

# Younger South Africans buy fewer cars than before

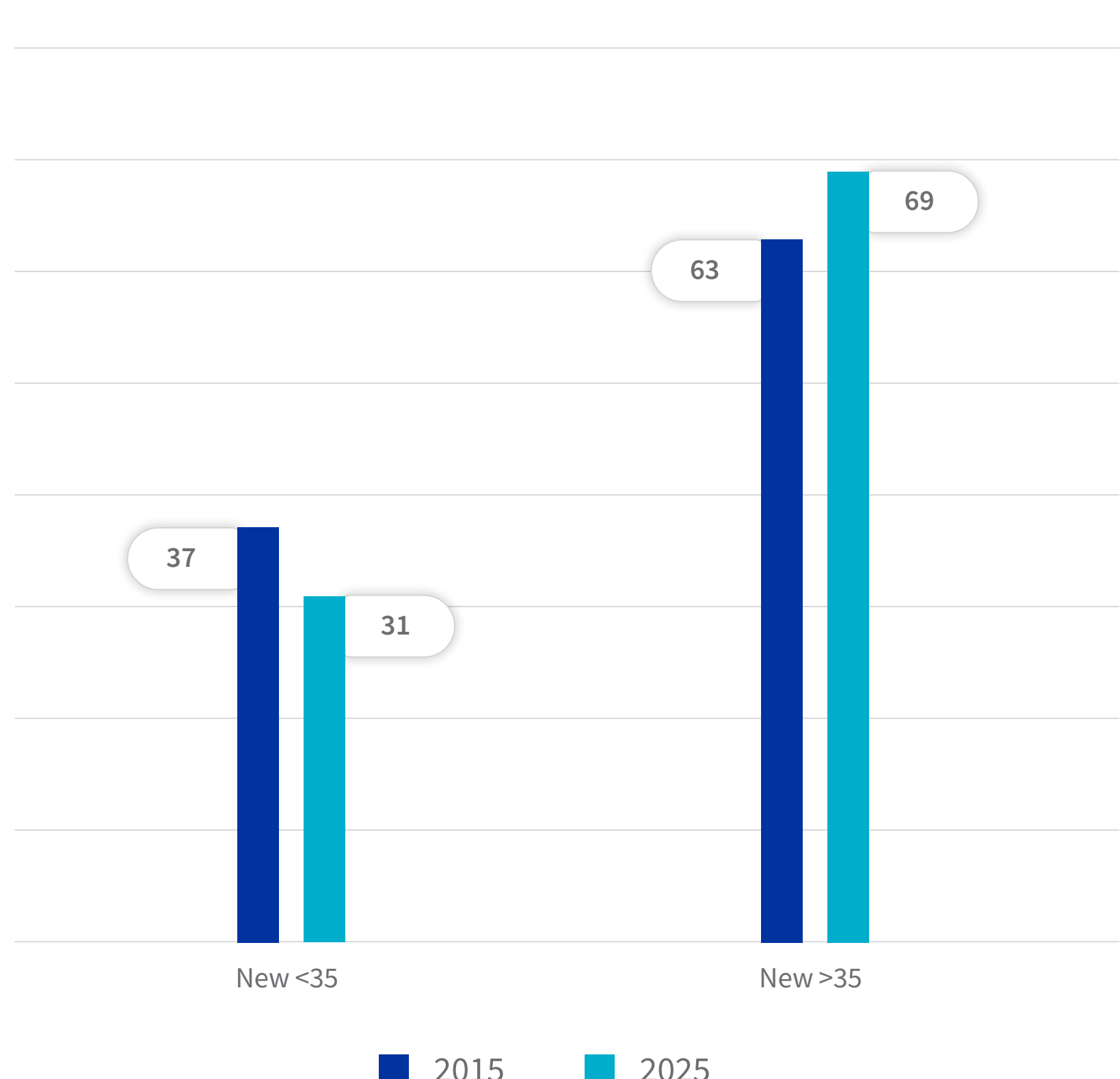
...and Chinese brands are increasingly popular

Buyers under-35 of new and used cars in South Africa have dropped over the last ten years, relative to those over-35, as stagnant personal income, high levels of youth unemployment, and rising living costs have squeezed disposable income. Increased fuel, insurance, and maintenance costs coupled with reasonably extensive public transport and ride hailing options have further dampened demand.

