

2025 Middle East Car Buyer Behavior Analysis Report —Covering UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Other Countries

2025-07 By Cartea Automotive Research Institute

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About Cartea



Cartea is an automotive internet media platform rooted in the MENA region, with a distinctive strength in bridging Chinese automotive technologies and the Middle Eastern market. While we maintain a comprehensive understanding of global automotive trends, we are particularly focused on emerging technologies such as electrification, intelligent mobility, and connected vehicles.

Our core team is composed of veteran professionals from both the Chinese and Middle Eastern automotive industries, bringing together first-hand market knowledge, technical expertise, and cultural fluency.

We collaborate with regional organizations, industry institutions, and auto clubs, alongside local influencers, to ensure meaningful, on-the-ground engagement that drives informed decision-making across the automotive value chain.

Research Overview



Research Objectives



The report aims to assist automakers in gaining a deeper understanding of the genuine car purchase needs of Middle Eastern consumers, thereby formulating more effective market strategies.

- ① Understand user behavior patterns: Identify the channels and platforms through which Middle Eastern car consumers obtain automotive information, and analyze key behaviors and decision-making factors throughout the entire process of browsing, selecting, and purchasing vehicles. This provides data-driven support for automakers to optimize marketing strategies and communication content.
- ② Enhance localization alignment of products and services: Based on users' key focus factors during car purchases, guide automakers in adjusting vehicle localization adaptations and provide references for optimizing dealer service processes. This improves service quality, increases user satisfaction and loyalty, and ultimately boosts sales conversion rates.

Research Methodology - Quantitative Study



- ① On-site Questionnaire Survey: Conducted purchase decision surveys among Middle Eastern auto consumers, covering diverse age groups, genders and budget segments, with incentives offered to enhance participation rates.
- ② Behavioral Data Analytics: Performed direct analysis of actual user behavior data from Cartea platform's 400,000 MAUs (Monthly Active Users), with focused tracking on: User navigation paths, Vehicle model comparison patterns and Content engagement metrics

Quality Control Measures



After removing invalid questionnaires through rigorous review (including content logic verification and response time validation), we retained 379 valid responses as the final sample for quantitative analysis.

Sample Profile



- ① Quantitative surveys: 379 valid responses
- ② Behavioral data: 400,000 Cartea platform MAUs (Monthly Active Users)
- 3 Sample Sources: Middle Eastern automotive consumers and Cartea platform users
- (4) Coverage: Middle East region (primarily UAE and Saudi Arabia)
- S Research Period: May-June 2025

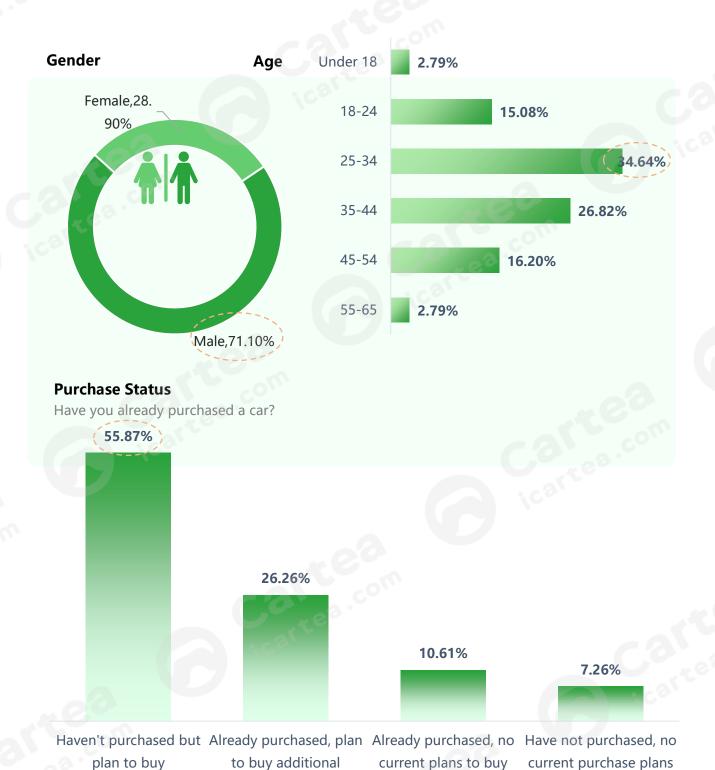


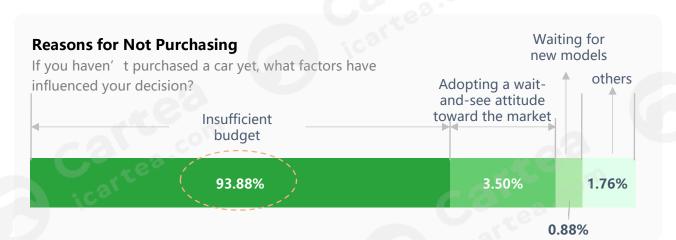
Part.1 Overall Trend Insights

- User Profile
- Purchase Needs
- Buying Process
- After-Sales Service



The leading segment for car buying intent in the Middle East region are young people, in particular males, 25 to 44 years old. More than fifty percent of this group does not own a car, and their main reason for not owning a car is due to budget constraints.



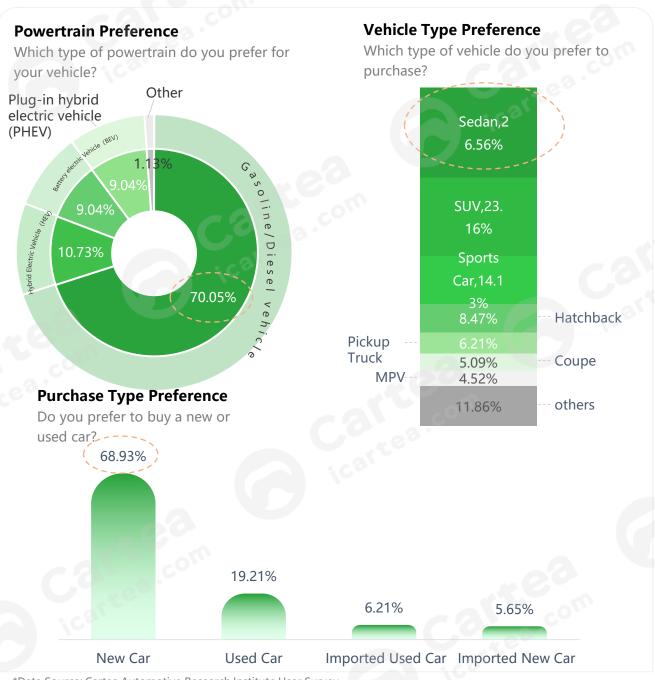


additional



The primary demand is for daily commuting, and the market is dominated by fuel-powered vehicles. Consumers 'top picks are new cars, and they prefer sedans and SUVs.





^{*}Data Source: Cartea Automotive Research Institute User Survey

Overall Trend Insights



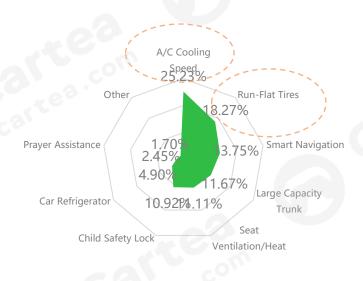
With the greatest emphasis on high-temperature adaptation features like run-flat tires, air conditioning cooling, and battery heat protection, local characteristics are noticeable. Furthermore, consumers are most willing to pay for rear-seat independent seats and panoramic sunroofs, screens for entertainment.

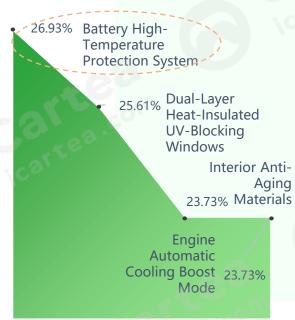
Features Considered When Purchasing a Car

What are the top three features you prioritize most when buying a car?

High-Temperature Adaptation Features

Please select the three most important hightemperature adaptation features from the following options:





Willingness to Pay for Additional Features

Which of the following features would you be willing to pay for?

