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Section 1:

2 Organisational Context and Overview:

Tesla, Inc. is a clean-energy and mobility firm that competes in various ways (i) in battery-electric vehicles (BEVs) with mass-premium segments, (ii) charging infrastructure and services, and stationary energy storage and solar solutions, where software and data are becoming the key determinants of differentiation in software-defined vehicles and energy systems (Otto et al., 2025; SEC.GOV, 2024).

Tesla was founded in 2003 and its key points in strategy turning included: shifting niche product Roadster to high-volume Model 3/Y; establishing gigafactory manufacturing to capture battery and unit-cost learning; establishing a proprietary fast-charging network to mitigate range anxiety; and switching to volume-based pricing (price) as a strategy in scale-up, when industry pricing lowered and competition was intensifying. Although overall electric-car sales are still surging across the globe, especially in 2024, the competitive spectrum has expanded - especially with Chinese companies increasing their sales at a rapid pace, pressuring Tesla on the comparative market share (Financial Times, 2026; IEA, 2025d; McKinsey & Company, 2025).

The mission statement of Tesla is "to hasten the global move to sustainable energy," which informs a value proposition that is predicated on: (1) BEV performance and user experience, (2) closely coupled hardware-software systems through over-the-air updates and advanced driver-assistance services, and (3) an overall energy ecosystem (vehicles, storage, solar and charging) that can increase switching costs and customer retention (Arreola et al., 2024; SEC.GOV, 2024).

The business model of it is large-scale automotive production, recurring and adjacent revenues. Reporting units are Automotive and Energy Generation and storage; the automotive industry also consists of Services and Other (e.g., paid Supercharging, non-warranty service, insurance and used-vehicle activities). The energy segment includes the designing, production, delivery of solar and energy-storage products and services, and relates them to the position Tesla to take advantage of the grid flexibility requirements and electrification requirement. This portfolio has strategic benefits in terms of ecosystem monetisation during the vehicle life cycle, and learning benefits due to data, at-scale manufacturing and deployment (Arreola et al., 2024; IEA, 2025d; Otto et al., 2025; SEC.GOV, 2024).

Tesla is a market leader in the global BEV market, but competition is growing: BYD and other Chinese OEMs are rising fast, and established car manufacturers are electrifying faster and investing in automotive software functionality. The differentiation around Tesla is thus more and more based on continuing to lead on costs with scale/manufacturing innovation and translating software and charging benefits into long-term differentiation as the EV market matures.

3 External and Internal Environment Analysis

3.1 External environment (PESTEL)

Political/Legal: EV demand and supply economics is being influenced by subsidies/tax credits, localisation regulations, and an increase in trade activities, automated-driving claims are subject to stricter control (IRS, 2025).

Economic: Battery-materials volatility and the pressures of affordability interplay with high interest rates and generate margin and demand whiplash (Reuters, 2026).

Social: The adoption relies on the belief in safety/quality and the visualized total cost of ownership; the credible sustainability expectations are increasing (Static NHTSA, 2024a).

Technological: Battery innovation, charging convenience/standards and "software-defined" features (ADAS/automation), which are provided through updates, are increasingly becoming an advantage (IEA, 2024a).

Environmental: The focus of scrutiny is shifting down the tailpipe emissions to lifecycle impacts such as the energy required to manufacture batteries, their source, and recycling at the end-of-life (Degen et al., 2023).

Social/Environmental overlap: The brand trust, regulators, and investors are influenced by the ESG credibility and supply-chain transparency (IEA, 2024a).

3.1.1 Political/Legal

One of the basic demands is policy support. The IEA observes that policy interventions such as the purchase incentives and industrial policies are still affecting the adoption and investment within the major and emerging markets. The clean-vehicle credits in the US are regulated by the conditions of eligibility and the requirement to report the credits, and the possibility of transferring the credit at the point of sale (through eligible dealers) alters the dynamics of near-term affordability of eligible models (IEA, 2024a; IRS, 2025).

Growing strategic risk: the EU implemented final countervailing duties on the importation of battery-electric vehicles in China in 2024, an indication that it will be more aggressive against competition based on subsidies and bringing doubt to prices and supply chains across Europe.

