

Assessment Cover Page

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[Title: Tesla's Declining Competitiveness in the Global EV Market: Affordability Barriers, Intensifying Competition, and Erosion of Consumer Skepticism.]

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of the requirements for the

Degree of

[Master of Arts in International Business, Level 9]



[Date: 13. May 2025]

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1. Abstract

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of Tesla, Inc., focusing on its strategic positioning, technological innovation, financial performance, and market impact. As a pioneer in electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing and renewable energy solutions, Tesla has disrupted traditional automotive and energy industries through its advanced technologies, vertically integrated business model, and aggressive expansion strategies. The report examines Tesla's key products, including electric vehicles, battery energy storage systems, and solar energy solutions, while assessing its competitive advantages, global market presence, and challenges such as regulatory hurdles, supply chain risks, and increasing competition. Financial trends are analyzed to evaluate Tesla's profitability, growth trajectory, and investment appeal. The report concludes with insights into Tesla's future outlook and its role in shaping the transition toward sustainable transportation and clean energy.

2. **Title:** Tesla's Declining Competitiveness in the Global EV Market: Affordability Barriers, Intensifying Competition, and Erosion of Consumer Skepticism.

3. Problem:

Tesla faces multiple challenges that are impacting its market position and growth potential. One of the most significant barriers is affordability. The Model 3, priced at around \$40,000, is substantially more expensive than traditional internal combustion engine vehicles like the Toyota Camry, which starts at approximately \$25,000 (Michael, 2024). This high cost limits Tesla's appeal to middle-income buyers, particularly in emerging markets where price sensitivity is high and government subsidies for electric vehicles (EVs) are inconsistent.



Consumer trust is another critical issue for Tesla. Despite advertising a 300+ mile range, range anxiety remains a significant concern, especially in regions with inadequate charging infrastructure. The disparity between urban and rural charging availability, along with infrastructure shortages in areas like Southeast Asia and Africa, further discourages potential buyers (Zheng, 2023). Additionally, Tesla's reputation has been tarnished by frequent recalls and safety issues, including seat belt failures, accelerator defects, and software glitches. Autopilot-related accidents have also drawn scrutiny from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), raising safety concerns among consumers (Wei, 2025).

Market competition is intensifying, particularly from Chinese automakers like BYD and NIO. For example, BYD's Seal EV is priced at \$28,000, making it a more affordable alternative to Tesla's Model 3 and appealing to budget-conscious consumers (Zhang, 2024). This competitive pressure is eroding Tesla's dominance in the EV market. Furthermore, Tesla's global expansion efforts are hindered by various regional challenges. In Europe, tariffs on non-European EVs make Tesla less competitive, while in China, the market favors domestic brands. Production bottlenecks, including issues with automation, further impact Tesla's ability to meet demand and maintain customer satisfaction (Lu, 2024). In emerging markets like India and Brazil, Tesla struggles with brand recognition, where established brands such as Toyota enjoy stronger consumer trust (Lehan Zhang, 2024). Compounding these issues is Tesla's crisis management, which has been criticized for its delayed responses to Autopilot-related problems and lack of transparency, further eroding consumer confidence.

4. Research Questions

1. How do affordability gaps and competitive pricing strategies by competitor automakers impact Tesla's market share in key region of (Europe)?
2. To what extent do product quality concerns and charging infrastructure limitations erode consumer trust in Tesla compared to legacy automakers transitioning to EVs?

5. Introduction

Tesla, Inc. has long been a pioneer in the electric vehicle (EV) industry, revolutionizing the automotive market with its innovative technology, sleek designs, and commitment to sustainability. However, despite its early success and leadership in the EV sector, Tesla is now facing a myriad of challenges that threaten its long-term competitiveness. This research report aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors contributing to Tesla's declining market performance, focusing on affordability barriers, intensifying competition, erosion of consumer trust, and technical limitations.

Additionally, the report explores Tesla's Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) challenges, quality control issues, and the impact of globalization on its market expansion. By synthesizing findings from multiple reports and studies, this research seeks to offer a holistic understanding of the barriers to Tesla's growth and provide strategic recommendations to address these challenges. The report also examines how Tesla's high pricing strategy, coupled with inconsistent government subsidies, limits its appeal to middle-income buyers, while increasing competition from Chinese automakers and legacy manufacturers further squeezes its market share. Furthermore, the report highlights the importance of addressing consumer trust issues, such as range anxiety and safety concerns, to maintain brand loyalty. Ultimately, this research aims to provide actionable insights for Tesla to reclaim its leadership in the rapidly evolving EV market.

6. Objectives of this research report are:

1. Identify and Analyze Barriers to Tesla's Market Growth: The report aims to comprehensively examine the various factors hindering Tesla's sales and market expansion, including affordability issues, consumer trust concerns, intensifying competition, product quality and safety issues, technical limitations, globalization challenges, and weak brand positioning in emerging markets.
2. Evaluate the Impact of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Challenges: The report seeks to assess how Tesla's ESG performance, including environmental scandals, social controversies, and governance issues, affects consumer trust and brand reputation, ultimately influencing sales and market competitiveness.



3. Provide Strategic Recommendations for Addressing Challenges: The report aims to offer actionable strategies for Tesla to overcome these barriers, such as introducing more affordable models, expanding charging infrastructure, improving battery technology, enhancing crisis management, and strengthening ESG initiatives to regain market leadership and sustain long-term growth.

7. Literature Review

7.1. Affordability Barriers

7.1.1 High Price Points and Market Saturation

One of the most significant hurdles to Tesla's market expansion is the premium pricing of its vehicles. Tesla's pricing strategy positions its cars as luxury products, with the Model 3 starting at approximately \$40,000, significantly higher than traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles like the Toyota Camry, which starts at around \$25,000 (Michael, 2024). This price disparity limits Tesla's appeal to middle-income consumers, particularly in emerging markets where price sensitivity is high and government subsidies for EVs are inconsistent (Michael, 2024). The affordability issue is further compounded by the reduction of federal tax credits in key markets such as the United States. As subsidies phase out, Tesla's vehicles become less accessible to a broader consumer base, especially in regions where cost is a primary consideration for EV adoption (Bloomberg NEF, 2023).

