Influence of Marketing Communication on Purchase Intention of the Luxury Electric Vehicles in China: Mediating Role of Consumer Brand Preference and Perceived Value

Yan Song^{*}, Gumporn Supasettaysa, Thanaphon Ratchatakulpat

Faculty of Business Administration, Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon, Thailand,10300

yan-s@rmutp.ac.th (Corresponding author), gumporn.s@rmutp.ac.th, thanaphon.r@rmutp.ac.th

Abstract. The electric vehicle (EV) market has surged due to environmental awareness and technological advancements. Global new energy vehicle (NEV) sales reached 14.653 million units in 2023 (+35.4% YoY) and 12.866 million units by mid-2024 (projected +35.5% annualized growth). By 2025, EV sales are forecasted to hit 145 million units, surpassing internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, signaling the industry's transformative potential. Established automakers (e.g., Tesla, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Audi) and emerging players are intensifying competition through technological innovation and customer-centric strategies. In this context, understanding drivers of luxury electric vehicle (LEV) purchase intention is critical for businesses. This study employs structural equation modeling (SEM) with data from 701 Chinese consumers aged 18+ to analyze how marketing communication, perceived value, and brand preference influence LEV purchase decisions. Results confirm that marketing communication indirectly affects purchase intention by enhancing perceived value and brand preference, which act as mediators. No direct link was found between marketing communication and purchase intention, highlighting the need for brands to prioritize value-driven branding and preference cultivation. Findings suggest LEV manufacturers should shift from transactional marketing to holistic brand-building strategies that align with consumer values, emphasize emotional resonance, and communicate long-term benefits (e.g., sustainability, innovation). By focusing on brand equity and customer loyalty, firms can strengthen their competitive edge in China's rapidly evolving LEV market.

Keywords: Marketing Communication, Consumer Perceived Value, Brand Preference, Purchase Intention

1. Introduction

As global warming intensifies, carbon emissions have become a key concern for countries around the world. To address this issue, more than 130 countries have committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 or 2060 (Zhao, 2022). As a sustainable alternative to conventional gasoline-powered vehicles, EVs are widely recognized as a key strategy for reducing global carbon emissions and advancing carbon neutrality (Wang et al., 2022). Governments have implemented incentives and favorable policies, catalyzing rapid growth in the EV industry. Data show that global sales of NEVs reached 14.65 million units in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 35.4% (Xing et al., 2024). Among them, Tesla's global sales reached 1.8 million units, and BYD led the market with 3 million units (Lee, 2024). By 2024, EV market share had reached 45% in China, 25% in Europe, and over 11% in the United States (IEA, 2024). Global EV sales are expected to reach 145 million units by 2025, surpassing ICE vehicle sales (Haryadi et al., 2024). These figures indicate that the EV industry is in a high growth phase and will dominate the global automotive market.

The rapid expansion of the EV market has driven the rise of the premium LEV segment, which is being actively contested by various brands. Established automakers such as Tesla, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, and Audi, along with emerging innovative brands, are competing for market share through cutting-edge technologies and customer-centric strategies (Olofsson & Winblad, 2023). However, compared to traditional ICE luxury vehicles, LEVs are associated with a premium brand image and influenced by factors such as environmental consciousness, technological innovation, and consumer perception (Zheng, 2023). Target consumers of LEVs typically have high purchasing power, strong brand loyalty, and a heightened awareness of environmental issues (Chidananda et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024). Their purchase decisions are shaped by a combination of brand preference, perceived value, and other influencing factors. Marketing communication serves as an important bridge between enterprises and consumers, and its effectiveness directly affects consumers' purchase decisions. However, most of existing studies focus on traditional ICE vehicles or mass-market EVs, and there is a lack of in-depth exploration of the marketing communication mechanism and its impact on consumer behavior in the specific segment of LEVs. To fill this research gap, this study is designed with several objectives to address it and provide a more comprehensive theoretical framework and empirical evidence for future research:

- 1. To examine the interrelationships among marketing communication, consumer perceived value, brand preference, and purchase intention in the context of LEVs.
- 2. To explore the mediating roles of consumer perceived value and brand preference in the relationship between marketing communication and purchase intention.
- 3. To provide practical guidance for LEV companies in developing precise brand marketing strategies to enhance consumer purchase intention.

To achieve these objectives, this study adopts a quantitative research approach, utilizing SEM to investigate the roles of marketing communication, perceived value, and brand preference in influencing the purchase decisions of LEVs in China. Data were collected from 701 Chinese consumers aged 18 and above, offering a robust basis for analyzing these relationships.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Consumer behavior theory

The theoretical foundations of consumer behavior encompass several models that elucidate the decision-making process and underlying motivations of consumers. Among these, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen and Madden (1986), is a prominent framework. TPB posits that behavioral intention is influenced by three key factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and

perceived behavioral control. In the context of LEV purchase intention, TPB has been extensively applied to examine how consumer attitudes (e.g., the importance of environmental protection), subjective norms (e.g., societal and peer support), and perceived behavioral control (e.g., the convenience of smart driving features) collectively shape purchase decisions (Wang et al., 2021). This model provides a robust lens for understanding the interplay of psychological and social factors in consumer behavior, particularly in the rapidly evolving market of LEVs.

Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory suggests that external stimuli (e.g., product features, marketing strategies, etc.) operationalize behavioral outcomes through mediating cognitive-affective mechanisms within individuals' psychological processes (organism), ultimately culminating in targeted behavioral manifestations (e.g., purchase intention) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). This theory is widely used to understand consumers' responses to brand messages and their purchase decision-making process.

2.2 Model building

Prior research has shown that marketing communication positively affects consumer perceived value, and there is a strong positive correlation between consumer perceived value and actual purchase (Song et al., 2016). Perceived value includes not only the functional value of the product but also emotional and social value. LEV companies convey brand image, product characteristics (e.g., high performance, high-tech configurations, and environmental attributes), and brand value (e.g., high-end fashion, innovative spirit, and social responsibility) to consumers through a variety of marketing communication methods such as advertising and public relations (Maoheng, 2018). Consumers will think about the LEV's functional value (like its range, power performance, and smart driving assistance functions), emotional value (like the sense of identity and pleasure that comes from driving), and social value (like the positive effect of being environmentally friendly on society). This is how they come up with the vehicle's perceived value. When consumers believe that LEVs have high perceived value, they are willing to pay more for certain product attributes (Lim et al., 2014).

Researchers have also suggested that marketing communication affects brand awareness, brand attitude, and brand trust, which in turn affects consumer purchase intention. This hypothesis is based on the consumer behavior theory and the Stimulus-Organism-Response model. Existing literature suggests that marketing communication increases brand awareness, shapes brand image, and stimulates brand resonance among consumers, mainly through the tools of advertising, public relations, and staff marketing (Faisal & Ekawanto, 2021; Febriyantoro, 2020). A favorable brand image helps enhance consumer brand preference (Gómez-Rico et al., 2023). When consumers form a positive preference for a brand at the cognitive and affective levels, they are more inclined to choose that brand in purchase decision-making process, which enhances purchase intention.

This study examines the influence of marketing communication on consumer purchase intention within the context of China's LEV market, with a particular focus on the mediating effects of consumer perceived value and brand preference. The proposed conceptual framework is presented as follows:



Fig.1: Theoretical Model

2.3 Hypotheses development

2.3.1 Marketing communication and consumer perceived value

Marketing communication is a means of conveying information about a product, service, or brand to target audience, with the purpose of informing, persuading, or reminding consumers (Quayson et al., 2024). Beyond providing information, effective marketing communication reinforces the competitive advantage of a product or service over its competitors (Oluwafemi & Adebiyi, 2018). In the EV market, consumers will typically consider technological, environmental, and cost factors when making purchase decisions (Featherman et al., 2021). Marketing communication serves as a bridge between companies and consumers, facilitating engagement and understanding (Wu & Li, 2018). Key marketing communication tools include advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing, all of which help businesses connect with consumers (Camilleri, 2018).

LEVs are characterized by high price and technology, which makes consumers pay more attention to the functional value, price value, social value, and emotional value of the product when making purchase decisions (Xi et al., 2022). Consumer perceived value is shaped by multi-sensory marketing and brand experience (Wiedmann et al., 2018). To enhance perceived value, companies demonstrate their superior performance and innovative features through well-planned advertising campaigns and product launches. Detailed product information, demonstration of usage scenarios, and communication of consumer evaluations can help consumers better understand the advantages of the product, thus increasing its perceived value. Consistent brand communication helps build brand uniqueness and a positive brand image, which in turn increases consumer identification and perceived value of the brand (Aaker, 2012). Emotionally driven advertising and promotional campaigns can stimulate an emotional response among consumers, resulting in higher levels of brand identification and loyalty (Bagozzi et al., 1999). In conclusion, the effective use of all elements of marketing communication can enhance consumer perceived value of LEVs in multiple dimensions. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Marketing communication has a positive influence on the perceived value of LEVs.

2.3.2 Perceived value and purchase intention

Consumers' intention to purchase LEVs is influenced by a variety of factors, among which perceived value is a critical determinant. For consumers, the perceived value of a product encompasses not only the benefits but also the perceived costs associated with the purchase process. According to Zeithaml (1988), perceived value is defined as an overall assessment of the benefits

consumers receive relative to the costs they incur when acquiring a product or service. Sweeney and Soutar (2001) further categorized perceived value into four dimensions: functional value, price value, emotional value, and social value. In the context of LEVs, perceived value may be manifested as superior performance, innovative technology, prestigious brand image, environmental contributions, and potential long-term cost savings (Canguende-Valentim & Vale, 2023; Reed, 2002; Skippon, 2014).