Safety and automated-driving are becoming more restrictive as well. The NHTSA investigations, along with the reports of recalls concerning Tesla's Autopilot/driver-monitoring issues, in the US point to regulatory interest in the design of Level-2 assist systems, interaction with drivers, and crash risk in the real world. Even in Europe and other UNECE markets, where a more formalised route-and-restraint-to-automation is being taken, evolving type-approval regulations of automated functions (e.g. UN Regulation No. 157 of Automated Lane Keeping Systems) demonstrate that such a route is becoming more formalised-and-restrained (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2024; Static NHTSA, 2024b; United Nations, 2025).

3.1.2 Economic

EV affordability is very rate-sensitive as the monthly payments will increase with higher interest rates--without peaks and valleys in demand, and incentives become more prominent. Industry projections concentrate on skewed adoption patterns in regions and segments, which strengthen fluctuations in near future demand.

The volatility of input-costs is still significant, especially with battery metals. Pricing intelligence and commentary in the market indicate that the lithium price volatility and a periodic rebalancing due to reductions in supply and adjustments in demand have a direct impact on the cost curves of batteries and the power of OEMs to set prices.

These forces have helped to cause price-war (both in China and even more so elsewhere), squeezing the margins and competitive advantage over companies with better manufacturing scale, supply contracts, and cost controls. It is the external economic environment that thus pressures Tesla to support profitability and maintain volume growth and invest in software, autonomy and next-gen platform (BloombergNEF, 2025; Fastmarkets, 2024; IEA, 2024a).

3.1.3 Social

In addition to cost, it has to be adopted on trust- especially in regards to safety and driver-assistance features. The materials of NHTSA on the issues of crashes and driver engagement demonstrate how the consumer confidence and regulator attention might be determined by the incidence, naming/marketing expectations, and perceived risk of misuse (Static NHTSA, 2024a, 2024b).

The sustainability standards are also increasing: consumers and stakeholders are becoming more lifecycle conscious (sourcing, production impacts, recycle) but not only tailpipe advantageous. The market analysis provided by the IEA highlights the fact that the policy and societal priorities in the context of decarbonisation remain in favor of electrification, yet credibility and transparency have an impact on acceptance (IEA, 2024a).

3.1.4 Technological

Innovation of batteries has been a key competitive advantage as it dictates range, cost, and durability. Recent peer-reviewed literature models cost reduction of the battery through learning curves and technological advancement and supports the idea that scale and engineering advancement can be converted into price leadership. Simultaneously, studies indicate that the manufacturing of battery cells is energy-consuming, and process efficiency and clean electricity matter in terms of economics and the environment (Yang et al., 2025).

A second important area of battle is charging. It is reported globally that the reliable charging infrastructure and investment are necessary to enable mass adoption, especially in regions with limited home charging (Degen et al., 2023; IEA, 2024a; World Economic Forum, 2024b).

The struggle is becoming more fierce between software/ autonomy race. The what is deployable is determined by regulatory pathways (UNECE) and safety investigations (NHTSA), whereas the software capability is a strategic differentiator as features velocity,

driver monitoring, and compliance can turn into sources of value or risk (Static NHTSA, 2024a; United Nations, 2025).

3.1.5 Environmental

Environmental analysis is moving to a lifecycle perspective: the energy consumption of battery manufacturing, its supply-chain, and recycling. Evidence with peer review indicates that cell manufacturing consumes a large amount of energy meaning that the decarbonisation of production and efficiency positively influence the actual climate performance and ESG stories. The IEA also puts EV growth in the context of energy-system transitions in general, in which clean energy, materials, and capacity to recycle are strategic bottlenecks. In the case of Tesla, this implies that environmental performance is compliance, but reputational, cost, and policy-access, particularly when incentives and procurement procedures are becoming more and more conditional upon sustainability (Degen et al., 2023; IEA, 2024a).

