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EV Purchase Realization Rate Ties Gasoline at 71%, Unfazed by Cheongna Fire, ConsumerInsight Finds

EVs matched gasoline as the fuel type consumers were most likely to follow through on, even as the Cheongna apartment fire and broader EV 'chasm' concerns dominated headlines, the latest 'Say-Do Gap' analysis shows.

The Say-Do Gap Series Ⅴ: Automobile Purchase Realization by Fuel Type within One Year

- EV and gasoline tied for the highest purchase realization rate in 2025, at 71% each; hybrid trailed at 63%.
- The Incheon Cheongna EV fire (August 2024) had no negative effect on EV intenders' follow-through; the EV realization rate instead rose 5 percentage points year-on-year.
- Non-EV intenders swung sharply away from EVs after the fire: only 5-8% switched to an EV, while 19-41% moved to gasoline or hybrid instead.
- EV purchase intention has decoupled from realization: intention held at 11% for two straight years even as realization climbed to 71%.
- Plug-in hybrid and diesel intenders posted realization rates of just 7% and 33%, respectively, the lowest of any fuel type.

SEOUL, South Korea — June 12, 2026 — ConsumerInsight today released the fifth and final report in its 'The Say-Do Gap' series, examining automobile purchase realization rates by fuel type. Among consumers who planned a car purchase in the 2024 survey, the share who completed that purchase within their originally intended fuel type within one year — the realization rate — was highest for electric vehicles (EV) and gasoline, both at 71%, followed by hybrid (HEV) at 63%. Plug-in hybrid (PHEV) and diesel intenders posted realization rates of just 7% and 33%, respectively.

This analysis is based on 1,127 respondents — drawn from 31,852 continuous participants in ConsumerInsight's 2024-2025 Annual Automobile Syndicated Study — who stated in 2024 that they planned to buy a new car within one year and completed that purchase. Realization rates were compared by fuel type: EV, gasoline, hybrid, plug-in hybrid and diesel. LPG and hydrogen (FCEV) intenders were excluded due to insufficient sample size.

EV Realization Rate Catches Up to Hybrid, Ties Gasoline

Among 2024 survey respondents who planned a car purchase, the share who followed through with their intended fuel type within one year — the realization rate — was highest for EV and gasoline, both at 71%, followed by hybrid at 63% [Table 1]. The EV realization rate ran 8 percentage points ahead of hybrid, the current mainstream fuel type, and matched gasoline, the perennial leader.

[Table 1] 2025 Purchase Realization Rate of 2024 Fuel-Type Intenders *Unit: %. Columns show the fuel type intended in 2024; rows show the fuel type actually purchased in 2025.*

Category	Intended Fuel Type ('24)						
	Total (1,127)	EV (119)	Gasoline (401)	Hybrid (352)	Plug-in Hybrid (152)	Diesel (66)	Other (37)
Actual Fuel Type ('25)							
EV	**13**	**71**	5	7	8	6	8
Gasoline	**44**	14	**71**	28	41	36	38
Hybrid	**35**	11	19	**63**	39	21	27
Plug-in Hybrid	**2**	–	1	1	**7**	–	–
Diesel	**4**	3	3	1	3	**33**	5
Other	**2**	–	1	1	1	3	**22**

Notes: LPG and hydrogen (FCEV) intenders were excluded due to insufficient sample size. Actual-fuel-type shares below 1.0% are shown as en dashes (–).

Cheongna Fire Leaves EV Realization Untouched

The finding is particularly striking set against the electric-vehicle fire that broke out in an apartment complex in Cheongna, Incheon, on August 1, 2024. The blaze erupted shortly after the 2024 survey was completed (late July 2024) and fueled a year of heightened public concern over EV safety — yet it had no measurable effect on the realization rate of existing EV intenders. If anything, the EV realization rate rose 5 percentage points from the previous year (66%), while domestic EV sales jumped more than 50% (from roughly 140,000 units in 2024 to about 215,000 in 2025, according to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport's vehicle registration statistics) — an unexpected outcome given the circumstances.

The Cheongna incident had a far greater impact on consumers who had no interest in EVs to begin with. Just 5-8% of non-EV intenders ended up choosing an EV, while 19-41% shifted toward gasoline or hybrid vehicles instead. ConsumerInsight reads this as a clear case of confirmation bias: the fire appears to have reinforced EV intenders' resolve to buy despite the incident, while hardening non-intenders' conviction never to buy an EV at all.

Plug-in hybrid (PHEV) and diesel intenders posted realization rates of just 7% and 33%, respectively — in both cases lower than the share who ended up switching to gasoline instead (41% and 36%). The extremely low PHEV realization rate reflects a narrow model lineup, along with charging inconvenience and price burden relative to EVs. Diesel's decline reflects a broader realignment of fuel types amid tightening emissions regulations and shrinking new-model lineups.

