



International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science

e-ISSN: 2544-9435

Scholarly Publisher
RS Global Sp. z O.O.
ISNI: 0000 0004 8495 2390

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Poland 00-773
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ARTICLE TITLE

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AND THE SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE WEEKLY USED CAR
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ARTICLE INFO

Abbes Chemami, Salah Bouchemal, Aissa Boulkaibet. (2024) The Definition of The Commercial Attraction Area and The Spatial Organization of The Weekly Used Car Market in Bir Ounas, Ain Beida Municipality (Algeria). *International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science*. 4(44). doi: 10.31435/ijitss.4(44).2024.3093

DOI

[https://doi.org/10.31435/ijitss.4\(44\).2024.3093](https://doi.org/10.31435/ijitss.4(44).2024.3093)

RECEIVED

02 December 2024

ACCEPTED

26 December 2024

PUBLISHED

30 December 2024

LICENSE



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THE DEFINITION OF THE COMMERCIAL ATTRACTION AREA AND THE SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE WEEKLY USED CAR MARKET IN BIR OUNAS, AIN BEIDA MUNICIPALITY (ALGERIA)

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ABSTRACT

To analyze and examine the factors influencing the determination of the trade attraction field of the Bir Ounas used car market in the Ain Beida Municipality, we conducted a field study based on statistical methods and quantitative criteria, through a descriptive analysis of the market and incoming vehicles. The study was supported by a survey aimed at market visitors, including questions about their geographical origin and reasons for choosing the market, with a cartographic representation of the results.

In light of the field study results conducted during the first semester of 2024, it was confirmed that the market's geographical position, located at the center of several large urban agglomerations in northeastern Algeria and near the intersection of national roads, plays a significant role in influencing the commercial attractiveness index, despite the development and management issues it experiences. The research revealed that over half of the visitors come from outside the Oum El Bouaghi province. The dense commercial territory extends to the east of the Oum El Bouaghi province (Khenchela, Tébessa, Souk Ahras), but becomes less concentrated and strong as it moves west towards provinces like Constantine, Batna, and Mila.

KEYWORDS

Bir Ounas Used Car Market, Ain Beida Municipality, Trade Attraction Field, Geographical Proximity, Road Network

CITATION

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Introduction.

Weekly markets are among the most significant components of urban commercial structures. Over time, these markets have evolved into complex historical, social, economic, and geographical phenomena influenced by their origins, interaction mechanisms within and outside the market, and the socio-economic and technological changes experienced by humanity. These changes include the development of transportation networks, accelerated urbanization rates, and rising living standards.

Based on this, many researchers, especially geographers, have focused their studies on market patterns and functional roles, examining "the reasons for their emergence, geographical distribution, goods sold, and locations of buyers and sellers, which define the areas of influence of these periodic markets" (Fadel Ibrahim Al-Ajwud, 2007, p. 72).

Weekly markets exhibit variable attraction areas that fluctuate in size and direction from week to week and season to season based on numerous factors. The strength of trade attraction "is directly proportional to the city's size, represented by its population size, and inversely proportional to distance" (Abdel Razzak Abbas Hussein, 1977, p. 363).

Additionally, the boundaries of trade attraction areas "are inversely proportional to transportation costs, which increase with distance, making these costs a determinant of the commercial area's expansion for cities" (Abdel Razzak Abbas Hussein, 1977, p. 370). The transportation network also plays a crucial role in shaping and defining the commercial area's size. "The size of a trade attraction area is directly proportional to the efficiency of transportation networks, which facilitate the movement of individuals and goods, and is influenced by the nature of these networks" (Sabri Faris Al-Hiti & Saleh Faleh Hassan, 2000, p. 365).

Moreover, the nature of goods and services is essential in determining the boundaries of trade attraction areas. "The influence of goods and services of higher importance is broader and more extensive than that of less significant goods" (Saeed Fadel Ahmed, 2014, p. 54). This can also be linked to purchasing power and its impact on consumption levels, as well as consumer preferences.

Competition, reputation, and product variety are other factors influencing trade attraction. A market's attraction diminishes if competing markets of the same type operate in the same region on the same day. Conversely, the attraction increases when there are fewer competing markets.

Within this framework, weekly markets for used car sales serve as geographical domains established for trading used vehicles. These markets operate under supply-and-demand mechanisms, with pricing determined by several factors, such as the availability or scarcity of vehicles, brand names, vehicle age, aesthetics, mileage, and structural condition. These markets provide an ideal space for sellers and buyers to conduct transactions efficiently.

Some of the most prominent and largest used car markets in Algeria include: Tijelabine in Boumerdes Province, Ain Touta in Batna Province, and Sedrata in Souk Ahras Province, all of which are held on Saturdays. Bougara in Blida Province, held on Mondays. Setif in Setif Province, held on Wednesdays. Tolga in Biskra Province, Sidi Salem in Annaba Province, and Cheria in Tébessa Province, all of which are held on Fridays.

Problem Statement.

The weekly used car market in Bir Ounas is a significant commercial landmark in the Ain Beida municipality of Oum El Bouaghi province (Algeria). This market, the only one of its kind in the area, has been operational since its establishment in the mid-1980s. It occupies a strategic location near the intersection of National Road No. 10, which links Tébessa and Constantine, and National Road No. 80, which connects Khenchela and Guelma. The market spans a total area exceeding 7 hectares.

Economically, the market—held every Friday—contributes to local economic growth through substantial financial resources that flow into the municipal treasury via market rental transactions. It also provides livelihood opportunities for young people in Bir Ounas and surrounding areas through jobs such as parking management, food sales, tobacco vending, and transportation services.

However, the market is not limited to used car trading as its name suggests. A closer examination reveals a variety of goods being bought and sold, including new and used spare parts, foreign household equipment, ready-to-wear clothing (both new and secondhand), and various other items. Additionally, mobile restaurants, herbal remedies, accessories, pets, fruits, and vegetables are found within the market. These diverse offerings give the market an open-air exhibition feel, attracting visitors from various segments of society, especially since it operates on Fridays, Algeria's official day of rest.

Research Questions.

This study aims to address the following questions:

1. To what extent does the trade attraction area of the Bir Ounas weekly car market extend?
2. What motivates visitors to choose this market over others?

Hypotheses.

Initial observations indicate that the market experiences a substantial influx of visitors, including used car sellers, buyers, traders, and shoppers. Based on this, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Despite the challenges faced by the market, its unique location near the intersection of National Roads No. 10 and 80 has significantly enhanced its trade attraction.
2. The strong reputation that the Bir Ounas market has cultivated since its establishment in the 1980s and its continued operation until today positively influences the market's trade attraction levels.

