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Forecasting the Impact of Dual-credit Policy (2021-2023) on China's Electric Vehicle Market*

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Summary

China is well known for its ambition on large-scale vehicle electrification which currently is mainly driven by fuel economy and electric vehicle policies. This study adopts the New Energy and Oil Consumption Credits (NEOCC) model, a vehicle policy analysis tool developed by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, to systematically quantify the potential impacts of the “Passenger Cars Corporate Average Fuel Consumption and New Energy Vehicle Credit Regulation” which was released in June 2020 for the timeframe 2021-2023, so called dual-credit policy (2021-2023). It is found that, under the dual-credit policy (2021-2023), the sales of low fuel consumption conventional vehicles will increase faster than they were in 2018-2020, and the share of plug-in electric vehicles (PEVs) could reach 11.4% by 2023 if it keeps the expansion as it was in 2017. Besides, the BEVs with long electric range (such as 400 km) and the plugin hybrid SUVs would be the most popular PEV types.

Keywords: auto industry, electric vehicle, policy, market, modelling

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1 Introduction

The world is experiencing a revolution on transportation electrification, and the sales of plug-in electric vehicles (PEVs) have been explosively growing since 2010 [1]. As far as 2018, the global stock of plug-in electric passenger vehicles has been more than 5 million [2]. The share of PEV annual sales in the global vehicle market has reached 2.5% in 2019, an increase from the 2.2% market share in 2018 [3]. In fact, the development of the PEV market is largely contributed by China - around 45% of PEV passenger vehicles on the road in 2018 were in China [2]. However, it is not always easy in the pathway of PEV development in China. The vehicle market in China had experienced downturns for two successive years (2018 - 2019), and this gloomy atmosphere also explicitly spread to its PEV sales. In 2019, the PEV sales in China were just over 1.2 million [3], which dropped about 4% off from 1.25 million of PEV sales in 2018 [4]. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic impacts also brought new challenges to the development of Chinese vehicle market [5]. Therefore, the market dynamics of the electric vehicle market development in China is of great concerns to the stakeholders from industry, policymakers, and academics.

Considering the potential advantages of the PEV in fuel-efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions, the Chinese government deems PEV as a critical technological revolution in the future mobility choices [6], and the policy orientation is regarded as a significant impetus on PEV development in China [1]. The Chinese policies started with a strong demand-pull strategy on the consumer side by directly monetarily subsidizing the PEV sales (including subsidies from both central government and local government), or non-monetary incentives such as license plate privilege for PEVs, urban free parking, free charging pile installation etc. Though criticized that it could distort the market demand and magnify local protectionism [1], these incentives motivated the sales of PEVs and enlarged the PEV user community in the early stage of PEV market development. For example, the most powerful non-monetary incentive for PEV purchase is a special priority given for vehicle registration and license plate - PEV license plate privilege, and the estimated value of this policy was about \$13,060 USD quantified by Ou et al. 2019 [6]. This value is equivalent to half of the vehicle's average price in China [6]. According to the report by Ren et al. 2019, nearly half of the PEVs were purchased by the consumers who live in the regions with policy on PEV license plate privilege, as shown in Figure 1 [4].

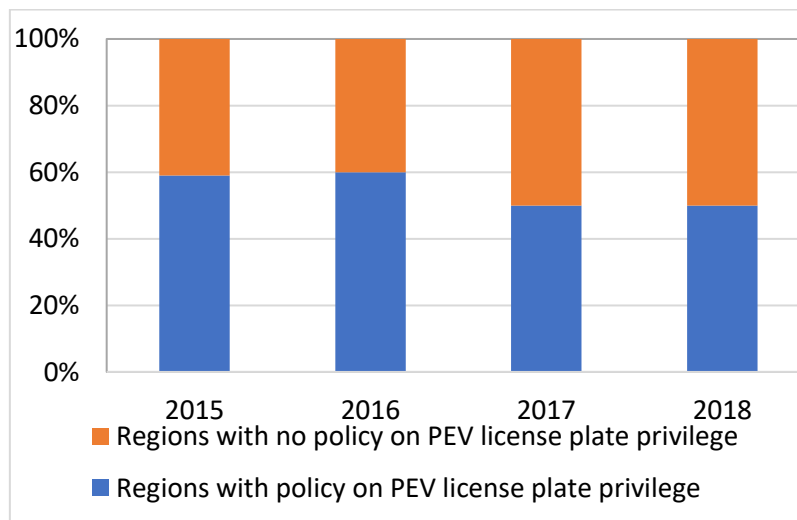


Figure 1: Shares of PEVs from the regions with or without policy on PEV license plate privilege [4]