Panoramic Sunroof



Rear-Seat Independent Entertainment Screen

(27.27%)

Genuine Leather Seats

21.65%

Power Running Boards

17.38%

Other

3.74%

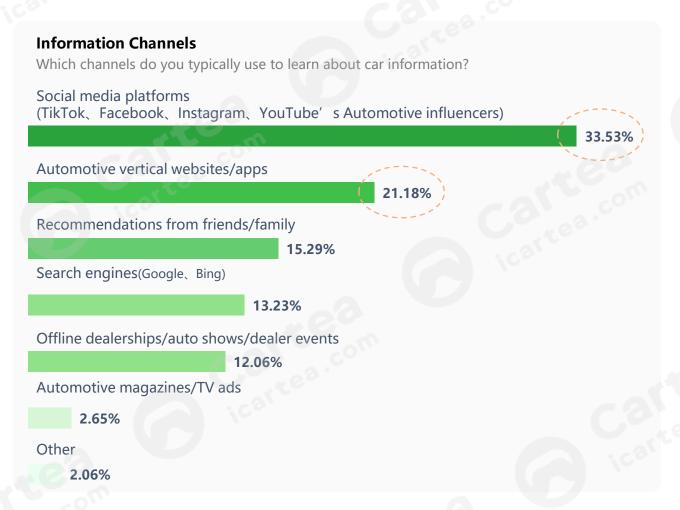
Purchase Process

Overall Trend Insights



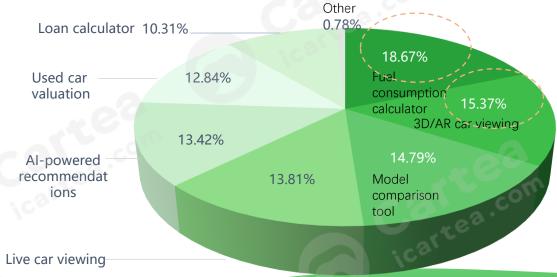
Social media and vertical media platforms are the main sources of information during the three-month-long user purchase decision cycle. Practical tools like fuel, cost calculators, and 3D car viewing features are highly desired.





Car-Buying Assistance Tools

Which tools would you like car platforms to provide to assist with your purchase?





Price and promotional policies are the core factors of concern for users when purchasing a car. Beyond this, users primarily focus on quality-related aspects such as performance parameters and exterior/interior design.

Key Information Sought When Purchasing

What information do you primarily research about a car model before purchasing?

Price and promotional (28.44%)	01
policies	
Performance parameters (horsenower fuel consumption, range, etc.) 23.22%	02
Exterior and interior design (16.12%)	03
Safety features (ABS, airbags, active safety systems)	04
After-sales service and warranty policies 6.87%	05
User reviews/word of mouth 4.50%	06
Tech features (smart connectivity, autonomous 4.03% driving assistance)	07
Brand history and culture 3.08%	08
Other 1,42%	09

Purchase Decision Factors

Which factors influence your decision most when selecting a car?

Price	(18.29%)				
Fuel efficiency		60%	12.	C	
exterior, comfort)	s (performance, space,	Feature	10.98%		
Brand reputation				8.13%	
Safety				7.99%	
Handling				7.86%	a.
Maintenance costs				7.45%	
User reviews				7.32%	
Failure rate/quality				.42%	5.4
Resale value				15%	5.15
oility of repair stations	Availab			1%	5.01
and warranty policies	After-sales service				3.12%
other					0.68%

^{*}Data Source: Cartea Automotive Research Institute User Survey

Car Purchase Process

Overall Trend Insights



Only 40% of users think about making an appointment for a test drive. The main avenues for purchasing a car are still dealership outlets and dealer stores. There are serious worries regarding the security of online payments. The biggest problem when buying a car is going over budget. The most common form of payment is an installment loan, which prefers small down payments (10-30%).

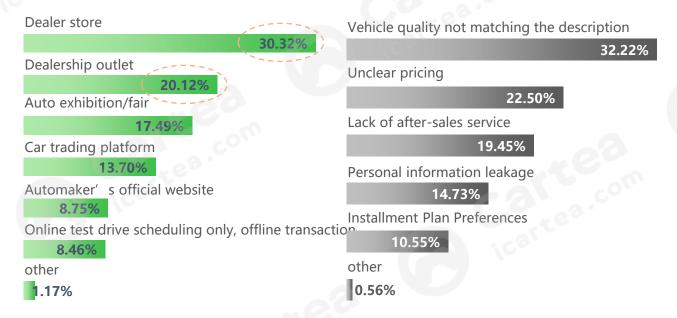


Purchase Methods

Online Purchase Risks

How do you plan to purchase a car?

What do you think is the biggest risk of buying a car online?



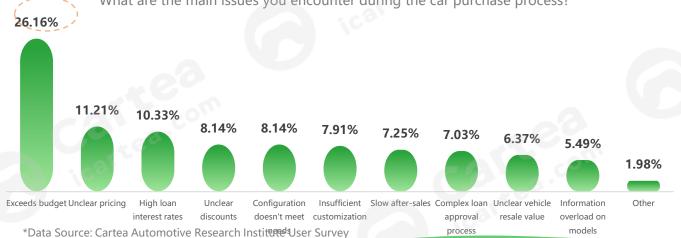
Payment Method Preferences

What is your preferred payment method for car purchases?

Installment loan	Full payment	Leasing Other	
When opting for installment payments, what down payment ratio do you prefer?	38.99%	7.91% 1.13%	
Less than 10%	10-30%	30- More 50% than 50%	
(58.70%)	31.52%	7.61% 2.18%	

Main Purchase Issues

What are the main issues you encounter during the car purchase process?



Overall Trend Insights



The two main ways to schedule after-sales service appointments are via phone calls and WhatsApp. The most common request is for maintenance, and the main problems are long wait times and a shortage of parts. Almost 50% of users, think about paying for extra services; maintenance packages are the most common.

Service Appointment Methods

What is your preferred method for scheduling service appointments?

Whatsapp customer service, 35.03%

Telephone booking, 27.68%

Walk-in, 18.08%

Platform booking, 17.52%

Other, 1.69%

Common After-Sales Services

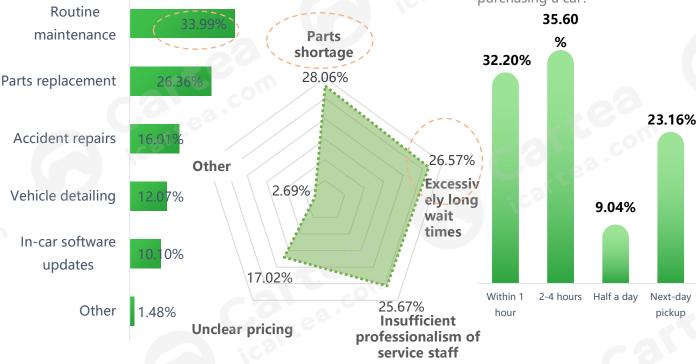
What type of after-sales service do you use most frequently?

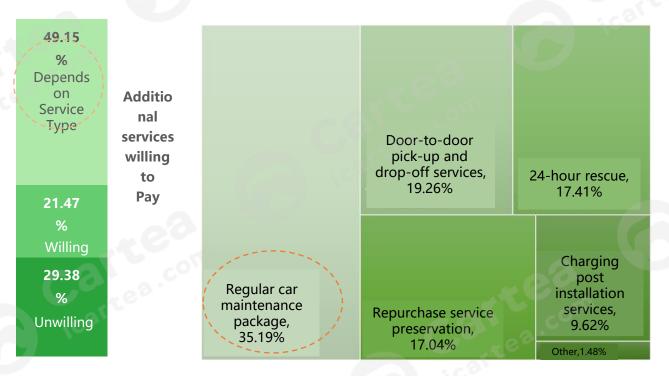
After-Sales Service Pain Points

What do you consider the biggest pain point in current after-sales service?

Willingness to Pay for Value-Added Services

Are you willing to pay for valueadded services when purchasing a car?







