



The Influence of Online Reviews on Consumers' Purchase Intentions for New Energy Vehicles: The Mediating Role of Brand Value

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Abstract

With the rapid growth of China's new energy vehicle market, especially in the context of the gradual reduction of government policies, consumers' purchasing decisions for new energy vehicles are gradually relying more on market factors. This study aims to explore how the usefulness and reliability of online reviews affect consumers' purchase intentions and to further analyze the mediating role of brand value in this process. The results show that the usefulness and reliability of online reviews have a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions. Furthermore, brand value plays an important mediating role between online reviews and purchase intention. The results of this study have practical implications for new energy vehicle companies. Businesses should focus on how to enhance the value of their brands. By enhancing brand reputation, increasing visibility, and building consumer trust, they can effectively increase consumers' recognition of online, thereby increasing their purchase intentions.

Keywords: *New Energy Vehicles, Online Reviews, Brand Value, Purchase Intention*

1. Introduction

The new energy vehicle (NEV) industry is experiencing rapid growth, with a penetration rate reaching 40% in 2023. Initially driven by policies and market demand, the industry is now accelerating toward full marketization as subsidies decrease, leading to industry reshuffling. By the end of 2022, China had 13.1 million NEVs, accounting for 3.14% of total vehicles, with 5.35 million new registrations, reflecting an 81.48% year-on-year increase. Over the next 5–8 years, the phase-out of China IV and older fuel vehicles will create significant market opportunities for NEVs. However, intense competition and fluctuating sales have led to the elimination of some firms. (Missing citation?)

In the digital era, consumers rely on social media platforms for product information, making online reviews a crucial factor in purchase decisions. Given the high cost of NEVs, consumers tend to gather extensive information before purchasing, and online reviews—due to their immediacy and accessibility—serve as key references. The usefulness and reliability of review content directly impact purchase intention, posing a challenge for companies on how to leverage online reviews effectively.

Online reviews refer to non-profit, subjective evaluations that consumers share based on their personal experiences after purchasing a product. These reviews significantly impact consumer purchasing decisions, business product optimization, and market trends (Zhang Wei, 2023). Additionally, they influence not only purchase intention but also brand building and corporate reputation management (Zhao Min, 2023).

Research on brand value primarily focuses on dimensions such as brand awareness, brand reputation, and brand recognition. Scholars widely agree that brand value encompasses not only functional attributes but also non-functional factors like cultural significance and social responsibility. Perceived brand value refers to consumers' comprehensive recognition of a brand's value, culture, image, and assets. It is not only based on a brand's functional attributes but also includes its social and cultural significance (Park, 1986). Brand value enhances a company's ability to command a price premium, leading to greater market recognition (Zhao Min, 2023). Additionally, it is shaped by market strategies, consumer loyalty, and brand image development.

Consumer purchase intention refers to an individual's subjective decision regarding a product or service under specific conditions. It is influenced by multiple factors, including physiological needs, psychological perceptions, cultural background, social identity, and group effects (Wang Chenyu, 2023; Guo

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Ping, 2023). Chen Qihong (2024) argues that NEV purchase intention is closely related to environmental consciousness, policy support, and product performance. Therefore, this study defines purchase intention as the subjective probability of consumers purchasing NEVs under the influence of external information.

This study, grounded in consumer decision-making theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, examines the impact of online reviews on NEV purchase intention and explores the mediating role of brand value. By analyzing the mechanisms through which online reviews influence consumer behavior, this research provides strategic insights for NEV enterprises to optimize online community engagement, enhance brand value, and gain a competitive edge in the evolving market.

2. Objectives

1) To examine the impact of online reviews on consumers' purchase intentions for new energy vehicles (NEVs) and quantify the influence of different types of online reviews (text, short videos, and long videos) on the consumer decision-making process.

2) The brand value of NEV enterprises influences consumers' purchase intentions through brand reputation and brand awareness. Brand reputation builds trust via social identity mechanisms, where positive reviews enhance emotional resonance and reduce perceived risks, while brand awareness shortens decision-making through mere-exposure effects and symbolic value, with high-frequency exposure strengthening psychological security.

3) To analyze the mediating role of brand value between online reviews and NEV purchase intentions, assessing the moderating effects of factors such as brand awareness and brand reputation on consumer purchase decisions.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Consumer Purchase Intention

Regarding influencing factors, Jiang Hao (2024) suggests that individual factors such as economic status and education level significantly impact purchase intention. High-income and highly educated groups tend to be more environmentally conscious, making them more likely to adopt NEVs. Wu Yumei (2024), based on the 4R theory, proposes that consumers can be segmented by age, gender, and income, with different groups exhibiting varying sensitivity to brand value, product adaptation, and additional services. This study primarily focuses on the impact of online reviews, measuring how consumer purchase intention changes under the influence of online evaluations.

