh, India, which influences the digital marketing. The purpose of the research is to gain an understanding of the role of digital campaigns, including social media campaigns, online advertisements and sponsored content, in enhancing consumer awareness about the financial and environmental values of electric vehicles (EVs), how online marketing activities affect consumer behaviour. The study also considers key factors affecting consumer responses, including environmental attitudes, evaluation of long-term values, prospect outlook, as well as government incentives. A systematic survey of 385 users of electric cars was conducted in Chhattisgarh. The data obtained were analyzed using structural equation modelling of AMOS software. The findings indicate that the decision to purchase an electric car is positively determined by the increased awareness, which has a significant correlation with the exposure to digital marketing. The circumstances described by the findings show the usefulness of the digital marketer in increasing the use of EVs through the accurate articulation of their benefits and aligning them with the sustainability goals of the customers. This study provides valuable information to the marketers, the lawmakers, and the automakers, who wish to sell more electric cars in developing countries using selective digital approaches based on the requirements of the intended customer base and the environmental aspirations.

Keywords: Advertising campaigns, Consumer awareness, Digital marketing, Environmental attitude, Future orientations.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most developed and quickly changing industries nowadays is the automobile sector. Electric vehicles (EVs) are becoming more and more popular as environmental awareness and sustainability become more of a worldwide concern. Understanding the factors influencing shifting consumer behaviour is a major problem in this transition. Understanding how digital marketing affects customers' propensity to purchase EVs becomes extremely pertinent in this context. According to earlier studies, digital marketing may greatly influence customer decisions. This includes social media, email campaigns, targeted ads, and specialised websites. To investigate the precise effect of these technologies on customer behaviour, a more thorough analysis is necessary.

In recent years, there has been a lot of interest in the idea of consumption powered by renewable sources of energy (Ozaki and Sevastyanova, 2011). Electric vehicles (EVs) have become a major solution to the growing environmental consciousness and the need to lower carbon emissions, and they are progressively making their way into new and emerging markets. To encourage the use and uptake of electric cars, corporate executives are implementing creative tactics (Silaen and Windasari, 2022). In this regard, digital marketing has emerged as an effective instrument for connecting with and interacting with prospective customers, especially prior to breaking into unexplored areas. As a result of more exposure to digital material and awareness efforts, consumer purchase behaviour has begun to change (Lodhi and Shoaib, 2017). Shaping customer preferences now requires developing a variety of marketing tactics based on critical elements, such as innovation, lowering emissions, and concern for the environment (Stephen, 2016).

Nowadays, marketers use digital networks including websites, social networking sites, smartphone apps, emails, and online forums to advertise goods and services (Dahiya and Gayatri, 2018). Growing digital engagement and excitement about the potential of digital marketing to raise awareness of electric vehicles are being observed in the Indian automobile sector, particularly in developing areas like Chhattisgarh (Charan and Dahiya, 2015). Consumer decision-making is greatly influenced by social media in particular, which makes digital marketing an essential communication channel as well as a promotional tool (Albarq, 2022). It assists businesses in showcasing their products, fostering client loyalty, cutting marketing expenses, and increasing return on investment. Businesses gain from increased reach and cost-effectiveness when they switch from traditional to digital marketing strategies (Alanmi and Alharthi, 2023; Al-Haraizah et al., 2020). The argument for digital outreach is further strengthened by the fact that online buying has become more popular than traditional ways due to the efficiency and ease of digital platforms (Al-Azzam and Al-Mizeed, 2021).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the connection between Chhattisgarh customers' desire for buying electric automobiles and digital marketing initiatives. It emphasises how digital marketing may raise customer awareness and sway their decisions to buy. The study employs sophisticated statistical methods, such as structural equation modelling, for data analysis after gathering information from present and prospective EV users in Chhattisgarh using structured questionnaires. In addition to offering a strategic framework that automakers may utilise to hone their marketing initiatives in a market that is changing quickly, the objective is to shed light on how well digital marketing techniques function to promote electric automobiles.