However, the demand-push brings extra financial burdens to the governments and also causes some problems on subsidy cheating [1]. Therefore, the Chinese government intends to transition the PEV support in a more supply-push approach, indicated by the reduction of purchase subsidies, the enforcement of restrictions on corporate average fuel consumption (CAFC) rate, and the implementation of PEV quota policy. In 2017, the Chinese government issued a policy named as Measures for *Passenger Cars Corporate Average Fuel*

Consumption and New Energy Vehicle Credit Regulation (dual-credit policy) for year 2018-2020 to enforce the auto industry to improve the fuel economy of their vehicle products, and more importantly, to divert the auto industry to an electrification path. This policy does not only lessen the financial pressures of direct subsidies, but also avoids the controversial regional protectionisms blamed by stakeholders. Meanwhile, the government could divert its resources to investing in public charging infrastructure.

Currently adopted only in the passenger vehicles, the dual credit policy consists of two sections: CAFC credit rules, and new energy vehicle (NEV) credit rules. Similar to the U.S. Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards, the CAFC credit rules require the weighted average fuel consumption of vehicles produced or imported by auto companies should be no larger than the required CAFC calculated by the Chinese vehicle fuel economy standards. Auto companies are allowed to accumulate their positive CAFC credits and to use them for the CAFC deficits in other years. Furthermore, similar to the Zero-emission Vehicle Mandate in California, the NEV credit rules require that the ratio of the PEV numbers to the conventional vehicle numbers from auto companies must be no smaller than a quota. The auto companies can accumulate positive NEV credits and use them for trading or filling the deficits of their CAFC credits.

In June 2020, the Chinese government issued a new official version of *Measures for Passenger Cars Corporate Average Fuel Consumption and New Energy Vehicle Credit Regulation* (a new version of dual-credit policy) for year 2021-2023 to replace the old version [7]. The new version of dual-credit policy is called dual-credit policy (2021-2023) in this study. This vehicle policy formulates the new fuel consumption targets and electric vehicle quotas for the Chinese auto industry in years from 2021 to 2023. This policy is believed to continue to strongly impact the future trends of the vehicle market and the strategies of transportation energy in China [8]. Therefore, it is essential to quantitatively recognize its effects on the market and energy trends in China. This study adopts the New Energy and Oil Consumption Credits (NEOCC) model, a vehicle policy analysis tool developed by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, to quantify the policy impacts on the electric vehicle market in China and to project the future trends of market dynamics through 2023.

This paper consists of four sections. Section 1 presents research motivations and objectives, and generally introduces the current Chinese PEV market. Section 2 describes the modeling assumptions and modeling approach for the analysis of impacts of the vehicle policies in 2021-2023. Section 3 presents scenario analyses and gives the market share projection through 2023 under the impacts of dual-credit policy (2021-2023). The final section summarizes the conclusions and the future work. In this study, the exchange rate of \$1.00 USD is 6.91 CNY (a yearly currency exchange rate in 2019) [9].

2 Data and Model

The vehicle market data for calibrated the NEOCC model is supplied by the China Automotive Research and Technology Center (CATARC), and the data is the aggregated information on the different vehicle technologies with respect to their annual sales, sales-weighted vehicle prices, sales-weighted fuel economy, sales-weighted electricity consumption etc in 2016-2019. Besides, the official version of the dual credit policy (2021-2023) was released in June 2020, and it can be downloaded through the website by China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology [7]. The NEOCC model was firstly released in 2017 and has been improved and integrated with various functions and features in following versions based on user feedback [10]. This model, developed by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, is an optimization model used to capture the dynamics changes of the vehicle market with comprehensively quantifying the consumer travel patterns, vehicle production costs, and the government incentives and policy constraints [11]. Figure 2 shows the interface of the 2020 model version.

