

2021 insights into car ownership and preferences across the African continent

Market research and data analytics firm Sagaci Research has released its 2021 insights into car ownership and preferences across the African continent. These results, based on daily data collection from more than 20,000 consumers over 12 months via the SagaPoll mobile app, reveal that Toyota poses as real competition to its German rivals in certain parts of the continent, as well as highlighting interesting differences between demographic groups.



Source: [Unsplash](#)

Within South Africa, BMW topped the rankings for preferred automotive brands, although its long-term rival Mercedes-Benz scored only a fraction behind in second place, and Toyota followed in third.

Côte d'Ivoire produced a similar leaderboard, however, across the continent, preferences amongst car-owners were much more varied.

In Kenya, Toyota was well ahead of the competition scoring 72% for preference. Subaru followed 12 percentage points behind in second place with Mercedes-Benz number three, Honda in fourth and BMW fifth.

Similarly, in Nigeria consumer preferences were clear as Toyota first place ranked 14 percentage points ahead of Mercedes-Benz in second place and BMW at sixth place.

The results arrive from the SagaBrand tracking tool, in conjunction with data from SagaCube which measures penetration and purchase habits across a wide range of products, including cars.

Across Africa, in the South, East and West, Toyota was one of the most popular choices in terms of respondents who were aware of and had ever purchased the brand. In South Africa, Volkswagen ranked a number one, followed by Toyota, Ford, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Hyundai and Audi. In addition to Toyota and Mercedes which were popular across the continent, Peugeot ranked highly within Western African nations, whereas Subaru and Nissan were popular in the East.

Car ownership

In terms of car ownership, Algeria's population has the highest proportion of households owning a car at 43%, followed by the Southern nations of South Africa (37%), Zimbabwe (33%) and Namibia (30%). In South Africa, gender and social class also have a significant influence - ownership was 10 percentage points higher for males than females and ownership amongst the highest-earning individuals (60%) was three times as much as for those at the bottom of the pyramid (19%).

"Interestingly, in certain countries car ownership amongst the lower-income groups was well above the continent's average of 17% - in Guinea, 26% within SEC DE reported owning a car - likely due to the country's fewer vehicle regulations," commented Julien Garcier, managing director of Sagaci Research.

These results help to provide an insight into some of the cultural norms, and perhaps, inequalities that exist within certain countries for women and the lower classes. Lack of access to their own car could restrict opportunities for work or access to health care, forcing reliance on public transport - often limited and unreliable - or friends or family, or even creating the need to walk rather than drive.

"Many people have expressed that owning a car would help them to better manage some of the uncertainty that comes with reliance on third parties as well as a belief that they will save money by having a car," Garcier continued.

While in Europe, ownership of cars is slightly declining in favour of shared ownership or rental, car ownership still has a long way to go across the African continent and remains a distant dream for many. Some brands have figured this out and seem to be surfing the wave, but this changes rapidly.

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