Part.2 Trend Insights by Demographic

- Gender Performance
- Age Performance
- Regional Performance
- Car Media Performance



Gender Performance

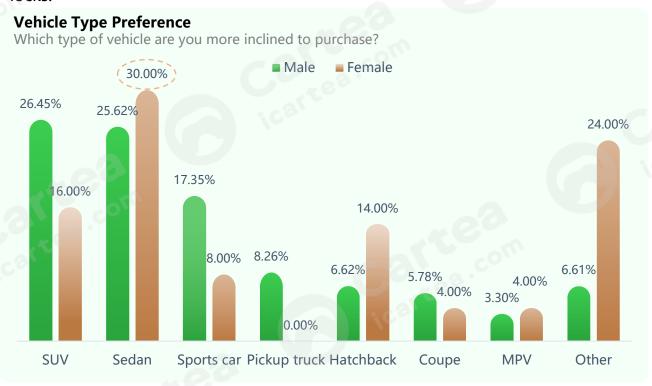
Trend Insights by Demographic





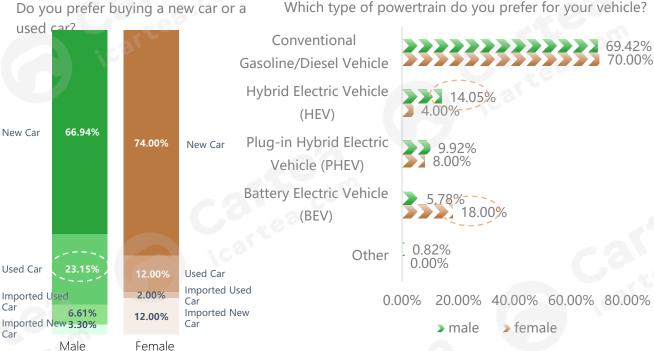
Male Preferences: Hybrid vehicles, higher acceptance of used cars, focus on smart navigation and ventilation/heating features.

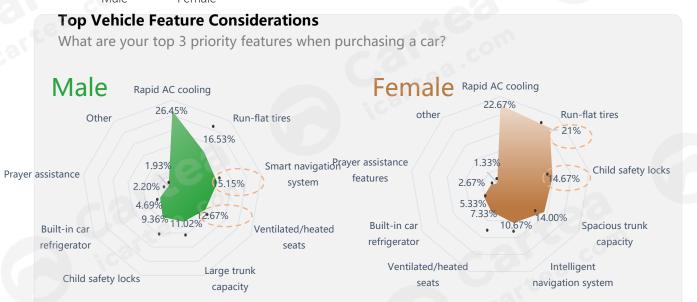
Female Preferences: Strong preference for pure EVs and sedans (nearly 2x SUV selection), greater emphasis on safety features like run-flat tires and child safety locks.



Powertrain Preference Purchase Preference

Which type of powertrain do you prefer for your vehicle?





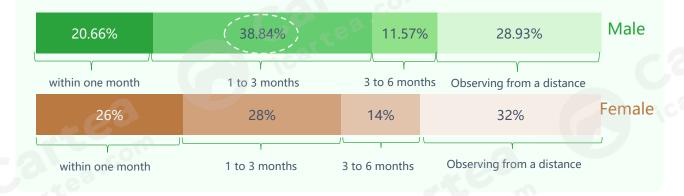
^{*}Data Source: Cartea Automotive Research Institute User Survey



The male decision-making cycle is concentrated within 1 to 3 months, and they tend to gather information through a combination of social media and vertical media. Women prefer social media and rely more on practical tools such as fuel consumption calculators and live car viewing.

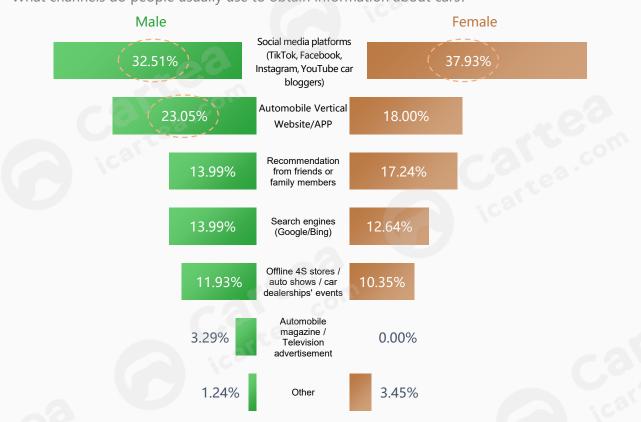
Purchase cycle

When do you plan to go from researching car models to actually purchasing the car?



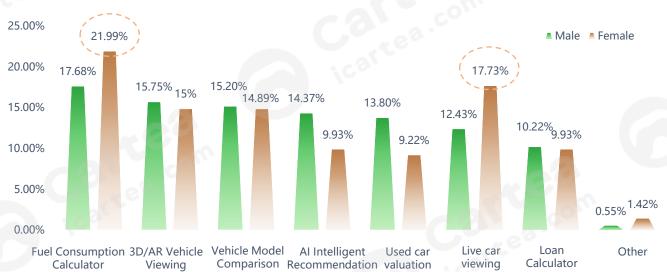
Information acquisition channels

What channels do people usually use to obtain information about cars?



Auxiliary vehicle purchase tools

What tools do you expect the car platform to provide to assist in car purchasing?



^{*}Data Source: Cartea Automotive Research Institute User Survey

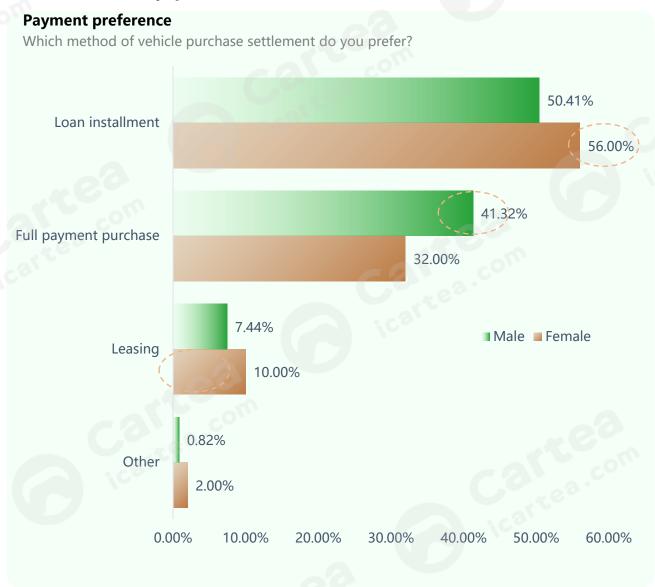
Car purchase transaction

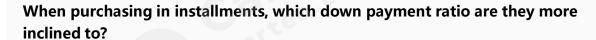
Trend Insights by Demographic



Males show a higher proportion of full - payment car purchases and prefer extremely low down payments (<10%).

Females have a higher proportion of installment loans and leases, with more diversified down payment choices



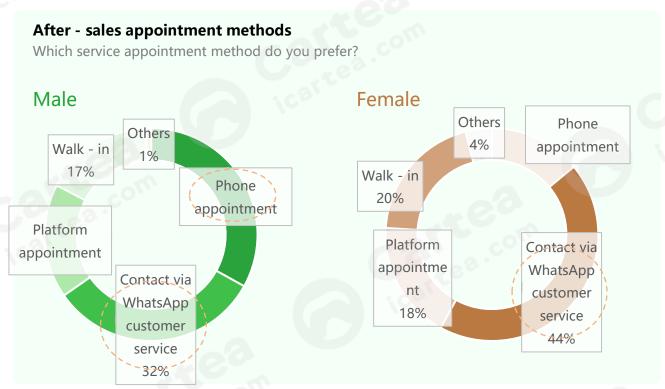






Males prefer phone/WhatsApp appointments and maintenance packages for after - sales service.

Females rely more on WhatsApp, value rescue/home - service, and over half will pay extra fees depending on the situation.



Maintenance Waiting Time

What is the maximum waiting time you can accept for routine maintenance?



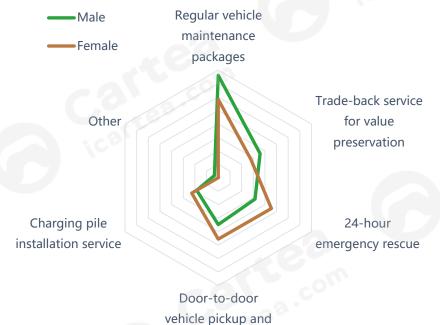
Acceptance of Additional Paid Services

Are you willing to pay for value - added services when purchasing a car?