The Means-End Chain Theory (Gutman,1982) links consumer values to their behaviors, positing that the attributes of a product or service and the perceived consequences of its consumption influence consumer behavior. Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated that consumer perceived value has a significant positive impact on purchase intention (He, 2024; Petravičiūtė et al., 2021; Salehzadeh & Pool, 2017). The higher the perceived value of a LEV, the greater the likelihood of purchase. Additionally, the greater the perceived value of a brand, the stronger the consumer's intention to recommend it to others. This evidence indicates that consumers exhibit positive attitudes and behavioral intentions toward brands they perceive as having high value. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Consumer perceived value is positively correlated with the purchase intention of LEVs.

Existing research also suggests that consumers first learn about a product through marketing communication activities, then form a perception of the product's value, and finally make a purchase decision based on the perception of value (Ramadan et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024). Marketing communication indirectly influences consumer purchase intention by shaping their perceived value of LEVs. Perceived value plays a key mediating role between marketing communication and purchase intention. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Marketing communication influences purchase intention through consumer perceived value.

2.3.3 Marketing communication and purchase intention

Purchase intention is the psychological state of a consumer who creates a tendency to buy a specific product or service during the purchase decision process (Lin & Lu, 2010). Effective marketing communication can make it easier for consumers to remember the brand and its products (Febriyantoro, 2020). Marketing communication influences consumer behavior and purchase decisions in different ways. For example, advertisements present the benefits and features of their products in a vivid way that captures consumers' attention and stimulates their interest and desire. Promotions utilize attractive offers and discounts to directly stimulate consumers' desire to buy, making them feel that the deal is a great opportunity not to be missed. Marketing communication on social media generates word-of-mouth effects, both positive and negative, through user sharing and recommendations, which can significantly influence brand image and consumer purchase decisions (Sandes & Urdan, 2013; Wang & Yu, 2017). Companies can utilize social media platforms to enhance consumer trust and purchase intention (Mainardes & Cardoso, 2019). PR campaigns can further enhance consumer confidence in a brand by portraying a favorable corporate image and making consumers prefer the brand's products among the many choices available (Lin & Lu, 2010). Direct marketing meets the specific needs of consumers through precise targeting and personalized communication to provide tailor-made solutions, which greatly increases purchase intention. In conclusion, marketing communication is an important factor influencing purchase intention. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: Marketing communication has a positive influence on consumer purchase intention for LEVs.

2.3.4 Marketing communication and brand preference

Brand preference reflects the consumer's attitude toward a particular brand, which is a relative preference to choose and use it after comparing with other brands (Chomvilailuk & Butcher, 2010). Most consumers have pre-existing brand preference before making a purchase, and only a few will make impulse purchases. Extensive brand advertising can significantly increase brand awareness by increasing brand exposure, strengthening brand associations, and improving consumers' perceptions of brand quality (Tellis, 2003). Promotional messages can increase brand awareness and trigger positive associations (Palazn-Vidal & Delgado-Ballester, 2005). Promotions make the brand more visible by increasing sales, thus making the brand more preferable to existing customers (Pauwels et al., 2002). It may also encourage potential customers to try the brand, making them more likely to make a purchase. The use of social media in PR programs can help generate conversions, enhance brand positioning, and maintain brand retention (Allagui & Breslow, 2016). Good interaction and skillful content marketing on social media can greatly increase a company's digital visibility and consumer brand preference (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In conclusion, marketing communication plays a key role in shaping brand preference for LEVs. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5: Marketing communication is positively related to brand preference for LEVs.

2.3.5 Brand preference and purchase intention

Consumers establish their tastes and preferences long before purchase behavior occurs. Although people's purchases may not be planned in advance, they are still influenced to some extent by established tastes and preferences (Hoyer & Brown, 1990). Once a consumer develops a brand preference, it is difficult to change, even if the differentiating attributes are found to be irrelevant to the brand (Muthukrishnan & Kardes, 2001). Brand preference reflects consumers' tendency to favor specific brands and represent behavioral tendencies (Overby & Lee, 2006).

Brand preference plays an important role in the purchase decision of EVs (Ye et al., 2025). Brand preference is especially important in the LEV segment. Due to the high price of these products, consumers are more rational in their purchase decisions. In this context, the added value carried by the brand - including social status symbols, images of technological innovation, and concepts of sustainability - becomes a central element influencing consumer choice. Marketing communication delivers brand messages, builds brand image, and influences consumer attitudes and behaviors through communication with consumers (Ravi & Amandeep Singh, 2024), resulting in the formation of a clear brand preference for a particular brand (e.g., Tesla) (Chin et al., 2024). This preference ultimately influences the actual purchase behavior.

Scholars have conducted empirical studies to examine the relationship between brand preference and consumer purchase intention. The results indicate that brand preference is an important driver of purchase intention and suggest that manufacturers influence consumer purchase decisions by enhancing brand preference (Chen & Chang, 2008; Khasanah, 2015; Muzakir & Damrus, 2018). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H6: Brand preference is positively related to purchase intention of LEVs.

H7: Marketing communication influences purchase intention through brand preference.