3.2 Perceived Brand Value

Research on brand value mainly focuses on brand awareness, brand reputation, and brand recognition. Studies show that brand reputation influences consumer trust through social media, where positive word-of-mouth can facilitate purchasing decisions (Zhu Dahui, 2022). Brand awareness, as a core component of brand value, strengthens brand identity, reduces perceived risk, and enhances purchase intention (Zhang Jun, 2024).

3.3 Online Reviews

Studies show that consumers increasingly rely on online reviews when making purchasing decisions, particularly on e-commerce and social media platforms (Chevalier, 2006). The credibility and usefulness of reviews are key factors. Highly credible reviews enhance consumer trust and reduce perceived risk (Dellarocas, 2003), while detailed and informative reviews improve perceived product quality and encourage purchase intention (Wu Fei, 2023).

3.4 New Energy Vehicles (NEVs)



Regarding economic factors influencing consumer behavior, studies indicate that income level affects the willingness to purchase NEVs, with higher-income and highly educated consumers being more likely to adopt them (Jiang Hao, 2023; Li Xiang, 2024). Price remains a key determinant, particularly in lower-tier cities where consumers have tighter budgets, making price compatibility a critical factor in market adoption. Additionally, NEVs offer lower travel costs, and government incentives such as subsidies and tax reductions further enhance consumer purchase intention (Chen Jianfeng, 2022). Existing research primarily focuses on the antecedents of NEV purchase intention, aiming to improve consumer adoption rates.

3.5 Theoretical Foundation

The SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) theory suggests that human information processing begins with external stimuli, which are then processed by the brain to generate behavioral responses. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) first proposed this model, arguing that external factors influence individual psychology and emotions, leading to behavioral changes. Later, Donovan (1982) applied the SOR model to retail settings, exploring how shopping environments affect consumer emotions.

With the rise of e-commerce and digital platforms, the SOR model has been widely used to examine how online shopping experiences impact consumer behavior (Zhang Beijia, 2017). Factors such as product appearance and quality influence not only consumer emotions but also their perception of the product, ultimately shaping their purchase intention.

3.6 Hypothesis Development

3.6.1 Relationship Between Online Reviews and Consumers' Purchase Intentions for NEVs

Online reviews influence NEV purchase intentions through usefulness, credibility, and brand value. Consumers rely on detailed, authentic reviews for high-risk decisions. Trustworthy reviews, especially from authoritative sources, enhance confidence and purchasing intent. Positive reviews boost brand value, while reviews also reduce perceived risks related to safety, battery range, and performance, strengthening purchase willingness.

Hypotheses:

H1: Online reviews positively influence consumers' purchase intentions for NEVs.

H1a: Review usefulness positively influences purchase intentions.

H1b: Review credibility positively influences purchase intentions.

3.6.2 Relationship Between Online Reviews and Brand Value

Online reviews and brand value influence each other. Consumers assess brand quality and reputation through reviews, with positive feedback enhancing trust and value, while negative reviews harm brand image. Strong brands attract more positive reviews, reducing perceived risks, boosting trust, and driving word-of-mouth marketing. Brand awareness and reputation are key—well-known brands receive more authoritative reviews, reinforcing brand value and competitiveness.

As a key aspect of brand value, online reviews impact brands in multiple ways. Research shows consumers form brand perceptions based on information reliability and usefulness (Mzileni, 2024). eWOM studies highlight that authentic user-generated content significantly strengthens brand trust (Chen et al., 2024).

Hypothesis:

H2: Online reviews positively influence brand value.

3.6.3 Relationship Between Brand Value and NEV Consumer Purchase Intention

Brand reputation reflects consumer perception and strongly influences purchase decisions. Studies show brand value alleviates trust issues in high-value purchases (Fu Nan, 2023). User-generated reputation is more persuasive than ads (Liu Chang et al., 2021), and recommendations from friends and family convert better than stranger reviews (Vieira, 2024). Certifications boost NEV brand credibility (Nerurkar, 2023), while consistently high reputation increases repurchase rates (Lumukso et al., 2023).



Brand awareness enhances recognition and market penetration, easing uncertainty in major purchases. Well-known brands reduce consumer anxiety in financial decisions (Song, 2024), and NEV brands in government subsidy programs gain official endorsement, lowering perceived risks and boosting purchase intent (Zhang Mingzhe, 2023).