By offering useful suggestions to enhance marketing strategies and boost the uptake of electric vehicles, the

study's conclusions should prove to be a useful manual for automakers, marketers, and policymakers. Additionally, this research might improve customer involvement with eco-friendly technology and guide industry-wide changes towards sustainable transportation solutions. This study's importance stems from its topical relevance, considering the increasing use of social media and digital technology in India, as well as its benefits to environmental sustainability. Manufacturers may match their products to customer expectations and hasten the shift to a greener future by comprehending how digital marketing and awareness affect consumer demand for electric cars.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous studies have looked at the connection between consumer behaviour and digital (e-marketing from various angles. With an emphasis on Jaipur customers, Ellitan (2022) examined the basic traits of consumer behaviour in the context of e-marketing. Since credit cards are the most popular payment method and online shopping is often perceived as more convenient and time-saving, the study discovered that e-marketing had a considerable impact on purchasing decisions across demographic groups. In order to achieve long-term marketing objectives, this study provides valuable information for improving the digital distribution and advertising tactics of goods and services. Using cutting-edge techniques, other academics have also investigated the relationship among e-marketing and consumer behaviour. Research (Wang et al., 2016; Al Adwan, 2019) used the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to demonstrate a robust positive correlation between online customer purchase habits and e-marketing strategies.

Dilotsotlhe (2022) examined customer attitudes towards eco-friendly items from an environmental standpoint, with a focus on the uptake of hybrid vehicles. The results of a 2009 questionnaire survey carried out in association with Toyota UK demonstrated that customer motivation and policy support had a major impact on the uptake of hybrid vehicles. In a similar vein, Ju et al. (2021) investigated how Korean customers viewed hybrid cars and discovered that while battery dependability and safety issues remained, they were valued for their quiet operation and fuel efficiency.

A comparative study of customer knowledge and experience with electric cars (EVs) by Long et al. (2019) revealed a very low and static level of awareness. This observation implies that a lack of understanding may impede the expansion of the EV market and its ability to lessen its environmental effect, as noted by Kowalska-Pyzalska et al. (2021). Additionally, Nirmala and Dsouza (2023) investigated the factors that encourage and discourage customers from switching from automobiles that run on fossil fuels to electric vehicles. Their results demonstrated that, despite knowledge being frequently mentioned as a crucial variable in the literature, environmental consciousness and fuel prices had a greater statistically meaningful impact on consumer decisions.

With awareness serving as a mediating variable, the current study attempts to examine how e-marketing affects customer preferences for electric cars in Chhattisgarh. This study offers a localised viewpoint within a developing area of India, which differs from most of the previous research that has concentrated on non-Indian or vehicle-producing nations. This helps to shed light on consumer behaviour in a fast expanding EV industry.

3. METHODOLOGY

Considering consumer awareness acting as a mediating variable, this research uses a quantitative field-based research methodology to investigate how digital marketing affects consumers' preferences for buying electric cars (EVs) in Chhattisgarh. The main goal is to evaluate how digital marketing tactics, such online ads, email promos, and social media marketing, affect customer awareness and, eventually, their purchase decisions. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 385 people who were chosen by purposive sampling. Current EV users and prospective purchasers from Chhattisgarh's urban and semi-urban districts were among the target respondents. Four areas made up the questionnaire: customer preferences, involvement with digital marketing, knowledge about electric vehicles, and demographic information. To guarantee accuracy and relevance, the survey questions were modified from well-established research. A pilot test was carried out to verify validity and reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha was used to evaluate internal consistency. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with AMOS software was used to analyse the data and investigate both direct and mediated correlations between the variables. The dimensions were validated using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and the mediation impact of consumer awareness was tested using bootstrapping. By raising consumer knowledge, this analytical approach enables a thorough examination of the ways in which digital marketing affects EV uptake. The results are intended to give manufacturers, legislators, and marketers useful information for creating focused advertising efforts that successfully support electric cars and promote environmentally friendly customer behaviour.

Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical framework that underpins this study, which links digital marketing to customers' inclination to buy electric vehicles and uses consumer awareness as the mediator.