54.00% 47.11% Depends Depends on the on the type of type of service service 27.27% YES 25.62% NO NO 14.00% **Female** Male

Value-Added Services Willing to Pay For

Which value-added services are you willing to pay for?



delivery service

^{*}Data Source: Cartea Automotive Research Institute User Survey



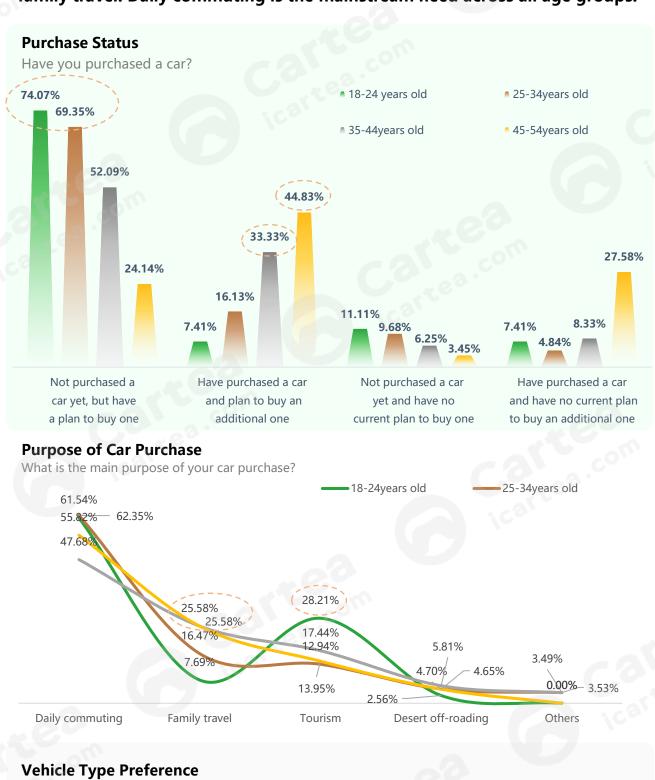
Age representation

Trend Insights by Demographic





Young groups show strong willingness for first-time car purchases. Those aged 18-24 prefer sports cars and travel-leisure vehicles when buying cars. The 35-54 age group has a high car ownership rate, favoring sedans and family travel. Daily commuting is the mainstream need across all age groups.



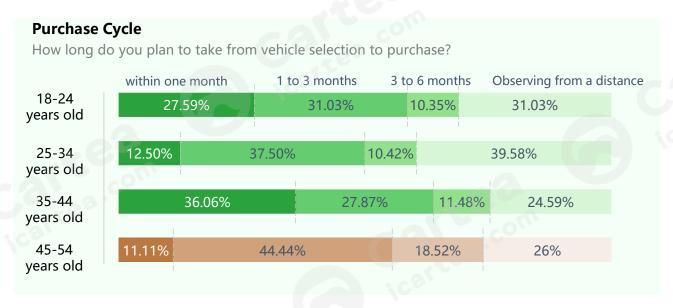


^{*}Data Source: Cartea Automotive Research Institute User Survey

Trend Insights by Demographic

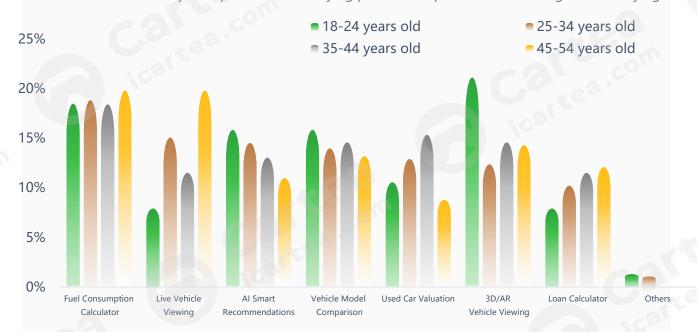


The 18-24 age group has the highest decision-making efficiency, prefers 3D/AR display tools, and pays the most attention to appearance and interior. The 25-34 age group shows polarized decision-making, relies on AI recommendations, and focuses on performance parameters. Those over 35 are the most cautious in decision-making, rely on fuel consumption calculation tools, and pay close attention to prices.



Auxiliary Car - buying Tools

What kinds of tools do you expect the car - buying platform to provide for assisting in car - buying?



Key Information for Car Purchase

Which aspects of a vehicle model do you mainly want to understand when purchasing a car?



Range, etc.)



The 18-24 age group is most proactive in test drives and tends to purchase vehicles outright or with moderate down payments (10-30%). Those over 25 highly rely on installment loans and generally require ultra-low down payments (<10%).

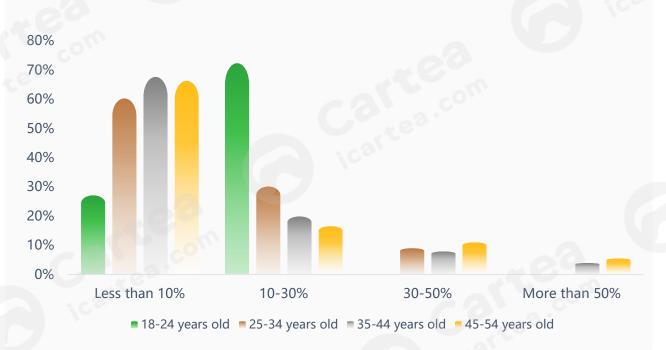


Payment Method Preference

Which payment method do you prefer for purchasing a car?

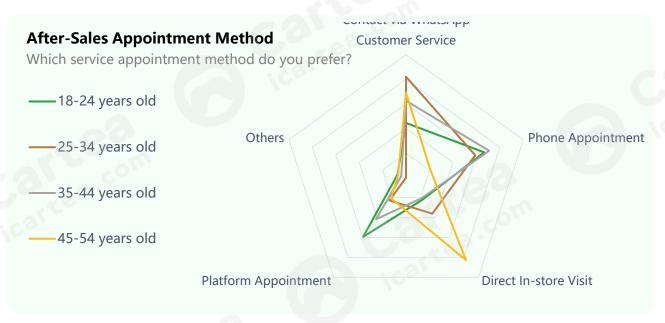


What down payment ratio do you prefer when purchasing by installment?





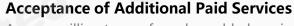
The 18-24 age group prefers platform appointments, accepts long waiting times, and has a high willingness to pay for additional services. The 25-34 age group favors communication via WhatsApp, with nearly half deciding on value-added payments based on the situation. Those over 35 (especially 45-54 years old) insist on visiting stores directly and are cautious about paying for value-added services



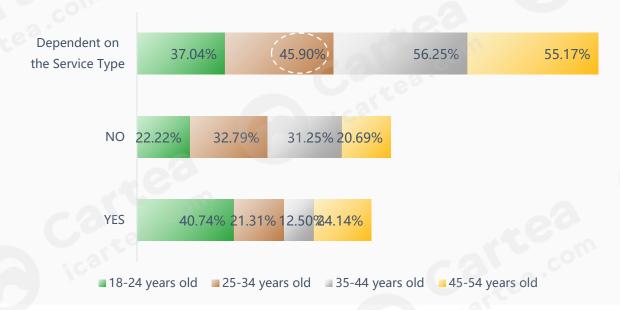
Maintenance Waiting Time

What is the maximum waiting time you can accept for routine maintenance?





Are you willing to pay for value-added services when purchasing a car?





Regional Performance

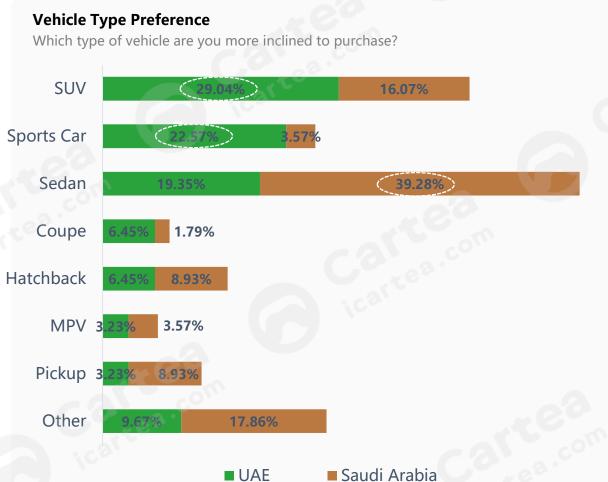
Trend Insights by Demographic





The UAE has a high demand for more car purchases, with SUVs and sports cars being the most popular models. Sedans are the most popular first-time purchases in Saudi Arabia.