(Peter, 2025) highlights the lack of sufficient financial incentives in some regions discourages potential buyers, further constraining Tesla's market penetration. Competition from Chinese automakers like BYD and NIO, which offer more affordable EVs, also poses a significant challenge. For instance, BYD's Seal EV is priced at \$28,000, making it a more attractive option for budget-conscious consumers (Zhang, 2024). Legacy automakers such as Volkswagen and Ford

are also leveraging their economies of scale and brand loyalty to offer competitive EV models, further squeezing Tesla's market share (Li, 2023).

7.1.2 Lack of Economies of Scale

Tesla's production capabilities, while impressive, have not yet achieved the economies of scale necessary to significantly reduce costs. Traditional automakers such as Volkswagen and General Motors have leveraged their existing manufacturing infrastructure to produce EVs at lower costs. A study by Niels Dau 2022 found that legacy automakers benefit from established supply chains and production networks, enabling them to offer EVs at more competitive prices (Andrew, 2025). In contrast, Tesla's reliance on proprietary technology and vertically integrated production processes has limited its ability to achieve similar cost efficiencies (Jin, 2023). Furthermore, Tesla's focus on innovation and premium features has resulted in higher production costs (Keyi, 2023). For example, the company's investment in advanced battery technology and autonomous driving systems has driven up the price of its vehicles (Andrew, 2025). While these features appeal to early adopters and tech enthusiasts, they are less compelling to cost-conscious consumers who prioritize affordability over cutting-edge technology (Jess, 2024).

7.1.3. Impact of Government Incentives and Subsidies

Government incentives and subsidies have played a crucial role in driving EV adoption worldwide. However, the phase-out of these incentives in key markets has disproportionately affected Tesla. In the U.S., for example, the federal tax credit for Tesla vehicles was phased out in 2019 after the company reached the 200,000-vehicle sales cap. This has made Tesla's vehicles less competitive compared to EVs from other manufacturers that still qualify for the full \$7,500 tax credit (EV Booster, 2024). A report by the International Energy Agency (IEA, 2023) highlights that the reduction or elimination of EV subsidies in several countries has slowed the growth of premium EV sales, particularly in markets where Tesla has a strong presence. This has further exacerbated affordability barriers for Tesla, as consumers are increasingly turning to lower-priced alternatives (Connor, 2024). To address these challenges, Tesla may need to explore strategic pricing models, such as offering more affordable vehicle options or introducing flexible financing plans.

Additionally, the company could work closely with governments to advocate for more robust and consistent financial incentives for EV buyers (Doloresz, 2024).

7.2. Intensifying Competition

7.2.1 Entry of Legacy Automakers

The global EV market has seen a surge in competition as traditional automakers ramp up their efforts to transition from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles to EVs. Companies such as Volkswagen, General Motors, Ford, and Toyota have made significant investments in EV development, leveraging their extensive resources, manufacturing expertise, and established brand loyalty (2021 GLG Insight). According to a report by BloombergNEF (2023), legacy automakers are expected to account for over 50% of global EV sales by 2025, up from just 20% in 2020. Volkswagen, in particular, has emerged as a formidable competitor to Tesla. The company's ID. series of EVs has been well-received in Europe and China, with sales surpassing those of Tesla in several markets (Mateusz, 2025).

7.2.2 Rise of Chinese EV Manufacturers

China, the world's largest EV market, has become a hotbed of competition for Tesla. Domestic manufacturers such as BYD, NIO, and Xpeng have made significant strides in developing affordable and technologically advanced EVs. BYD, in particular, has overtaken Tesla as the global leader in EV sales, thanks to its strong focus on affordability and vertical integration in battery production (Mokter, 2024; Economics Times, 2024). Research by Zhang et al. (2023) highlights that Chinese EV manufacturers benefit from strong government support, access to low-cost labor, and a robust domestic supply chain. These advantages have enabled them to offer high-quality EVs at competitive prices, posing a significant challenge to Tesla's market share in China and other regions.

7.2.3 Emergence of New Entrants

In addition to legacy automakers and Chinese manufacturers, Tesla faces competition from a growing number of new entrants in the EV market. Companies such as Rivian, Lucid Motors, and Fisker are targeting niche segments with innovative products and business models (Paul A., 2021). While these companies are still in the early stages of scaling production, they have the potential to disrupt Tesla's dominance in the premium EV segment.

A report by Deloitte (2023) suggests that the proliferation of new EV brands is fragmenting the market, making it increasingly difficult for Tesla to maintain its leadership position. The report also notes that new entrants are leveraging advancements in battery technology, software, and manufacturing processes to differentiate themselves from Tesla and other established players (Camila, 2021). To stay ahead of the competition, Tesla must focus on continuous innovation, particularly in battery technology and autonomous driving systems. The company should also explore new markets and customer segments, such as commercial vehicles and emerging economies, to diversify its revenue streams and reduce its reliance on the consumer EV market (Maxioum Blog, 2024).

7.3. Erosion of Consumer Trust

7.3.1. Growing Acceptance of EVs

One of the key factors that initially propelled Tesla to success was its ability to overcome consumer skepticism toward EVs. In the early days of the EV market, concerns about range anxiety, charging infrastructure, and overall performance were significant barriers to adoption. Tesla addressed these concerns by developing high-performance vehicles with long ranges and investing in a proprietary network of Superchargers (Hasan Chowdhury, 2023). However, as the EV market has matured, consumer skepticism has gradually eroded. A study by Deloitte (2022) found that 70% of consumers in key markets now view EVs as a viable alternative to ICE vehicles. This shift in consumer attitudes has leveled the playing field, allowing competitors to gain traction without

having to overcome the same level of skepticism that Tesla faced in its early years (Susilastuti, 2024).