The under-35 share of new vehicle purchases has dropped from 37% in 2015 to 31% a decade later (graph on the left below) while the under-35 share of used vehicle purchases fell from 45% to 37% (graph on the right).

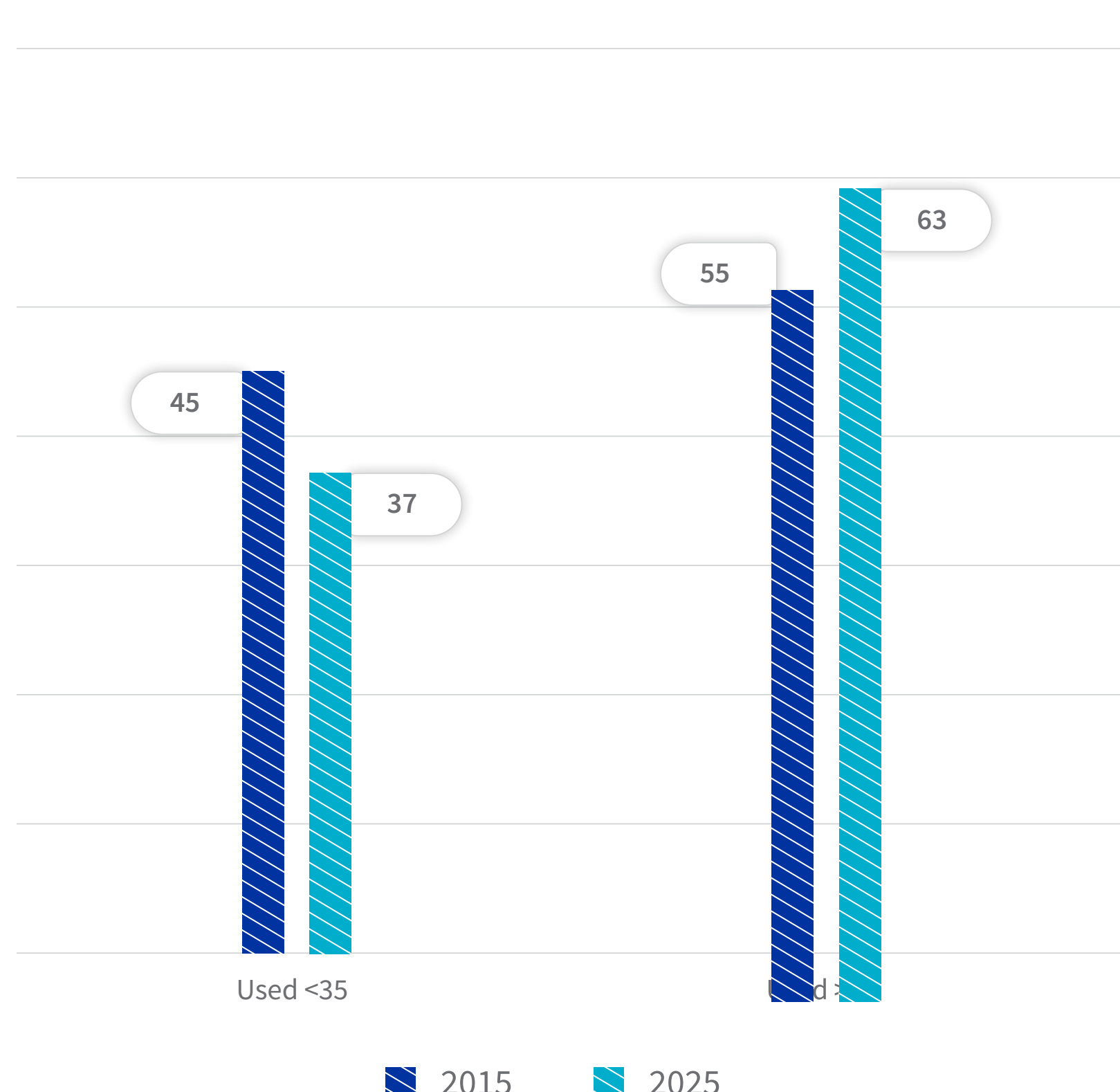
## Sales per age bands: 2015-2025

### NEW VEHICLE SALES



Source: Lightstone Auto, June 2026

### USED VEHICLE SALES



Source: Lightstone Auto, June 2026

The under 25 age-group had the largest proportion of used-to-new purchases, perhaps because this group has the least disposable income and looks for the most budget-friendly car option.

