



## Marketing Strategies in India's Automotive Sector

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### Context & Purpose:

India's automotive market is one of the world's largest yet remains under-penetrated (~38 cars per 1,000 people). To tap unmet demand, manufacturers blend legacy channels (TV, print, dealerships) with digital tools (search, social media, influencers). This study investigates how 200 prospective and recent vehicle buyers across India navigate these touchpoints during their purchase journey .

### Methodology:

A structured survey (online and in-person) captured demographics, media usage, brand interactions, and EV attitudes. Respondents spanned five geographic regions and varied age/income groups. Data were analyzed descriptively (frequencies, cross-tabs) to reveal prevailing patterns .

### Key Findings:

**Digital First:** Over 90% begin with online search; 80% rely on video content (walkarounds, reviews) for initial research.

**Digital ROI:** Targeted digital campaigns (SEO/SEM, social ads) are perceived as more cost-effective—case evidence shows ~12–23% increases in leads and significant cost savings for brands like Volkswagen and Renault.

**Influencer Impact:** 41% follow automotive influencers; unscripted reviews drive trust, especially among buyers under 35.

**Offline Trust:** Despite digital research, ~90% still finalize purchases via dealership visits and personal referrals, valuing test-drives and face-to-face advice.

**Regional Nuance:** Urban buyers heavily use digital media; rural buyers rely more on local ads, vernacular communications, and dealer relationships.

**EV Awareness vs. Persuasion:** ~75% know about EVs and incentives, but only 20% feel current ads sway them—highlighting a gap in confidence-building messaging.

### Conclusions & Implications:

An omnichannel approach is optimal:

**Digital for Awareness**—invest in SEO/SEM, high-quality video, and influencers.

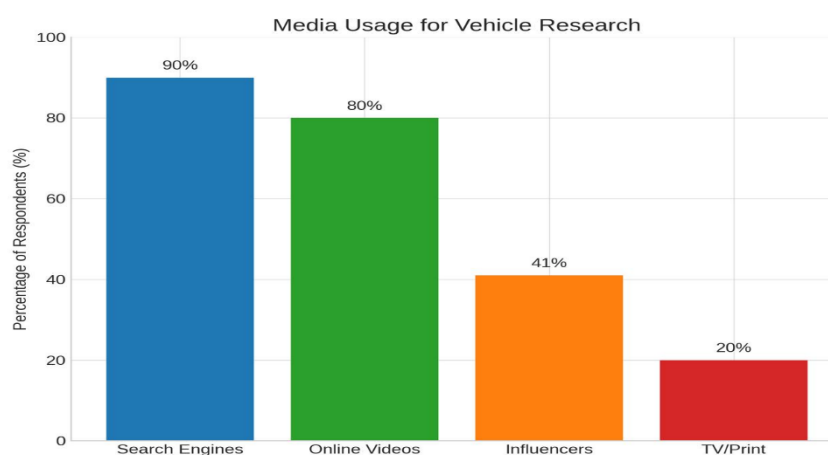
**Offline for Conversion**—strengthen dealership networks and experiential test-drives.

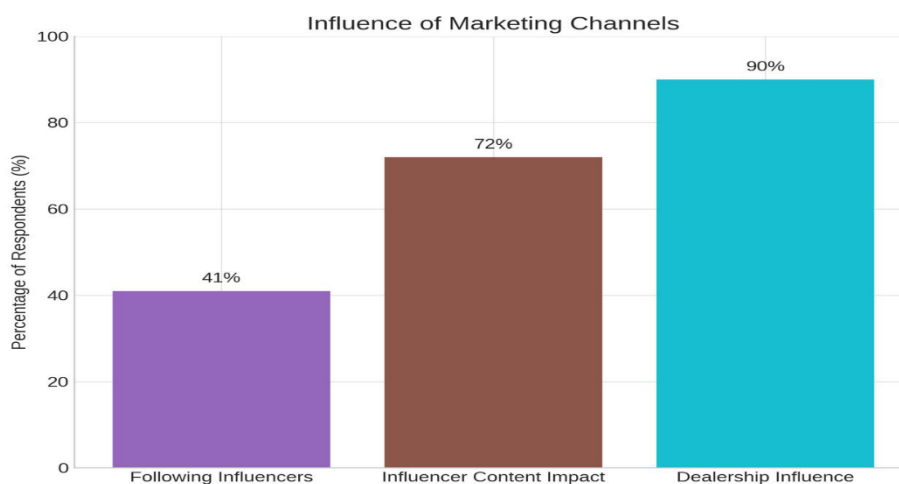
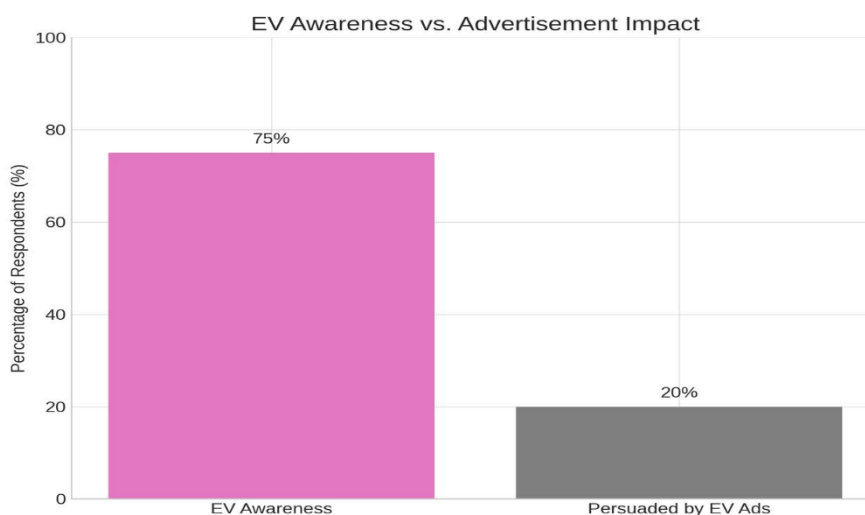
**Regional Customization**—tailor language, media mix, and messaging to urban vs. rural markets.

**EV Engagement**—shift from mere awareness to hands-on demos and interactive tools to build trust.

### Data Analysis

Figure 1: Media channels used by Indian car buyers for initial vehicle research



**Figure 2: Influence of marketing channels on Indian buyers percentages following or affected by each channel****Figure 3: EV awareness versus persuasion by EV advertisements**

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**Limitations & Future Research:**

The non-random, urban-leaning sample (N = 200) and self-reported data may limit generalizability. Rapid digital shifts call for longitudinal studies, controlled experiments on channel ROI, and deeper qualitative work (e.g., focus groups) to track evolving consumer behaviors and emerging technologies (AR/VR, AI chatbots).