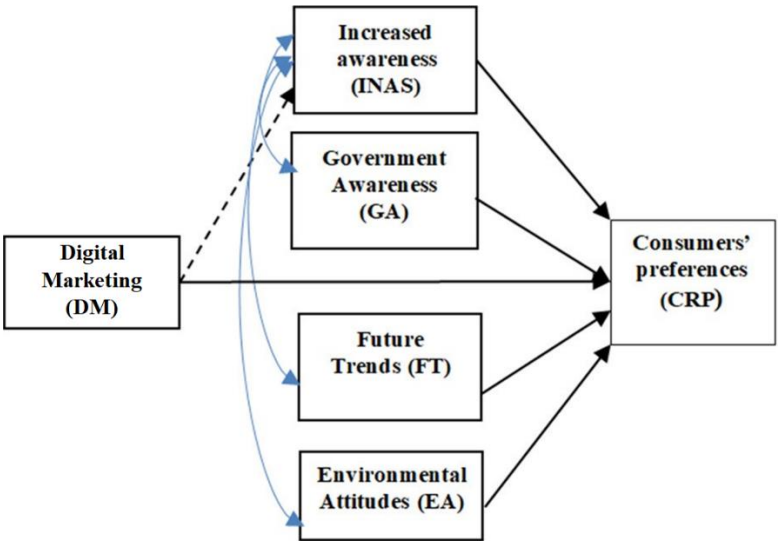

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

The subsequent hypotheses are developed to investigate the connections between digital marketing, consumer awareness, and buyer preferences for electric cars based on the suggested theoretical framework:

H_1: Digital marketing has a significant positive effect on consumers' preferences for purchasing electric vehicles.

H_2: Consumer awareness has a significant positive effect on consumers' preferences for purchasing electric vehicles.

H_3: Consumer awareness mediates the relationship between digital marketing and consumers' preferences for purchasing electric vehicles.

3.1. Reliability

According to Table 1's results, each item's dependability coefficient is 0.80, which is higher than the generally recognized cutoff of 0.70 (Bonett and Wright, 2015). This implies that the tool exhibits adequate internal consistency and is appropriate for application in scientific investigations.

Table 1. Reliability coefficient.

Variable	N	Cronbach's alpha
DM	8	0.934
INAS	12	0.895
GA	4	0.807
FT	4	0.883
EA	4	0.897
CRP	8	0.883

3.2. Analysis and Result

The statistical findings obtained with SPSS and AMOS software are shown in this section. According to the first hypothesis, the main factors being studied are positively correlated with the attitudes of the respondents. Descriptive statistics, particularly mean values, were computed in order to evaluate this.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics.

Variable	Min.	Max.	Mean	St. Dev.
DM	2.4	5	4.0667	0.04640
INAS	2.5	5	4.3433	0.07540
GA	2.4	5	4.5833	0.93788
FT	2.3	5	3.9468	0.84350
EA	2.9	5	4.5000	0.94387
CRP	2.0	5	4.3397	0.76804
N		385		

The arithmetic mean for the relative relevance of each variable was quite high, as seen in Table 2, indicating that respondents generally exhibited a high degree of awareness regarding electric vehicles and the advantages they offer. Furthermore, the standard deviation figures were often low, suggesting that respondents were largely in agreement and that there was little variation in their judgements.

H_1: Digital marketing has a significant positive effect on consumers' preferences for purchasing electric vehicles.

The Pearson correlation value, which is more than zero and shows a somewhat favourable association (Akoglu, 2018) among digital marketing and customers' desire for buying electric vehicles, is 0.677 based on the data in Table 3. This implies that consumer demand for electric cars tends to increase along with exposure to digital marketing.

Table 3. Correlations Between Variables.

		DM	CRP
DM	Pearson correlation	1	0.677
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000

Table 4. Coefficients of Determination.

Correlation coefficient (R)	Coefficient of determination (R^2)	Adjusted coefficient of determination (R^2)	Standard error
0.677	0.458	0.442	0.479

The independent variable, digital marketing, collectively explains 44.2% of the variation in the dependent variable, customers' preference for buying electric vehicles, according to the adjusted coefficient of determination (R^2), which was determined to be 0.442.