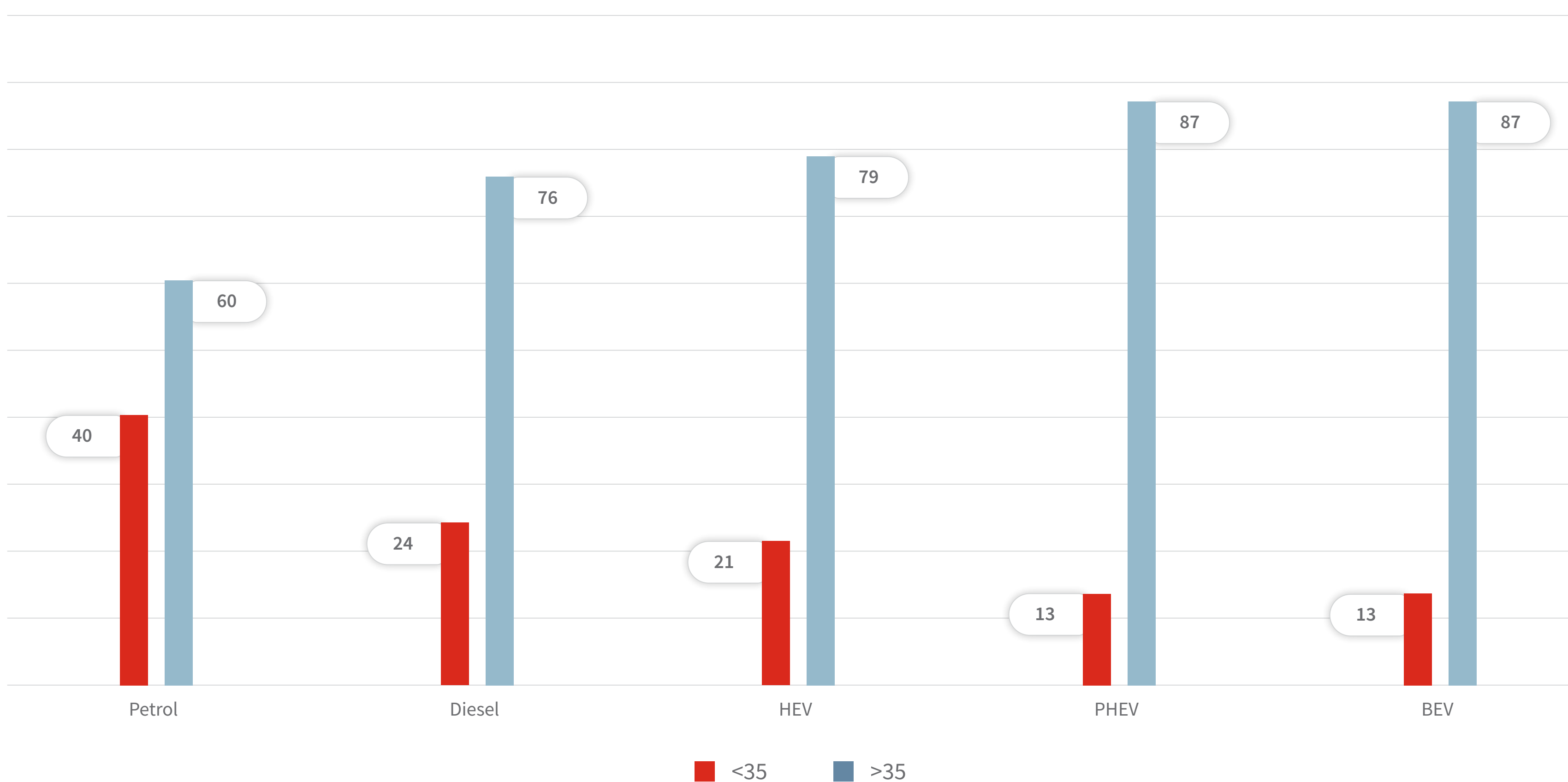
New Light vehicle sales peaked in 2015 following five years of strong growth. By 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, the Used vehicle market had gained share as New vehicle sales contracted across all age bands. New vehicle sales have since recovered and 2025 was the strongest year since 2015 (see table below).