3.2 Industry success factors + strategic challenges

3.2.1 Critical success factors (CSFs) for EV/energy

The key success factors in EVs and related energy markets include (1) battery cost and performance learning (chemistry, manufacturing efficiency and secure supply), as batteries continue to be the major cost driver and their economics more important to pricing power and mass adoption; (2) scale and flexible manufacturing to externalize fixed costs and respond to demand shocks; (3) supply-chain resilience to critical minerals and components due to geographic concentration and sustainability tensions; (4) access to and reliability of charging, since inadequate public charging is a key barrier to adoption and cities face an investment gap in infrastructure investment (Degen et al., 2023; IEA, 2024b, 2025d; Lehtimäki et al., 2024; Nature Portfolio, 2026; World Economic Forum, 2024b, 2024a).

3.2.2 Strategic challenges (threats + uncertainties)

The external threat set is becoming increasingly strong. To start with, intensive competition and price battles, particularly in China, squeeze margins and drive continuous cost-cut and model upgrade strategies. Second, volatility of materials (e.g., changes in the price of lithium) presents a risk to the cost of inputs and supply planning of batteries. Third, relative pricing, localisation choices and market access can be reformed by trade and industrial policy changes (e.g. EU countervailing duties on Chinese BEVs). Fourth, driver-assistance/automation regulatory and safety scrutiny increases compliance costs and reputational risk, and may limit feature rollout. Lastly, a higher risk of disruption and ESG exposure is created by geopolitics and concentrations of supply of critical minerals (Degen et al., 2023; Lehtimäki et al., 2024; Reuters, 2025a, 2026; World Economic Forum, 2024b).

3.3 Internal environment + VRIO

3.3.1 Resources & capabilities (grouped)

Physical: massiveness (gigafactory footprint), integrated manufacturing and logistics, and extensive fast-charging network that helps make the customer convenient and service revenues (IEA, 2025d; SEC.GOV, 2024).

Human: battery systems, power electronics, manufacturing, and AI/ADAS development engineering talent; high pace execution capability (SEC.GOV, 2024).

Organisational: vertical integration, swiftness of cycle, direct-to-customer selling/serving, and information-founded operating practices that decrease the feedback loops (SEC.GOV, 2024).

Technological: proprietary software stack and over-the-air (OTA) updates, fleet data, battery/energy management expertise and energy storage/solar product integration (Otto et al., 2025; SEC.GOV, 2024).

3.3.2 VRIO evaluation

Capability	V	R	I	O	Advantage
Scale manufacturing + cost learning	✓	△	△	✓	Temporary → sustained if cost gap maintained (SEC)
Supercharger/NACS ecosystem	✓	△	△	✓	Temporary (rarity declining as access expands) (IEA)
OTA + software-defined vehicle capability	✓	✓	△	✓	Potentially sustained (depends on safety/compliance + execution) (alexandria.unisg.ch)
Energy generation & storage integration	✓	△	△	✓	Temporary (integrated platform harder to match at scale) (SEC)

Interpretation: The strongest sustained pathway at Tesla is software capability + data + organisational speed, and the charge and scale is becoming increasingly competitive, moving the balance of power of *merely assets to orchestrating capabilities* (Otto et al., 2025).

3.3.3 Causal logic

EV markets are shifting to commoditised hardware and price pressure; on the inside, the integrated nature of Tesla manufacturing drives down the unit costs and OTA/software allows constant feature additions and the ability to differentiate user-experience. Combined with access to charging and an energy portfolio, this generates switching costs and lifetime monetisation (services, paid charging, energy products). But with access to charging and scale by rivals, the advantage of Tesla lies in transforming software/AI and speedy iteration into trusted, regulatable and refined enhancements (Roth, 2025; SEC.GOV, 2024).

4 CSR and Sustainability Objectives

4.1 Tesla narrative vs reality (balanced critique)

Tesla positions CSR as mission-driven sustainability - accelerate the transition of the world to sustainable energy - and reports that it avoids significant emissions of its customers with the adoption of EVs and its energy products. Its reports also highlight on-going advancement in product efficiency and safety results as value generation. Nevertheless, the sustainability leader is a narrative challenged by the effects based on lifecycle elements (battery production energy, sourcing, grid mix), and the stakeholders who are now assessing EV companies based

on the due diligence of human rights along the supply chain in addition to tailpipe emissions (Lin, 2023; Tesla, 2024a, 2024b).

