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RECONCEPTUALIZING SOCIAL VALUE IN ELECTRIC VEHICLE MARKET: IDENTITY ALIGNMENT AS A DRIVER OF PURCHASE INTENTIONS

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Abstract
Purpose - This study reconceptualizes social value in the electric vehicle (EV) market and investigates its influence on purchase intentions. The aim was to identify key attributes of social value and evaluate their role in shaping consumer decisions.
Methodology - A quantitative survey (N = 76) was conducted using adapted and original items on a 5-point Likert scale. Exploratory factor analysis identified latent attributes of social value, followed by confirmatory analysis via PLS-SEM. A hierarchical reflective measurement model was applied using the disjoint two-stage approach. Multi-group analysis assessed gender- and age-related differences.
Findings - Three attributes of social value dimension were extracted: social recognition, personal identification, and prestige. The overall construct significantly predicted EV purchase intentions ($f^2 = 0.616$; $q^2 = 0.366$). Among the attributes, personal identification had the strongest effect ($f^2 = 0.717$), while recognition and prestige had negligible influence. Predictive relevance was confirmed ($Q^2\_predict = 0.356$). No significant structural differences were found across gender or age groups.
Contribution - This study offers a refined model of social value in EV market, emphasizing identity alignment as a key driver. It contributes to consumer behavior theory by empirically distinguishing the components of social value and confirms its consistent role across demographic segments. The results provide actionable insights for EV marketing, highlighting the need to position EVs as personally meaningful and identity-expressive products.

Keywords Electric vehicles, social value, purchase intentions, personal identification, PLS-SEM

INTRODUCTION

The global electric vehicle (EV) market expanded significantly in 2023, reaching 13.8 million units or 18% of all car sales, up from 14% in 2022 (IEA 2024). In the U.S., 1.4 million new EVs were registered, a 40% increase from 2022 despite slower relative growth (IEA 2024). Norway led globally, with EVs making up nearly 93% of new car sales, driven by strong government incentives (Norwegian EV Association 2024). As the market grows, understanding its key drivers and attractive segments is vital. Research shows that ecologically conscious consumers tend to perceive more benefits and report stronger purchase intentions toward EVs (Contzen et al. 2021). Values linked to social status, self-image, and the desire for societal approval also stimulate adoption (Rezvani et al. 2015; Schuitema et al. 2013), particularly in collectivist and emerging markets

where social conformity is prized. The direct effect of social values on behavioral intention (standardized regression coefficient of 0.248 ($p < 0.05$)) in the market of green products has already been empirically confirmed (Khan and Mohsin 2017). What remains vague is would such a logic of an EV being a green product also apply and would purchase intentions be confirmed. Also, which attributes of the social value are strongest to influence the purchase intentions is another issue.

Understanding how social value influences different genders and age groups is key to designing effective marketing strategies. Demographic variables remain the most common basis for segmentation because they often correlate with consumer needs and are easy to measure. Even when segments are defined by behavior or benefits, demographic data is essential for sizing and targeting. However, marketers must avoid stereotypes. Age doesn't always reflect lifestyle, needs, or buying power—some 80-year-olds are active, while some 40-year-olds are new parents. Similarly, as women become more educated and financially independent, they increasingly represent key target markets once dominated by men.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Social value is a complex construct shaped by perceptions of status, group belonging, and social approval. It is both self-reflective, reinforcing one's self-image, and self-expressive, allowing individuals to signal their identity and beliefs. This study examines which aspects of social value are recognized by consumers with purchase intentions toward EVs, focusing on key attributes such as status, symbolism, prestige, exclusivity, and recognition. It is also assumed that gender and age may shape how these dimensions are perceived and how they influence purchase decisions.