		Breakdown by age-band within field		Breakdown by field within age-band	
		NEW	USED	NEW	USED
<b>2015</b>	<25	6%	9%	28%	72%
	26-30	15%	18%	32%	68%
	31-35	16%	18%	33%	67%
	>35	63%	55%	38%	62%
<b>2020</b>	<25	4%	7%	18%	82%
	26-30	13%	17%	22%	78%
	31-35	15%	18%	23%	77%
	>35	68%	59%	29%	71%
<b>2025</b>	<25	4%	6%	22%	78%
	26-30	12%	14%	27%	73%
	31-35	15%	17%	28%	72%
	>35	69%	63%	33%	67%

Petrol-ICE-powered vehicles still dominate across all age-bands, especially among under-35s, where they accounted for around 80% of all vehicle sales in 2025. Diesel-ICE vehicles made up a little under 20% of vehicle purchases by under-35s, while Traditional Hybrid (HEV), Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV) and Battery Electric (BEV) vehicles combined made up around 1%.

40% of all Petrol-ICE vehicle sales in 2025 were made by under-35s, however this share was smaller for the other fuel-types, with 24% of all diesel-ICE vehicles, 21% of HEVs, 14% of PHEVs and just 13% of BEVs being purchased by under-35s last year.

## Over 35 years versus under 35 years: percentage vehicle purchases per energy type in 2025



Source: Lightstone Auto, June 2026

While the adoption of New Energy Vehicles remained relatively low across all age groups (looking across the entire Light vehicle market), this will change over time as more of these vehicles become available in the New and Used markets.

		Breakdown by age-band within field					Breakdown by field within age-band				
		PETROL	DIESEL	HEV	PHEV	BEV	PETROL	DIESEL	HEV	PHEV	BEV
<b>2015</b>	<25	10%	4%	5%	0%	0%	85%	15%	0%	0%	0%
	26-30	19%	11%	14%	0%	0%	81%	19%	0%	0%	0%
	31-35	17%	15%	15%	20%	25%	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
	>35	54%	69%	67%	80%	75%	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%
<b>2020</b>	<25	7%	3%	2%	4%	0%	82%	18%	0%	0%	0%
	26-30	18%	10%	8%	4%	10%	79%	21%	0%	0%	0%
	31-35	18%	15%	18%	19%	10%	72%	28%	0%	0%	0%
	>35	57%	71%	73%	74%	80%	63%	37%	0%	0%	0%
<b>2025</b>	<25	7%	3%	2%	1%	1%	83%	16%	0%	0%	0%
	26-30	16%	8%	6%	5%	1%	83%	16%	1%	0%	0%
	31-35	18%	13%	13%	8%	11%	76%	23%	1%	0%	0%
	>35	60%	76%	79%	87%	87%	65%	33%	2%	0%	0%