Study Objectives.

This study aims to highlight the significance of the Bir Ounas used car market by delineating its trade attraction area. And analyze the market's internal structure and identify various issues that impact its ability to attract visitors.

Methodology and Study Tools.

This paper is structured using the standard IMRaD (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion) format, which has been adopted by an increasing number of international academic journals since the mid-20th century. The IMRaD format is commonly used in case studies or experimental research as it allows for smooth organization and editing of articles, while also facilitating reviewers' evaluations (Bakhti Ibrahim, 2022, p. 326).

To achieve the study's objectives, various methodologies were employed, including Quantitative Analytical Method That involves analyzing data gathered through a questionnaire (Ali Mohamed El-Tir et al., 2020, p. 130) and field observation networks. In addition to the Behavioral Approach, this modern marketing geography method (Baha Fouad Maqabla & Ahmed Ali Al-Dars, 2020, p. 860) was utilized to analyze visitors' needs and understand their motivations for choosing this market. As well as using Statistical Tools, Data analysis was performed using statistical software to process numerical data, generate graphs, and create maps. These tools facilitated the identification of relationships between variables, ensuring accurate and objective result.

Field Study.

The field study was conducted through exploratory visits to the market over several weeks to collect data that would help address the study's research questions.

Phase 1 focused on examining the market's internal structure, counting the total number of incoming vehicles, and identifying their geographic origins. Additionally, other commercial categories within the market were recorded, and relevant administrative entities—such as the State Property Inspection Office and the municipal offices for property management and statistics—were consulted to gather data and statistics related to the market.

In phase 02 Surveys were distributed to a sample of 100 visitors, with 72 completed surveys retrieved. This sample represented the available cross-sectional data, given the researcher faced challenges such as the lack of official permissions from market managers. The study covered three market sessions held between May 17 and May 31, 2024.

The questionnaire aimed to understand the market's trade and spatial attraction by investigating the geographic origins of the visitors, reasons for their market attendance, and factors influencing their choice compared to other markets.

Presentation of Ain Beida Municipality.

The geographical location of Ain Beida plays a pivotal role in enhancing the area's trade attractiveness. It is directly linked to the development of transportation networks and the distribution of population centers.

The strategic value of the study area lies in its position as a central hub connecting northern coastal areas with the southern desert regions, while also serving as a link between the eastern border regions and major cities like Constantine and Setif through National Roads 80 and 10.

The region's terrain is predominantly flat, which has facilitated the expansion and growth of Ain Beida into the largest urban settlement in Oum El Bouaghi province, with a population of 175,870 residents as per

the last general housing and population census conducted in October 2022 (Data obtained from the census cell of Ain el-Beida municipality on May 12, 2024).

To meet the needs of Ain Beida's residents as well as visitors from other areas, the region has developed numerous commercial markets. These include daily local markets, weekly markets, and specialized markets, some of which are within the main urban center (Ain Beida city) and others in secondary settlements like Bir Ounas.

Markets in Ain Beida Municipality.

In the main urban area, the weekly livestock market is the oldest market in the study area. Its roots trace back to the Ottoman period when the region was home to the Harakta tribe, which established a weekly livestock market held on Sundays and Mondays (**Chemami Abbes, 2014, p. 60**). As the city expanded and new neighborhoods developed, the location of the market was moved several times. Currently, it operates every Monday south of the city, covering an area of 2.5 hectares with a capacity to accommodate nearly 5,000 livestock.

In addition, there is the wholesale fruit and vegetable market located in the Saidi J'moui neighborhood, which opened in 1965 to replace the old market in the city center. It spans about 3 hectares, with over 350 stores and 4 large warehouses.

The city also hosts numerous other markets spread across its neighborhoods, with some of the most notable including the clothing market in Al amal neighborhood, which contains 186 shops, and the covered market in Palestine Square with 47 shops (The data was obtained by the Ain Beida Municipality Property Management Office) that sell food, cleaning supplies, and household appliances in bulk and retail.

However, the weekly used car market in Bir Ounas, located in the secondary settlement, is the most important in terms of its contribution to the local economy and its role in financing the municipality's public treasury. This market operates every Friday along National Road No. 10.

Internal Structure of the Bir Ounas Used Car Market.

The Bir Ounas used car market occupies a strategic location along National Road No. 10, approximately 7 km from the center of Ain Beida city and 21 km from Oum El Bouaghi city. It covers an area of 7.9 hectares (Data obtained by the State Property Inspectorate of Ain el-Beida on May 19, 2024), with the property belonging to state-owned assets, while rental income from the market space is directed to the municipality's treasury.

The market also features an additional section with private ownership, located on the northern edge of the commercial space. This section is rented weekly to the current market operator, increasing the total available commercial area to approximately 10 hectares.

The market's layout is generally flat, with a regular geometric shape (mostly rectangular), though there is a complete lack of any external development or infrastructure. This includes the absence of paved walkways, roads, and public lighting, except for the 28 commercial shops, a multi-purpose station, and an unfinished hotel located on the southern side of the market, along the National Road No. 10.



Fig. 1. The Bir Ounas used car market, Source Authors: May 17, 2024.

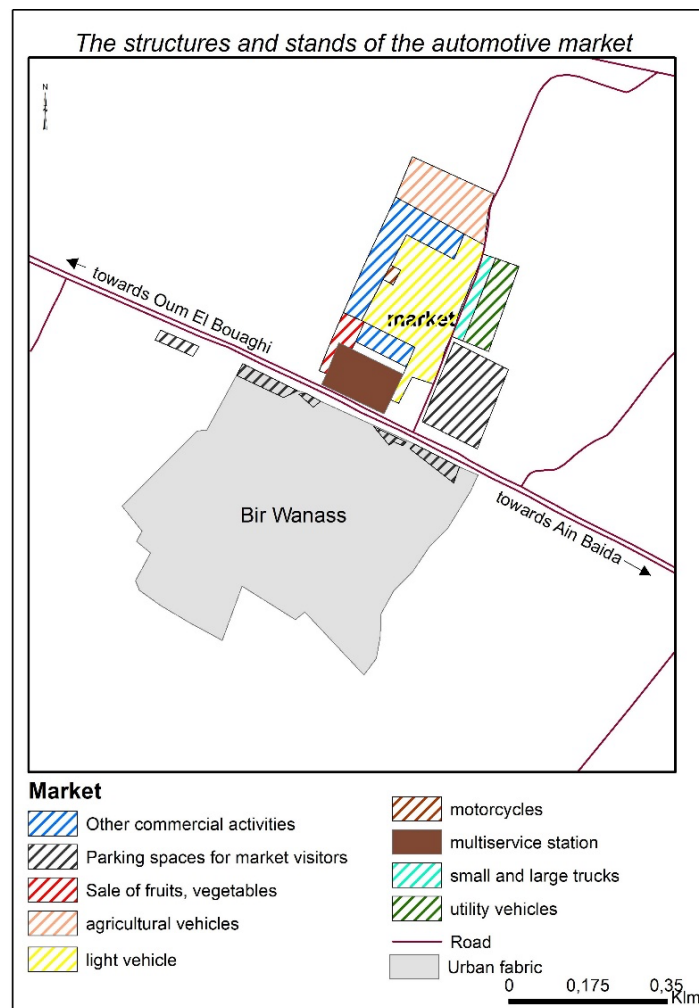
The market is accessed via two main entrances facing the national road, with an additional unpaved entrance on the northern side of the market. It should also be noted that all visitors to the market, both sellers and buyers, are male.