3. Research Methodology

The Chinese government has implemented a series of proactive measures to promote the development of the EV industry, including purchase subsidies, free parking, and charging incentives,

which have significantly accelerated the rapid growth of the EV market. Particularly in the LEV segment, advancements in technological innovation, intelligent features, and enhanced environmental appeal have successfully attracted an increasing number of consumers who pursue high-quality lifestyles (Li, 2024). LEVs have not only become an ideal choice for urban living but also serve as a symbol of elevated social status (da Silva et al., 2024). Overall, the LEV market in China exhibits vast potential, with its primary target users comprising environmentally conscious individuals who prioritize quality of life, possess medium to high incomes, and hold relatively high social status. As EV technology continues to advance and the market matures, this user base is expected to expand further. Therefore, this study focuses on current and potential buyers of LEVs in China.

3.1 Sampling and data collection process

The data collection process was conducted in two phases: a pre-survey phase and a formal survey phase. The primary objective of the pre-survey phase was to refine the measurement scale to ensure the validity and reliability of the survey instrument. First, the questionnaire was reviewed by five marketing experts to assess its content validity. Based on their feedback, certain indicator items that were semantically ambiguous, repetitive, or unclear were removed, while additional relevant items were incorporated. Second, to further enhance the accuracy and comprehensibility of the questionnaire, input was sought from experienced sales professionals and LEV consumers, leading to appropriate revisions. Following these adjustments, a pilot test was conducted by randomly selecting a group of respondents to complete the questionnaire. The respondents were invited to provide feedback on the survey, and small-sample measurements were performed to evaluate the internal consistency and validity of the measurement items. The results demonstrated that the Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs ranged from .923 to .967, indicating that both the overall questionnaire and individual indicator questions were well-designed and exhibited high internal consistency.

In the second stage, the questionnaire was utilized for the formal survey. The focus of this study was on buyers or potential buyers of LEVs in China. Given the requirement for a large sample size and respondents' familiarity with LEVs, a combination of convenience sampling and random sampling methods was employed. First, researchers distributed questionnaires at LEV brand 4S stores and auto exhibitions, inviting both marketing personnel and consumers to complete the survey in exchange for compensation to enhance the response rate. Second, online survey platforms offering recruitment services were utilized to efficiently screen and contact respondents who met the research criteria, thereby improving the efficiency and quality of data collection. Additionally, informants with expertise in consumer behavior were welcomed to participate in the survey. Prior to completing the questionnaire, researchers explained the purpose and significance of the study to participants and assured them of confidentiality to alleviate any concerns.

Data collection was conducted using a pilot-tested questionnaire between August and September 2024. Over two months, 723 questionnaires were collected, of which 701 were deemed valid, resulting in a validity rate of 97%.

3.2 Procedure & measurement

After reviewing relevant national and international literature, the researchers meticulously designed a comprehensive questionnaire comprising 48 items, each aligned with the relevant constructs. As outlined in the conceptual framework, the marketing communication scale (17 items) was adapted from studies by Villarejo-Ramos and Sanchez-Franco (2005) and Yoo et al. (2000). To assess the consumer perceived value of LEVs, this study incorporated 16 items adapted from Hanzaee and Rouhani (2013), Sweeney and Soutar (2001), and Sheth et al. (1991). The brand preference construct included 9 items adapted from Chen and Chang (2008) and Mohan Raj et al. (2013). Finally, purchase intention was measured using 7 items adapted from Chen and Chang (2008) and Dodds et al. (1991).

The study was designed using a Likert 1-5 scale commonly used in market research for all questions. On this scale, 1 = "strongly disagree," 2 = "disagree," 3 = "neutral," 4 = "agree," and 5 = "strongly agree."

3.3 Data analysis method

In this study, SPSS 21 and AMOS 21 software were used to analyze the collected data to test the reasonableness of the research model and hypotheses. The data analysis process included descriptive statistical analysis, reliability and validity tests, validated factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis.

First, SPSS 21 was employed to clean the data and perform descriptive statistical analyses to examine the fundamental characteristics of the dataset, including the demographic profile of respondents, data distribution, skewness, and kurtosis. Additionally, reliability analyses were conducted on the measurement variables, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated to assess the internal consistency of the scales.

Next, a CFA was conducted using AMOS 21 to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement model. We checked for convergent validity using standardized factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). For discriminant validity, we used the Fornell-Lacker criterion and the correlation matrix. In addition, model fit was assessed using CMIN/DF, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA.

Finally, path analysis was conducted using the SEM methodology to examine the effect of marketing communication on the purchase intention of LEVs in China and the mediating role of consumer brand preference and perceived value. Path coefficients and significance levels were estimated using AMOS 21(Byrne, 2013).

3.4 Model fit evaluation

In SEM analysis, model fit evaluation is a crucial step to ensure that the theoretical model aligns with the actual data. This study used various Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) indices to assess the fit of the constructed model, thereby testing its validity and effectiveness. The study analyzed how to use the MIN/DF, GFI, AGFI, CFI, IFI, TLI, and RMSEA indices to check how well a model fits (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Marsh & Hocevar, 1985; Rahman et al., 2023), and Table 1 shows the criteria that are needed.