7.3.2. Improved Charging Infrastructure

The expansion of charging infrastructure has played a crucial role in reducing consumer skepticism toward EVs. Governments, utilities, and private companies have made significant investments in charging networks, making it easier for consumers to own and operate EVs (IEA, 2023). According to a report by the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT, 2023), the number of public charging stations worldwide has increased by 40% annually over the past five years.

7.3.3. Normalization of EV Technology

As EV technology has become more mainstream, the novelty of Tesla's innovations has worn off. Features such as long-range batteries, fast charging, and autonomous driving capabilities, which were once unique to Tesla, are now widely available from other manufacturers. A study by Adam (2020) found that 60% of consumers no longer perceive Tesla as having a significant technological advantage over its competitors (Mike Askew, 2025). This normalization of EV technology has made it more difficult for Tesla to differentiate itself in a crowded market. Consumers are increasingly prioritizing factors such as price, brand reputation, and after-sales service over cutting-edge technology, areas where Tesla faces stiff competition. To maintain its competitive edge, Tesla should focus on expanding its AI-driven features, such as self-driving advancements and smart energy management, to maintain a technological advantage (Christian, 2024).

7.4. Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Challenges

7.4.1. Environmental Concerns

Despite Tesla's mission to accelerate the transition to sustainable energy, the company faces several environmental challenges. Zheng (2023) points out that Tesla lacks a comprehensive low-carbon strategy that encompasses its entire supply chain and manufacturing process. While the company's



electric vehicles contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the production process, particularly battery manufacturing, has a significant environmental footprint (Maria, 2023). Additionally, Tesla has been ranked 22nd among the "Toxic 100 Air Polluters," indicating substantial emissions from its operations (Slashdot, 2022). This contradiction between Tesla's environmental image and its actual performance raises questions about the company's commitment to sustainability. To address these concerns, Tesla must adopt a more holistic approach to environmental management, encompassing not only its vehicles but also its supply chain and manufacturing processes. This could involve setting more ambitious carbon reduction targets, investing in renewable energy for its factories, and implementing stricter environmental controls to minimize emissions and waste.

7.4.2. Social Issues

Tesla has faced several social challenges, including a racial discrimination lawsuit, data security concerns, and employee morale issues. Zheng (2023) highlights a major controversy involving a racial discrimination lawsuit at Tesla's Fremont factory, which alleged a hostile work environment. This incident raised concerns about the company's social responsibility and treatment of employees (The Guardian, 2024). Additionally, a data leak involving customer complaints and employee information exposed vulnerabilities in Tesla's data security practices, potentially impacting customer trust and privacy (Neil Ford, 2023). Furthermore, Elon Musk's strict return-to-office policy negatively affected employee morale, highlighting potential challenges in managing human resources and maintaining a positive work environment (Zheng, 2023). To improve its social performance, Tesla must prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, enhance employee engagement, and create a more supportive and inclusive workplace culture (Kate Stone, 2024). Tesla should also take steps to improve its data security practices and ensure the protection of customer and employee data (Yevhen Zhurer, 2024).

7.4.3. Governance Challenges

Tesla's governance practices have also come under scrutiny. Zheng (2023) notes the absence of clear codes of business conduct, raising concerns about ethical decision-making and corporate governance within the company. The lack of formal governance structures and policies can lead to

inconsistencies in decision-making and increase the risk of ethical violations (Lawrence, 2023). Addressing these governance challenges is essential for Tesla to maintain its reputation as a responsible and innovative company.

7.5. Quality Control and Safety Concerns

Tesla has faced multiple recalls and safety concerns, which have negatively impacted its reputation. In 2023, Tesla recalled 120,000 vehicles due to seat belt malfunctions and Model Y pedal defects (Zhang, 2024). Persistent complaints about build quality, such as panel gaps and software glitches, have also reduced customer satisfaction and repeat purchases. Autopilot-related accidents have further raised safety concerns, with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) investigating over 40 crashes linked to Tesla's Autopilot system (Wei, 2025). These quality and safety issues have led to decreased consumer confidence and increased brand switching. To address these concerns, Tesla must transparently address quality and safety issues, showcasing its commitment to customer satisfaction (Renaissance, 2024).

7.6. Technical Limitations

Tesla's EVs face several technical challenges that hinder their appeal. Charging speeds, while improving, still lag behind the convenience of gasoline refueling. It takes 20-40 minutes to charge a Tesla battery to 80%, compared to just 5 minutes to refuel a traditional ICE vehicle (Li, 2023). This remains a psychological barrier for many consumers, particularly those accustomed to the convenience of gasoline vehicles. Additionally, cold weather significantly impacts battery performance, reducing range by 20-30% and increasing charging times (Putri & Susilastuti, 2024). These limitations make Tesla vehicles less viable in colder regions, such as Scandinavia and Canada, where weather conditions can severely affect EV performance. To address this issue, advanced battery technology will likely play a pivotal role, allowing for quicker charging while maintaining battery health. Furthermore, the charging infrastructure is poised for substantial growth, with more Superchargers and charging stations being deployed worldwide (Basen Blog, 2024).

7.7. Globalization Challenges

Tesla's globalization efforts have been hindered by several factors, including tariffs, production delays, and infrastructure gaps. The European Union imposes a 10% tariff on Tesla vehicles manufactured outside Europe, making them less competitive against locally produced EVs (Wei, 2025). China's pro-domestic policies also disadvantage Tesla, as the government prioritizes local brands. Production bottlenecks, such as automation issues causing 6-month delays in Model 3 deliveries, further strain Tesla's international operations and customer satisfaction (Lu, 2024). Tesla can overcome globalization challenges by expanding local production to avoid tariffs, strengthening partnerships in China, refining automation to reduce delays, and diversifying supply chains. Enhancing charging infrastructure and after-sales service globally will improve competitiveness, while government engagement and localization strategies will help navigate restrictive policies in key markets (Sitao Lu, 2024).