From the field visits conducted, it was observed that the market is divided spatially according to several criteria, the most important of which are:

- **Type and Size of Vehicles on Display:** The central and southern sections of the market are designated for passenger cars, while the eastern area is for small and large trucks as well as utility vehicles. The northern section is dedicated to agricultural vehicles, while a small space on the western side is reserved for motorcycles.

- **Type of Commercial Activity:** In addition to vehicle sales, many other commercial activities are present, including mobile restaurants and fast-food vendors scattered throughout the market. New and used spare parts, clothing, household accessories, and imported equipment occupy a specific section that runs from east to west along the northern part of the market and from north to south along the western boundaries. The sale of fruits, vegetables, and nuts is concentrated at the western entrance, near the multi-purpose station. The 28 commercial shops at the eastern entrance are divided between restaurants, cafés, tobacco, and sulfur sales, operating daily (due to their reliance on the traffic of National Road No. 10). These shops also include restrooms, which are operational only on market days.

- **Property Ownership:** Based on field observations and discussions with local participants familiar with the market's operations, it was confirmed that the privately owned section to the north of the market is dedicated exclusively to agricultural machinery, including spare parts for such equipment, as per an agreement between the owner of the space and the current market operator. The remainder of the market, which is state-owned, is reserved for the sale of vehicles and other commercial activities.



Source: Prepared by the researcher from the field investigation – May, 2024

Despite the significant role this market plays both economically and socially, it suffers from several issues, the most notable being the inadequate infrastructure. There is a complete lack of any form of external development, as the market consists of a dirt surface with no paved paths, roads, or public lighting. The absence of clearly defined commercial plots further complicates mobility, especially during the winter months when mud makes it difficult to move, and dust becomes a problem in summer.

Although the municipality of Ain Beida benefits from the substantial financial returns from renting market spaces, it has not invested a portion of these revenues in improving the market or its surroundings, except for a few commercial shops along the road.

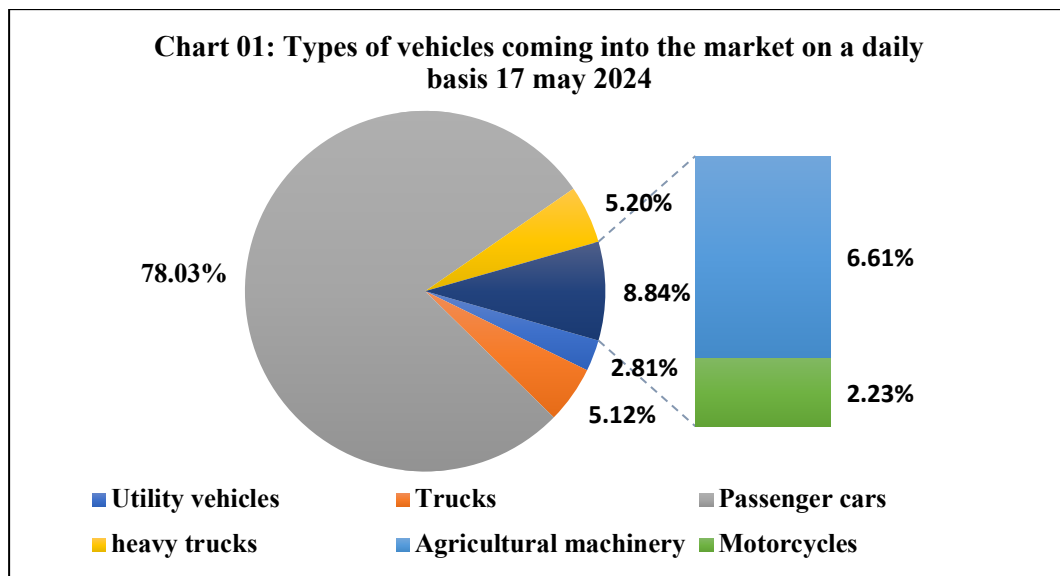
Another pressing issue is child labor, with children being exploited as cheap labor without any protection or job security. This is linked to the difficult economic and social conditions they face.

Food poisoning is a growing concern due to the large number of mobile and stationary food vendors operating in the market without proper health monitoring. Moreover, the lack of adequate security coverage, coupled with the increasing incidence of theft and criminal activities, has led to the formation of internal market committees aimed at combating these issues.

