



Consumer Insights Into Fuel Prices

February 2006

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You don't need to own a car to be worried about escalating fuel prices:

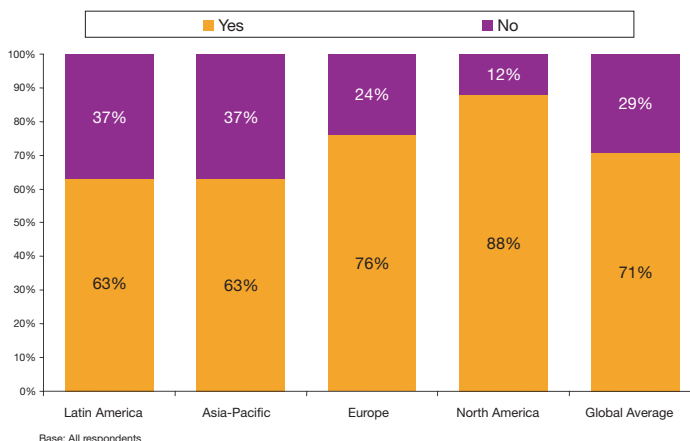
ACNielsen Global Survey

- Consumers worldwide are worried about the impact of increasing fuel prices;
- The most common ways of coping with price rises are: using one's vehicle less, combining trips and cutting down on non-essential living expenses.

Percentage of having a vehicle for which fuel must be bought



Do you have a vehicle for which you must buy fuel?



You don't need to own a car to be affected by fuel prices

While 70 percent of Internet-users worldwide claim to have a vehicle for which they must buy fuel, an even greater number are concerned about the impact of ever-rising fuel prices. As many as 82 percent of consumers on the world's five continents claim to be feeling the hit to their wallets in a recent online survey by ACNielsen, the world's leading market research and information company. The survey, conducted in November 2005, polled over 23,500 respondents – regular Internet users – in 42 markets.

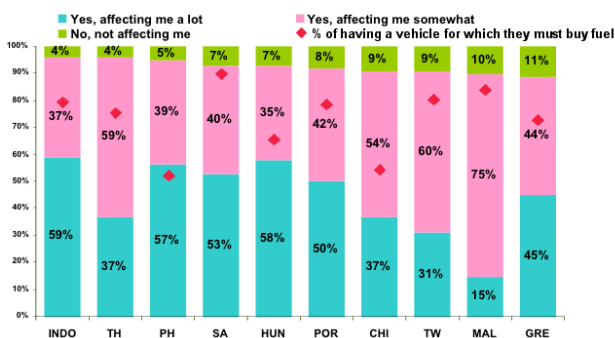
Car owners aren't the only ones concerned over growing fuel prices. Consumers evidently realise that, whether they own a car or not, fuel prices affect the economy and cost of living in general. Among the ten countries whose consumers were most concerned about high fuel prices, a number of them claimed not very high car ownership, for example, in the Philippines, Hungary and Chile.

In Asia Pacific, 83 percent acknowledge their dependence on fuel prices, while only 63 percent claim to own a car. Concerns are high even in more well-off countries such as Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Thailand.

It is doubtless, however, that the impact of escalating fuel prices is being acutely felt in the countries with the highest number of vehicles in private possession. In the US, Canada, Belgium, France, Malaysia and South Africa, high levels of concern over price increases corresponded with vehicle ownership (up to 90%).

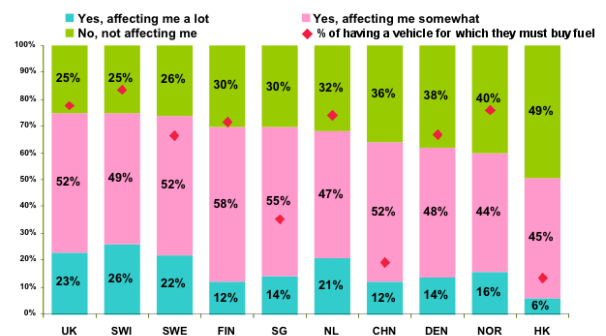
Only in a small number of countries, namely, Denmark, Norway, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand and UAE, did the percentage of those having a vehicle exceed the percentage anxious about the cost of fuel (by +10%).

Are the increases in the prices of fuel affecting you in any way? Top 10 affected.



