

I Dream Of Greenie: Is A Hybrid Car War Near?

Contributed by Synovate
Friday, 17 July 2009
Last Updated Friday, 17 July 2009

Synovate Motoresearch paints optimistic picture for hybrid car market

Synovate and Honda give take on local implications

Other findings from survey

Close to 40% of urban Malaysians have admitted if money was no object they would buy an environmentally friendly car over their dream car, according to a recent survey by Synovate Motoresearch.

The survey also revealed 16% of urban Malaysians said their dream car is a 'green' car.

The results will be good news for Honda and Toyota which are currently locked in a fierce battle for the hybrid car market globally.

Locally, the Honda Insight made its debut in January while Toyota is expected to launch its Prius hybrid model next month.

In Japan, the Honda Insight topped the charts in April for vehicle sales.

The following month, Toyota launched an updated version of the Prius along with a new \$58 million advertising campaign.

"Environmental consciousness is certainly on the minds of many urban Malaysian consumers but it has yet to make an impact on their purchase behaviour and the 'green' car market in Malaysia has a long way to go," Synovate Motoresearch Malaysia's Ajay Bangia said.

Honda Malaysia marketing manager, Akhbar Danial agreed and said that the company was taking steps to lure buyers by working closely with the government which last year announced 100% import duty exemption and 50% off excise duty.

The tax exemptions should help companies like Honda and Toyota lower the price of hybrid car models in Malaysia however Bangia warns that customers will not exactly be buying the cars in droves because of this and there is still a lack of awareness and confidence in the technology.

"There are still people who still think that hybrid cars are like space ships," Honda's Danial said.

The Synovate findings were part of a bigger survey featuring more than 13,500 people across 18 markets about vehicle ownership, intentions to buy in the next year and attitudes towards cars, traffic, public transport and 'green' versus 'dream' cars.

Other local results showed 56% of urban Malaysians living in the Klang Valley Penang, Johor Bahru and Ipoh plan to use their existing cars or motorcycles this year without buying a new replacement.

Malaysia - July 2009