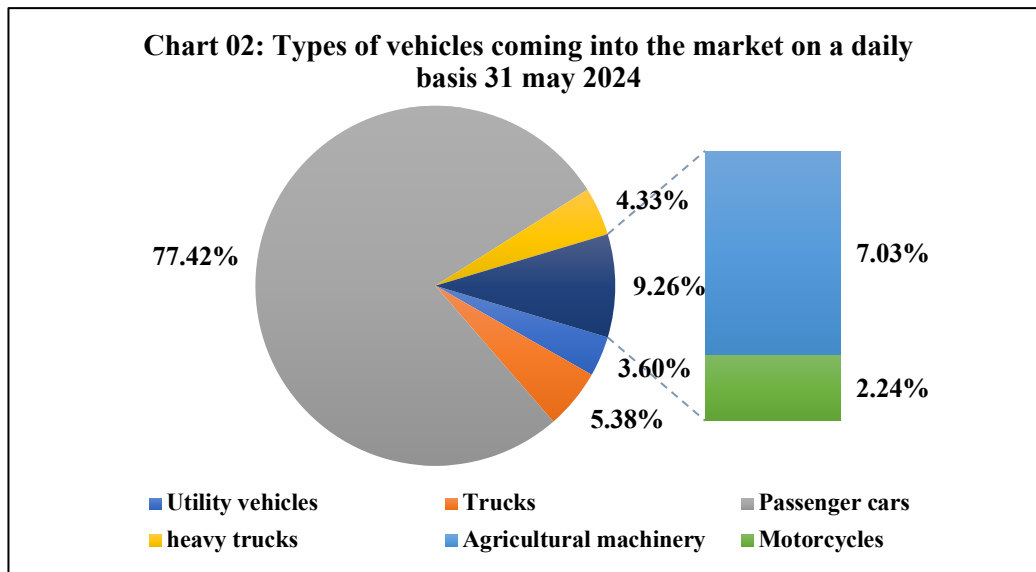
Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of Incoming Vehicles to the Bir Ounas Market.

Although the market is held on Fridays, vehicles and various commercial activities begin arriving on Thursday evening to secure the best display locations. The market itself starts in the early morning and concludes just before the Friday prayer, when the area empties of people, leaving the space empty.

Based on the field census conducted, the number of incoming vehicles to the market on Friday, May 17, 2024, was 2,421 vehicles of various types, sizes, and brands. This number dropped to 2,192 vehicles on Friday, May 31, 2024 (a decrease of 229 vehicles, representing a 9.46% reduction compared to May 17, 2024).



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on data from the field investigation –May 17, 2024



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on data from the field investigation – May 31, 2024

By analyzing the data in chart 01 and chart 02, we can break down the number and types of incoming vehicles as follows:

A-Decline in Number with Stable Percentage:

Passenger cars made up the majority with 1,889 vehicles, representing 78.02% of the total vehicles on May 17. This number dropped to 1,697 vehicles on May 31 (a decrease of 192 cars, representing a 10.16% decline in this category), with only a slight decrease in the overall percentage to 77.42%.

Motorcycles had the lowest presence in the market, with only 54 motorcycles on May 17, dropping to 49 on May 31 (a decrease of 5 motorcycles, representing a 9.26% reduction in this category), while their overall percentage remained nearly unchanged (2.23% on May 17 and 2.24% on May 31).

Similarly, the number of small trucks decreased from 124 on May 17 to 118 on May 31 (a decrease of 6 trucks, representing a 4.84% reduction), with the overall percentage remaining stable at 5.12% on May 17 and 5.38% on May 31.

B-Decrease in Number and Percentage:

Heavy trucks recorded a presence of 126 vehicles (5.20% of the total) on May 17, but this number decreased to 95 on May 31 (a reduction of 31 trucks, representing a 24.60% drop in this category), marking the most significant decrease in any vehicle category.

C-Increase in Number and Percentage:

Utility vehicles increased from 68 vehicles on May 17 (2.81% of the total) to 79 vehicles on May 31 (3.60% of the total), an increase of 11 vehicles (a 16.18% rise in this category), representing the largest increase in any category.

D-Decrease in Number with an Increase in Percentage:

Agricultural machinery types showed a slight decline in numbers, from 160 on May 17 to 154 on May 31 (a decrease of 6 vehicles, representing a 3.75% drop). However, the percentage of agricultural machinery increased from 6.61% on May 17 to 7.03% on May 31.

From discussions with market insiders, it was confirmed that such fluctuations in vehicle numbers are typical of the market since its establishment. These fluctuations can occur on a weekly or seasonal basis.

The decline between May 17 and May 31 was linked primarily to the period coinciding with end-of-year school exams when many parents chose to stay home to support their children's studies. Additionally, visitor attendance is also influenced by religious and social events. For example, the market on Friday, June 14, 2024, coincided with the Eid al-Adha holiday (on June 16, 2024), resulting in a notable drop in the number of vehicles, with only 1,750 vehicles recorded, a 28% decrease compared to May 17, 2024.

The rest of the commercial types are commercial squares, food trucks, tents or mobile trade within the market (selling snacks, selling hot and cold drinks...).

On 17 May, 357 commercial activities were counted at the market, including 47 places selling various foods (16 food tents, 05 snack trucks, 26 sellers of boiled egg sandwiches) and two mobile traders selling hot

drinks. In addition to 111 squares for the sale of men's clothing and shoes, 11 squares for the sale of dates and nuts, and 21 squares for the sale of vegetables and fruits.

The number of car and truck spare parts and related accessories was estimated at 104 stalls, with 3 stalls for the sale of herbs and drugs and 58 stalls for miscellaneous trade (sale of toys, cable trade, cleaning materials, telephone accessories, household utensils...).

On 31 May, 397 commercial activities were counted at the market (an increase of 40 activities, equivalent to an increase of 11.20% compared to 17 May), including 57 food stalls (16 food tents, 07 snack trucks, 34 sellers of boiled egg sandwiches, sellers of fresh fruit juice) And 3 mobile traders selling hot drinks. In addition to 114 squares for the sale of men's clothing and shoes, 11 squares for the sale of dates and nuts, and 31 squares for the sale of vegetables and fruits.

As for car and truck spare parts and related accessories, their number was estimated at 104 stalls, with 04 stalls for the sale of herbs and drugs and 71 stalls for miscellaneous trade (sale of toys, cable trade, cleaning materials, telephone accessories, household utensils...).

As for the vehicles parked outside the borders of the market or on the streets of the urban agglomeration, for shoppers coming to the market, and because it is difficult to always count them accurately, it was only counted between 10:00 and 10:30 am (rush hour). On 17 May, the number of vehicles was estimated at 1,024, including 25 taxis to ensure inter-municipal and interstate transport. On 31 May, the number of vehicles was estimated at 968, including 21 taxis at the same time. By looking at the number plates of these cars, we noticed that they came from different states, especially (Oum El Bouaghi, Tébessa, Khenchela, Souk Ahras and batna...).

Through repeated field visits to the market, we noticed that there is a variation in the turnout of both traders and shoppers depending on the weather conditions between the cold and hot seasons, especially in the case of rain or snow, where the turnout decreases significantly. In the summer, the turnout is high, but the market empties of vehicles, traders, and shoppers earlier if the temperature is high.