Clear Decoupling Between EV Purchase Intention and Realization

A six-year comparison highlights distinct patterns by fuel type, most notably a decoupling between EV purchase intention and realization. EV purchase intention peaked at 16% in 2022 before declining and holding steady at 11% for two consecutive years [Table 2]. Realization rates, by contrast, rose in every year except 2023 (58%), catching up to hybrid in 2024 (66%) and matching gasoline in 2025 (71%) [Table 3]. This suggests the EV market is increasingly sustained by a committed core of genuine buyers rather than a broader base of casual interest.

[Table 2] Trend in Automobile Purchase Intention Rate by Fuel Type ('19-'24) *Unit: %*

Fuel Type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
EV	3	3	14	**16**	11	11
Gasoline	47	**49**	41	39	42	36
Hybrid	14	14	20	23	25	**31**
Plug-in Hybrid	4	6	8	10	12	**14**

[Table 3] Trend in Automobile Purchase Realization Rate by Fuel Type ('20-'25) *Unit: %*

Fuel Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
EV	40	49	61	58	66	**71**
Gasoline	76	79	77	**81**	74	71
Hybrid	40	49	61	**67**	66	63
Plug-in Hybrid	5	**9**	5	5	3	7

Gasoline's high realization rate appears to reflect its advantages: the widest range of models and trims, the lowest upfront cost, and no charging-related stress. Even so, both gasoline's purchase intention and its realization rate have been on a downward trend since peaking in 2022.

It is somewhat paradoxical that hybrid — now the mainstream fuel type — posted a realization rate well below both EV and gasoline. Its outsized popularity likely triggered supply shortages, which in turn drove long delivery waits and price increases that pushed some buyers elsewhere. Plug-in hybrids, meanwhile, saw purchase intention rise even as realization remained in the single digits, reflecting a severe supply constraint with few purchasable models.

EVs Show a Split Between Strong Support and Strong Avoidance

Among all 43,501 respondents in the 2025 survey who intended to buy a car, 15% named EV as their preferred fuel type, up 3 percentage points from the previous year — the only fuel type to post a gain. With domestic EV sales up 53% year-on-year in 2025 and the realization rate poised to overtake gasoline outright this year, multiple indicators point to a genuine exit from the EV chasm that began in 2022.

EVs also benefit from a distinctly loyal core of genuine buyers. Yet the fact that EV's share of actual purchases remained in the single digits among intenders of every other fuel type shows EVs have yet to break out of what might be called a 'closed league.' How the industry brings together these two starkly divided camps — strong supporters and strong avoiders — will likely determine the pace of vehicle electrification going forward.

Notes

Analysis base: This analysis is based on 1,127 respondents — drawn from 31,852 continuous participants in ConsumerInsight's 2024-2025 Annual Automobile Syndicated Study — who stated in 2024 that they planned to buy a new car within one year and completed that purchase. (ConsumerInsight 2024-2025 Annual Automobile Syndicated Study)

Metric definition: 'Purchase realization rate' means the share of buyers who purchased a car of the same fuel type they originally intended. (ConsumerInsight definition)

Sample criteria: LPG and hydrogen (FCEV) intenders were excluded from Table 1 due to insufficient sample size. Actual-fuel-type shares below 1.0% are shown as en dashes (–) in Table 1. (ConsumerInsight report terminology)

Trend base: Tables 2 and 3 reflect year-specific continuous-respondent samples from ConsumerInsight's Annual Automobile Syndicated Study for 2019-2024 (purchase intention) and 2020-2025 (purchase realization), and are not limited to the 1,127-respondent base used in Table 1. (ConsumerInsight report terminology)

Sales figures: Domestic EV sales figures cited for 2024 and 2025 are drawn from the Korean Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport's vehicle registration statistics.

Methodology

ConsumerInsight analyzed automobile purchase realization rates by fuel type, comparing the fuel type each respondent intended to buy with the fuel type actually purchased one year later. The broader Annual Automobile Syndicated Study has been conducted every July since 2001 among approximately 100,000 automotive consumers. This report's fuel-type realization comparison (Table 1) matched 31,852 respondents who participated continuously in the 2024-2025 survey, narrowed to 1,127 who planned a purchase within one year and completed it. The six-year trend comparisons (Tables 2 and 3) draw on continuous-respondent samples for each corresponding year pair from the 2019-2025 surveys.

- Population: Licensed drivers who own a vehicle or plan to purchase one within one year
- Sampling frame: ConsumerInsight's Invight Panel and quota-based samples from major Korean portal-site panels
- Sampling method: Gender- and age-based quota sampling
- Survey mode: Email and mobile survey
- Survey content: Usage & Attitude (U&A) and Consumer Experienced Quality (CEQ)
- Survey period: July 2019 through July 2025

About ConsumerInsight

ConsumerInsight is a leading South Korean market research firm specializing in automotive consumer data and analytics. Since 2001, it has conducted the Annual Automobile Syndicated Study, surveying approximately 100,000 automotive consumers every July — one of the largest continuous automotive consumer studies in the world. Drawing on more than two decades of longitudinal data, ConsumerInsight provides in-depth insight into consumer behavior, market trends, and industry benchmarks.

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