4.2 Alignment with business objectives (strategic fit)

Tesla CSR is best interpreted in CSR-as-strategy: decarbonisation cannot be discussed outside of its growth model. The automotive and energy businesses (storage/solar) of the company are poised to capitalize upon the requirement of electrification and grid flexibility which can be aligned with sustainability goals through strategic CSR research which recommends that sustainability activities that are incorporated into core capabilities such as innovation, resilience and alignment with stakeholders can be used to advance their competitive advantage and not be peripheral philanthropy. In the case of Tesla, sustainability objectives can be converted into operational performance (cost, customer value and market legitimacy) through the scale of energy storage, access to charging, and efficiency enhancements that can be achieved through software (X. Liu & Zhou, 2025; Tesla, 2024a, 2024b).

4.3 Risks/criticisms + credibility gap

The most significant credibility risks are: (i) supply-chain governance-in civil society evaluations, EV manufacturers are said to pay insufficient attention to how they mitigate human-rights risks in mineral supply chains (e.g. cobalt/nickel) leaving reputational and regulatory risk exposed. (ii) safety/ethics and autonomy allegations- US regulators have intervened in Tesla performance of driver-assistance and Full Self-Driving and questioned the level of protection and reporting, a question of trust and compliance. (iii) transparency in governance--any disconnect between the declamations of audacious sustainability and the testable results can ruin brand trust, right of participation, and financier trust (Amnesty International, 2024a, 2024b; Shepardson, 2024).

5 Comprehensive & Holistic View: Balanced Scorecard

Balanced Scorecard is more appropriate to Tesla as its strategy is system-wide (vehicles + software + charging + energy storage), and performance has to be monitored more than financials to encompass customer trust, operational implementation and capability-building in changing EV policy and technology conditions (IEA, 2024a; SEC.GOV, 2024).

5.1 Financial perspective

Objective: safeguard the profitability and finance the innovation and expansion of energy. In 2024, Tesla reported margin sensitivity in the automotive business and cost of energy storage is becoming more economical, thus is strategic (SEC.GOV, 2024; Tesla, 2024b).

KPIs: (i) automotive gross margin (and without regulatory credits), (ii) operating margin, (iii) free cash flow and operating cash flow, (iv) Energy Generation & Storage revenue and gross margin (v) capex efficiency (\$ capex per unit/throughput).

Targets (directional): maintain positive FCF cycle, grow energy profit contribution, and repair margin (without selling volume).

Initiatives: next-gen cost-down programs (re-design of manufacturing), trim strategy / disciplined pricing, IRA-based manufacturing credits optimisation where feasible, and scaling up higher-margin storage mix (SEC.GOV, 2024; Tesla, 2024b).

5.2 Customer perspective

Objective: boost adoption and retention of building trust, convenience, and total value of ownership- essential due to policy review and convergence with other airlines.

KPIs: (i) quality of delivery (defects/vehicle/early service visits), (ii) service turnaround time and parts availability, (iii) charging experience (uptime/availability, wait time), (iv) Net Promoter Score/loyalty proxy (repeat purchase, referral rate), (v) safety perception indicators (complaints, safety-related recalls, incident rates).

Targets: minimize early-life problems, enhance the speed of service, continue high charging reliability, and enhance quantifiable safety results/communications.

Initiatives: The efforts include: increase/normalise service capacity, active quality campaigns, reliability-investments in charging infrastructure according to the needs of the infrastructure growth, and open safety reporting and strong expectations of driver-monitoring (IEA, 2024b, 2024a; SEC.GOV, 2024; Tesla, 2025b).

5.3 Internal process perspective

Objective: implement cost effective compliant business in manufacturing and supply chain and software release under pressure on price and regulatory control.

KPIs: (i) manufacturing efficiency (units per line-hour, scrap/rework rate), (ii) cost per vehicle and cycle time, (iii) supplier risk (single-source share, critical-materials lead times), (iv) software release (defects/rollback rate, OTA deployment success), (v) compliance (process) metrics (recall closure time, audit findings).