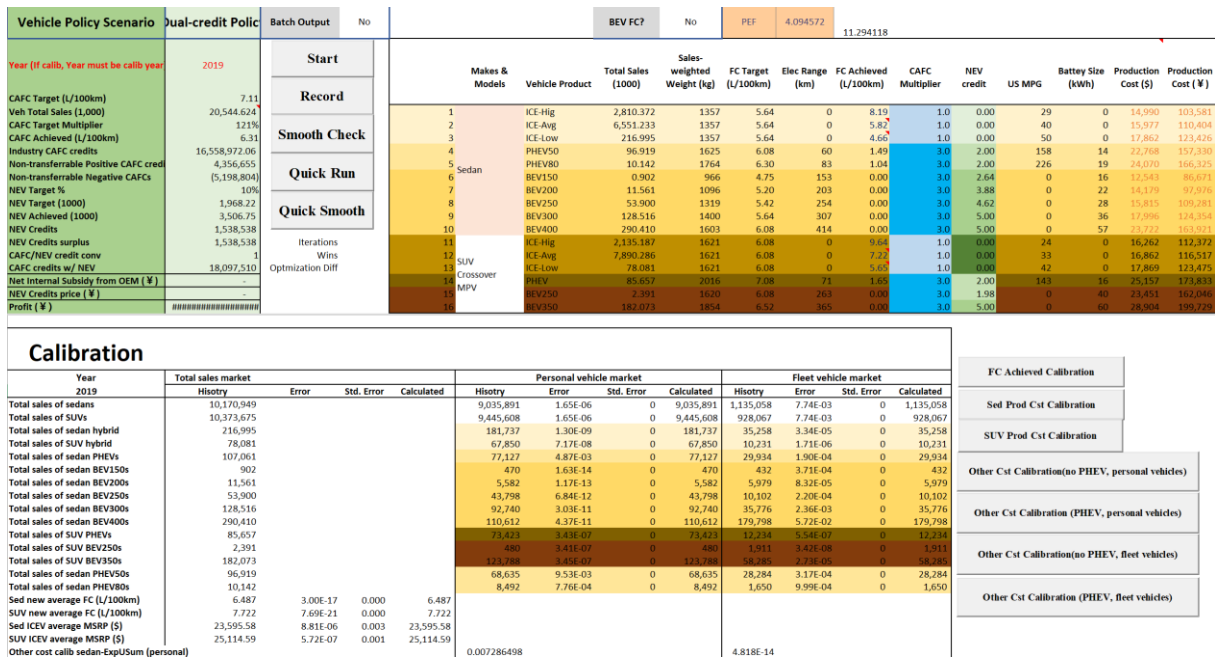


Figure 2: Interface of NEOCC model (2020 version)

The NEOCC model considers the market dynamics among the consumers, government and auto industry. It assumes that the auto industry would maximize its industry profit through selling different types of vehicles to meet the demands of the consumers with respect to the vehicle price, travel patterns, charging infrastructure, fuel cost and so on. The industry constantly adjusts its internal subsidies for different vehicle technologies until it is believed that the total profit reaches the largest one. This model integrates the optimization methodology (genetic algorithm) for seeking the maximum profits with the discrete choice modelling on allocating the market share of vehicles to the consumers based on their utilities [10].

The market shares of 16 different vehicle powertrain technologies (e.g. internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle, plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV), battery electric vehicle (BEV)) are calculated through the nested logit function (discrete choice modelling). Besides, the purchase and travel patterns of two consumer types are considered: personal vehicle drivers and public fleet drivers. The probabilities of consumers choosing a particular vehicle type depends on the value of the total ownership cost for each type of vehicle. The total cost of vehicle ownership is calculated and based on the travel patterns, incomes (value of time) and personal preferences of consumers, etc [10], [11]. For example, the NEOCC model quantifies the costs of vehicle ownership impacted by the charging activities and distributions of electric infrastructure. For a BEV owned by a personal consumer, the total cost of vehicle ownership impacted by charging related activities are estimated through estimating three different perceived costs: the electricity charging costs (at home, at public charging stations, and at workplace), the charging inconvenience cost, and the range anxiety cost [10]. Besides, this total cost of vehicle ownership impacted by charging related activities varies depending on whether the consumer owns a dedicated residential parking spot or not [12]. Figure 3 reveals the costs of BEV ownership impacted by charging activities by 2023 under the constraints of dual-credit policy (2021-2023). We can see that, by 2023, the sedan BEVs with electric range at 400 km have the lowest cost of ownership related to the charging activities. In addition, owning a dedicated residential parking could largely decrease the ownership cost on charging activities by 40-50%, although owning a dedicated residential parking is high-cost spending.