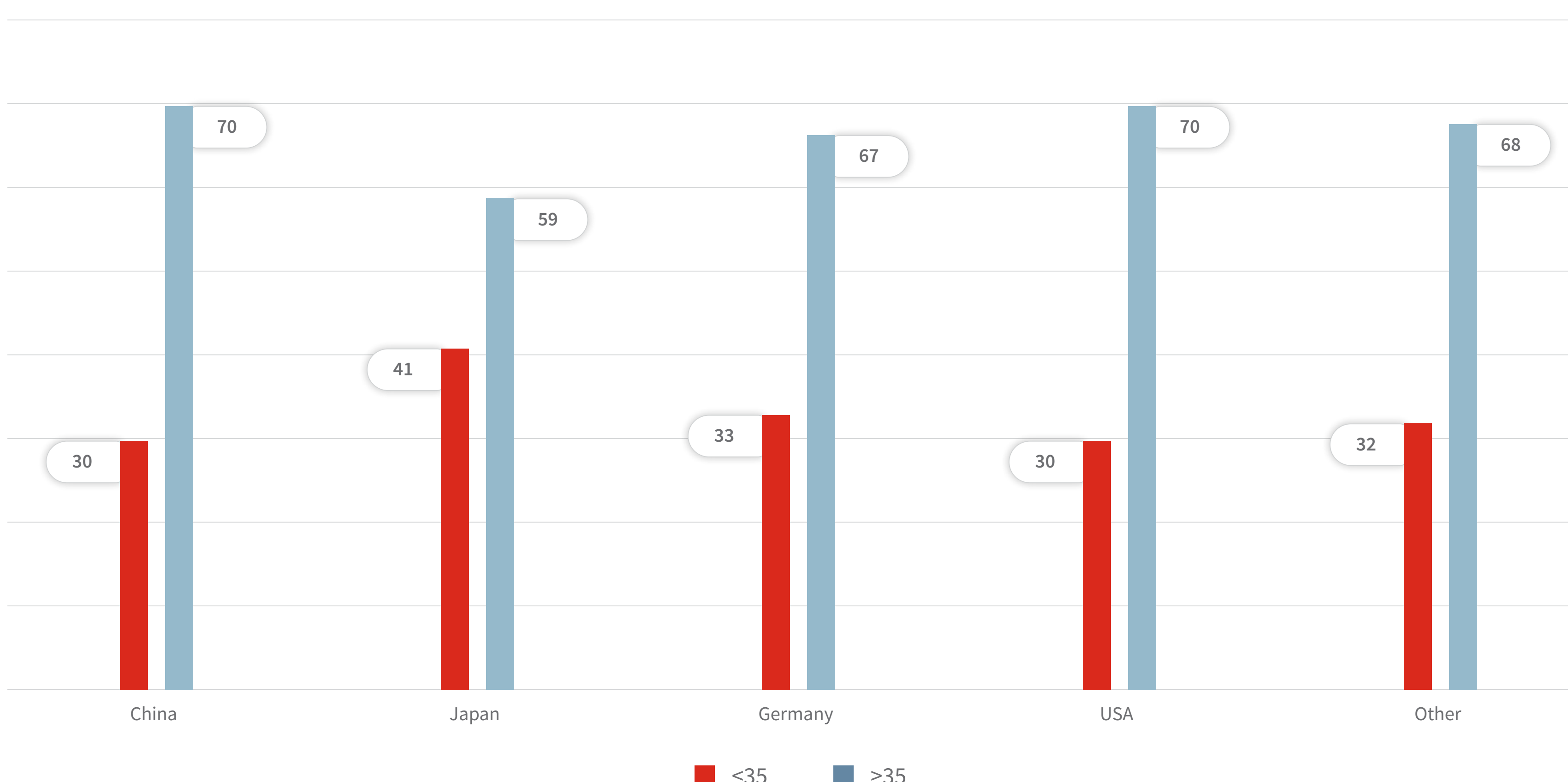
Chinese brands (which include Haval, Chery and BYD) have improved their market share across the board.

In 2015, under-35s made up 27% of all Chinese-brand vehicle purchases, (see table below) yet this made up only 1% of all purchases by this group (over-35s was 73% and 2%). In 2025, under-35s made up 30% of Chinese-brand purchases (see graph below table) which accounted for more than 10% of all purchases for this group as a whole.

		Breakdown by age-band within field					Breakdown by field within age-band				
		CHINA	JAPAN	GERMANY	USA	OTHER	CHINA	JAPAN	GERMANY	USA	OTHER
<b>2015</b>	<25	5%	9%	5%	9%	9%	1%	19%	40%	25%	15%
	26-30	10%	18%	13%	17%	17%	1%	22%	40%	23%	14%
	31-35	12%	17%	15%	16%	16%	1%	27%	36%	22%	13%
	>35	73%	56%	67%	59%	58%	2%	34%	26%	24%	14%
<b>2020</b>	<25	3%	8%	4%	6%	7%	1%	25%	41%	18%	15%
	26-30	10%	17%	12%	15%	15%	2%	28%	41%	17%	13%
	31-35	14%	16%	15%	17%	15%	2%	33%	36%	17%	12%
	>35	73%	59%	68%	62%	64%	3%	40%	24%	18%	14%
<b>2025</b>	<25	3%	8%	5%	5%	6%	8%	36%	34%	11%	11%
	26-30	11%	16%	13%	10%	12%	11%	38%	33%	9%	9%
	31-35	16%	17%	15%	15%	14%	14%	37%	30%	11%	9%
	>35	70%	59%	67%	70%	68%	15%	41%	20%	13%	11%

While Chinese brands have grown in popularity, Japanese brands still dominated under-35 purchases at 41% in 2025, although this was down from 44% in 2015.

## Over 35 years versus under 35 years: country of origin of vehicle purchases as a percentage in 2025



Source: Lightstone Auto, June 2026