Fit parameters	Recommendation value	
CMIN/DF	<3	
GFI	>0.9	
AGFI	>0.9	
CFI	>0.9	
IFI	>0.9	
TLI	>0.9	
RMSEA	<0.05	
SRMR	<0.05	

Table 1. Criteria for alignment between model and empirical data

4. Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Descriptive statistical analysis

The demographic characteristics and general profile of the respondents are presented in Table 2, which provides a comprehensive overview of the sample composition and essential descriptive statistics.

Table 2. General information of respondents (n=701)								
	Item	Value	Percentage					
	Female	363	51.8					
1.Sex	Male	338	48.2					
	Total	701	100					
	18-25	39	5.6					
	26—35	16	2.3					
2 4 ~~	35—45	254	36.2					
2.Age	46—59	383	54.6					
	Over 60	9	1.3					
	total	701	100					
	Below post-secondary	24	3.4					
	Post-secondary	106	15.1					
3.Educational level	Undergraduate	416	59.3					
	Master's degree or above	155	22.1					
	Total	701	100					
	Student	48	6.8					
	Company employee	183	26.1					
	Owner/senior management	73	10.4					
4.0	Government/Institutions	228	32.5					
4.Career	Freelancer	97	13.8					
	Retirees	24	3.4					
	Other	48	6.8					
	Total	701	100					
	Under \$14000	0	0					
	\$14001-28000	0	0					
5.Annual family	\$28001-42000	10	1.4					
income	\$42001-71000	407	58.1					
	Above \$71000	284	40.5					
	Total	701	100					
	Under \$42000							
	\$42000-57000	161	23					
6.Car purchase	£ \$57001-71000	131	18.7					
budget	\$71000-85000	154	22					
	above \$85000	255	36.4					
	total	701	100					
	Audi	59	4.20%					
	AVATR	62	4.40%					
	Mercedes-Benz	269	19.20%					
	BMW	152	10.90%					
7.Brand name	LEADINGIDEAL	73	5.20%					
	Tesla	376	26.90%					
	DENZA	64	4.60%					
	AITO	172	12.30%					
	NIO	46	3.30%					

Item	Value	Percentage
XPENG	43	3.10%
Yangwang	67	4.80%
Other	15	1.10%
Total	701	100

Table 2 presents general information regarding the 701 respondents, comprising both current and potential consumers of LEVs. General information encompasses gender, age, and educational attainment. The gender distribution indicated that 51.8% of the sample was male and 48.2% was female, reflecting a relatively balanced gender ratio. The age distribution indicated that the cohort aged 46-59 comprised the largest segment at 54.6%, while the 36-45 age group represented 36.2%. These findings suggested a greater propensity for car purchases within the older demographic. The sample group exhibited a high level of education, with 59.3% holding a bachelor's degree and 22.1% possessing a master's diploma or higher. The occupational distribution indicated that government/institution workers comprised the largest proportion of respondents at 32.5%, while company employees accounted for 26.1%. Regarding annual household income, 40.5% of respondents reported earnings exceeding \$70,000, while 58.1% fell within the \$50,001-\$70,000 range. This result suggested that the sample of high-income households was inclined to purchase LEVs. The preferred model's price range of \$70,000-850,000 was the most prevalent, comprising 36.4% of the total, while the \$45,000-57,000 range accounted for 23%. The data delineated the fundamental characteristics of the sample group, facilitating a more profound analysis of car purchase preference and behavioral patterns across various demographics.

4.2 Reliability and validity analysis

4.2.1 Reliability

In this study, the reliability of the scale was evaluated across multiple dimensions, and the findings are summarized in Table 3. Cronbach's α , a critical measure of scale reliability, ranged from 0 to 1, with higher values reflecting greater reliability. The analysis revealed that Cronbach's α for all dimensions surpassed the widely accepted threshold of .70 (Hair Jr et al., 2010). Additionally, the overall Cronbach's α of .952 further substantiated the scale's high level of reliability, underscoring its robustness for the intended research purposes.

Table 3. Reliability Analysis							
Dimensionality	Number of Terms	Cronbach's α	Total Cronbach's α				
Advertising	4	.849					
Sale Promotion	3	.836					
Public Relations	4	.851					
Personal Salling	3	.799					
Direct Marketing	3	.822					
Functional Value	4	.856					
Price Value	3	.818	.952				
Social Value	5	.873					
Emotional Value	3	.836					
Cognitive Preference	3	.828					
Emotional Preference	3	.840					
Behavioral Preference	3	.816					
In-role	4	.874					

Extra-role 3 .849

4.2.2 KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity

To assess the suitability of the measurement items, this study conducted factor analysis, including the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's test of sphericity, with the results presented in Table 4. The analysis revealed a KMO value of .923, indicating that the sample data were highly suitable for factor analysis (Kaiser, 1970). Typically, a KMO value greater than .8 is considered to indicate excellent suitability (Field, 2024). Furthermore, Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded an approximate chi-square value of 18663.861 (df = 1128, p < .001), further supporting the conclusion that the data were appropriate for factor analysis (Bartlett, 1950). Therefore, the study data met the prerequisites for factor analysis and were suitable for extracting common factors.