1.1. Social value

Social value reflects the extent to which a product enhances one's social self-concept through symbolic associations and social signaling (Widing et al. 2003). It plays a key role in shaping consumer preferences, particularly in identity-driven markets such as luxury goods and EVs (Reyes-Menendez et al. 2022). It is linked to social affiliation and the projection of a desirable image (Widing et al. 2003). In this context, EVs serve as symbols of environmental concern, social status, and technological innovation. Attributes of social value such as status, symbolism, prestige, exclusivity, and recognition, consistently emerge as influential. Status represents value conveyed through ownership and self-esteem (Thye 2000, cited in Zabkar and Hosta 2012), driven by status consumption motives (Eastman et al. 1999, cited in Goldsmith and Clark 2011). Symbolic attributes express self-image and distinction (Rezvani et al. 2015; Burgess et al. 2013, cited in White and Sintov 2017; Dalal and Aljarah 2021; Gilai et al. 2018, cited in Zhuoqun et al. 2023). Prestige relates to product quality and others' perceptions (Vigneron and Johnson 1999), and is enhanced by exclusivity and cost (Vigneron and Johnson 2004; Thomas 2007, cited in Femina and Santhi 2024). Desire for exclusivity drives luxury EV adoption (Bertoncello et al. 2022).

Social value influences behavior through conformity (Ajzen 1991, cited in Jia et al. 2023), internalized motivation (Gavrilets and Richerson 2017, cited in Jia et al. 2023), cognitive referencing (Kozitsin 2021, cited in Jia et al. 2023), and norm-driven cognition (Mackie and Smith 1998, cited in Jia et al. 2023). Empirical evidence shows a positive link between social value and behavioral intentions (Elgebali and Zaazou 2023). Product evaluation thus extends beyond functional utility of the product to include socially distinctive dimensions (Sweeney and Soutar 2001). Dong and Huang (2024) and Dilotsotlhe (2022) confirm these effects in EV markets, especially in collectivist or emerging markets.

1.2. Purchase intentions

Purchase intentions reflect a consumer's behavioral intention to buy a product or remain engaged with a brand. They represent commitment and loyalty (Oliver 1999) and are an outcome of the perceived value (Widing et al. 2003). Purchase intentions of the EVs may stem from environmental concern and brand's environmental reputation (Zhao et al. 2024), self-image and functional congruity, as consumers are more likely to purchase when a brand aligns with their identity (Lee, Kang, and Tang 2012), as well as positive emotional experiences (Sari and Burhanudin 2023).

1.3. Gender

Gender plays a significant role in shaping EV adoption, with consistent evidence of differences in interest and purchase intentions between men and women. These disparities stem not only from economic factors but also from symbolic and cultural associations. Internal combustion vehicles are usually linked with masculinity (Morgan 2009 cited in Plananska, Wustenhagen and de Bellis 2023), while EVs are associated with femininity due to their ease of use and technological appeal (Sovacool et al. 2019, Brough et al. 2016; Scharff 1992; Wachs 1987 cited in Plananska, Wustenhagen and de Bellis 2023). These associations align with Hofstede's cultural dimensions, where masculine societies emphasize competition and assertiveness, while feminine cultures value cooperation and care, traits often tied to EV ownership (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov 2010).

Survey data show that approximately 71% of men and 34% of women report a willingness to purchase an EV, with women preferring hybrids and men opting for fully electric models (Edmunds 2023).

Parental status further influences decision-making: women, especially mothers, tend to manage more daily transport tasks to meet their obligations and demonstrate higher environmental concern (Kawgan-Kagan and Popp 2018). Despite their stronger environmental values, women are less likely to complete a purchase due to practical and financial barriers (Daziano and Bolduc 2010, cited in Esteves, Alonso-Martínez and de Haro 2021; Esteves et al. 2021).

1.4. Age

Although EVs are often associated with younger consumers (Hidrue et al. 2011, cited in Esteves, Alonso-Martínez and de Haro 2021), research shows that middle-aged buyers show stronger purchase preferences due to greater financial stability (Esteves et al. 2021). However, they may hesitate due to unfamiliarity with EV technology (Ayci and Ergenc 2023). Younger consumers, particularly Gen Z, demonstrate strong environmental values and a commitment to sustainability (Chen 2025), yet face financial constraints that limit immediate ownership. Price remains the most important factor influencing their decisions (Chen 2025; Ma et al. 2022; Ayci and Ergenc 2023). Still, EVs are increasingly attractive to Gen Z, who are growing up amid global environmental concerns. In a study of 500 senior college students, Ayci and Ergenc (2023) found that Gen Z holds positive perceptions of EVs and shows interest in purchasing them.