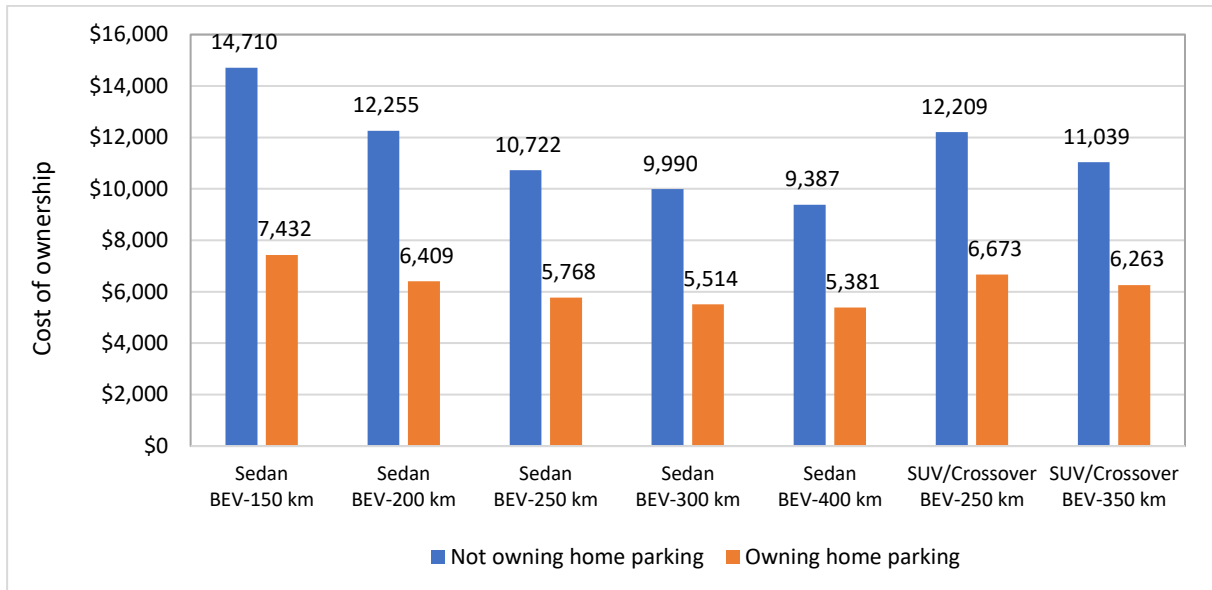


Figure 3: Comparisons on costs of BEV ownership (personal owned) impacted by charging activities by 2023

3 Results and Discussions

3.1 Policy comparisons

This study aims to quantify the possible impacts of dual-credit policy (2021-2023) on the vehicle market in China by comparing the market dynamics under different vehicle policies. Four different policy scenarios are simulated in the NEOCC model, the definitions of these scenarios are described below:

- New dual-credit policy scenario: this scenario assumes that the vehicle market is constrained by the dual-credit policy (2021-2023).
- Dual-credit policy with old NEV-rules scenario: this scenario assumes that the vehicle market in 2021-2023 is still continuously constrained by the NEV credit rules and methods adopted in the dual-credit policy used for 2018-2020. However, the quota targets on PEV share in 2021-2023 are updated to 14%, 16%, and 18% respectively, and all other rules in this scenario are the same as they are in the new dual-credit policy for 2021-2023. So, the rule changes (such as the incentives on the low fuel consumption conventional vehicles) can be better compared and reflected in the simulate results.
- CAFC-only policy scenario: this scenario assumes that the vehicle market is constrained by the Corporate Average Fuel Consumption rules in the dual credit policy phase (2021-2023). In this scenario, the fuel consumption of vehicles instead of the PEV quota is the only factor that impacts the industry market strategy.
- No rules scenario: this scenario assumes that the vehicle market is constrained to no vehicle policies during 2021 and 2023.

Figure 4 presents the market shares of PEVs and high fuel-efficient ICE vehicles under these four policy scenarios. Three types of vehicle are discussed: BEV, PHEV, and ICE vehicle with low fuel consumption (ICE-Low FC). The ICE-Low FC refers to high fuel-efficient ICE vehicles like pure hybrid vehicles in this study.