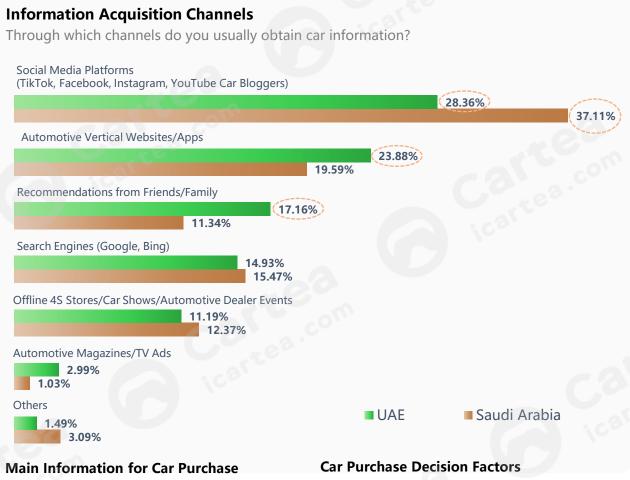






UAE consumers are price-conscious, They use a variety of channels (social media, search, and vertical media), and make decisions more quickly. When making decisions, Saudi users are more careful and heavily rely on social media, and give safety and post-purchase support top priority.





Which aspects of the vehicle model do you mainly want to know about when purchasing a car?

Price and Discount



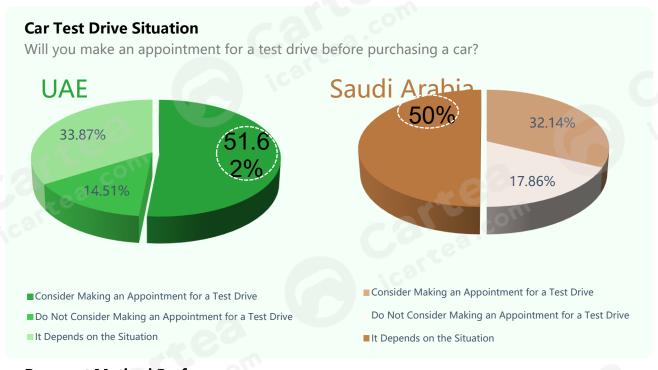
Which factors have the greatest impact on your decision-making when purchasing a car?





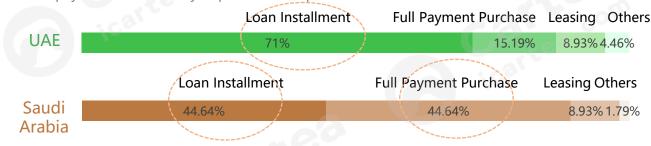
UAE: Loan installments with distributed down payment ratios dominate the test-drive enthusiasm. Clear prices are the main post-purchase issues, and phone appointments are preferred.

KSA: Extremely low down payment ratios, balanced loan installments and full payments, and cautious test-drive choices. The biggest after-sales issue is parts shortages, which prioritize platform and WhatsApp appointments.

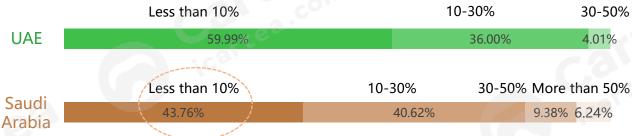


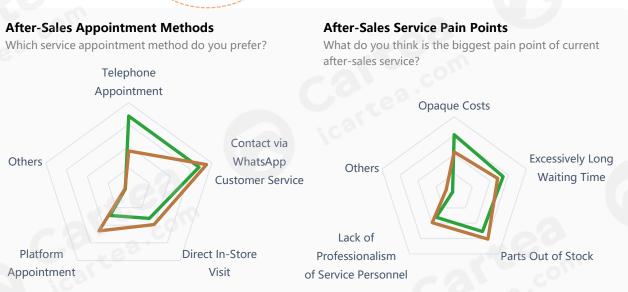
Payment Method Preference

Which payment method do you prefer for car purchase?



What down payment ratio do you prefer for installment car purchases?





UAE

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia

•UAE

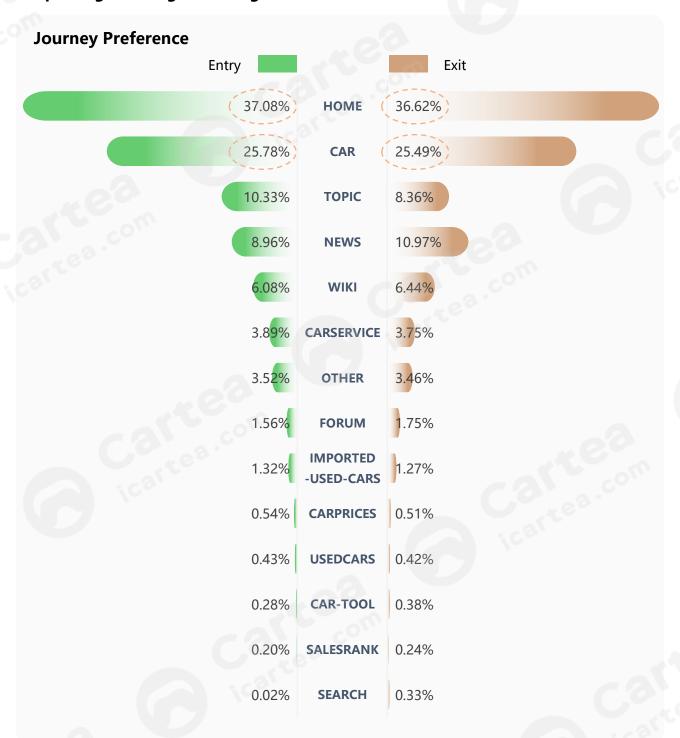


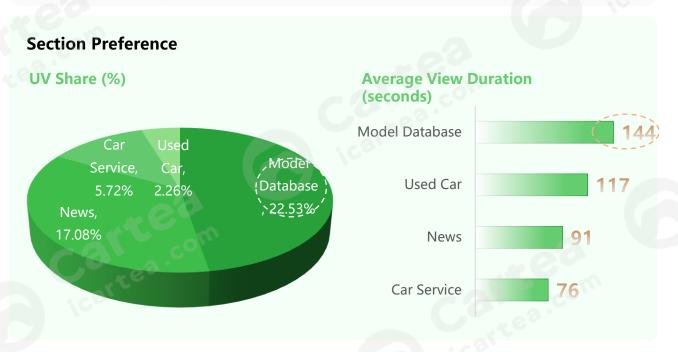
Car Media Performance





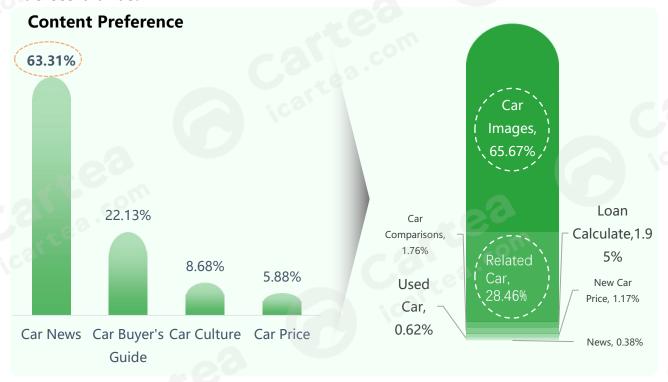
The homepage and model pages make up the majority of the user journey on car media platforms, the model database is the most traffic(Cookies) and capturing the longest average view duration.