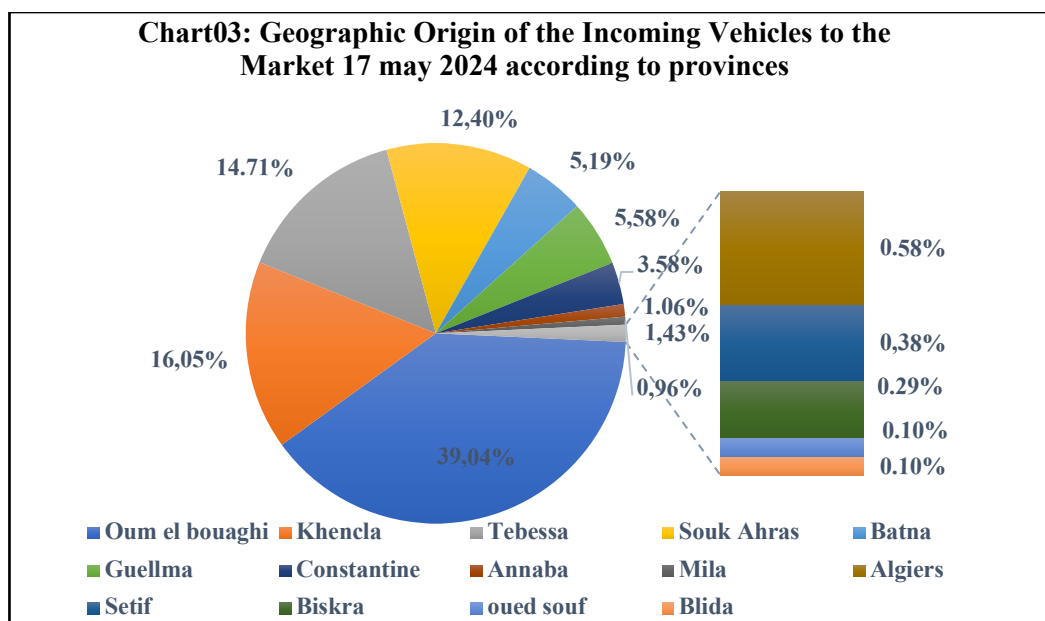
Geographic Origin of the Incoming Vehicles to the Market.

To determine the geographic origin of the vehicles coming to the market, license plates were examined to identify the provinces from which the vehicles originated.

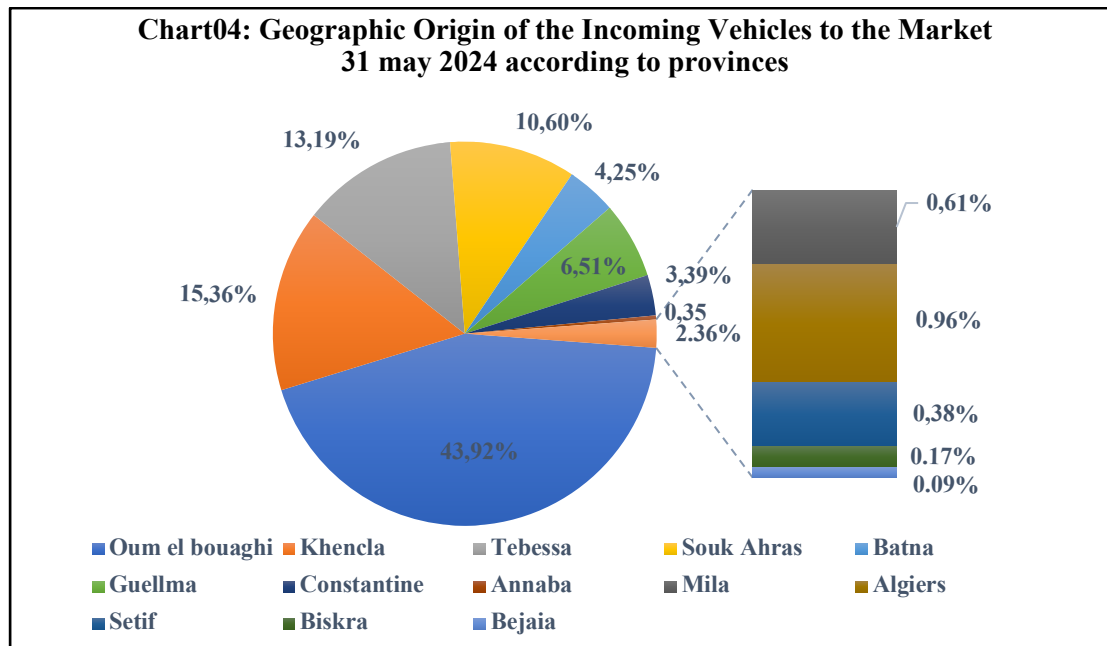
The process excluded agricultural machinery and motorcycles, as many of these vehicles lacked license plates.

Due to time constraints and the large area occupied by passenger cars in the market, the task of scanning license plates to determine the geographic origin of all vehicles was challenging. Therefore, the analysis focused on a sample of vehicles. Specifically, 722 out of 1,889 passenger cars on May 17 (representing 38.22% of the total) and 860 out of 1,697 on May 31 (representing 50.68% of the total) were analyzed

For small trucks, heavy trucks, and utility vehicles, all license plates were recorded, as the space occupied by these vehicles in the market was smaller and more concentrated than that of the passenger cars.