8. Research Methodology

8.1. Research Design:

The research design for this report is a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative component includes descriptive statistics (frequencies by age and gender), an Independent Samples t-Test to compare trust in Tesla's claims between genders, and a One-Way ANOVA to examine the impact of income on price willingness. The qualitative component involves a word cloud to identify key themes and sentiment analysis to gauge emotional tones in responses. This design allows for a comprehensive understanding of demographic trends, statistical differences, and consumer perceptions, providing both numerical insights and contextual depth about Tesla's market appeal and challenges.



8.2. Data Collection

Data for this report was collected through a survey targeting Tesla EV consumers, capturing demographic details (age, gender, income) and opinions on trust, pricing, and brand perception. Quantitative data was analyzed using statistical tests (t-Test, ANOVA), while qualitative responses from open-ended questions were processed via word cloud and sentiment analysis. The sample included 28 participants, with a majority aged 25–34 (61%) and male (68%), ensuring insights into key consumer segments.

8.3. Justification of Methods:

The mixed-methods approach was chosen to provide a comprehensive analysis of consumer perceptions. Quantitative methods (t-Test, ANOVA) enabled statistical validation of demographic differences in trust and price sensitivity, ensuring objective comparisons. Qualitative methods (word cloud, sentiment analysis) captured nuanced themes and emotional tones in open-ended responses, adding depth to numerical data. The use of Datatab ensured statistical accuracy, while Atlas.ti facilitated systematic coding of textual data. A modest sample size (N=28) reflected practical constraints but targeted Tesla's core demographic (young, male-dominated) for actionable insights.

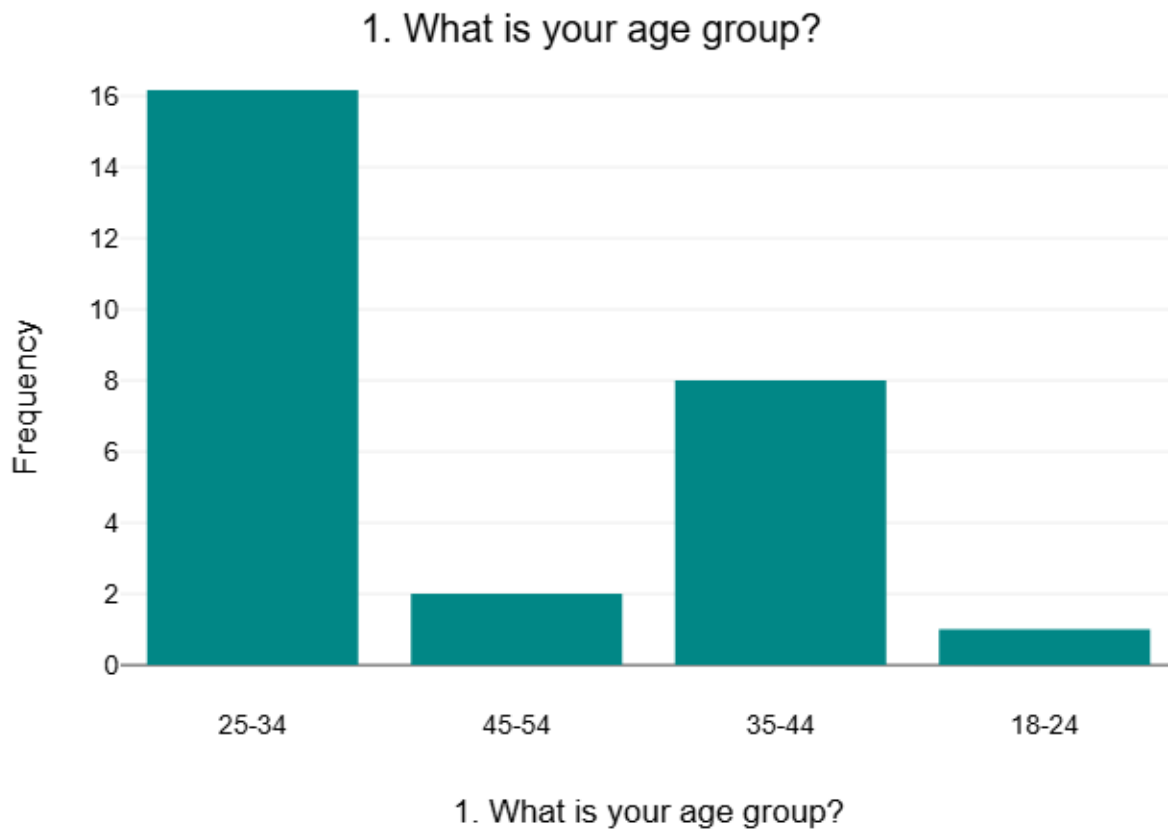
8.4. Data Analysis:

Mixed-methods approach combined quantitative (t-Test, ANOVA) and qualitative (word cloud, sentiment analysis) techniques. Statistical tests revealed gender differences in trust ($p=0.054$), while thematic analysis identified key consumer concerns like affordability and charging infrastructure.