Table 5. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

	Sum of Squares (SS)	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	Significance level
Regression	6.422	6.422	27.902	0.000
Residual	0.23	7.595		
Total	14.016			

Table 5 displays the results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), which showed that the estimated F-value was 27.902 with a matching significance level of 0.000. The F-value is regarded as statistically significant since the p-value is below the conventional cutoff point of 0.05. The null hypothesis, which holds that there is no discernible impact of digital marketing on study participants' inclination to buy electric cars, is rejected as a consequence of this finding. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is approved, demonstrating that consumers' choices for buying electric vehicles are statistically influenced by digital marketing.

H_2: Consumer awareness has a significant positive effect on consumers' preferences for purchasing electric vehicles.

According to the findings in Table 6, there is a high positive association (pearson correlation coefficient) of 0.778 between customers' desire for buying electric vehicles and growing knowledge (Akoglu, 2018). This implies that consumers' desire for electric vehicles is positively correlated with knowledge levels.

Table 6. Correlations Between Variables.

		CRP
INAS	Pearson Correlation	0.778
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
GA	Pearson Correlation	0.746
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
FT	Pearson Correlation	0.823
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
EA	Pearson Correlation	0.687
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

A closer look at Table 7 shows that the modified coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.756, meaning that 75.6% of the variation in customer choice can be explained by raising knowledge. This significant percentage emphasises how important awareness is in influencing decisions to buy.

Table 8. Coefficients of Determination.

Correlation coefficient (R)	Coefficient of determination (R^2)	Adjusted coefficient of determination (R^2)	Standard error
0.778	0.758	0.756	0.443

According to Table 8's ANOVA results, the F-value is 8.586 at a significance level of 0.000, which is less than the standard cutoff of 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected since the model is statistically significant. As a result, the alternative hypothesis is approved, demonstrating that consumers' desire for electric vehicles is significantly impacted by growing awareness.

Table 9. ANOVA.

	Sum of Squares (SS)	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	Significance level
Regression	81.261	81.261	8.586	0.000
Residual	25.96	0.195		
Total	107.221			

Furthermore, the statistical significance of the association between increasing awareness (GA) and consumer response preferences (CRP) is confirmed by the T-test result in Table 9, which displays a T-value of 2.074 and a p-value of 0.000. This lends more credence to the idea that customer attitudes and decisions about the adoption of electric vehicles are significantly influenced by awareness.

Table 9. Significance of Regression Coefficients

	β	Std. err	BETA	T	SIG
C	0.431	0.449		1.103	0.000
GA	0.327	0.096	0.891	2.074	0.000
FT	0.822	0.108	0.831	9.214	0.000
EA	0.407	0.108	0.689	5.856	0.000

On the same note, the T-value of Functional Traits (FT) is 9.214, which is far lower than the cutoff set at 0.05 with an equivalent significance of (SIG) being 0.000. This result proves that functional characteristics significantly affect response preference of consumers to electric cars, statistically. In addition, CRP and environmental awareness, EA are statistically related. It is supported with the help of the T-value of 5.856 and the SIG value of 0.000 that also indicate that customer preferences toward purchasing electric vehicles mainly depend on environmental consciousness.

H_8: Consumer awareness mediates the relationship between digital marketing and consumers' preferences for purchasing electric vehicles.

The regression weights for the default model are shown in Table 10, which also reveals the following correlations:

- INAS ← DM: here is a substantial positive correlation among the variables INAS and DM, as indicated by the relationship's estimate of 0.846. The critical ratio is 37.960, which is extremely important, while the standard error is 0.022 (***).
- GA ← DM: With a connection value of 0.673, GA and DM appear to be positively correlated. The critical ratio is 13.425, which is extremely important, while the standard error is 0.035 (***).
- FT ← DM: There is a positive correlation between FT and DM, as indicated by the relationship's estimate of 0.720. The critical ratio is 9.032, which is extremely important, while the standard error is 0.019 (***).
- EA ← DM: EA and DM are positively correlated, as indicated by the relationship's value of 0.479. The critical ratio is 22.681, which is extremely important, while the standard error is 0.025 (***).
- CRP ← INAS: There is a positive correlation between CRP and INAS, as indicated by the relationship's estimate of 0.688. The critical ratio is 3.970, which is extremely important, while the standard error is 0.022 (***).
- CRP ← DM: There is a positive correlation between CRP and DM, as indicated by the relationship's estimate of 0.328. The critical ratio is 22.909, which is extremely important, while the standard error is 0.010 (***).