Table 4. Sphere test results for KMO and Bartlett's Test					
КМО .923					
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square df	18663.861 1128			
	Sig.	.000			

4.2.3 Distinguishing validity and internal consistency

This study evaluated the internal consistency and discriminant validity of the multidimensional scales. First, Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to analyze the interrelationships among different dimensions. Second, the reliability and validity of the scales were assessed using composite reliability (C.R.) and average variance extracted (AVE). The results indicated that the C.R. values for all dimensions exceeded 0.7, demonstrating a high level of internal consistency (Hair Jr et al., 2010). Furthermore, the AVE values for all dimensions were above 0.5, providing additional evidence of the scale's reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Pearson's correlation analysis revealed moderate correlations among the dimensions, with coefficients ranging from 0.298 to 0.487, all of which were statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Importantly, the square roots of the AVE values for each dimension, confirming excellent discriminant validity while maintaining moderate inter-dimensional correlations.

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

**	Correlation	n is	significa	int at the	0.01	level	(2-tailed).
							(

	C.R.	AVE	AD	SP	PR	PS	DM	FV	PV	SV	EV	СР	EP	BP	InR	ExR
AD	0.842	0.571	0.756													
SP	0.819	0.601	.333**	0.775												
PR	0.844	0.575	.380**	.428**	0.758											
PS	0.786	0.551	.326**	.379**	.424**	0.742										
DM	0.803	0.576	.332**	.424**	.401**	.456**	0.759									
FV	0.858	0.602	.364**	.322**	.313**	.338**	.390**	0.776								
PV	0.789	0.555	.424**	.363**	.377**	.380**	.358**	.411**	0.745							
SV	0.859	0.549	.413**	.437**	.364**	.469**	.443**	.361**	.487**	0.741						
EV	0.828	0.616	.339**	.326**	.349**	.403**	.320**	.353**	.450**	.402**	0.785					
СР	0.813	0.592	.376**	.368**	.344**	.370**	.377**	.369**	.352**	.383**	.345**	0.769				
EP	0.814	0.593	.407**	.423**	.377**	.393**	.400**	.298**	.355**	.378**	.353**	.444**	0.770			
BP	0.799	0.571	.416**	.392**	.385**	.389**	.452**	.303**	.309**	.378**	.309**	.454**	.462**	0.756		
InR	0.854	0.594	.422**	.357**	.425**	.412**	.329**	.337**	.419**	.357**	.412**	.378**	.388**	.424**	0.771	
ExR	0.832	0.623	.323**	.348**	.369**	.375**	.388**	.389**	.423**	.359**	.366**	.408**	.401**	.336**	.356**	0.789
** 0																

Table 5. Pearson correlation coefficients between observable variables

4.3 Confirmatory factor analysis

Jöreskog and Sörbom (1982) suggested SEM as a way to do statistical analysis. We conducted a CFA to evaluate the measurement model and to check whether the measurement instrument (e.g., questionnaire or measurement indicator) can reliably and accurately measure the latent variables. The model fit metrics included CMIN/DF, GFI, AGFI, CFI, IFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR. For detailed information, please refer to Table 4.6.

Fit parameters	Value	Recommendation value	Result
CMIN/DF	1.777	<3	Good
GFI	0.909	>0.9	Good
AGFI	0.892	>0.9	Acceptable
CFI	0.957	>0.9	Good
IFI	0.958	>0.9	Good
TLI	0.951	>0.9	Good
RMSEA	0.033	<0.05	Good
SRMR	0.0281	< 0.05	Good

Table 6 Model fit results of marketing communication

The results indicated that the measurement model demonstrated a good fit, with all fitted values falling within the recommended ranges. Specifically, the CMIN/DF value of 1.777 was below the recommended threshold of 3, suggesting a good fit between the model and the data (Kline, 2018). The GFI value of .909 exceeded the recommended threshold of .9, while the AGFI value of .892 met the acceptable criterion of being greater than .8 (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). Furthermore, the CFI and IFI values of .957 and .958, both surpassed the recommended threshold of .9, indicating strong performance in comparative and incremental fit. The TLI value of .951 further supported the model's good fit. Additionally, the RMSEA value of .033, which was below the recommended threshold of .05, and the SRMR value of .0281, which was lower than the recommended threshold of .05, suggested that the model's confirmed that the measurement model exhibited a good fit across multiple dimensions.

4.4 SEM analysis

In this study, we tested the proposed conceptual model using the SEM and verified the hypotheses using AMOS software.