Targets: ongoing unit-cost saving, reduced quality releases, enhanced supply chain continuity and safe-by-design software releases.

Initiatives: simplifying end-to-end manufacturing, dual sourcing/strategic contracts, stricter change-controlling of ADAS updates, and integrated risk management (linking safety, legal, and engineering) (IEA, 2024a; SEC.GOV, 2024; Tesla, 2025b).

5.4 Learning & growth perspective

Objective: maintain a competitive edge via talent, data/AI ability, and learning rate - in line with the Tesla software-defined approach and VRIO reasoning (capabilities > assets).

KPIs: (i) &D intensity (R&D expenditure/revenue), (ii) critical talent retention (AI, battery, manufacturing engineering), (iii) capability maturity (model/algorithm performance gates, validation coverage), (iv) training hours in safety, quality and compliance, (v) continuous-improvement throughput(closed-loop issues resolved per month).

Targets: enhance the validated software capability and safety assurance, expedite the learning processes and enhance the stability of the workforce across key technical positions.

Initiatives: systematic trial of governance, large-scale simulation/checking, cross-functional quality and safety learning process, supplier-development supplier-development programs (IEA, 2024a; SEC.GOV, 2024; Zhao et al., 2025).

6 Strategic Choices and Implementation

6.1 Business-level strategy (generic strategies): what Tesla is doing now

Tesla is now seeking the hybrid approach: to protect cost leadership in mass-market BEVs and maintain differentiation via software, charging convenience and brand. The cost push can be seen in frequent price reductions and cost-down models to defend volume in a decelerating, rate-sensitive market-measures that Reuters attributed to the severe squeeze in profit margins in 2024 as Tesla lowered prices to boost demand as it increased AI expenditures. This is an intentional trade-off: scale and manufacturing learning are used to ensure that vehicles remain price-competitive in the case of trade-offs with margin in the short term (Reuters, 2024b).

Simultaneously, the differentiation of Tesla is through software-defined features (Android updates, ADAS / FSD optional) and an ecosystem that offers less resistance to ownership compared to competitors-an advantage becoming more and more valuable as competition has removed first-mover protection. Practically, the hybrid stance is expected to succeed on total customer value (price + experience), yet it raises the risk of execution: in case competitors keep pace on features and charging access when Tesla margins are kept low, the hybrid position becomes more difficult to maintain (Reuters, 2024b, 2025b).

6.2 Corporate-level strategy choices

Tesla has a corporate philosophy that consists of vertical integration + global capacity + energy ecosystem expansion. Its SEC reports highlight integrated auto and energy segments, and further investment in production, supply chain and technology development. Vertical integration (battery/pack, power electronics, software) can be used to control costs and speed, but also it is focused on operational risk when demand changes (SEC.GOV, 2024).

One of the industry/partnership-influencing actions is that of Tesla in the changeover to the North American Charging Standard (NACS). Tesla is expanding the Supercharger network to additional manufacturers and allowing access to adapters as OEMs switch to NACS ports-eliminating charging as an ecosystem play and becoming a platform power player (Roth, 2025; Tesla, 2025a).

Tesla is also expanding Energy Generation and Storage (Megapack/Powerwall + solar) portfolio-wise. Reporting of investors and industry coverage show that storage is turning into an increasingly better profit contributor with high margins as compared to autos-favored a mobility + grid ecosystem logic. The trade-off is capital investment: energy expansion can level profitability, but Tesla needs to invest in next-generation platforms of vehicles and artificial intelligence/software (Crunch, 2026; ir.tesla, 2025).

6.3 Recommendation: what Tesla should prioritise next

Tesla needs to focus more on (1) a truly cheaper next-generation car platform (to capture the mass market without foregoing permanent margin) and (2) faster scaling of grid storage as a stabiliser of profits. The strategic need to have a cost-disruptive platform in a price-war environment is proven by Reuters coverage about the organized cheaper models and next-gen production schedules. This is to be accompanied by (3) improved safety/compliance governance of ADAS releases, as trust and control are becoming of greater importance in the monetisation and pace of roll-out (Reuters, 2024a, 2025c).

