

MODERN ELECTRIC AUTOMOTIVE SYSTEMS PERFORMANCE AND SAFETY ANALYSIS

¹Idrees M A Alkandari, ²Mansour A KH Aljamaan

¹Author, ²Corresponding Author

¹(Sabah Alsalem Industrial Institute, PAAET, Kuwait)

²(Sabah Alsalem Industrial Institute, PAAET, Kuwait)

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Abstract: This paper analyses the performance and safety issues of present-day electric vehicles (EVs) in terms of available literature, current technology developments, environmental and economic concerns, challenges and future perspectives. Performance metrics such as range, efficiency, charging speed, thermal management and drivetrain responsiveness are assessed in combination with safety considerations like battery systems and high-voltage safety including crashworthiness and software/control risks as well as charging-infrastructure risks. Specific passenger EVs, fleet promotions, and policy reactions are highlighted in case studies. The paper ends with suggestions on future directions, policy and industry practices that further EVs performance and safety to drive their widespread adoption worldwide.

Keywords: electric vehicles (EVs), current technology developments, environmental and economic concerns.

1. INTRODUCTION

Electric powertrains for both light-duty and heavy-duty road transport have emerged as key ingredients to the global greenhouse gas reduction strategy since the 2010s, with electric vehicles (EV) becoming mainstream in several parts of the world. New-generation EVs have a high potential of drivetrain efficiency and lower tailpipe emissions and provide new possibilities for vehicle connectivity and control. Nevertheless, the performance and safety of these vehicles rely on innovations in battery chemistry, power electronics, thermal management systems, software, and charging infrastructure. In this paper, the current status of EV performance and safety is reviewed worldwide on the basis of practical results in a comprehensive manner, summarizing those empirical results to pinpoint trends for industry and policymakers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Performance-focused research:

EV performance studies have focused on the energy density and specific energy of battery systems, energy-management strategies, regenerative braking efficiency, and vehicle-level optimization for response and range (Nykqvist & Nilsson 2015; Wang et al., 2020). It was also found that range increases with driving efficiency improvements and both battery advancement and vehicle light-weighting lead to proportional range gains, whereas drivetrain control strategies can improve real-life powertrain efficiency by 5-15% (Bandivadekar et al., 2021).

2.2 Safety-focused research:

Thermal runaway initiation, propagation and mitigation mechanisms by cell chemistry, pack design and thermal control are addressed in battery safety research (Verma et al., 2018). Studies of crashworthiness and HV-system isolation indicate that structural configuration, HV interlocking mechanisms and disconnects represent significant mitigating factors to occupant and first-responder risks (Moriarty & Hogg, 2019). Cyber security and software reliability are increasingly being recognized

as vital safety concerns, with research into threat surfaces, secure over-the-air update solutions, and fail-safe control (Petit & Shladover, 2015).

2.3 Integrated perspectives:

An increasing amount of the literature recognizes combined performance-safety trade-offs, for example charging protocols that enhance end-user usability can also provoke increased battery degradation and thermal risks if handled improperly (Bresser et al., 2018). Performance and safety considerations contrasted with environmental impacts in life-cycle assessments (LCAs) show that it's necessary to decarbonize the grid to get the full lower life-cycle emissions benefit of EVs (Hawkins et al., 2013).

3. TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES IN EVS

3.1 Batteries and energy storage:

Lithium-ion (Li-ion) cells still dominate; positive improvements include higher-nickel cathodes (NMC, NCA) for energy density and silicon-dominant or silicon-graphite anode materials for greater capacity (Xu et al., 2021). Solid-state batteries could offer higher energy density and safer, when replacing neat organic liquid electrolytes, but the manufacturability and cost are major barriers (Janek & Zeier 2016). BMS technology has advanced, with cell-level monitoring, SOC and SOH estimation algorithms and active cell balancing to improve pack life and safety.

3.2 Power electronics and drivetrain:

Inverters and on-board chargers using wide-bandgap semiconductors (SiC, GaN) have lower conduction and switching losses, which can help improve efficiency lead to more compact systems (Baliga, 2019). Motor-inverter combination units and multi-speed e-axles can provide good torque density and vehicle performance. Also contributing to efficiency are optimized regenerative braking and predictive energy- management utilizing map and traffic data.

3.3 Thermal management:

Thermal management of battery packs through active liquid cooling, heat pipes or refrigerant loops is now widespread on high-performance EVs to keep cell temperatures within narrow limits and help enable rapid charging and reduce the risk of thermal runaway propagation. Thermal simulation coupled with live sensing allows for situationally adaptive cooling strategies, trading off energy consumption and safety.

3.4 Software, controls, and connectivity:

Sophisticated car controls such as torque vectoring, electronic stability, and predictive energy control are using connectivity links and machine-learned models to produce empirical performance gains. The introduction of over-the-air (OTA) updates can offer continuous improvement, but entails secure provisioning and authentication in order to prevent safety-critical security breaches.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

4.1 Life-cycle environmental impacts:

Many LCAs show that EVs often have lower lifetime GHG emissions than comparable ICEVs under the assumption of decarbonized electricity, while in regions with carbon-intensive grids, though benefits are smaller they also tend to be favorable over lifecycle horizons (e.g., Hawkins et al., 2013; Breetz et al., 2018). Battery manufacturing makes a substantial contribution of the upfront emissions, based on materials extraction (nickel, cobalt and lithium) and processing. Through recycling and other second-life uses (stationary storage), net impacts and resource requirements may be reduced (Gaines et al., 2014).