Base: All respondents

Are the increases in the prices of fuel affecting you in any way? Bottom 10 affected.



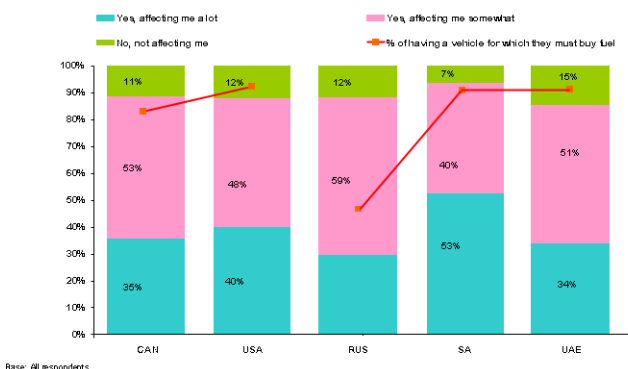
ase: All respondents

The five most anxious nations hail from Asia Pacific

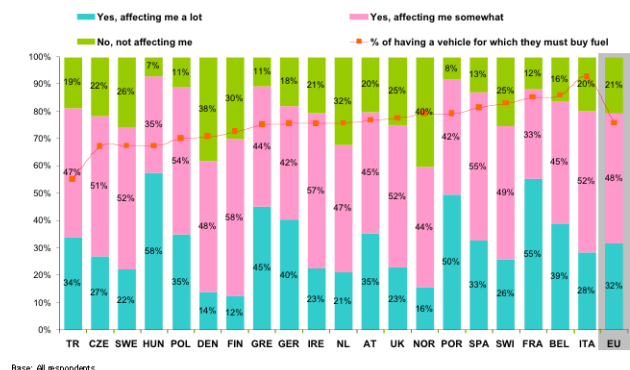
Five of the ten countries whose consumers are most worried over high fuel prices hail from Asia-Pacific. Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines top the list with 95 percent concerned, while Taiwan and Malaysia come close with 90 percent. Indonesia and the Philippines also lead the world with the greatest percentage of consumers extremely affected by fuel prices (59% and 57%, respectively), accompanied globally by Hungary (58%) and South Africa (53%).

Of all regions, Europe has the lowest number of Internet users who are feeling the affect of fuel prices – 80 percent versus, for example, a 89 percent average in North America, and 83 percent in Asia-Pacific. However, it is really only the Scandinavian countries that seem less concerned. Norway, Denmark, Finland and Sweden rank among the Top 10 least worried over fuel prices worldwide. In the rest of Europe, it is only in the Netherlands where less than three quarters of respondents are concerned. In Hungary, Poland, Portugal and Greece, nearly all are concerned about fuel prices to some extent.

Americas and Others: Are the increases in the prices of fuel affecting you in any way?



Europe: Are the increases in the prices of fuel affecting you in any way?



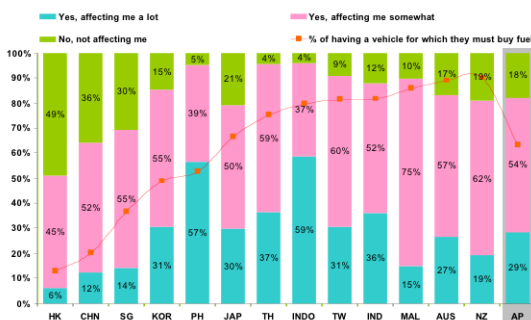
Drive less – spend less

Higher fuel prices are changing people’s driving habits worldwide. The most obvious response to price hikes is simply driving less (44%) and trying to combine trips (40%), which rank as the highest ‘coping mechanisms’ in all regions except Latin America. In Latin America, 63 percent of respondents on average say they have a vehicle, but 85 percent are feeling the impact of price rises, the majority coping with it by cutting down on non-essential living expenses.

In some countries where distances are greater in the cities and public transport functions well, people are switching to public transport more often, like in Argentina (36%), Brazil (32%), China (47%), Hong Kong (48%), South Korea (53%), Taiwan (43%), Thailand (43%) and Turkey (40%).