Fig.2: Structural Equation Modeling

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized Estimate	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	Р
H1	CPV <mc< td=""><td>.918</td><td>1.05</td><td>.100</td><td>10.522</td><td>***</td></mc<>	.918	1.05	.100	10.522	***
H2	PI <cpv< td=""><td>.569</td><td>.679</td><td>.243</td><td>2.791</td><td>.005</td></cpv<>	.569	.679	.243	2.791	.005
H4	PI <mc< td=""><td>.046</td><td>.063</td><td>.392</td><td>.160</td><td>.873</td></mc<>	.046	.063	.392	.160	.873
H5	BrP <mc< td=""><td>.899</td><td>1.336</td><td>.117</td><td>11.388</td><td>***</td></mc<>	.899	1.336	.117	11.388	***
H6	PI <brp< td=""><td>.450</td><td>.413</td><td>.160</td><td>2.575</td><td>0.010</td></brp<>	.450	.413	.160	2.575	0.010

Table 7. Summary of correlation coefficients of variables

Figure 2 and Table 7 show the results of the hypothesis tests. The results supported four hypotheses: (1) Marketing communication has a significant positive effect on consumer perceived value ($\beta = .918$, CR = 10.522, p < .001), validating H1; (2) Consumer perceived value significantly influences purchase intention ($\beta = .569$, CR = 2.791, p = .005), supporting H2; (4) Marketing communication positively affects brand preference ($\beta = .899$, CR = 11.388, p < .001), confirming H4; and (5) Brand preference has a significant positive impact on purchase intention ($\beta = .450$, CR = 2.575, p = .010), establishing H5. However, H3 was not

supported, as marketing communication did not significantly influence purchase intention (β = .046, CR = .160, p = .873). Overall, the findings highlighted the critical roles of consumer perceived value and brand preference in mediating the impact of marketing communication on purchase intention.

4.5 Mediation Analysis

This study employed the bootstrap technique with 1,000 resamples to examine the mediating roles of brand preference and consumer perceived value in the relationship between marketing communication and purchase intention at a 90% confidence level. Both the percentile and bias-corrected methods were utilized for the analysis. The detailed results of the mediation analysis are presented in Table 8.

The results of the study showed that the point estimate of the mediating effect of consumer perceived value was 0.552 with a standard error (S.E.) of 0.422. The bias-corrected confidence interval was [0.001,1.170] and the percentile confidence interval was [0034,1.216], neither of which included zero, suggesting that the consumer perceived value of goodness of fit plays a significant mediating role. H3 was established.

In addition, the point estimate of the mediating effect of brand preference was 0.713 with a standard error (S.E.) of 0.472. The bias-corrected confidence interval was [0.101, 1.444], and the percentile confidence interval was [0.16, 1.502], neither of which included zero, further confirming that brand preference is also an important mediator of the relationship between marketing communication and purchase intention. H7 was established.

Table 8. Mediation analysis										
Path	Point		Bias-corr	ected	Percentile					
	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper				
$MC \rightarrow BrP \rightarrow PI$	0.713	0.472	0.101	1.444	0.136	1.502				
$MC \rightarrow CPV \rightarrow PI$	0.552	0.422	0.001	1.170	0.034	1.216				

5. Discussion

Based on SOR and TPB theories, this study proposes a model to explain how marketing communication influences Chinese consumers' purchase intention of LEVs through perceived value and brand preference. In the model, marketing communication (e.g., advertising, sales promotion, public relations, etc.) acts as an external stimulus variable to deliver product information and brand value related to LEVs to consumers. After receiving external stimuli, consumers will have internal psychological and emotional responses to them, which are manifested in the formation and shifts of consumers' perceived value and brand preference. Research has shown that marketing communication indirectly has a significant impact on purchase intention by enhancing perceived value and brand preference. This theoretical framework provides a new research perspective for understanding the consumer behavior mechanism in the LEV market.

The analytical outcomes indicate that this study supports H1 and H2, demonstrating a significant positive relationship between marketing communication and consumer perceived value, as well as a significant positive relationship between consumer perceived value and purchase intention. Specifically, marketing communication exerts a significant positive

influence on consumer perceived value, a finding that aligns with prior research (Kovanovienė et al., 2021; Lv et al., 2024; Song et al., 2016). This suggests that effective marketing communication can substantially enhance consumer perceived value of LEVs, thereby increasing their purchase intention. By leveraging various channels and methods such as advertising, public relations, and social media promotions, marketing communication can convey information about the unique benefits, quality assurance, innovative technology, and support services associated with LEVs, ultimately elevating consumer perceived value of the product.

Moreover, Chinese consumers are more inclined than their Western counterparts to associate luxury brands with the concept of "face" and perceive the purchase of luxury goods as a crucial means to maintain, sustain, or enhance their social status (Mo & Wong, 2019). Beyond functional benefits, consumers also place significant emphasis on the symbolic value of EVs as an effective medium to express their identity (Liu et al., 2021). For Chinese consumers, purchasing LEVs can fulfill their self-presentation needs, reflecting attributes such as business success, a pursuit of quality, and pragmatism (Li et al., 2021). Consequently, LEV companies should not only uphold the traditional functional and price value of their vehicles but also actively explore the social and emotional dimensions of their products (Lv et al., 2024). This can be achieved by enhancing brand awareness, advancing technological innovations, improving aesthetic appeal, prioritizing safety design, and ensuring consumers' cost-effectiveness, thereby addressing self-presentation needs more comprehensively.