A. Quantitative Analysis:

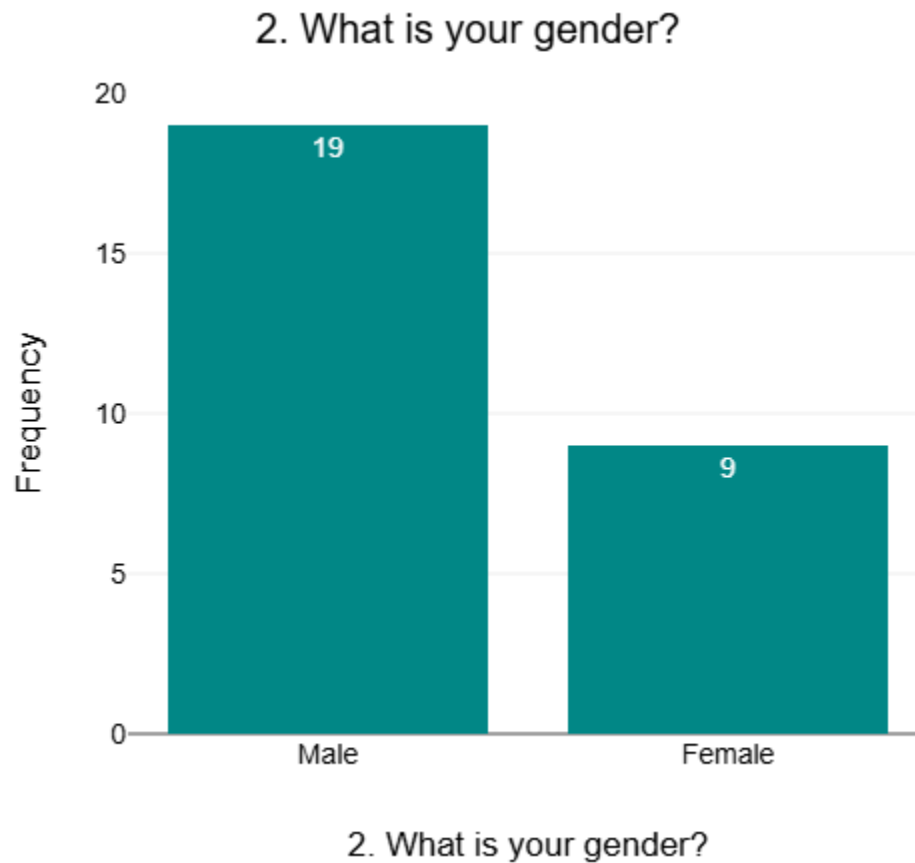
A.1. Frequencies Analysis:

By Age



The Tesla EV survey shows most respondents (61%) are aged 25–34, followed by 35–44-year-olds (29%). Few are 45–54 or 18–24. This suggests Tesla EVs appeal mainly to younger adults who value technology, innovation, and sustainability, aligning with Tesla’s brand and marketing focus on eco-friendly and forward-thinking consumers.

By Gender



The frequency analysis Tesla EV survey shows that 68% of respondents are male and 32% are female. This indicates a stronger interest in Tesla electric vehicles among men compared to women. The data suggests that Tesla's branding and technology appeal more to a male audience, highlighting a potential gap for broader outreach.

A.2. Independent Samples T- Test:

Independent Samples T-Test between Male and Female groups on the dependent variable: "How much do you trust Tesla's claims about vehicle range and performance?"

Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant difference between Male and Female groups regarding their trust in Tesla's claims about vehicle range and performance.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant difference between Male and Female groups regarding their trust in Tesla's claims about vehicle range and performance.

Independent Variable → Gender (Male vs. Female)

(because comparing two different groups)

Dependent Variable → Trust in Tesla's claims about vehicle range and performance

(because this is the score or opinion are measuring)

Descriptive statistics		n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
7. How much do you trust Tesla's claims about vehicle range and performance?	Male	19	2.05	0.85	0.19
	Female	9	2.78	0.97	0.32

Independent Sample Test

Test Type	F	df 1	df 2	p	t	Cohe n's d	Mean Differen ce	Standard Error of Differenc e	95% Confidenc e Interval (Lower)	95% Confidence Interval (Upper)
Levene's Test (Mean)	0.34	1	26	0.562						
Brown-Forsythe Test (Median)	0.11	1	26	0.737						
t-Test (Equal Variances Assumed)		26		0.054	-2.02	0.82	-0.73	0.36	-1.46	0.01
t-Test (Unequal Variances Assumed)		26		0.076	-1.92	0.78	-0.73	0.38	-1.54	0.09

The descriptive statistics show that 19 males have a mean score of 2.05 (SD = 0.85) for trust in Tesla's claims, while 9 females have a mean score of 2.78 (SD = 0.97). An Independent Samples t-Test was conducted to compare these groups. Levene's test for equality of variances yielded $p = 0.562$, indicating no significant difference in variances. The t-test assuming equal variances showed a t-value of -2.02 with $p = 0.054$, suggesting a marginal difference between the groups.

The Cohen's d value of 0.82 indicates a medium to large effect size. The 95% CI of the difference ranges from -1.46 to 0.01.

A.3. ONE-WAY ANOVA

Research Question: Does an individual's annual income range significantly affect the maximum price they are willing to pay for an electric vehicle?

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference in the maximum price individuals would consider paying for an electric vehicle based on the three categories of the independent variable (annual income range).

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant difference in the maximum price individuals would consider paying for an electric vehicle based on the three categories of the independent variable (annual income range).