2. METHODOLOGY, SAMPLE, PROCEDURES AND MEASURES

This study began with a literature review to define components of social value and assess its impact on purchase intentions, forming the basis for questionnaire development. Measurement scales were adapted from prior research, with additional items developed by the authors. A structured online survey, distributed via social media to a self-selected sample of potential EV consumers, used a 5-point Likert scale and included demographics 15 items for social value reflecting status, symbolism, prestige, exclusivity, and recognition, and 3 for purchase intentions. Data collection occurred from mid-November to early December 2024. After excluding invalid responses, 76 remained (53.2% female, 46.8% male; 68.4% aged 18–45, 31.6% aged 46+). Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests indicated that the data were not normally distributed. All variables yielded p-values of 0.000, which are below the conventional significance threshold ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis of normality was rejected for all manifest variables, confirming that their distributions deviate significantly from normality (Malhotra & Birks, 2003).

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the independent variable only, in line with Hair et al. (2010), to identify latent dimensions without bias from the outcome. EFA used principal component analysis with Varimax rotation, a 0.60 loading threshold, and the Kaiser criterion. Sampling adequacy was confirmed (KMO > 0.6; Bartlett's Test $p < 0.05$). The dependent variable was reserved for outcome analysis.

In phase two, following factor extraction, PLS-SEM was used for confirmatory analysis and hypothesis testing. Internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha, Rho_A, CR > 0.7), convergent validity (AVE > 0.5, loadings > 0.7), and discriminant validity (cross-loadings, Fornell-Larcker √AVE, HTMT < 0.85) were tested. The structural model was examined to test relationships between constructs by modelling paths from exogenous to endogenous latent variables. Key indicators include R^2, path significance, predictive relevance (Q^2), effect size (f^2), and contribution size (q^2). Bootstrapping (5,000 resamples, $\alpha = 0.05$) tested the statistical significance of path coefficients.

In phase three, multigroup analysis examined differences in responses across demographic segments.

Statistical analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS 23 and SmartPLS 4 (Ringle, Wende and Becker 2024). Language editing was supported by OpenAI's ChatGPT (June 5–20 2025).

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

To identify underlying value attributes in the EV market, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was applied following a check of data suitability. The KMO value of 0.840 and significant Bartlett's Test ($\chi^2 = 403.112$, df = 45, $p < .001$) confirmed the matrix was factorable, justifying EFA. The factor structure matrix is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: **Rotated component matrix**[a]

Factor	Component		
	1	2	3
SOC_1			0.920
SOC_3	0.757		
SOC_4	0.779		
SOC_5	0.772		
SOC_6		0.852	
SOC_7		0.773	
SOC_9	0.623		
SOC_10			0.821
SOC_12		0.800	
SOC_14	0.818		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
[a.] Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Source: Authors' work

Although the factor structure converged with a minimum loading of 0.50, a stricter threshold of 0.60 was applied for theoretical clarity and interpretability. Five items (SOC_2, SOC_8, SOC_11, SOC_13, and SOC_15) were excluded due to loadings below 0.60 and are not included in the factor structure. The final solution yielded three factors, indicating that social value is composed of three distinct attributes.

Component 1 includes items SOC_3, SOC_4, SOC_5, SOC_9, and SOC_14. It reflects social recognition, focusing on social approval and acknowledgment received through EV ownership. This factor is termed value of gaining social recognition and captures status signaling and external validation, key aspects of luxury consumption (Vigneron and Johnson 1999; Moore and Birtwistle 2005, cited in Femina and Santhi 2024).

Component 2 includes SOC_6, SOC_7, and SOC_12, representing personal identification. This factor, named value of personal identification, reflects intrinsic motivations where EVs serve as expressions of personal values and identity. It aligns with findings that link identity-based symbolism with increased purchase intentions (Rezvani et al. 2015; Schuitema et al. 2013, cited in White and Sintov 2017).

Component 3, comprising SOC_1 and SOC_10, captures prestige and wealth symbolism and is named value of prestige. It reflects perceptions of EVs as luxury goods that signal social rank and exclusivity. This value is product-focused rather than self-reflective, aligning with prestige consumption theory (Vigneron and Johnson 1999; Moore and Birtwistle 2005, cited in Femina and Santhi 2024).