4.2 Economic considerations:

There, the total cost of ownership (TCO) has been steadily falling since 2018 due to declining fuel and maintenance costs, despite higher purchase prices in several markets. Incentive structures, battery manufacturing economies of scale, and downward trajectories in battery costs keep driving affordability (BloombergNEF, 2022). The investment of charging infrastructure and the policy of pricing electricity will impact on operational costs and consumer uptake.

5. CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

5.1 Fast charging vs battery life and safety:

High power DC fast charging (up to 350 kW and beyond) lower user friction but increase thermal stress, and therefore possible degradation. We urgently need research to develop protocols for charging batteries that trade speed versus cell life and safety including preconditioning formulas and multi-step charge algorithms.

5.2 Materials supply and sustainability:

The commercial success of sheet metal fabricated product S7 is heavily dependent on the availability of a number of materials and some questions have been raised about the sources from which these have been drawn for this report. Key supply chains of selected critical materials (nickel, cobalt, lithium, rare earths for motors etc.) are under constraints (due to social/environmental concerns). Recycling, new chemistries (cobalt-free cathodes) and culturing domestic supply are strategic priorities.

5.3 Safety at battery system and pack level:

Development in preventing thermal runaway propagation such as advanced cell design, module enclosure, venting paths, separators and active suppression is being pursued nowadays. Nonetheless, routine test measures and certifications must adapt to new chemistries and pack configurations.

5.4 Cybersecurity and functional safety:

As vehicles become more software-driven, IEC 61508/ISO 26262-compliant functional safety and ISO/SAE21434-compliant cybersecurity are a must. The risks of being remotely exploited can be mitigated by safe OTA update frameworks and hardware-based trust.

5.5 Introduction of smart charging and grid integration:

V2G (Vehicle-to-grid) and managed charging can address grid stability with fewer emissions, but depend on interoperable communication standards, market models and regulation. Distribution utilities need to be coordinated with to prevent local grid overload.

5.6 Regulatory and standards development:

Global alignment of safety, charging and recycling regulations may lessen the barriers to large-scale implementation of EV technologies. Adoption rates will be shaped by policy instruments such as emissions standards, incentives and infrastructure mandates.

6. CASE STUDIES / EXAMPLES

6.1 Passenger EV: Compact sedan example:

Type A vehicle (mid-high compact EV) shows what has become representative of modern days: the 55-70 kWh pack, rated range by WLTP/ EPA 350-420 km (~220 - 260 mi.), acceleration from 0 to 100 km/h in about 7-8 s, onboard charger at 7-11 kW AC, DC fast-charging capability up to 150 kW. Optimizing performance features torque-vectoring control and a cloud-sourced predictive range tool for the map- and traffic data. Safety features in addition to modular battery enclosures, HV interlock system and electronic controls that are compliant with ISO 26262 standard. Applied in real-world testing, energy consumption is ~150-200 Wh/km depending on the driving cycle and conditions.

6.2 Fleet deployment: City distribution vans:

City logistics fleet operations have adopted battery-electric vans with 100-200 km daily routes, based on depot charging and route optimization. These fleets can operate with lower operating costs (fuel and maintenance) and local emissions but face certain issues including upfront capital cost, availability of charging power at depots, and battery replacement strategy. Managed charging and telematics has increased uptime while minimizing battery-stress via scheduled charge windows.

6.3 Heavy goods vehicle: Passenger and transport operation with long and short distance:

Battery-electric of heavy-duty trucks are coming for the short-haul and regional applications in which predictable routes and centralized refueling minimize weight and range penalties. For long-range use, hydrogen fuel cells and by extension hybridization are still viable options because of the lower energy density in current battery systems. Pack integrity and Effectiveness of thermal runaway containment in heavy vehicles pack enclosure crashworthiness.

6.4 Safety incident trends:

Review of industry safety reporting (combined manufacturer and agency information) shows that although EV-specific occurrences (battery fires, HV shocks) tend to make the headlines, the grand scheme vehicle fire rates for today's modern EVs are no difference or lower than their comparable ICEV makes when normalized for vehicle miles / years in service (National Transportation Safety Board data sets + multiple OEM safety reporting). The causes can be related to battery abuse, manufacturing flaws, collision damage or the way the electric pack is used.

7. CONCLUSION

State-of-the-art EVs integrate high drivetrain efficiency and maturing battery technologies with emerging safety-driven engineering. Performance gains over range, charging speed and handling depend on battery chemistry, power electronics, thermal management and software integration. Safety concerns revolve around a range of issues such as battery thermal runaway, high-voltage isolation, crashworthiness and security; yet when designed and maintained well, data indicate that EVs have safety outcomes no worse than indeed in some respects superior to those of ICEVs on many measures. Support should also emphasize material sustainability, charging infrastructure, grid integration as well as harmonized standards to unlock the full environmental and economic opportunities of EVs worldwide.

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