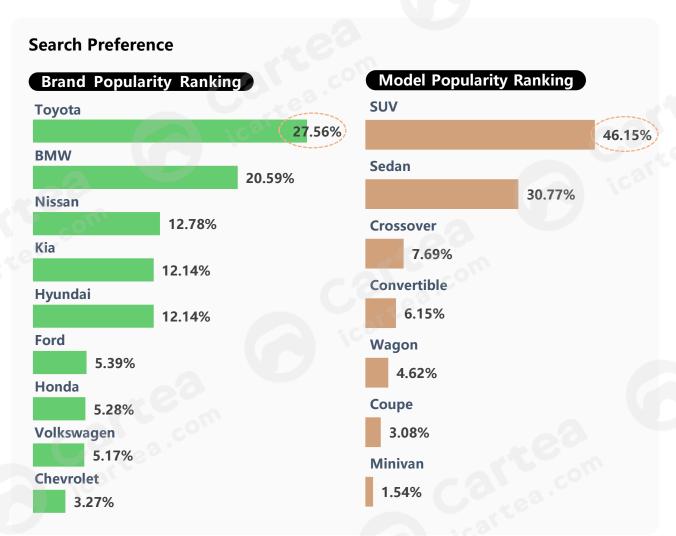


With a preference for English-language articles, users' actual demand is focused on automotive news content, specifically vehicle specifications. There is a high concentration of search activity: Toyota has a huge advantage, while SUVs make up almost half of all model-related traffic across brands.



Language Preference







Part.3 Chinese Car Brand

- User Profile
- Purchase Drivers
- Purchase Journey
- After-Sales Service
- ImprovementRecommendations

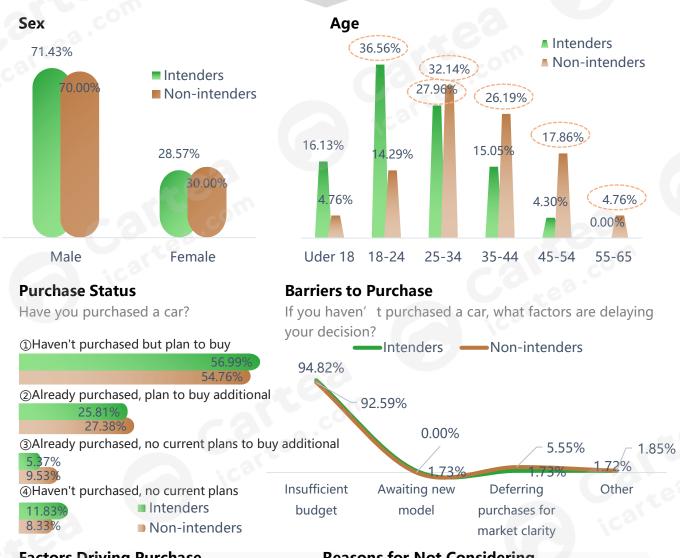


More than 50% of users are accepting of Chinese cars:

The younger demographic trend of those who would buy Chinese cars is mainly between the ages of 18 and 34, and they are looking to costperformance ratios and smart technology as a major benefit.

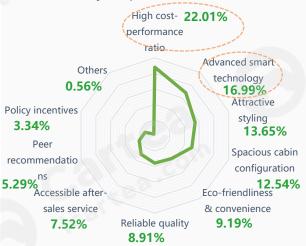
Most people over 25 say that local after-sales security, brand trust, and quality dependability are the main reasons they wouldn't buy Chinese cars.



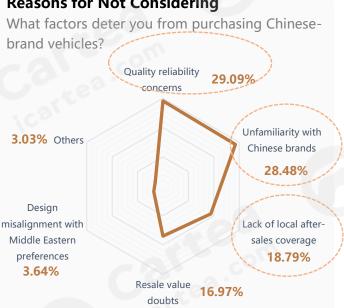


Factors Driving Purchase

What features of Chinese automotive brands would drive your purchase decision?

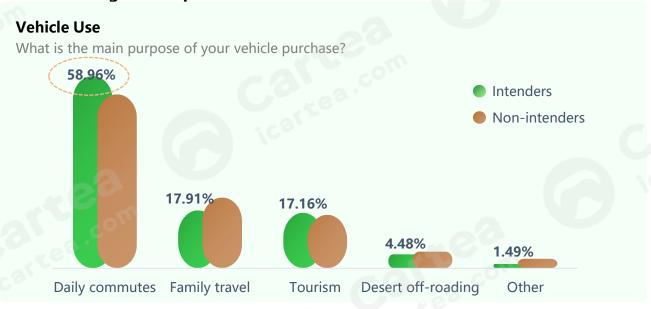


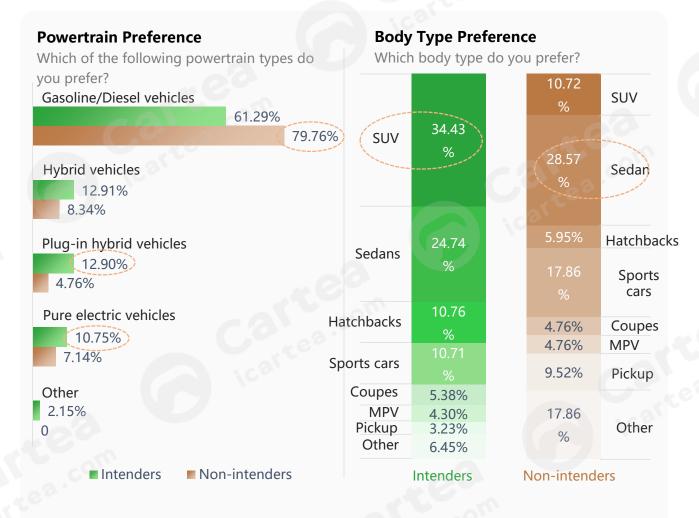
Reasons for Not Considering





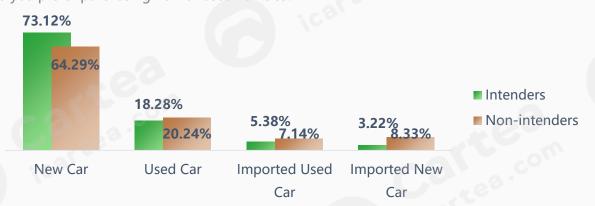
A great percentage of those who would buy Chinese cars use them for daily commuting, and SUVs and NEVs are clearly preferred. Those who would not buy show somewhat greater needs for family vacations and strongly prefer sedans and gasoline-powered cars.





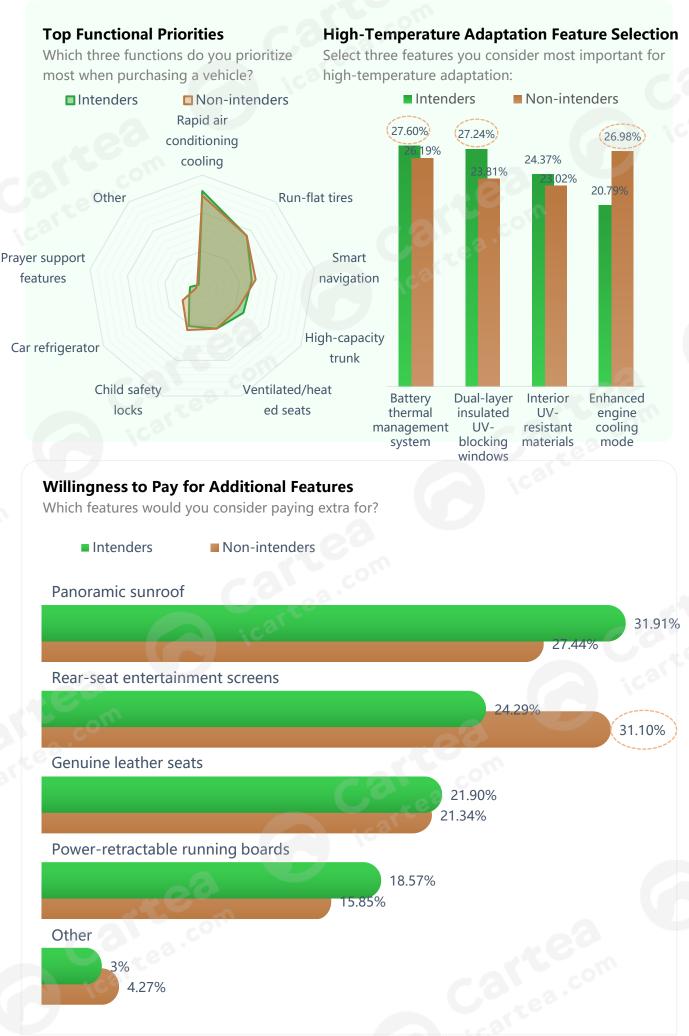
Purchase Type Preference

Do you prefer purchasing new or used vehicles?