Hypothesis:

H3: Brand value positively influences NEV consumer purchase intention.

3.6.4 Hypothesis on the Mediating Role of Brand Value

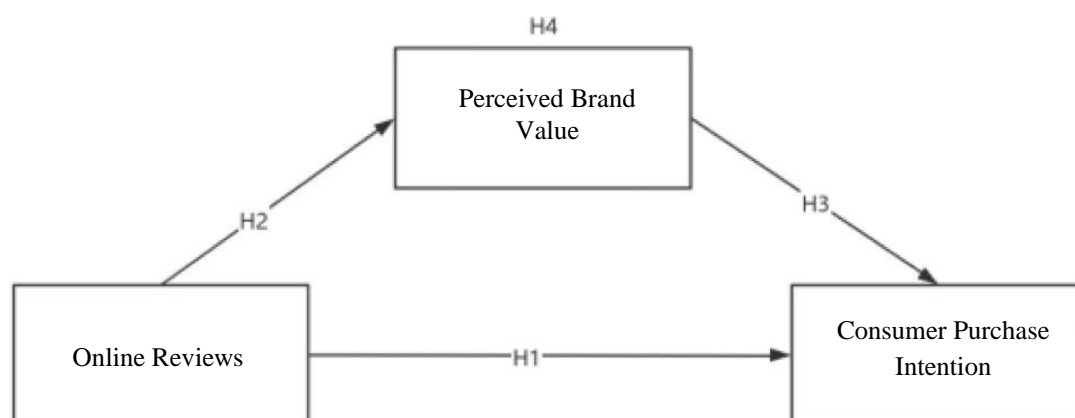
The NEV purchase decision process is a risk-averse value assessment, where online reviews shape brand value, which in turn influences purchase intention. Positive reviews create a social recognition effect, gradually building brand trust. Brand value actively integrates and translates fragmented user experiences into measurable quality assurances, simplifying consumer decision-making.

Empirical studies confirm this mediating effect. Xu Zhongchao (2023) found it stronger among consumers less familiar with technical specifications. Macit (2023) demonstrated, using cross-country data, that online reviews enhance brand value, which then impacts purchase intention. Gutierrez (2024) showed that online reviews influence consumer decisions indirectly through brand identity and image.

Hypothesis:

H4: Brand value mediates the relationship between online reviews and NEV consumer purchase intention.

3.6.5 Conceptual Research Framework



3.7 Questionnaire Design and Data Collection

This study adopted a questionnaire survey method for data collection, conducted between November and December 2024. The target respondents were consumers aged 23-65 who intended to purchase new energy vehicles (NEVs) and were in the pre-purchase information-gathering phase, where their information acquisition behavior would directly influence their final purchasing decisions.

The questionnaire was designed as an electronic survey using the Wenjuanxing platform and distributed through social media channels such as QQ groups, WeChat groups, Weibo, and Xiaohongshu. Respondents accessed the survey via an online link and submitted their responses automatically upon completing all questions.

The questionnaire consists of two parts: demographic information (gender, age, education, income) and measurement scales using a five-point Likert scale. The scales are adapted from existing studies:

Online reviews: 2 dimensions, 6 items (Hu, 2021; Liu, 2023).

Brand value: 2 dimensions, 6 items (Zhu, 2022; Liu, 2023).

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Purchase intention: 1 dimension, 3 items (Wang, 2023).

3.8 Descriptive Statistics

In this study, a random sampling method was used to distribute questionnaires for data collection. A total of 475 responses were collected. Based on the following screening criteria, responses showed obvious patterns or regularity and completion time of less than 60 seconds. After applying these filters, 460 valid responses were obtained, resulting in a valid response rate of 96.8%.

3.9 Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach's α for the usefulness dimension is 0.797, exceeding the 0.7 threshold. The Cronbach's α for the reliability dimension is 0.756, also greater than 0.7. The Cronbach's α for the brand word-of-mouth dimension is 0.733, surpassing 0.7. The Cronbach's α for the brand awareness dimension is 0.766, exceeding 0.7. The Cronbach's α for the purchase intention dimension is 0.775, also above 0.7. These findings demonstrate that the survey questionnaire designed for this study exhibits high internal consistency, meeting the requirements for research validity and reliability.

3.10 Validity Testing

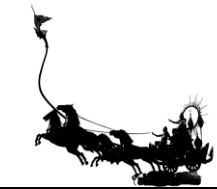
Since the scale used in this study is adapted from established scales, the validity test primarily focuses on structural validity. If the structural validity meets the required standards, it indicates that the scale's validity is acceptable.