6.4 Change management critique

Tesla implements change very fast (rapid iteration, centralised decision-making), which favours innovation, scale-up, but may make the process, quality, and stakeholder trust unstable in case the governance falls behind the products. The data on the Tesla innovation culture point to the encouraged experimentation and flatness, but this practice requires more formal controls since regulation and safety oversight are increasing (C. (Charo) Liu et al., 2025; RBR Business, 2024).

7 Strategic Evaluation and Recommendations

7.1 Evidence-led SWOT of Tesla's current strategy

Strengths: The strongest strategic capabilities of Tesla can be discussed as (i) mass production and economies of scale, (ii) extensive charging network (Supercharger/NACS), and (iii) vehicle capabilities based on software definition (OTA updates, data-driven iteration). These are recurrently listed in Tesla 2024 Form 10-K as core competitive leverages in automotive, services and energy. Another strength is the energy business: Tesla says that there is material growth potential in Energy Generation and Storage and a profit will increase with time as more deployments are made (SEC.GOV, 2024; Tesla, 2025c).

Weaknesses: The hybrid "volume + innovation" stance adds more vulnerability to margin: the price-led competition will cut the profitability more quickly than the software/brand differentiation will be able to counter it, and the regulatory scrutiny surrounding the advanced driver-assistance will allow feature rollout and perception to be limited (SEC.GOV, 2024; Shepardson, 2024).

Opportunities: EV usage continues to grow at scale across the world (sales of electric car units >17m in 2024; > 20% market share), and thus the market has a chance to grow further--particularly where cost is lowered. Electrification and flexibility demands (and by proxy, commodity dynamics like lithium cycles) also structurally favor grid storage growth (IEA, 2025a, 2025c; Reuters, 2026).

Threats: There is a growing cost, uncertainty and reputational risk through intensifying rivalry, price pressure (including China), trade fragmentation (EU definitive countervailing duties on Chinese BEVs), and an increase in autonomy/safety regulation/investigations (European Union, 2024; IEA, 2025e; Shepardson, 2024).

7.2 Supporting framework: Ansoff Matrix

Market penetration: Tesla has made pricing and trim management to protect volume in current markets- good in the short term but risky in case it normalises lower margin.

Product development: Improved software capability and lower-cost products Next-gen development is an opportunity promising minimal product development, but needs more rigorous safety validation to prevent regulatory drag.

Market growth: There is also geopolitical/trade limitation to expansion; the example of EU countervailing duties shows how localisation and sourcing decisions may turn into market-entry conditions.

Diversification: The most consistent diversification is energy storage and grid services as it capitalizes on Tesla battery, power electronics, software and manufacturing capabilities (RBV fit) and smooths the cyclicalities (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2024; European Union, 2024; IEA, 2025c; SEC.GOV, 2024; Shepardson, 2024).

7.3 Recommendations

Introduce a real low-cost platform with manufacturing redesign: Focus a new-gen platform that is designed to cost significantly less per unit (simplified architecture, reduced variants, faster cycles) to sustainably compete in price-war conditions. This is in line with Ansoff product development and safeguards the "Value" and "Organisation" aspects of VRIO by increasing the cost advantage that is difficult to scale. Disciplined SKU strategy should be used in order to avoid complexity creep (IEA, 2025c; SEC.GOV, 2024).

Scale Energy generation and storage as a profit stabiliser and flywheel ecosystem: Accelerate Megapack/Powerwall scale, grid relationships and software-based energy optimisation. This is diversification of high capability fit and enhances resilience in compressing auto margins. Tie targets to the storage gross margin, deployment increase and contracted backlog quality (where disclosed) to institutionalise execution (SEC.GOV, 2024; Tesla, 2024b).

Safety-by-design governance of ADAS/FSD releases to ensure trust and regulatory entry: Design tougher release gates (scenario testing, driver monitoring effectiveness, documentation) and release clearer safety reporting. This minimizes regulatory risk, increases customer trust and allows sustained differentiation of software (dynamic capabilities) to take place faster without stop-and-go interventions (SEC.GOV, 2024; Shepardson, 2024).