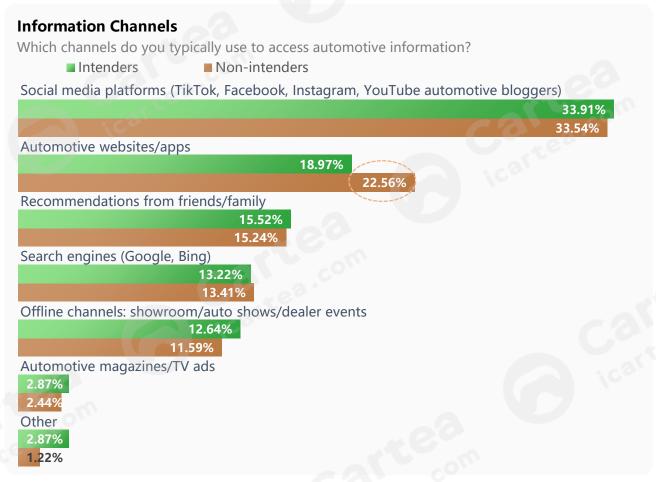
Dual-layer insulated windows for high temperature adaptation and battery thermal management are given top priority by those who would buy Chinese automobiles. Engine cooling systems and rear seat entertainment screens are more popular among those who would not buy, but there is little variance in the two groups' core functional priorities when choosing a car.





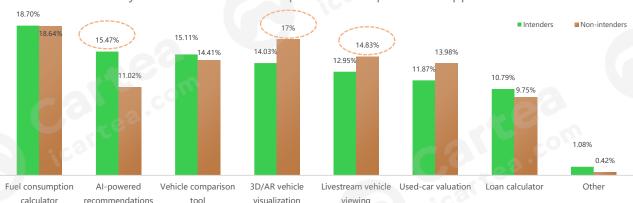
People who would buy Chinese cars prefer tools like AI-powered recommendations and focus their decisions within three months. Those who would not buy make more deliberate choices and rely more on cars media, preferring live-streaming and 3D/AR visualization.





Car-Buying Assistance Tools

Which tools would you want on automotive platforms for purchase support?



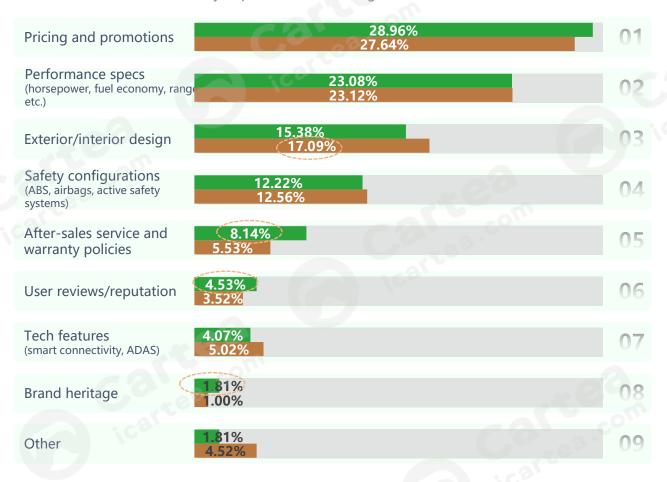
Data Source: Cartea Automotive Research Institute User Survey



Those who would purchase Chinese cars prioritize after-sales security, user reviews, and brand background during purchase decisions. Those who wouldn't purchase place greater emphasis on exterior/interior styling, fuel economy, feature sets, and safety credentials.

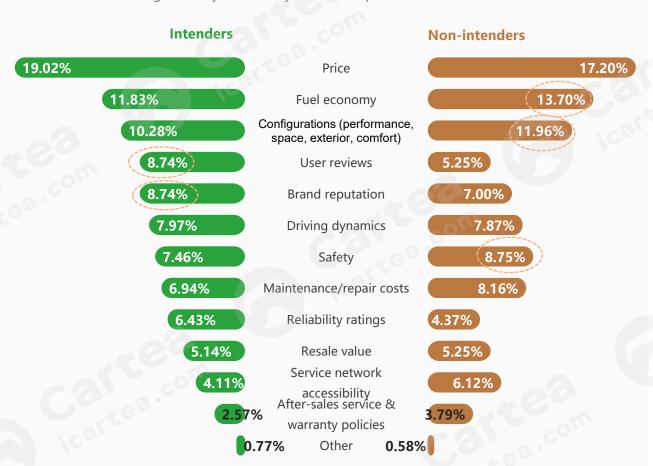
Key Information Sought During Vehicle Purchase

What vehicle information do you prioritize researching?



Key Purchase Decision Factors

Which factors most significantly influence your vehicle purchase decision?

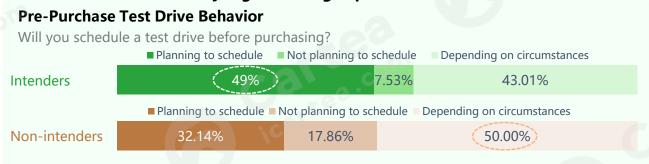


Purchase Journey

Chinese Car Brand



Those who would purchase Chinese cars exhibit stronger test drive initiative and prefer flexible payment schemes (leasing/moderate down payments). Those who wouldn't purchase demonstrate more cautious test drive decisions with a relatively higher outright purchase rate.

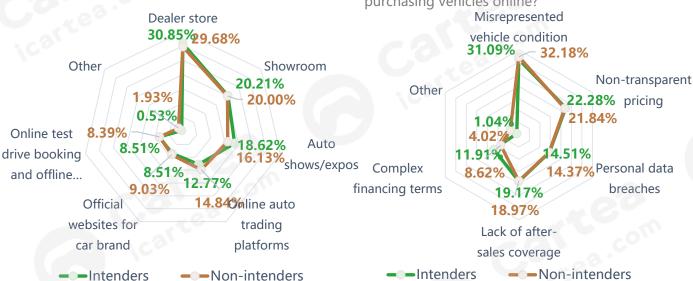


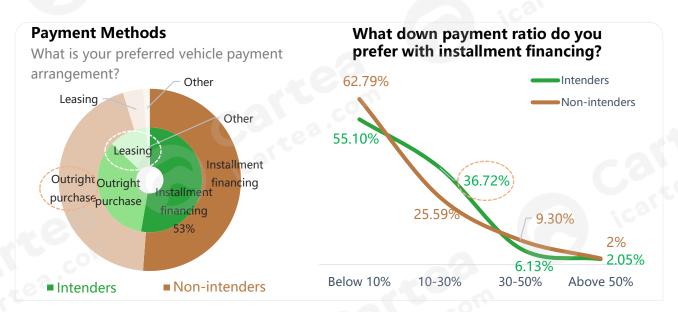
Purchase Channels

How do you plan to purchase your vehicle?

Online Car-Buying Risks

What do you consider the biggest risk when purchasing vehicles online?

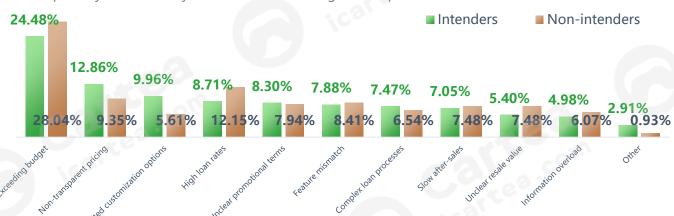




Major Purchase Issues

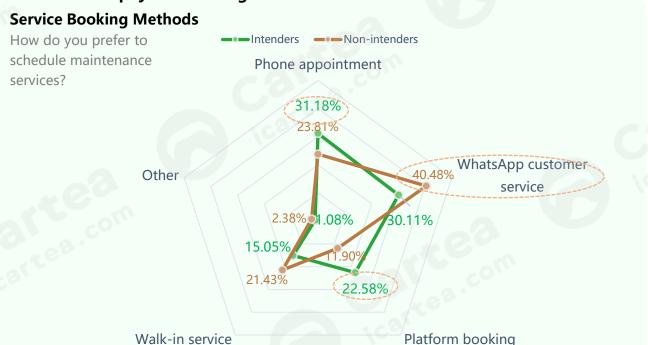
What primary issues have you encountered during vehicle purchase?