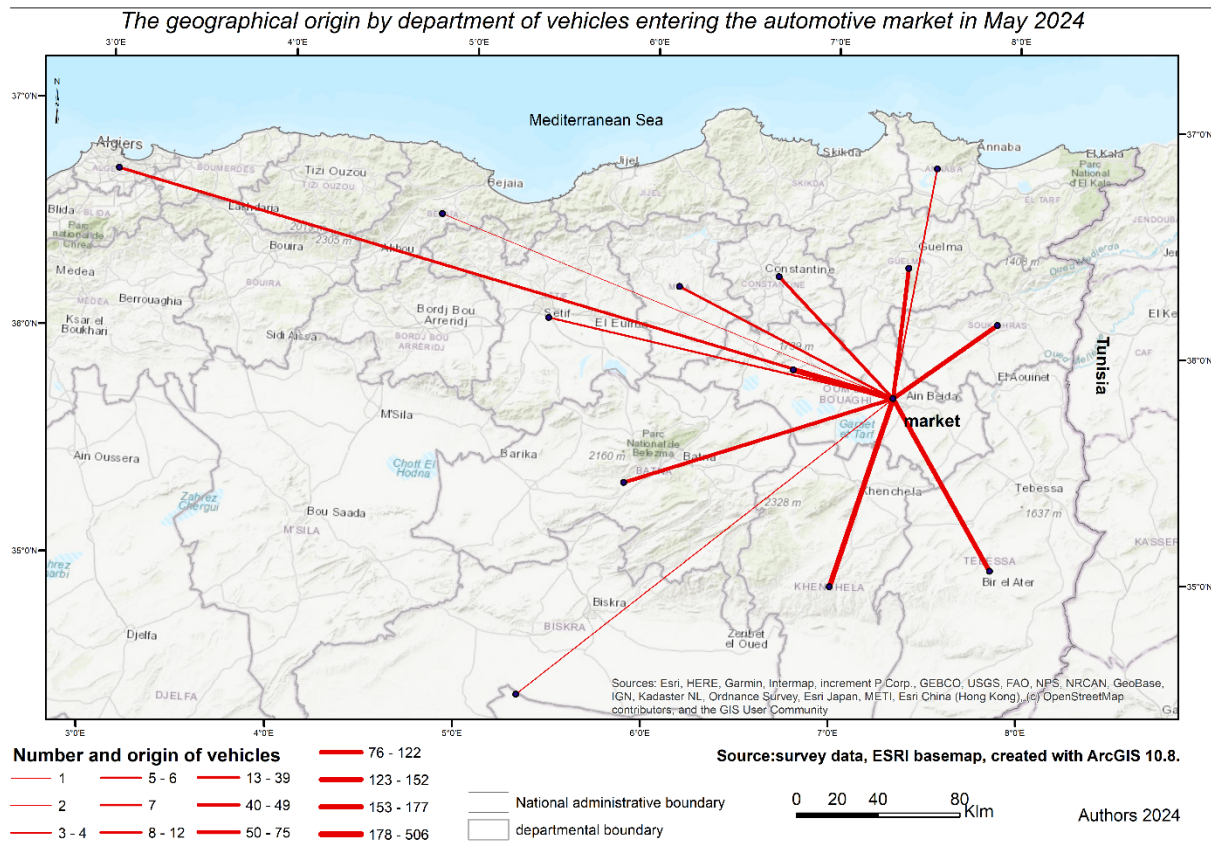
Source: Prepared by the researcher based on data from the field investigation – May 17, 2024



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on data from the field investigation – May 31, 2024

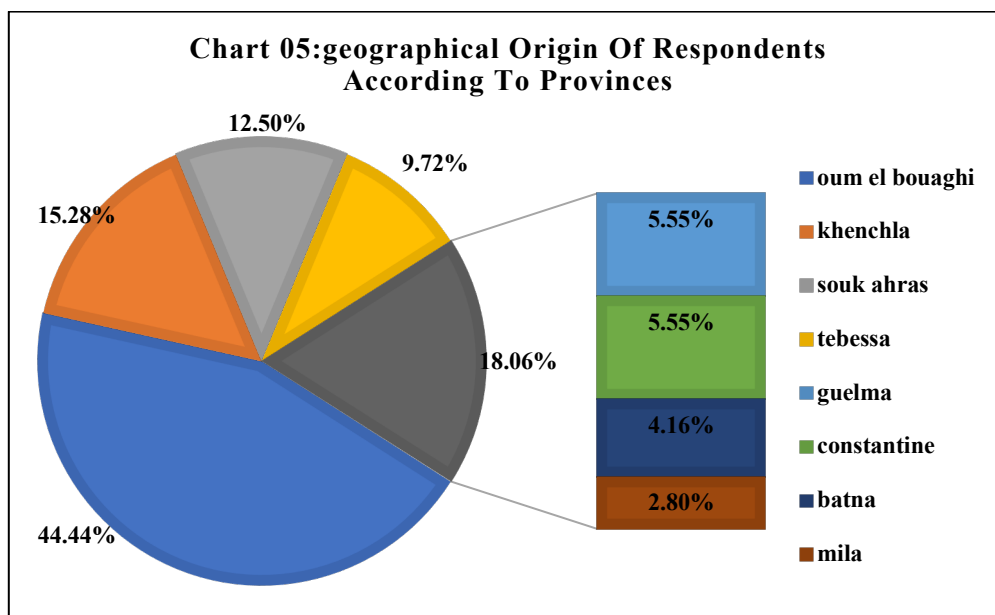
The following results were obtained from this analysis of chart 03 and chart 04

- Vehicles from Within Oum El Bouaghi Province: More than one-third of the vehicles (39.04% on May 17, rising to 43.92% on May 31) came from municipalities within Oum El Bouaghi province.
- Vehicles from provinces to the east of Oum El Bouaghi (Tébessa, Khenchela, Souk Ahras) were five times more numerous than those from the western provinces (Constantine, Batna, Mila).
- On May 17, 507 vehicles came from the eastern provinces, representing 48.75% of the total vehicles recorded.
- On May 31, 526 vehicles came from these eastern provinces, representing 45.67% of the total vehicles recorded.
- Vehicles from Western Neighboring Provinces (Constantine, Batna, Mila):
- On May 17, only 101 vehicles came from the western provinces, representing just 9.71% of the total.
- On May 31, 95 vehicles came from these provinces, making up 8.25% of the total vehicles.
- Despite the presence of used car markets in Tébessa (Cheria market) and Constantine (Hamma Bouziane market), a significant number of vehicles from Tébessa still attended the Bir Ounas market. On May 17, 153 vehicles came from Tébessa, representing 14.71% of the total vehicles recorded. On May 31, 152 vehicles arrived from Tébessa, representing 13.19%.
- Interestingly, even vehicles from provinces not directly adjacent to Oum El Bouaghi, such as Setif, Algiers, Biskra, Bejaia, Souk Ahras, and Annaba, were present.
- On May 17, 27 vehicles from these provinces arrived, making up 2.5% of the total vehicles.
- On May 31, 25 vehicles arrived, representing 2.17% of the total vehicles.
- Although used car markets were held on Fridays in the provinces of Tébessa (Sharia market), Constantine (Hamma Bouziane market), Annaba (Sidi Salem market) and Biskra (Toulka market), we observed a significant number of vehicles from these provinces, especially from Tébessa (153 vehicles on 17 May and 152 vehicles on 31 May), Constantine (37 vehicles on 17 May and 39 vehicles on 31 May) and Annaba (11 vehicles on 17 May and 4 vehicles on 31 May).