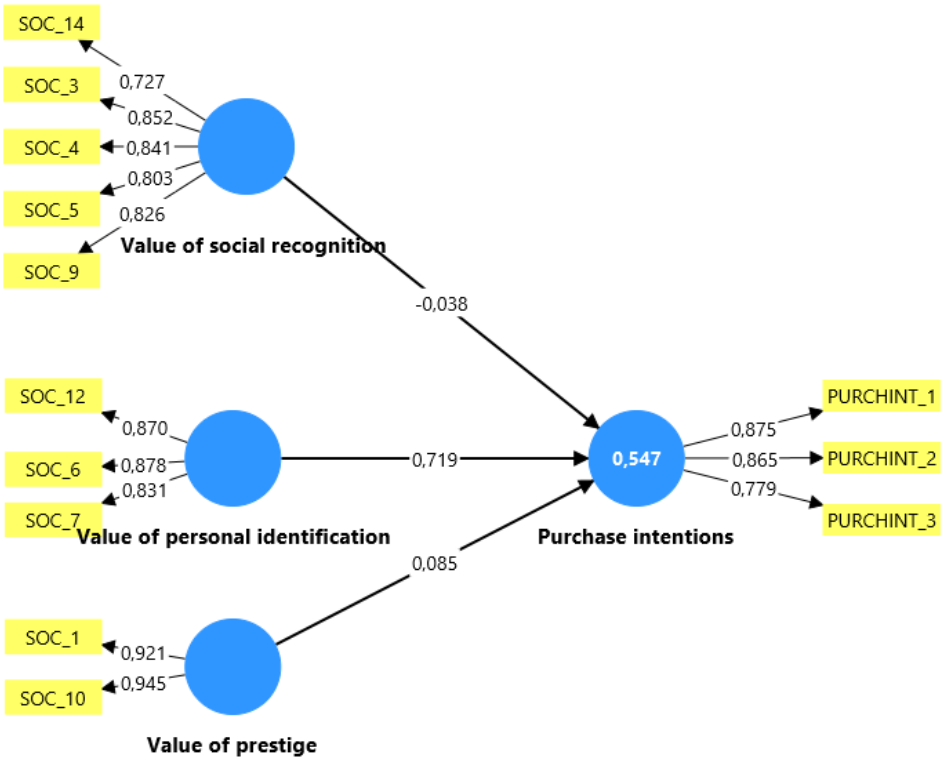
All retained items loaded above 0.60, indicating strong factor-item relationships. The number of components was validated by eigenvalue and variance analysis, supplementing Kaiser's criterion (Fabrigar et al. 1999; Schonrock-Adema et al. 2009, cited in Bevaers et al. 2013). The three extracted factors account for 74.975% of the total variance, indicating a strong explanatory power of the social value construct in this model.

The reliability of the measurement scales was confirmed, with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.860 for value of social recognition, 0.827 for value of personal identification, 0.853 for value of prestige, and 0.791 for purchase intentions, all exceeding the 0.70 threshold and indicating acceptable internal consistency.

PCA results show that the scales are reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.70$), convergently valid (loadings > 0.50), and discriminately valid (low cross-loadings). Three factors were extracted and, with the dependent variable, were included in confirmatory factor analysis.

A reflective measurement (inner) model was specified. Using hierarchical modelling, the higher-order construct was treated as endogenous. This approach reduces multicollinearity and improves model parsimony (Hair et al. 2016). The disjoint two-stage method was applied, as it yields stronger path estimates for higher-order constructs (Sarstedt et al. 2019). The higher-order construct was estimated using the repeated indicators approach, following Hair et al. (2016) and Sarstedt et al. (2019). The measurement model specification is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: **Measurement model**



Source: Authors' work

Using the disjoint two-stage approach, the PLS algorithm with path weighting and Mode A was applied (Hair et al. 2016; Sarstedt et al. 2019). In stage one, the three lower-order reflective constructs, value of social recognition, personal identification, and prestige, were modelled and latent scores extracted. In stage two, these scores served as indicators for the higher-order reflective construct, social value. Reliability and validity were assessed via loadings, composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and AVE. Results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: **Indicators of model quality**

Factor	Indicator	Outer loadings	α	Cho_a	Rho_c	AVE
Purchase intentions	PURCHINT_1	0.875	0.793	0.813	0.878	0.707
	PURCHINT_2	0.865				
	PURCHINT_3	0.779				
Social value*	Value_pers_id	0.400	0.891	0.896	0.911	0.508
	Value_prest	0.231				
	Value_soc_recog	0.559				
Value of personal identification	SOC_12	0.870	0.828	0.858	0.895	0.739
	SOC_6	0.878				
	SOC_7	0.831				
Value of prestige	SOC_1	0.921	0.853	0.873	0.931	0.871
	SOC_10	0.945				
Value of social recognition	SOC_14	0.727	0.871	0.895	0.906	0.658
	SOC_3	0,852				
	SOC_4	0,841				
	SOC_5	0,803				
	SOC_9	0,826				

*Higher-order construct with latent component scores as indicators.