Data Source: Cartea Automotive Research Institute User Survey



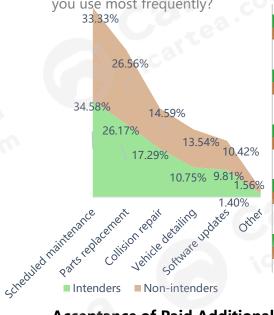


Those who would purchase Chinese cars prefer self-initiated booking (phone/app) and show higher willingness to pay for add-ons. Those who wouldn't purchase favor WhatsApp-based appointments and demonstrate lower add-on payment willingness.



Frequently Used After-**Sales Services**

Which after-sales service do you use most frequently?



Top After-Sales Pain Points Maintenance Wait Times

What is your biggest concern with What is your maximum acceptable current after-sales services? wait time for routine maintenance?



Acceptance of Paid Additional Services

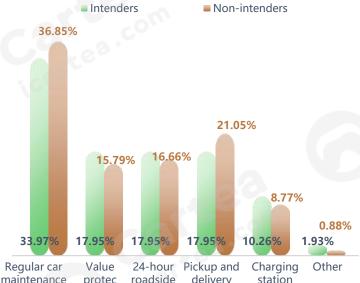
Are you willing to pay for value-added services when purchasing a car?



type of service

Value-added services you are willing to pay for

Which value-added services would you pay for?



protec tion

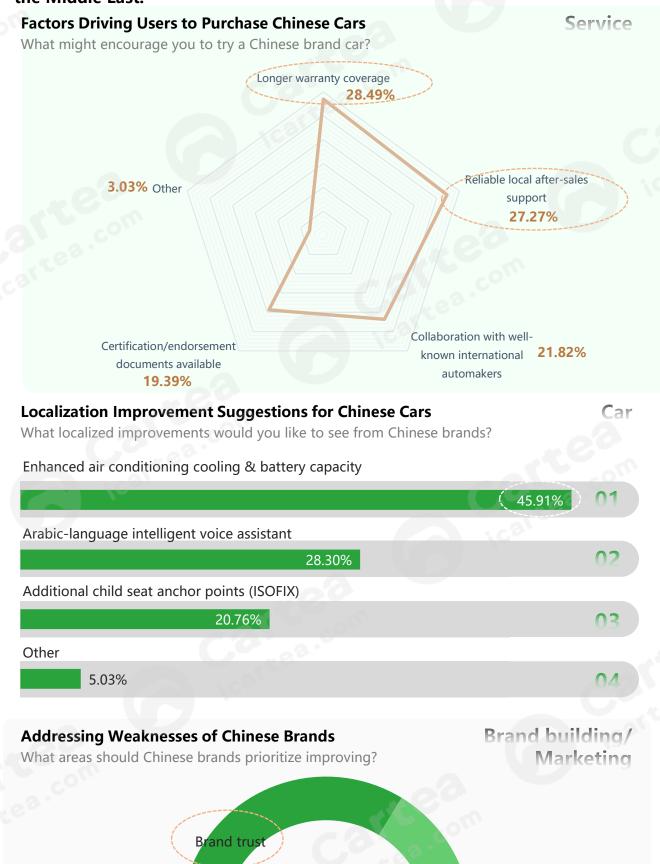
delivery assistance service

station installation

packages ata Source: Cartea Automotive Research Institute User Survey



Providing long-term warranties, stable local after-sales service, enhanced vehicle features (such as air conditioning cooling/battery capacity), and strengthening brand trust are key to upgrading the image of Chinese cars in the Middle East.



After-sales service network coverage

Other

Religious & cultural adaptation

Marketing presence

Summary



Middle East Automotive Market-Overall Trend Insights



Young men make up the majority of Middle Eastern automobile users. Their main reason for buying a car is to get to work every day, and they prefer new cars, sedans, SUVs, and gasoline-powered vehicles. However, the market for new energy vehicles has developed. Just 40% of consumers actively request test drives during the car-buying process. Price sensitivity is high, and notable trends include worries about overspending, reliance on loans or installments, low down payments, and problems with online channels' credibility. The most popular offline channels for purchases are still authorized stores and showrooms. The primary need for after-sales service is maintenance. Long wait times and shortages of parts are major problems. Nearly half of users think about service types before making a decision, and nearly 80% of users accept paid value-added services.

Middle East Market Segmentation-Trend Insights by Demographic



Gender Perfor mance High price sensitivity, a strong reliance on social media, and a high level of acceptance of next-day vehicle pickup are characteristics shared by both male and female car users; There are important core differences: Efficiency is a top priority for men, as evidenced by their quicker decision-making, preference for installment financing and extremely low down payments, proficient use of specialized vertical media and artificial intelligence tools, preference for phone appointments and maintenance packages after the sale, and tolerance for longer service wait times; Women place a greater emphasis on safety and service features, such as their preference for live-streaming and social media, their preference for flexible payment options (high leasing ratio + arranged down payments), their requirement for a one-hour response time after sales, their appreciation for 24-hour rescue services, and their reliance on WhatsApp appointments.

Age Perfor mance The Middle East The 18–24 age group: mostly carless, favors sports cars and leisure activities, makes snap decisions, and relies heavily on visualization tools; 25–34 age group: Performance and tech-assist tools are prioritized, and decisions exhibit division (some people buy very quickly, while others are unsure for a long time); The 35–54 age group has a much higher car ownership ratio, prioritizes sedan models and family needs, and makes cautious decisions that emphasize affordable, useful options. Something that all ages have in common: Troubles with after-sales parts supply and mainstream sedan preference.

Region al Perfor mance Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates: a significant percentage of first-time purchasers, social media as the primary channel, high price sensitivity, and regular WhatsApp after-sales appointments; UAE users: active test drive scheduling, financing preference, excellent phone appointment acceptance, strong additional-purchase intent, preference for SUVs and sports cars, quick decisions, reliance on multi-channel information, and a major emphasis on promotions and quotation transparency; First-time Saudi buyers: Higher demand for purchases, cautious choices, emphasis on social media validation and practical issues (fuel economy, safety, and after-sales), conflicting attitudes during test drives, down payments that are kept to less than 10%, acceptance of online after-sales bookings, and parts supply as the main source of discomfort.



The main actions of users on cars media platforms: heavily focused on the model pages and homepage, the model database is the main source of traffic (cookies) and the page with the longest view time; substantial demand for news about cars, particularly in English; User searches show a high level of attention about features—SUVs and Japanese models dominate by far.

Chinese Car Brand-Specialized Research



Purchase intent in the Middle East shows an obvious age divide, with younger groups (particularly those aged 18 to 34) displaying stronger preference, making quick decisions in favor of NEVs and flexible payments, while older groups show lower purchase intent, making cautious decisions, insisting on gasoline-powered vehicles, and making outright purchases. Middle Eastern market acceptance of Chinese vehicles has surpassed 50%. The advantages of Chinese cars are their smart technology and high cost-performance ratios, but they also have three major problems: poor after-sales coverage, low brand trust, and poor local adaptation. Of these, improving A/C output and battery capacity for extreme heat is the most important localization requirement. Future enhancements must prioritize building brand trust, expanding the after-sales network, and optimizing digital experiences for younger users.

Cartea Automotive Research Institute Expert Alliance



Project Team

Dean/Chief Analyst: Jane

Industry Analyst: Felixchyi

Planning Department: Quincy Chue, Zoe

Steering Committee

Cartea Product Manager: Mohamed Awny

Cartea Commercial Manager: Peter Pan

Cartea Strategy Manager: Shokil Ahmed

Support Team

Marketing Center: Henry Qin

Visual Center: Jin Wing



Contact Us

Email: bd@icartea.com

WhatsApp: +971 52 760 5266

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