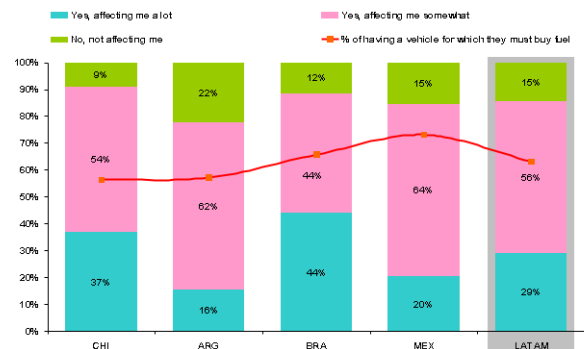
Malaysians (28%), Indians (24%), Thais (23%), Filipinos (21%), South Africans (23%), Mexicans (26%), Brazilians (17%), and people living in the UAE (19%) are opting to use their cars when there is less traffic on the roads.

Asia Pacific: Are the increases in the prices of fuel affecting you in any way?



Base: All respondents

Latin America: Are the increases in the prices of fuel affecting you in any way?



Base: All respondents

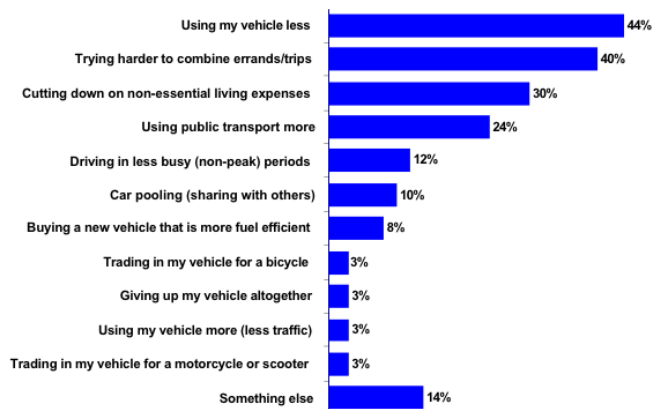
Thais (23%), Malaysians (17%), Finns (19%), Russians (15%), Czechs and Poles (14%) are in agreement about the benefits of car pooling and sharing their trips with friends or relatives. But this way of economising doesn't appear to be particularly popular globally (10%).

An opportunity exists for global car marketers in Turkey, China and South Africa where up to one fifth of consumers are eager to consider trading their vehicle for a more fuel efficient one, and in Taiwan where 17 percent of respondents are looking at a motorcycle or scooter as an alternative. With the global

hike in oil prices year after year, we can expect consumer demand to further develop in this direction. At the same time, 14 percent of the Chinese and 11 percent of Finns and Hungarians are ready to switch to a bicycle.

Only three percent of respondents globally would agree to give up using their vehicle altogether, with the highest number of volunteers (13%) having already done so in Brazil.

What impact, if any, have higher fuel prices had on your household's driving habits? Global average.



Base: Those of who own a vehicle for which they must buy fuel

About the Survey

The ACNielsen Online Consumer Confidence Survey, the largest twice-yearly global survey of its kind, is aimed to gauge consumers' current confidence levels, spending habits/intentions and current major concerns. The most recent wave of the survey took place in November 2005 and polled over 23,500 consumers – regular Internet users – in 42 markets in Europe, North and Latin America, Asia-Pacific region, Africa (Republic of South Africa) and the Middle East (UAE).

About ACNielsen

ACNielsen, a VNU business, is the world's leading marketing information provider. Offering services in more than 100 countries, the unit provides measurement and analysis of marketplace dynamics and consumer attitudes and behaviour. Clients rely on ACNielsen's market research, proprietary products, analytical tools and professional service to understand competitive performance, to uncover new opportunities and to raise the profitability of their marketing and sales campaigns. To learn more, visit www.acnielsen.com

The 42 markets in the Online Consumer Confidence Survey:

Asia Pacific:

Australia
China
Hong Kong
India
Indonesia
Japan
South Korea
Malaysia
New Zealand
Philippines
Singapore
Taiwan
Thailand

Europe:

Austria
Belgium
Denmark
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Ireland
Italy
Netherlands
Norway
Portugal
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey
UK

Latin America:

Argentina
Brazil
Chile
Mexico

North America:

USA
Canada

Emerging Markets:

Poland
Russia
South Africa
Hungary
United Arab Emirates
Czech Republic

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