Therefore, H3 is confirmed

Table 10. Regression Weights (Default Model).

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
INAS	←	DM	0.846	0.022	37.960	***	par_1
GA	←	DM	0.673	0.035	13.425	***	par_5
FT	←	DM	0.720	0.019	9.032	***	par_6
EA	←	DM	0.479	0.025	22.681	***	par_2
CRP	←	INAS	0.688	0.022	3.970	***	par_3
CRP	←	EMG	0.328	0.010	22.909	***	par_4

Indirect effects of various e-marketing combinations on the preference of customers to purchase electric vehicles, as moderated by the increasing awareness, are indicated in Table 11. The results indicate that DM (Digital Marketing) has a positive relationship with both CRP (Consumer Response Preference) and INAS (Increasing Awareness) and a p-value of 0.000, which means that the relationship is significant.

Table 11. Indirect Effects (Default Model).

	CRP	INAS	p-value
EMG	0.475	0.353	0.000

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. Hypothesis 1 (H1)

The purpose of this hypothesis was to investigate the statistical link and influence among digital marketing and Chhattisgarh customers' preferences for buying electric automobiles. The findings showed a statistically significant and favourable correlation between customer purchase preferences and digital marketing activity. This result confirms previous research (Hamzah et al., 2022; Qtaishat, 2022) showing digital platforms including social media, online ads, and email marketing successfully affect customer attitudes and behaviour when it comes to environmentally friendly transportation.

4.2. Hypothesis 2 (H2)

The current study's results are consistent with the findings reported by Zamil et al. (2023), who emphasised the significance of favourable word-of-mouth (WOM) in influencing consumers' intentions to purchase ecologically friendly goods. This study found that consumer preferences for electric cars were highly impacted by growing awareness, especially through digital marketing initiatives. This implies that people are more likely to favour EVs over traditional cars when they are more knowledgeable about the advantages, incentives, and technology connected to EVs.

4.3. Hypothesis 3 (H3)

According to the third hypothesis, the link among digital marketing and customer desire for buying electric vehicles is mediated by consumer awareness. The findings support this mediation impact, which is in line with other studies that highlighted how environmental concerns influence the adoption of hybrid vehicles, as Dilotsotlhe (2022). In a similar vein, Arifin and Rahmat Syah (20230) discovered that more knowledge brought about by digital marketing campaigns might act as a critical mediator, boosting the efficacy of marketing tactics in influencing customer choices on the adoption of electric vehicles.

5. CONCLUSION

With an emphasis on the mediating function of consumer awareness, the current study examined the influence of digital marketing on customers' inclination to buy electric cars (EVs) in Chhattisgarh. Several important findings were reached after a thorough examination of the empirical data and pertinent literature. First, it was discovered that digital marketing initiatives, including social media interaction, online ads, and educational websites, significantly improved customer preferences for buying electric cars. These results are in line with other studies that demonstrate how successful digital outreach is in influencing customer perceptions of eco-friendly technology.

Furthermore, the study found that heightened knowledge acts as a moderator between consumer preference and digital marketing. Consumer knowledge of the technological, financial, and environmental advantages of electric cars is greatly increased by digital marketing initiatives. In turn, this increased knowledge has a significant impact on purchasing decisions. Therefore, the results support the notion that by educating prospective customers and improving their knowledge about EVs, digital marketing might have an indirect impact on consumer behaviour.

All things considered, this study emphasises how important internet marketing is to encouraging the use of electric vehicles in developing nations like Chhattisgarh. It offers various recommendations for future study topics and offers insightful information on consumer behaviour in a local setting. In order to determine the most successful communication channels, more research should specifically examine the efficacy of distinct digital marketing channels, including as email campaigns, social media platforms, and EV-specific websites. It is also advised to evaluate the ways in which various communication techniques and message framing affect customer awareness and preferences. Finally, studies that compare different demographic groups can reveal significant differences in customer behaviour, giving marketers and decision-makers sophisticated approaches for focused interaction. By raising awareness, these suggestions seek to deepen the awareness of the way digital marketing contributes to India's rising desire for electric automobiles.

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