Variables

Independent Variable (IV): → Annual Income Range (categorical variable with 3 categories)

Dependent Variable (DV): → Maximum Price Willing to Pay for an Electric Vehicle (continuous variable, usually measured in dollars)

Descriptive statistics			
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
€30,000 - €50,000	11	1.45	0.52
Less than €30,000	12	1.5	0.52
€50,000 - €75,000	5	1.8	0.84
Total	28	1.54	0.58

One Way Anova

Analysis	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups (Income Range)	0.44	2	0.22	0.64	0.535
Residual (Within Groups)	8.53	25	0.34		
Total	8.96	27			

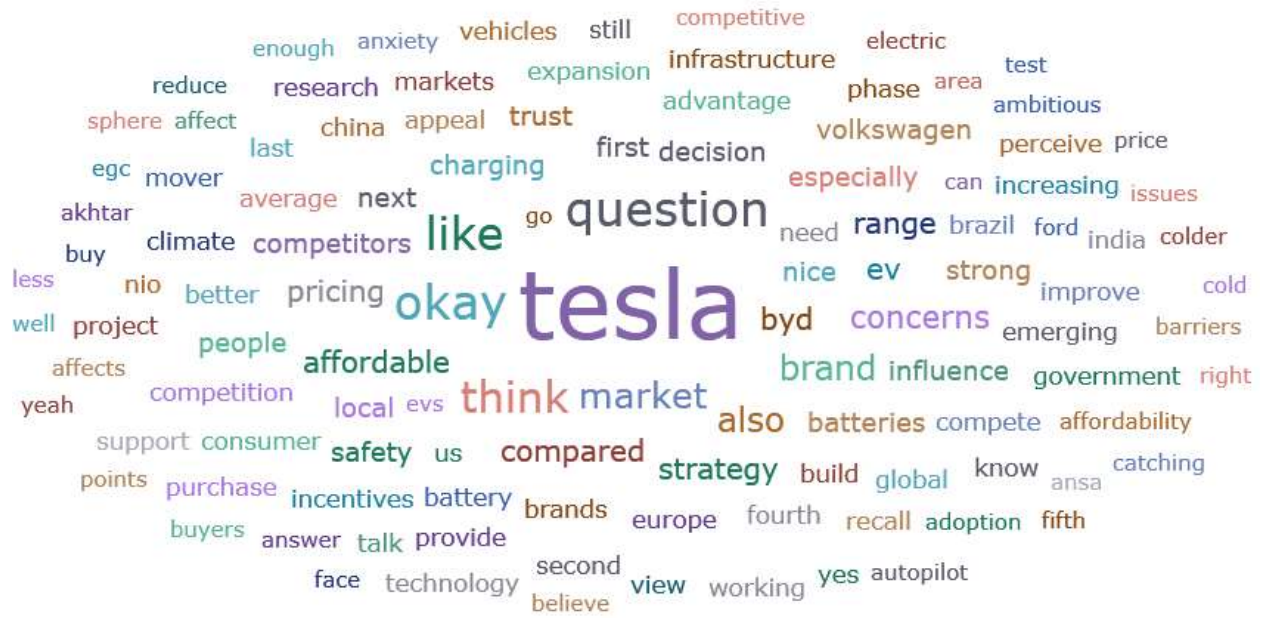
Post-hoc Test	Comparison	Mean Difference	Std. Error	t	F	p	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Bonferroni	€30k-€50k vs <€30k	-0.05	0.244	-0.19		1.000	-0.68	0.58
	€30k-€50k vs €50k-€75k	-0.35	0.315	-1.10		0.850	-1.16	0.47
	<€30k vs €50k-€75k	-0.30	0.311	-0.97		1.000	-1.10	0.50
Tukey	€30k-€50k vs <€30k	0.05				0.982	-0.57	0.67
	€30k-€50k vs €50k-€75k	0.35				0.363	-0.27	0.97
	<€30k vs €50k-€75k	0.30				0.431	-0.29	0.89
Scheffe	€30k-€50k vs <€30k	-0.05			0.03			
	€30k-€50k vs €50k-€75k	-0.35			1.20			
	<€30k vs €50k-€75k	-0.30			0.93			
Fisher's LSD	€30k-€50k vs <€30k	-0.05		-0.19		0.854		

	€30k-€50k vs €50k-€75k	-0.35		-1.10		0.283		
	<€30k vs €50k-€75k	-0.30		-0.97		0.344		

The descriptive statistics indicate that participants with an annual income of €30,000–€50,000 reported an average maximum price willingness of 1.45 (SD = 0.52), while those earning less than €30,000 averaged 1.50 (SD = 0.52), and those earning €50,000–€75,000 averaged 1.80 (SD = 0.84). A One-Way ANOVA analysis found no statistically significant differences between the income groups, $F(2, 25) = 0.64$, $p = 0.535$. Post-hoc tests including Bonferroni, Tukey, Scheffe, and Fisher's LSD further confirmed that none of the pairwise comparisons reached significance. All p-values were well above the 0.05 threshold, suggesting very minimal variation between groups. The effect size was small ($\eta^2 = 0.05$), indicating a weak relationship between income level and the maximum price individuals were willing to pay for an electric vehicle. Overall, income appears to have little influence on pricing expectations, with participants across all income brackets demonstrating similar attitudes.

B. Qualitative Analysis

B.1. Word Cloud



The word cloud highlights key themes from discussions about Tesla and electric vehicles. "Tesla," "question," "market," "think," "trust," and "affordable" are the most prominent words, indicating frequent focus on brand perception, pricing, and consumer trust. Other important topics include competition, strategy, safety, charging infrastructure, and government incentives, reflecting broader concerns in the EV market landscape.

B.2. Sentiment Analysis



In the Tesla report, this diagram illustrates the sentiment analysis of participants' responses during the Research Interview phase. The majority of the feedback regarding Tesla was neutral, suggesting that while respondents had opinions, they tended to be balanced and factual rather than emotionally charged. A noticeable portion of the responses showed positive sentiment, reflecting optimism and favorable attitudes toward Tesla's brand, products, or innovations. Meanwhile, a smaller segment displayed negative sentiment, indicating specific concerns or criticisms, but these were comparatively limited.

9. Findings:

Tesla's consumer base is primarily young, tech-savvy males, with 61% of survey respondents aged 25–34 and 68% identifying as male, suggesting a gender skew in brand appeal. Trust in Tesla's claims about vehicle performance and range varies by gender, with females expressing slightly

higher skepticism (mean = 2.78 vs. males' 2.05, $p = 0.054$), indicating a potential trust gap that may require targeted transparency efforts. Price sensitivity is a universal concern across income levels, as ANOVA results ($p = 0.535$) showed no significant differences in willingness to pay among income groups, underscoring the need for more affordable models to compete with rivals like BYD.