Source: Authors' work

The indicators of model quality suggest that the values of Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient, Rho_A reliability coefficient and composite reliability are all higher than 0,7, thus meeting the internal consistency requirement. Values of AVE are higher than 0,5, confirming that all indicators meet the model quality criteria.

It is also important to interpret path coefficients. The construct social value is most strongly reflected by value of social recognition (0.559), followed by value of personal identification (0.400), and least by value of prestige (0.231).

Discriminant validity was established by ensuring no correlations among indicators of different constructs (Malhotra and Birks 2003) and by verifying that each indicator's loading on its own construct exceeded its cross-loadings (Hair et al. 2016; Wong 2013). Cross-loading analyses at both levels confirmed that all indicators loaded highest on their intended constructs. Note that discriminant validity across hierarchical levels is not expected because higher-order constructs reuse lower-order indicators for identification (Sarstedt et al. 2019).

Discriminant validity was also assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which requires that the square root of a construct's AVE (shown on the matrix diagonal) exceeds its correlations with other constructs (Hair et al. 2016; Gefen et al. 2000). This condition was met at both the first and second levels, confirming discriminant validity across the measurement model.

Due to instability in discriminant validity when varying the number of latent variables, the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio was also applied (Henseler et al. 2015; Hair et al. 2016). Discriminant validity is confirmed when HTMT values remain below 0.90 for conceptually distinct constructs. This condition was met at both levels, as all HTMT values remained below the threshold of 0.900.

Although the primary focus in PLS-SEM is on predictive relevance, global fit indices are used as an additional check. Thresholds for goodness-of-fit indices in PLS-SEM are SRMR below 0.08 for good fit, NFI above 0.90 for acceptable fit, GoF above 0.36 for large overall fit (Hair et al., 2016) and good d_ULS close to zero. The indicators are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: **Indicators of model fit**

Fit Index	Obtained Value	Recommended Cutoff	Interpretation
SRMR	0.141	< 0.08	Poor fit
NFI	n/a	> 0.90	n/a
GoF	n/a	≥ 0.36	n/a
d_ULS	2,723	>3	Moderate fit

Source: Authors' work

The model shows a poor fit according to SRMR (0.141 > 0.08), while d_ULS (2.723) suggests a moderate fit. Other indices are not available, so overall fit should be interpreted with caution. Since global fit indices are only supplementary in PLS-SEM, the poor fit is mainly attributable to the strong non-normality of the data (Ory & Mokhtarian, 2010), as already noted in Section 2 (Methodology, Sample, Procedures and Measures). Because PLS-SEM is primarily predictive, the model can still be considered useful if R^2 values and path coefficients are strong and significant.

In continuation, the following hypotheses are formulated:
H1: Social value influences purchase intentions.
- H1.1: Value of personal identification influences purchase intentions.
- H1.2: Value of prestige influences purchase intentions.
- H1.3: Value of social recognition influences purchase intentions.

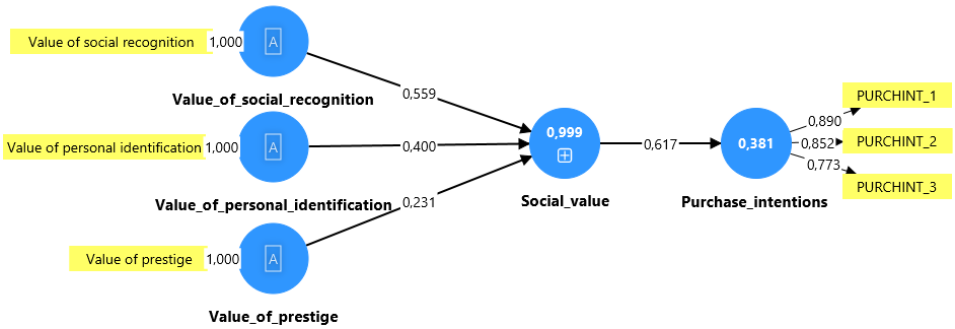
H2: There is a difference in the effect of social value on purchase intentions between female and male respondents.
- H2.1: There is a difference in the effect of value of personal identification on purchase intentions between female and male respondents.
- H2.2: There is a difference in the effect of value of prestige on purchase intentions between female and male respondents.
- H2.3: There is a difference in the effect of value of social recognition on purchase intentions between female and male respondents.