To validate the study's hypotheses and compare the data collected from field observations, a questionnaire was distributed to 72 visitors to the Bir Ounas market, with the aim of understanding the factors influencing their decision to visit this market. The respondents were not necessarily vehicle owners but included a mix of buyers, sellers, and traders. The analysis of the survey results showed the following findings:

Geographical Origin of Respondents:



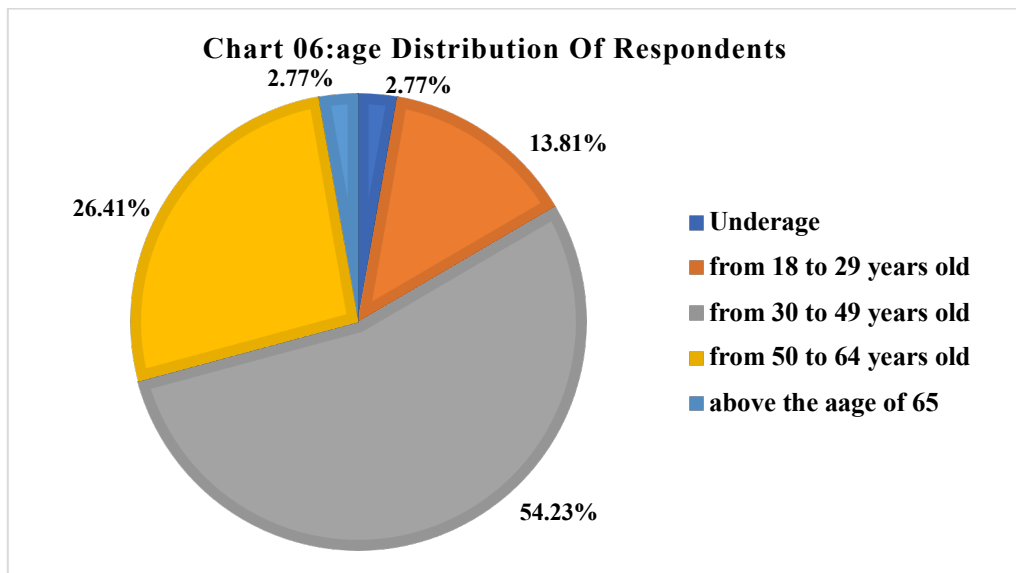
Source: Prepared by the researcher based on data from the questionnaire - May 2024

From the chart number 05, it was noted that the majority of respondents came from the province of Oum El Bouaghi, with 32 individuals (44.44% of the sample) coming from various municipalities within the province.

31 respondents (43.05%) were from neighboring eastern provinces such as Khenchela, Souk Ahras, Tébessa, and Guelma. 9 respondents (12.51%) came from neighboring western provinces, such as Constantine, Batna, and Mila.

Age Distribution of Respondents:

The survey showed that the majority of respondents (68.07%) were in the age group of 18 to 49 years, which represents the younger population. 19 respondents (26.39%) were in the 50-64 age group. A small number of respondents were under 18 years (2.77%) or over 65 years (2.77%).



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on data from the questionnaire - May 2024

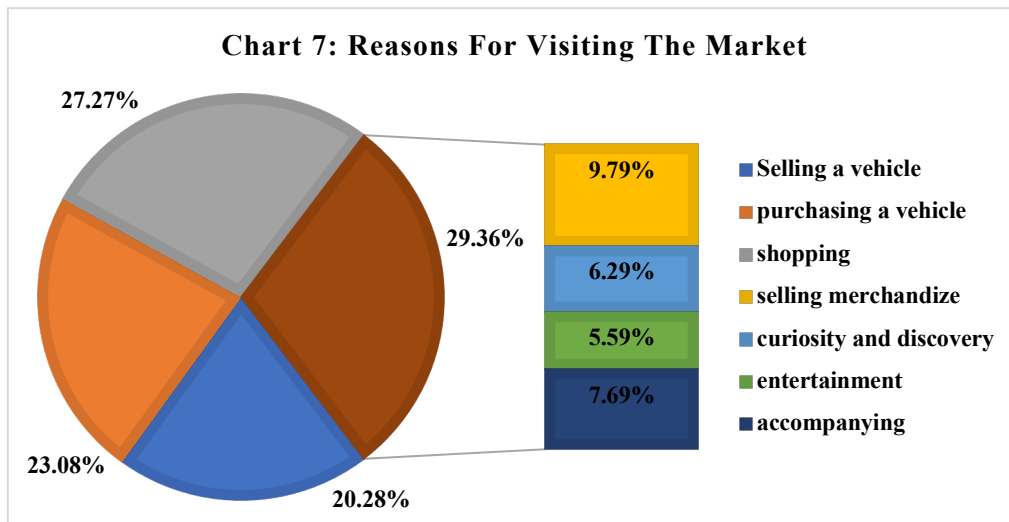
Reasons for Visiting the Market:

In order to provide a comprehensive overview of visitors' behaviors and priorities when visiting the market, we have summarized the results in chart number 07. From this, it can be stated that there is a diversity of reasons that drive people to visit the Bir Ounas market, primarily linked to the variety of services and activities available there.

It is important to note that most visitors do not come to the market for a single reason; rather, the majority engage in multiple activities and commercial practices on the same day. After reviewing 72 questionnaires, we found 143 instances of potential responses.

The survey revealed that most respondents had multiple reasons for visiting the Bir Ounas market. Among the various activities they engaged in, the primary reasons were buying or selling vehicles, which accounted for 43.36% of the responses. Additionally, shopping for goods unrelated to vehicles, such as clothing or accessories, was another significant reason, representing 27.27% of the visits. Furthermore, purchasing other products like food or spare parts contributed to 9.79% of the visits.

In addition to these primary motivations, there were also secondary reasons for visiting Bir Ounas Market. These included curiosity and discovery, which accounted for 6.29% of the total visits, entertainment at 5.59%, and companionship, which made up 7.69% of the visits. These findings highlight the diverse attractions and purposes that draw people to the market.