All AVE values exceed 0.5, and all CR values are greater than 0.7, indicating good convergent validity of the measurement scale used in this study, see Table 1.

Table 1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Results for Each Variable

Variable	Item	Standardized Factor Loading	CR	AVE
Usefulness	1	0.706	0.801	0.5756
	2	0.693		
	3	0.865		
Reliability	4	0.764	0.7849	0.549
	5	<u>0.742</u>		
	6	0.716		
Brand Reputation	7	0.684	0.7331	0.5781
	8	0.682		
	9	0.708		
Brand Awareness	10	0.801	0.804	0.5782
	11	0.705		
	12	0.772		
Purchase Intention	13	0.764	0.7761	0.5364
	14	0.711		

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0.721

The square root of the AVE for each variable is greater than its correlation coefficients with other variables, indicating good discriminant validity of the measurement scale in this study; see Table 2.

Table 2 Discriminant Validity Test Results of Each Variable

	Purchase Intention	Usefulness	Reliability	Brand Reputation	Brand Awareness
Purchase Intention	0.732				
Usefulness	0.276***	0.759			
Reliability	0.276***	0.414***	0.741		
Brand Reputation	0.31***	0.24***	0.281***	0.76	
Brand Awareness	0.683***	0.248***	0.261***	0.31***	0.76

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Correlation Analysis

This study conducted a correlation analysis of the variables, and the correlation coefficients between them are presented; see Table 3.

Table 3 Correlation Analysis Results

	Purchase intention	Online reviews	Brand value	Review usefulness	Review credibility	Brand reputation	Brand awareness
Purchase intention	1						
Online reviews	.449**	1					
Brand value	.680**	.572**	1				
Review usefulness	.384**	.930**	.423**	1			
Review credibility	.445**	.907**	.644**	.688**	1		
Brand reputation	.408**	.535**	.857**	.370**	.631**	1	
Brand awareness	.758**	.454**	.868**	.359**	.483**	.488**	1

These findings confirm that all key variables exhibit significant positive correlations with purchase intention, supporting the study's hypotheses and emphasizing the critical role of brand awareness and brand value in influencing consumer purchase intention.

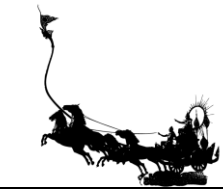
4.2 Regression Analysis

4.2.1 Regression Analysis of Online Reviews and Purchase Intention

Table 4 Regression Analysis Results of Online Reviews and Purchase Intention

	Unstandardized BETA	Standard Error	Standardized BETA	T	Significance (P)	Collinearity (VIF)
(Constant)	1.543	0.164		9.408	0	

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Usefulness	0.142	0.055	0.149	2.601	0.01	1.899
Reliability	0.373	0.063	0.342	5.967	0	1.899
R ²	0.209					
AdjustedR ²	0.206					
F	60.48					
P	0.000**					
Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention						

Table 4 shows that the two dimensions of online reviews have an impact on purchase intention. The regression analysis results indicate that the adjusted R² of online reviews is 0.206, with a p-value of 0, demonstrating that online reviews can explain 20.6% of the variance in consumers' purchase intention for new energy vehicles, and the impact is significant. In conclusion, the research hypotheses H1, H1a, and H1b are supported.

4.2.2 Regression Analysis of Online Reviews and Brand Value

Table 5 Regression Analysis Results of Online Reviews and Brand Value

	Unstandardized BETA	Standard Error	StandardizedBETA	T	Significance (P)	Collinearity (VIF)
(Constant)	1.46	0.113		12.895	0	
Usefulness	-0.03	0.038	-0.039	-0.799	0.425	1.899
Reliability	0.589	0.043	0.671	13.627	0	1.899
R ²	0.416					
AdjustedR ²	0.413					
F	162.67					
P	0.000**					
Dependent Variable: Brand Value						

Table 5 shows that the two dimensions of online reviews have an impact on brand value. The regression analysis results indicate that the adjusted R² of online reviews is 0.413, with P equal to 0, proving that online reviews can explain 41.3% of the variation in brand value, with a significant effect. In conclusion, the research hypothesis H2 is supported.