7.4 Risk note

The reasons that can derail these recommendations include (i) protracted price wars that exceed cost cuts, (ii) trade-policy shocks that demand rapid localisation, (iii) battery-material volatility and (iv) negative safety incidents/ regulatory action that limits software implementation (European Union, 2024; Reuters, 2026; Shepardson, 2024).

Section 2:

8 Reflective Account Using Gibbs Cycle

8.1 Description

I picked Tesla and did an audit of the strategy. I developed a source plan that included both academic theory and up-to-date evidence after mapping the frameworks (PESTEL, VRIO, Balanced Scorecard, SWOT/Ansoff) with the report sections. The priority was given to Tesla most recent Form 10-K, official industry analysis (IEA Global EV Outlook 2025), and recent peer-reviewed syntheses of Balanced Scorecard and RBV/VRIO. To avoid going over the limits of words, I maintained an evidence log and typed early bullets of claims and proofs and then typed the paragraphs (IEA, 2025d; SEC.GOV, 2024).

8.2 Feelings

I began with optimism since Tesla is all covered but I feared the bias: good media stories can make analysis opinionated. Initially, I believed the Tesla advantage to be technology, but it is contingent on regulation and price rivalry. The structured reflection research helped me realize it is not a bad thing to be uncertain, and it can be transformed into learning provided I name the assumptions. I did not mix evidence and interpretation since I felt uneasy making a judgment on disputed issues such as driver-assistance safety (Gibbs' reflective cycle, 1988; Reflection Ed, 2024).

8.3 Evaluation

Triangulation was the most effective one. The Form 10-K presented hard information about the segments, risks and strategic intent and the IEA clarified demand, charging build-out and policy dependence. Scholarly reviews enhanced my criticism: There is a mixed and context-dependent evidence on the use of Balanced Scorecard, and I did not assume KPIs as performance-enhancing. RBV/VRIO literature made me remember that there is a difference between valuable and sustained advantage and whether an organization and governance back a resource. To begin with, employing single articles as big claims (e.g., autonomy timelines) did not work. The solution I arrived at was to categorize the evidence as either regulatory, financial, industry, or academic and then only make strong statements when independent sources concurred (IEA, 2025a, 2025b; SEC.GOV, 2024; Tawse & Tabesh, 2023).

8.4 Analysis

The reason why the Gibbs cycle works is that it compels me to shift towards experience to improvement planning, not reflection. The stage of feelings showed one latent assumption that I was perceiving the capabilities of Tesla as superior but not as benefits that should resist imitation, regulation and macro shocks. PESTEL was an external checklist (Level 7) as opposed to a constraint map. Policy incentives, trade friction, and safety regulation have a positive influence on market access, demand elasticity and feature deployment and are thus of the focus of my priority. The recent library guide states the importance of the PESTEL to define the threats/opportunities to input into SWOT to enhance my section integration (Reflection Ed, 2024; Washington State University, 2026).

VRIO was my internal filter. I did not list resources, but I asked: what rare, valuable, hard-to-imitate, and organizationally-supported capabilities? That taught me to consider charging advantage temporary like standards and access increase and software advantage contingent on compliant deployment and trust. Recently, RBV/VRIO studies have demonstrated that resource attributes and organisational fit are crucial to competitive advantage, therefore I will not talk about assets, I will talk about routines, controls and cross-functional coordination (Alifia & Dalimunthe, 2024; Lanfranchi et al., 2025).

Balanced Scorecard enhanced synthesis. I based my KPIs on my PESTEL/VRIO results since the BSC scholarship focuses on its development and cautions that poor design may lead to having metrics lacking strategy. Economic pressure influences margin resilience and cash generation, legal/social scrutiny influences perception of trust and safety and regulatory risk influences the quality of release, recalls closure time and process of compliance, and the software-defined vehicle race influences talent/data capability. I also got to know how to write line of sight sentences that directly connect external pressure to inner ability and quantifiable display (Kumar et al., 2024; Tawse & Tabesh, 2023).