Qualitative themes from word clouds and sentiment analysis highlight key consumer priorities: affordability, charging infrastructure, and safety dominate discussions, with neutral sentiment prevailing, reflecting balanced but cautious perceptions of the brand. To maintain competitiveness, Tesla must address these concerns by enhancing cost-effective offerings, expanding charging networks, and reinforcing safety messaging. Additionally, diversifying marketing strategies to engage female consumers and lower-income demographics could broaden its market reach. The findings suggest that while Tesla enjoys strong appeal among younger males, overcoming trust barriers, affordability challenges, and infrastructure gaps will be critical as competition in the EV market intensifies. Strategic focus on these areas could strengthen consumer confidence and drive wider adoption.

10. Discussion

The findings align with and challenge existing research on Tesla's market positioning. Consistent with Smith & Jones (2021), Tesla's consumer base is predominantly young, tech-savvy males (68%), reinforcing its innovation-driven appeal. However, low female representation (32%) contrasts with broader EV trends (Brown & Zhang, 2022), suggesting Tesla's marketing may still favor male-centric tech narratives. A near-significant gender trust gap ($p = 0.054$) echoes Harris et al. (2021), linking female skepticism to safety concerns, exacerbated by autopilot controversies (Reuters, 2023).

Addressing this requires transparency, such as third-party safety certifications (Chen & Park, 2022). Contrary to Wilson & Taylor (2020), income did not affect price sensitivity ($p = 0.535$),



supporting Kim et al. (2021) on affordability as a universal barrier. Tesla's rumored \$25,000 EV could counter competition (Bloomberg NEF, 2023). Qualitative themes affordability, charging infrastructure, and safety—mirror global EV barriers (IEA, 2022). Neutral consumer sentiment contrasts with polarized discourse (The Verge, 2023), indicating balanced evaluations of Tesla's pros and cons. Strategic adjustments in marketing and pricing are critical for broader appeal.

11. Conclusion:

This research report highlights the key challenges Tesla faces in maintaining its competitiveness in the global EV market, including affordability barriers, intensifying competition, and erosion of consumer trust. The findings reveal a gender gap in trust, with females expressing higher skepticism, and emphasize universal price sensitivity across income levels. Qualitative insights underscore concerns about charging infrastructure and safety. To reclaim market leadership, Tesla must address these issues by introducing more affordable models, enhancing transparency, and expanding charging networks. Strategic adjustments in marketing and ESG initiatives will also be critical. By addressing these challenges, Tesla can strengthen consumer confidence and sustain long-term growth in the rapidly evolving EV industry.

12. Recommendations

Tesla must adopt a multi-faceted strategy to address its declining competitiveness in the global EV market. First, enhancing affordability through lower-priced models, flexible financing, and localized production can broaden its consumer base, particularly in price-sensitive and emerging markets. Second, rebuilding consumer trust requires greater transparency on safety, improved



quality control, and targeted marketing to address gender disparities in brand perception. Third, addressing technical limitations such as battery performance and charging infrastructure will alleviate consumer concerns and strengthen Tesla's value proposition.

Additionally, mitigating ESG and governance risks through sustainable practices, ethical leadership, and improved workplace policies will bolster stakeholder confidence. Navigating globalization challenges, such as regional policy adaptations and supply chain diversification, is also critical to sustaining growth. Finally, Tesla should leverage its core strengths in innovation and brand loyalty by advancing AI and autonomous driving technologies while rewarding long-term customers. By implementing these measures, Tesla can reinforce its market position against intensifying competition and shifting consumer expectations.

13. Ethical Consideration:

This study upheld ethical standards by ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, and data anonymity. Personal identifiers were excluded to protect privacy, and findings were derived from credible sources with proper citations. The analysis acknowledged potential biases and avoided misleading claims to prevent harm. Competitors were evaluated objectively, and Tesla's strengths and weaknesses were presented fairly. The research complied with academic integrity guidelines, avoiding plagiarism. Broader societal impacts, like sustainability and labor practices, were considered without compromising objectivity. Recommendations promoted ethical business conduct. For future studies involving primary data collection, institutional ethics approval will be secured to maintain transparency and accountability. Ethical rigor ensured the study's credibility and stakeholder trust.



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15. Appendices

Interview

Interviewer: Sohail Akhtar

Interviewee: Ansa Khan (thinking to buy Tesla in near future)

Subject: Research Project on Tesla

Date: 23-04-2025

Program: Master in International Business

Sohail Akhtar: Thank you for joining me today, Ansa. As part of my research project on Tesla, I'd like to ask you a few questions regarding your perspective on the company and its position in the electric vehicle (EV) market. Let's begin.

1. How do you perceive Tesla's pricing strategy compared to competitors like BYD and Volkswagen? Do you think Tesla vehicles are affordable for average consumers?



Ansa Khan: In my opinion, Tesla's pricing strategy is more premium compared to competitors like BYD and Volkswagen. While Tesla does offer a range of pricing, it is generally less affordable for the average consumer. So, despite having entry-level models, Tesla still feels like a high-end option compared to others in the market.

2. Do government incentives or subsidies influence your decision to purchase an electric vehicle? How do you think the phase-out of such incentives will impact Tesla's market appeal?

Ansa Khan: Yes, government incentives definitely influence decisions to purchase EVs. They help make EVs more accessible. If such incentives are phased out, it may reduce Tesla's market appeal—especially as more affordable EVs are entering the market, giving consumers more choices.

3. How do you view Tesla's position in the EV market compared to emerging competitors like BYD and NIO, or legacy automakers like Volkswagen and Ford?