The analytical outcomes indicate that this study supports H5 and H6, demonstrating a significant positive relationship between marketing communication and brand preference, as well as a significant positive relationship between brand preference and purchase intention. These findings align with prior research by Tellis (2003) and Pauwels et al. (2002), reinforcing the critical role of marketing communication in shaping brand preference for LEVs and highlighting the substantial influence of brand perception on consumer purchase intention (Sari & Kusuma, 2014). Effective brand positioning, achieved through consistent, precise, and creative marketing communication campaigns, enables brands to convey unique value propositions and differentiate themselves from competitors (Firmansyah et al., 2022). For instance, Mercedes-Benz's comprehensive social media strategy, which featured visually engaging content and interactive campaigns, successfully enhanced brand value and consumer engagement (Xu, 2024), fostering strong brand loyalty and preference. Once brand preference is established, consumers tend to prioritize the preferred brand in their decision-making process, often choosing it over competing alternatives even in a crowded market.

The analytical outcomes reveal that the H4 remains unsubstantiated, indicating that marketing communication exerts no significant direct effect on purchase intention of LEVs. While prior research has demonstrated that marketing communication can influence consumer purchase intention through various mechanisms (Kim & Lee, 2020; Pinca et al., 2024; Quayson et al., 2024), the findings of the current study diverge from these conclusions, suggesting that marketing communication alone have limited impact on consumers' plans to purchase LEVs. This discrepancy may be attributed to the fact that LEV consumers tend to be more rational and cautious in their decision-making processes. When selecting high-end products, particularly those involving safety and durability, such as LEVs, consumers prioritize product quality, performance (Gani et al., 2024), and a well-established after-sales service system (Hu, 2022). Consequently, consumers are unlikely to make purchase decisions solely based on advertisements or promotional activities, as trust in a brand requires time to develop. To address this, enterprises should adopt a sustainable marketing strategy centered on enhancing the perceived value of their products. By emphasizing core values such as

technological innovation, sustainability, and premium experiences, companies can strengthen consumer brand preference, thereby indirectly increasing their purchase intention.

The analytical outcomes provide empirical support for H3 and H7, revealing that while marketing communication do not directly influence purchase decisions, they exert significant indirect effects on consumer behavior through shaping perceived value and brand preference. For example, Tesla has successfully established industry leadership through high-quality products, superior experiences, and all-encompassing branding, making it a natural choice for consumers when purchasing a EV(Sheykhan et al., 2024). In addition, LEV consumers are typically more interested in brand experience than just product features. Brands can enhance consumers' brand identity through offline test-drive experiences, immersive showrooms, and digital interactive experiences (e.g., VR test drives), which can indirectly increase purchase intention (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). Meanwhile, as consumers increasingly prefer social media as their primary source of auto information, LEV companies should utilize these platforms to meet their information needs and improve their interactions with potential customers. Building brand communities and encouraging owners to share user-generated content (UGC), such as driving experiences and environmental ideas, can enhance consumers' brand identity and inspire purchase intent through community interaction (Muniz et al., 2001). By adopting these modernized channels, EV companies can increase brand impact and marketing effectiveness.

6. Limitations and future research directions

Despite researchers' efforts to ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, this study still has some limitations and many opportunities for future exploration.

First, this study is subject to certain limitations in its research process. The primary data collection method employed was questionnaires. Although efforts were made to ensure a diverse sample, it may not fully capture the characteristics and behaviors of all LEV purchasers. Consequently, the findings may lack generalizability to underrepresented groups. To address this limitation, future research should expand the sample coverage to include a broader range of regions, age groups, income levels, and occupational types. For instance, a stratified sampling approach could be adopted, dividing the sample by geographic region and further subdividing each region by age and income categories. Additionally, increasing the sample size would enhance the reliability and generalizability of the results.

Second, while this study provides a detailed analysis of variables such as consumer perceived value and brand preference, the measurement of these constructs may be oversimplified, potentially failing to fully capture the influence of more complex factors. For instance, the formation of consumer perceived value and brand preference for LEVs could be shaped by multidimensional factors, including cultural background, social trends, and personal experiences, which were not comprehensively addressed in this research. Future studies should further investigate the impact of external factors, such as cultural context, social dynamics, and policy environment, on consumer perceived value, brand preference, and purchase intention.

7. Conclusion

This study investigates the impact of marketing communication on purchase intention of LEVs, emphasizing the mediating role of perceived value and brand preference. A comprehensive theoretical model was developed and empirically tested by integrating SOR and TPB. The findings suggest that marketing communication can significantly increase consumer perceived value and brand preference, which in turn positively affects their

purchase intention. However, the direct impact of marketing communication on purchase intention is limited, highlighting the key mediating role of perceived value and brand preference in shaping consumer behavior.

The findings provide valuable insights for LEV brands, suggesting that marketing strategies should focus on highlighting core values such as technological innovation, sustainability, and premium experiences to increase perceived value. In addition, fostering brand preference through immersive experiences, social media engagement, and community building can further enhance consumer loyalty and drive purchase intent.

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