H3: There is a difference in the effect of social value on purchase intentions between younger and older respondents.

H3.1: There is a difference in the effect of value of personal identification on purchase intentions between younger and older respondents.
H3.2: There is a difference in the effect of value of prestige on purchase intentions between younger and older respondents.
H3.3: There is a difference in the effect of value of social recognition on purchase intentions between younger and older respondents.

The structural model that describes these hypotheses is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: **Structural model**



Source: Authors' work

Multicollinearity was tested using VIF, with all values below the critical threshold of 5, confirming no collinearity issues (Wong 2013; Hair et al. 2016).

Path coefficients were analyzed to test the hypothesized relationships. At a 5% significance level (Hair et al. 2016), paths are considered significant if $t > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$, and the confidence intervals do not include zero. Significance was assessed using bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples. Multi-group analysis (MGA) in SmartPLS was conducted to examine whether the effect of social value and its attributes on purchase intentions differs by gender and age. Since the age groups were of unequal sizes, the Welch-Satterthwaite test was employed, as it is considered reliable for unbalanced real-world data. Differences in path coefficients were evaluated via bootstrapping, with p-values below 0.05 indicating statistical significance. The results are presented in Table 4 and Table 5, respectively.

Table 4: **Strength and significance of relationships**

Hypotheses	**Relationship**	**Original sample (O)**	**Sample mean (M)**	**Standard deviation (STDEV)**	**T statistics (|O/STDEV|)**	**P values**	**Hypotheses confirmed**
H1	Social_value -> purchase intentions	0.617	0.632	0.072	8.572	0.000	Yes
H1.1	Value of personal identification -> purchase intentions	0.719	0.726	0.096	7.495	0.000	Yes
H1.2	Value of prestige -> purchase intentions	0.085	0.088	0.117	0.728	0.467	No
H1.3	Value of social recognition -> purchase intentions	-0.038	-0.038	-0.028	0.113	0.334	No

Source: Authors' work

In the first-order model, value of personal identification and value of prestige had strong and weak effects on purchase intentions, respectively ($\beta = 0.719$; $\beta = 0.085$), however only the path from value of personal identification to purchase intentions is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$). Value of social recognition indicated no meaningful influence on purchase intentions ($\beta = –0.038$). At the second-order level, social value had a strong and positive direct effect on purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.617$), which is also highly significant ($p = 0.000$), confirming the overall relevance of the higher-order construct.

Table 5: **Multi-group analysis of the effect of social value on purchase intentions by gender and age**

Hypotheses	Relationship	Difference	t-value	p-value	Hypotheses confirmed
H2	Social_value → purchase_intentions (female - male)	0.011	0.082	0.935	No
H2.1	Value_of_personal_identification → purchase_intentions (female - male)	-0.072	0.576	0.568	No
H2.2	Value_of_prestige → purchase_intentions (female - male)	-0.085	1.008	0.321	No
H2.3	Value_of_social_recognition → purchase_intentions (female - male)	0.064	0.552	0.585	No
H3	Social_value → purchase_intentions (younger - older)	-0.017	0.101	0.920	No
H3.1	value_of_personal_identification → purchase_intentions (younger - older)	0.005	0.042	0.967	No
H3.2	value_of_prestige → purchase_intentions (younger - older)	-0.034	0.358	0.724	No
H3.3	value_of_social_recognition → purchase_intentions (younger - older)	-0.056	0.457	0.652	No

Source: Authors' work

Multi-group analysis revealed no statistically significant differences in path coefficients across gender or age groups. These results suggest the structural relationships in the model are stable across demographic segments.