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on data from the questionnaire - May 2024

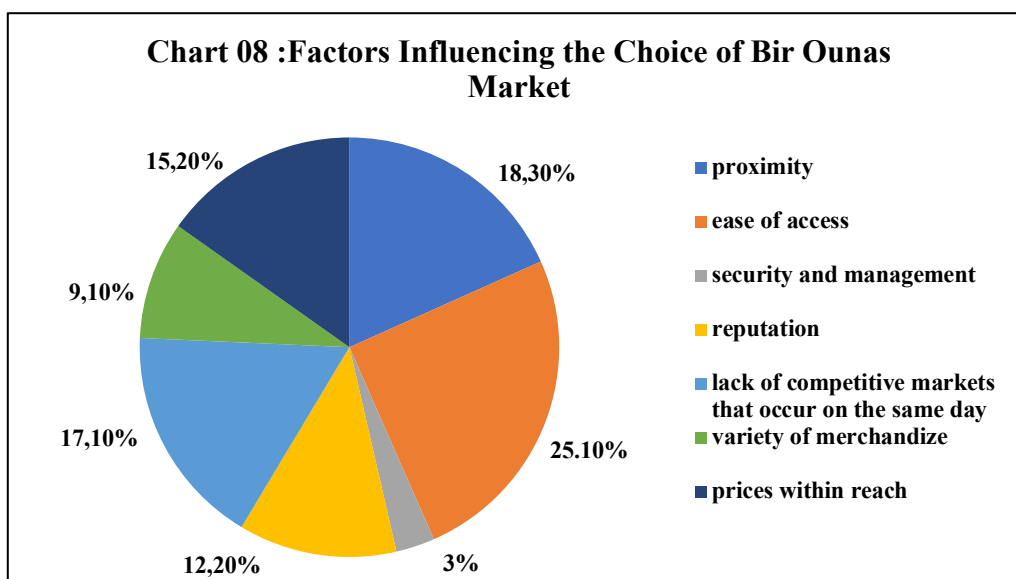
Factors Influencing the Choice of Bir Ounas Market:

Through analyzing the results presented in chart number 08, we observed a diversity of reasons and criteria that drive visitors to choose the Bir Ounas market over other markets. This is evidenced by the 263 instances of expected responses to this question.

A total of 66 individuals (91.66% of the research sample), equivalent to 25.10% of the total instances, identified ease of access as a primary factor for selecting the market. Meanwhile, 48 individuals (72% of the research sample), representing 18.30% of the total instances, considered geographical proximity an important reason for choosing Bir Ounas.

Additionally, 45 individuals (62.5% of the research sample), accounting for 17.10% of the total instances, stated that the lack of competing markets and limited alternatives were the main reasons for choosing Bir Ounas. Competitive prices also play a significant role in attracting visitors, with 40 individuals (55.55% of the research sample), equivalent to 15.20% of the total instances, indicating that prices are a key factor in their decision to visit Bir Ounas compared to other markets.

While the market's reputation and variety of goods are influential factors in visitors' decisions, they are not the most critical factors (accounting for 12.20% and 9.10% of the total instances, respectively). Only eight individuals (11.11% of the research sample), representing 3.00% of the total instances, cited the availability of organizational and security conditions as a motivator for choosing Bir Ounas over other markets. This suggests a shortcoming in managing organizational aspects and security coverage at the market level.



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on data from the questionnaire - May 2024

From the results of the field observation and the questionnaire, we can conclude the following:

- There is a great convergence in the results obtained by field observation and the results obtained by the questionnaire with regard to the geographical origin of those who visit the market, especially for the states of Oum El Bouaghi, Khenchela, Souk Ahras, Qalma and Constantine.
- It can be said that the area of commercial attraction of the Bir Wannas market extends to cover the entire territory of Oum El Bouaghi and its eastern neighbouring states (Tebessa, Khenchela, Souk Ahras and Guelma), forming a dense commercial territory, and this area decreases as we move west towards the states (Constantine, Batna, Mila), forming a weak commercial territory.
- Considering that more than 40% of the market arrivals have their geographical origins from within the municipalities of Oum El Bouaghi, the geographical proximity criterion is one of the most important reasons for the commercial attraction of this market due to its central location, its proximity to the main transport hubs, and being the only market for used cars in Oum El Bouaghi.
- Ease of access, mainly related to the proximity of the market to the intersection of National Roads 10 and 80 for those coming from the states of Khenchela, Souk Ahras, Tébessa and, to a lesser extent, Guelma, are factors that play a pivotal role in facilitating access to the Bir Wannas market.
- Despite the complex issues recorded at the level of the market, its location at the centre of several large urban agglomerations such as Kassa, Constantine, Kalmah, Khenchela and Batna has contributed to increasing the commercial attraction of this market as more than half of the arrivals to the market are from outside Oum El Bouaghi governorate.
- The lack of competition with car markets held on Fridays in the states of Khenchela and Souk Ahras contributed to the increase in the number of arrivals from these two states to Bir Wannas market.
- It can be said that the good reputation of the Bir Wannas market contributes to attracting visitors to it, despite the presence of markets active on Fridays in the states of Tébessa (Souk El Sharia), Constantine (Bahama Bouziane) and Annaba (Sidi Salem), this did not limit the number of visitors coming from the areas close to these markets. This indicates the important place of the market in the north-eastern region of Algeria.
- The good reputation of the Bir Wannas used car market can also be linked to the number of vehicles coming from relatively distant states, as we recorded the presence of a number of vehicles with state numbers (Setif, Bejaia, Algiers, Annaba...) despite the distance.
- Competitive prices play a very important role for those who come to the market, while the variety of goods and exhibits within the market is an opportunity for entertainment, knowledge and discovery, which reflects positively on the good reputation of the market, thus raising the levels of commercial attraction of the market.

Conclusions.

This field study on the Bir Ounas used car market has highlighted that the ease of access, primarily due to the availability of transportation networks and its strategic geographical location, is the most significant factor influencing the expansion or contraction of the market's trade attraction area.

Despite the existence of competing used car markets in eastern Algeria, including Tébessa (Cheria), Constantine (Hamma Bouziane), Annaba (Sidi Salem), and Biskra (Tolga), these markets have not deterred visitors from attending Bir Ounas. This is due to the market's strong reputation, which can be linked to its long-standing history, competitive pricing, and variety of goods offered.

The study also found that organizational and security aspects, while important, were not major factors for most visitors, although the market suffers from significant infrastructure challenges. These include inadequate external development, lack of proper roadways, public lighting, and defined commercial spaces.

To enhance the market's attractiveness and influence, especially towards the western parts of Oum El Bouaghi province and neighboring regions, improvements in infrastructure are needed. These should include the development of walkways, roads, public lighting, and better organization of the exhibition areas. Increased security, including the installation of surveillance cameras and the hiring of additional security personnel, is also recommended.

Given that the majority of market visitors are young people, it is also suggested that updating traditional market practices and introducing digital solutions, such as an online platform for reservations and better communication between sellers and buyers, would improve the overall market experience. This move towards digitization would streamline the process, enhance customer satisfaction, and further increase the market's trade attraction.

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