4.2.3 Regression Analysis of Brand Value and Purchase Intention

Table 6 Regression Analysis Results of Brand Value and Purchase Intention

	Unstandardized BETA	Standard Error	StandardizedBETA	T	Significance (P)	Collinearity (VIF)
(Constant)	0.495	0.131		3.775	0	
Brand Reputation	0.055	0.038	0.05	1.437	0.152	1.313
Brand Awareness	0.772	0.037	0.733	21.009	0	1.313
R ²	0.576					
AdjustedR ²	0.574					
F	310.38					
P	0.000**					
Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention						

Table 6 shows that the two dimensions of brand value have an impact on purchase intention. The regression analysis results indicate that the adjusted R² of brand value is 0.574, with P equal to 0, demonstrating that brand value can explain 57.4% of the variation in consumers' purchase intention for new energy vehicles, and the effect is significant. In conclusion, hypothesis H3 of this study is supported.

4.3 Mediation Effect Test

The mediation effect coefficient of brand value between online reviews and purchase intention is 0.398. After 2,000 bootstrap resampling iterations, the 95% confidence interval does not include zero,



confirming that brand value plays a mediating role between online reviews and purchase intention. In conclusion, hypothesis H4 is supported.

4.4 Research Conclusions

Based on 460 survey responses, this study confirms that online reviews positively influence NEV purchase intentions, with brand value as a mediator.

Consumers assess review usefulness and credibility, which directly impact purchase decisions. Trustworthy reviews enhance purchase intent. Additionally, high-quality online reviews boost brand recognition and trust, increasing perceived brand value and indirectly driving purchase intentions.

Brand value plays a key role in reducing perceived risk. Strong brand reputation and awareness enhance consumer trust, making them more likely to purchase NEVs.

4.5 Discussions

Based on a questionnaire survey of 460 respondents, this study empirically analyzes the impact of online reviews on consumers' purchase intention for new energy vehicles (NEVs). The results indicate that online reviews positively influence NEV purchase intention, with brand value playing a mediating role between the two.

4.5.1 The Impact of Online Reviews on NEV Purchase Intention

When consumers encounter online reviews, they evaluate and filter the content based on its perceived usefulness. Since online reviews are generated by different consumers under varying usage scenarios, there is an inherent gap between reviewers and readers. Consumers prioritize whether the information is relevant to their own context. Useful information is identified and stored in their cognitive database, where it generates stimuli that ultimately influence purchase intention.

The lack of personal connection between reviewers and consumers creates initial distrust toward product information in online reviews. The credibility of reviewers is a key factor in enhancing review reliability. When consumers perceive online reviews as trustworthy, the information exerts a stronger stimulus, thereby increasing its impact on purchase intention.

4.5.2 The Impact of Online Reviews on Brand Value

Online reviews, as a form of word-of-mouth, also affect brand value. Empirical analysis reveals that reliability is the critical factor influencing brand value. When consumers perceive online reviews as reliable, their perception of brand value improves.

If reviewers have established credibility or the review platform holds significant influence among consumers, the product information in the reviews becomes more acceptable. This information then affects consumers' decision-making process, ultimately shaping their NEV purchase intention.

Interestingly, usefulness negatively impacts brand value in our analysis. This unexpected result may stem from measurement errors in the usefulness dimension or insufficient indicators capturing consumers' true perceptions. Further research or more complex models are needed to verify the relationship between usefulness and brand value.

4.5.3 The Impact of Brand Value on NEV Purchase Intention

Given that NEVs represent a major household expenditure, consumers extensively research product-related information before purchasing. Brand value plays a crucial role, as it reflects market acceptance and accumulated consumer endorsements.

Brand reputation consists of evaluations from existing NEV owners. In the digital era, such word-of-mouth is diverse and accessible anytime, anywhere. A strong brand reputation reduces consumers' perceived risk and mitigates the weakening effect of decision-making systems on product-related stimuli.

High brand awareness indicates a large consumer base and diverse product offerings in the NEV market. This alleviates consumer concerns, such as warranty or maintenance issues, and diminishes the



impact of negative information. Consequently, positive stimuli are amplified, further enhancing consumers' willingness to purchase NEVs.

5. Conclusion

To optimize the online review mechanism, NEV companies should incentivize high-quality reviews, increase review volume to enhance the bandwagon effect, and incorporate diverse formats like images and videos for greater credibility. Establishing an interactive brand platform can improve review accessibility, reinforcing purchase intention. Ensuring review reliability through strict management while enhancing product and service quality will foster genuine word-of-mouth. Strengthening brand image via social media, live streaming, expert reviews, and virtual reality experiences can boost recognition and market influence. Given this study's sample limitation to Guangdong Province, future research should expand the data scope for broader applicability and explore online reviews' impact on actual purchasing behavior.

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