To assess model strength, R^2 and adjusted R^2 were used (Malhotra and Birks 2003; Hair et al. 2016). Cohen's thresholds (0.02, 0.13, 0.26) were applied due to the novelty of constructs (Cohen 1988, in Ringle et al. 2014). Social value is strongly explained by its dimensions (R^2 = .999), and moderately predicts purchase intentions (R^2 = .381), confirming its relevance in EV adoption.

Effect size (f^2) was assessed to determine the relative impact of predictors on outcomes (Hair et al. 2016). According to Cohen's thresholds (1988, in Hair et al. 2016), 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects. In the first-order model, value of personal identification had a strong effect on purchase intentions ($f^2 = 0.717$), while prestige ($f^2 = 0.011$) and social recognition ($f^2 = 0.002$) showed negligible effects. In the second-order model, social value showed a large effect ($f^2 = 0.616$), confirming its relevance.

Predictive relevance was assessed using Stone-Geisser's Q^2 value (Geisser 1974; Stone 1974, cited in Hair et al. 2016), where values > 0, 0.25, and 0.50 indicate small, medium, and high relevance. The PLSpredict function in SmartPLS applies k-fold cross-validation to evaluate out-of-sample performance. The model demonstrates medium predictive relevance for purchase intentions (Q^2_predict = 0.356) and high for social value (Q^2_predict = 0.999), confirming its predictive utility.

Since no built-in software function exists, the q^2 effect size was calculated in Excel by subtracting the Q^2 value of the dependent variable without the predictor from the Q^2 value with the predictor, then dividing by one minus the Q^2 with the predictor. According to Hair et al. (2022), $q^2 \geq 0.35$ indicates a large effect. The result ($q^2 = 0.366$) confirms that social value substantially contributes to explaining variance in purchase intentions, underscoring its importance in EV adoption models.

CONCLUSION

This study reconceptualized the dimension of social value in the market of EVs and explored its role in shaping EV purchase intentions. Three key attributes of the social value dimension were identified: value of social recognition, value of personal identification, and value of prestige. Through a two-stage reflective measurement model, results confirmed that social value is a significant predictor of purchase intentions, with a strong effect size ($f^2 = 0.616$) and large q^2 impact ($q^2 = 0.366$). Among the attributes, personal identification showed the strongest effect on purchase intentions ($f^2 = 0.717$), while prestige and recognition had negligible influence. The predictive relevance of the model was confirmed (Q^2_predict = 0.356), supporting its practical utility. Multi-group analysis revealed no significant differences in structural relationships across gender or age. This suggests that the influence of social value on EV purchase intentions is consistent across demographic groups.

The findings of this research offer valuable guidance for marketing managers in the EV industry, particularly when designing promotional strategies aimed at enhancing product appeal through the lens of social value. As the attribute of personal identification exerts the strongest influence on purchase intentions, it underscores the importance of aligning EVs with consumers' self-image, values, and identity. Consequently, marketers should strategically frame EVs not merely as functional or eco-friendly products, but as lifestyle choices that reflect the values and personality of the owner. This aligns with prior literature suggesting that consumers often evaluate EVs based on symbolic and self-expressive qualities. Rezvani et al. (2015) and Schuitema et al. (2013), cited in White

and Sintov (2017), emphasized that EVs support identity expression and self-congruity, increasing favorable attitudes and purchase intentions. Our study confirms this, revealing that personal identification is a critical determinant of EV adoption, more so than prestige or social approval. Finally, the findings suggest that social value in EVs is more internally motivated (identity) than externally driven (status or recognition). Thus, marketing messages should shift from prestige-driven themes to more authentic, relatable narratives that resonate with consumers' sense of self. By aligning EV brands with consumers' internal values and identity motivations, firms can enhance customer loyalty, increase engagement, and reduce the perceived risk of adoption. In doing so, the EV industry can accelerate market penetration while building emotionally resonant and value-driven customer relationships.

This study was part of a student research project with a convenience sample drawn primarily from social media, limiting representativeness and diversity. The sample size was small and not reflective of the broader EV market. The research focused solely on social value, excluding other relevant soft dimensions (e.g., emotional, hedonic, epistemic, relational) and functional dimensions (e.g., performance, range, cost). Future studies should integrate these factors for a more comprehensive understanding of EV purchase drivers.

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