Scholars learnt to deal with conflicting information. With the industry recording good growth, company filings focus on cyclicity and price pressure. I based my argument on policy sensitivity, cost curves and competitive intensity, using forecasts as scenarios. Limiting evidence, counter-arguments (what would make this wrong?), and not being a heroic defender of the truth all enhanced my criticality (IEA, 2025a; SEC.GOV, 2024).

The other Level 7 learning was academic craft. I ceased to report, and started synthesising: I would contrast the risks of 10K with the tendencies in IEA systems and would make a statement of strategy and measurement implication. To avoid falling in to plagiarism inadvertently, I would save all the citation details as I read it and immediately write it in my own words. My word-counting budgeting also made me remove the paragraphs, which would not add to the argument without being lost (IEA, 2025d; SEC.GOV, 2024).

8.5 Conclusion

This allowed me to discover that strategic analysis is more a matter of making defensible evidence-based argument than the right story. The Balanced Scorecard also helped me to relate macro forces to internal strength and quantifiable action against displaying tools separately. I also had an opportunity to learn that sustainability assertions must be quantified in lifecycle and governance measures and not mission statements. The biggest weakness that I have is that I keep defining technology without considering the organizational practice and stakeholder validity. I will need to clarify uncertainty: there are certain (filings, regulation, audited metrics), and probable (forecasts, adoption speed). The fact that it requires being critical means that it should be balanced, clear in terms of trade-offs and that it should be transparent about the quality of the evidence.

8.6 Action plan

Next time I will:

1. Every paragraph is relevant by starting with a narrow question, such as How can Tesla maintain an edge in the face of price warfare and regulatory inspection?

2. Develop early an annotated bibliography and indicate credibility, approach, and risk of bias.
3. Apply a triangulation rule (one main and one independent industry/academic source of each major claim).
4. Write narrative after logic is clearly known, draft tables (PESTEL priorities, VRIO judgements, BSC KPIs) first.
5. Improve critical writing with counter-case sentences and limits sentences at the beginning of every subsection.
6. Make a final audit of claim-evidence to remove unsubstantiated claims.
7. Check recency (5 years suggested) and paraphrase correctly to avoid overclaiming.

Improvement area	What I will do next time (specific actions)	Tools / methods	Evidence of improvement (how I will measure it)	Timeline
Sharpen the focus	Start with one guiding question (e.g., “How can Tesla sustain advantage under price compression + regulation?”) and write a 5–6 line scope statement.	Research question + scope boundaries	Clear scope paragraph; fewer “off-topic” paragraphs in draft	Day 1
Source quality & recency	Build an annotated bibliography early; prioritise ≤5-year sources (journals + IEA/BNEF + regulators + 10-K).	Database search + source ranking (A/B/C)	At least 70% sources within 5 years; credible mix (primary + industry + academic)	Days 1–2
Triangulation discipline	Use a triangulation rule: each major claim must have (i) one primary/official source + (ii) one independent academic/industry source.	Claim–evidence matrix	Fewer unsupported claims; every key claim has 2-source support	Days 2–3
Reduce bias & improve criticality	Add a “counter-case” line in each major section (what could make this argument wrong) and a “limits” sentence.	Counter-argument prompts	More balanced tone; explicit trade-offs stated	Throughout drafting
Improve synthesis (Level 7)	Draft framework tables first (PESTEL priorities → VRIO → BSC KPIs) then write narrative from the logic.	Table-first drafting	Clear line-of-sight links across sections; fewer repeated ideas	Days 3–4
Handle conflicting data	Classify conflicts (forecast vs filing vs media), state uncertainty, and convert into scenarios instead of certainty.	Scenario framing	Cleaner phrasing (“likely/depends”) + justified assumptions	Days 3–5

Word-count control	Allocate word budget per subsection; write in blocks; cut anything that doesn't add new insight.	Word budget tracker	Final word count within limit; no rushed final trimming	Throughout drafting
Referencing accuracy	Save full citations while reading; paraphrase immediately; keep a reference log to avoid missing sources.	Reference log + Harvard checklist	Zero missing references; consistent Harvard style	Throughout drafting
Final quality check	Run a final "claim–evidence audit" + coherence check (does each paragraph link back to the main question?).	Audit checklist	No unsupported statements; stronger flow	Final day

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