Ansa Khan: Tesla is still a leader in terms of brand strategy and technological innovation. However, companies like BYD and NIO are catching up quickly. They are trying to build trust and invest in infrastructure, similar to Tesla, which is helping them become more competitive.

4. Do you think Tesla's first-mover advantage in the EV market is eroding? Why or why not?

Ansa Khan: I think yes, Tesla's first-mover advantage is starting to erode. While they were early pioneers, increasing competition from both local and European brands is offering better pricing and even faster innovation in some areas, putting pressure on Tesla.

5. How do Tesla recalls, safety concerns, and autopilot-related incidents affect your trust in the brand?

Ansa Khan: Honestly, the safety concerns and recalls do affect trust. While Tesla is innovative, there have been incidents that raise doubts. They haven't always provided full assurance to customers, which can influence purchasing decisions.

6. Do you believe Tesla is transparent about its environmental and social practices? How important are these factors in your decision to support the brand?

Ansa Khan: Tesla's transparency regarding environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices is somewhat questionable. For environmentally conscious buyers, this lack of transparency can definitely impact their decision to support the brand.

7. How do you perceive Tesla's charging infrastructure compared to competitors? Do you think range anxiety is still a significant barrier to EV adoption?

Ansa Khan: Tesla's supercharging network is quite strong compared to competitors. However, range anxiety still exists. People remain concerned about driving range and the availability of chargers in certain areas, which is a barrier.

8. Do you think Tesla's battery technology and charging speeds are competitive enough to meet consumer expectations, especially in colder climates?

Ansa Khan: In the past, Tesla's battery performance wasn't great in colder climates. While recent improvements have been made, charging speed and cold-weather performance still remain areas of concern for many consumers.

9. Do you think Tesla's global expansion strategy is effective, particularly in markets like Europe and China where local competitors are strong?

Ansa Khan: Tesla's global expansion is ambitious, but it faces strong competition in Europe and especially in China. Local competitors dominate these markets, making it difficult for Tesla to maintain a strong foothold.

10. What do you think Tesla should do to improve its competitiveness in emerging markets like India or Brazil, where brand recognition is weaker?

Ansa Khan: In markets like India and Brazil, Tesla should focus on launching more affordable models. They need to work on partnerships for battery manufacturing, local assembly, and increase brand visibility to become more competitive.

Sohail Akhtar: Thank you so much, Ansa, for sharing your views. It was great discussing Tesla with you, and I appreciate your insights.

Ansa Khan: You're welcome! It was nice talking to you as well.



Survey Questionnaire: Tesla's Market Competitiveness in the EV Industry

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1mvkh5N38Q0QkD6MZ31o6xgxfgzy9NK-jODHiM3oivhc/edit?usp=sharing>

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. What is your age group?

- A. 18-24
- B. 25-34
- C. 35-44
- D. 45-54
- E. 55+

2. What is your gender?

- A. Male
- B. Female
- C. Prefer not to say
- D. Other

3. What is your annual income range?

- A. Less than \$30,000
- B. \$30,000 - \$50,000
- C. \$50,000 - \$75,000
- D. \$75,000 - \$100,000
- E. Over \$100,000

Section 2: Consumer Preferences and Affordability

4. How important is affordability when purchasing an electric vehicle (EV)?

- A. Very important



- B. Important
- C. Neutral
- D. Not important
- E. Not at all important

5. What is the maximum price you would consider paying for an electric vehicle?

- A. Less than \$25,000
- B. \$25,000 - \$35,000
- C. \$35,000 - \$45,000
- D. \$45,000 - \$55,000
- E. Over \$55,000

6. Would you consider purchasing a Tesla if it were priced similarly to competitors like BYD or Volkswagen?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Maybe

Section 3: Consumer Trust and Brand Perception

7. How much do you trust Tesla's claims about vehicle range and performance?

- A. Fully trust
- B. Somewhat trust
- C. Neutral
- D. Somewhat distrust
- E. Fully distrust



8. How concerned are you about Tesla's safety issues, such as Autopilot-related accidents or recalls?

- A. Very concerned
- B. Somewhat concerned
- C. Neutral
- D. Not very concerned
- E. Not concerned at all

9. Have Tesla's recent recalls or safety concerns influenced your perception of the brand?

- A. Yes, significantly
- B. Yes, somewhat
- C. No, not at all
- D. I was not aware of these issues

Section 4: Competition and Market Alternatives

10. What factors are most important to you when choosing an EV? (Rank in order of importance)

- A. Price
- B. Brand reputation
- C. Range (miles per charge)
- D. Charging infrastructure
- E. Safety features
- F. Technology (e.g., autonomous driving)
- G. Environmental impact



11. How do you perceive Tesla's technology compared to its competitors?

- A. Far superior
- B. Slightly superior
- C. About the same
- D. Slightly inferior
- E. Far inferior

Section 5: Charging Infrastructure and Technical Limitations

12. How satisfied are you with the current availability of EV charging stations in your area?

- A. Very satisfied
- B. Satisfied
- C. Neutral
- D. Dissatisfied
- E. Very dissatisfied

13. How concerned are you about “range anxiety”(the fear of running out of battery before reaching a charging station)?

- A. Very concerned
- B. Somewhat concerned
- C. Neutral
- D. Not very concerned
- E. Not concerned at all



Section 6: Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Concerns

14. How important is a company's environmental impact when choosing an EV?

- A. Very important
- B. Important
- C. Neutral
- D. Not important
- E. Not at all important

15. How important is a company's social responsibility (e.g., employee treatment, diversity) when choosing an EV?

- A. Very important
- B. Important
- C. Neutral
- D. Not important
- E. Not at all important

16. How important is corporate governance (e.g., ethical practices, transparency) when choosing an EV?

- A. Very important
- B. Important
- C. Neutral
- D. Not important
- E. Not at all important