New Study Strengthens the Case for EVs, But India's Buyers May Need More than that

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A new study strengthens the case for EVs on emissions. But in India, the winning argument may be less about saving the planet and more about making electric cars genuinely easy and appealing to own.

VinFast is also trying to tackle the less glamorous part of EV ownership: everything that happens after the keys are handed over

A new study in the journal Science gives the electric-car pitch a fresh twist: replacing a functioning gasoline car with an EV can cut lifetime emissions even before the old car reaches the end of its useful life.

Previously, the usual argument against early EV replacement has been fairly intuitive: if the gasoline car is already built, why create another manufacturing footprint just to replace it? The new research's counter: the carbon cost of making an EV can be repaid by its lower emissions during operation.

In their representative US SUV scenario, replacing the combustion vehicle in its second year cut cumulative emissions over a 16-year period by 44 percent, with the EV's manufacturing "*carbon debt*" paid back in three years. Across the study's modeled vehicle scenarios, 92% produced a net emissions reduction, while fleet-average assumptions delivered a 58 percent benefit.

The researchers put the underlying point rather neatly: “**electrifying vehicle powertrains provides an order-of-magnitude-larger reduction in use-phase emissions**” than replacing an old ICE vehicle with a newer ICE vehicle. They ultimately found “**large carbon mitigation benefits across a wide range of scenarios**,” although the outcome still depends on vehicle efficiency, battery-production emissions and the electricity grid.

The study no doubt strengthens the case for switching from a gas-guzzling vehicle to a new EV for environmental reasons. But alas, in emerging markets like India, an EV brand that leans too heavily on that narrative will certainly fail. Indian customers are practical people and naturally seek practical mode of transportation. They are unlikely to buy a vehicle simply because it helps reduce their personal carbon footprint. A car is transport, technology, a status symbol, family space and, increasingly, an extension of personal identity.

For EVs, that makes the proposition less “**save the planet” and more “this happens to make sense**.” OEMs should emphasize benefits such as lower running costs, quieter driving, instant torque, connected features and the ability to charge at home to turn electrification into a lifestyle upgrade rather than an environmental sacrifice.

The economics can be compelling, too. For example, VinFast’s India portfolio includes the VF 6 and VF 7 SUVs, alongside the seven-seat VF MPV 7. The latter is listed at INR 2.449 million, or about INR 24.49 lakh, before incentives. Its comparison with a comparable gas-powered vehicle showed a significantly lower five-year ownership cost, even before counting free charging.

VinFast is also trying to tackle the less glamorous part of EV ownership: everything that happens after the keys are handed over.

It offers free charging at V-Green stations through March 31, 2029, alongside free scheduled maintenance for three years or 36,000 km. Customers switching from an ICE vehicle can also receive cash support ranging from INR 138,000 for the VF 6 Earth to INR 214,000 for the VF 7 Sky Infinity, with INR 196,000 available for the VF MPV 7.

Then comes the ecosystem. VinFast recently inaugurated its 60th retail outlet in India, with plans to establish 75 dealerships across more than 60 cities by the end of 2026.

Charging-wise, VinFast’s strategic partner V-Green and HPCL are working to deploy EV chargers nationwide. V-Green has also partnered with RoadGrid to accelerate fast-charging deployment at fuel stations, smart cities and other high-demand locations.

The bigger point is that India’s EV transition will probably be won in the details. Cleaner driving is the headline benefit, but cheaper running, useful range, easy charging, accessible service and a car that feels desirable are what can turn curiosity into ownership.

The greenest car, in other words, may increasingly be the one people actually want to drive.

About VinFast

VinFast (NASDAQ: VFS), a subsidiary of Vingroup JSC, one of Vietnam’s largest conglomerates, is a pure-play electric vehicle (“EV”) manufacturer with the mission of making EVs accessible to everyone. VinFast’s product lineup today includes a wide range of electric SUVs, e-scooters, and e-buses.

VinFast is currently embarking on its next growth phase through rapid expansion of its distribution and dealership network globally and increasing its manufacturing capacities with a focus on key markets across North America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Learn more at: wwwvinfastauto.in.