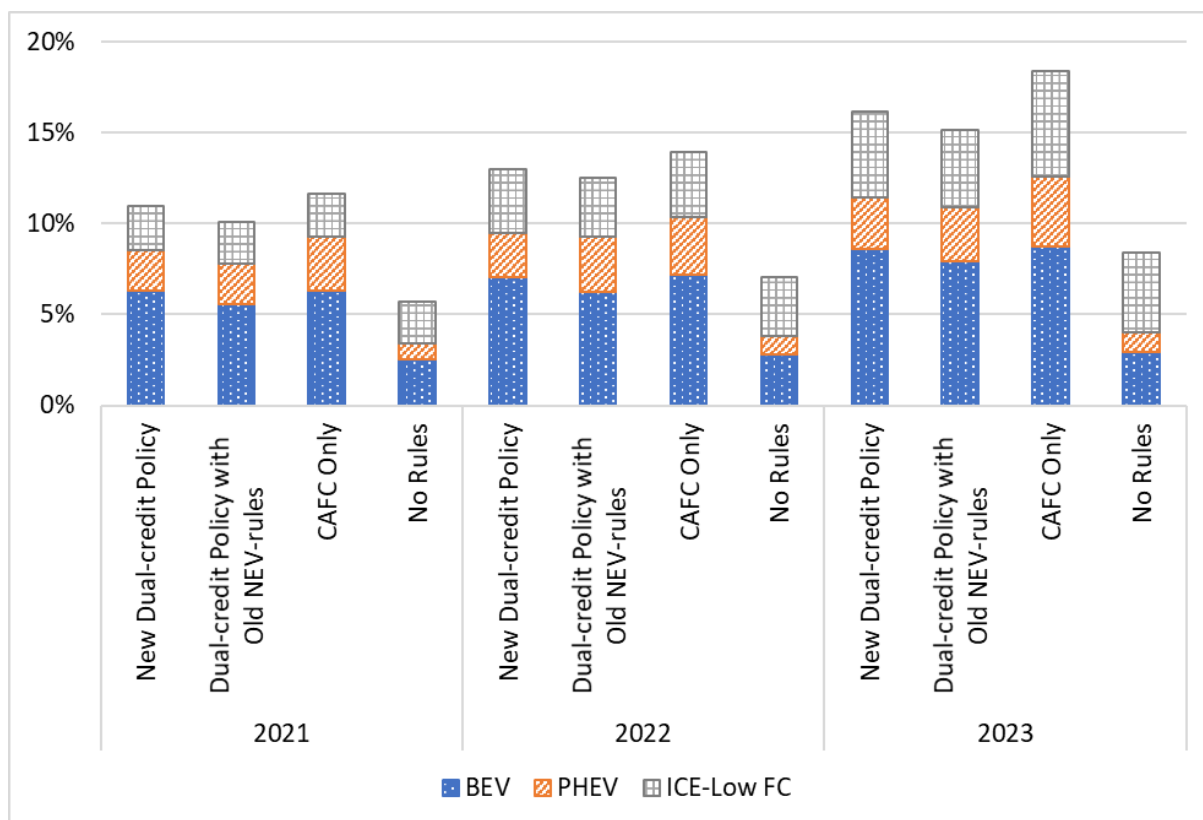


Figure 4: Market shares of vehicle powertrain technologies under different vehicle policies

As shown in Figure 4, the market shares of PEVs with the policy constraints are obviously more than the market share of PEVs under the no rules scenario. Comparing to the dual-credit policy (2018-2020), two major types of adjustments in the dual-credit policy (2021-2023) are changed: (a) the dual-credit policy (2021-2023) more emphasizes the energy efficiency of BEVs, the electricity consumption for a certain driving range (kW/100 km) and the battery's energy capacity (kWh/kg) become more critical performance indicators to determine the value of NEV credit that each BEV can obtain; (b) unlike the dual-credit policy (2018-2020), the dual-credit policy (2021-2023) also encourages the high fuel-efficient ICE vehicles. Therefore, because of more incentives on the ICE-Low FC vehicles by the dual-credit policy phase 2 (2021-2023), the market share of ICE-Low FC vehicles (for example, 4.7% in 2023) in the new dual-credit policy scenario becomes larger than it (for example, 4.2% in 2023) in the dual-credit policy with old NEV-rules scenario. Meanwhile, with the slight changes in policy, the market share of BEVs with long electric range in the new dual-credit policy scenario becomes more than it in the dual-credit policy with old NEV-rules scenario. For example, in 2023, the sedan BEVs at 300 and 400 km take more than 82% of total PEVs in the new dual-credit policy scenario, while it just reaches 80% in the dual-credit policy with old NEV-rules scenario.

It is also clearly shown that, with more strict requirements, the ratio of PEVs in the passenger vehicle market in the new dual-credit policy scenario increases more than it is in the dual-credit policy with old NEV-rules scenario in 2021-2023, as shown in Figure 4. For example, comparing the PEV share under the dual-credit policy with old NEV-rules scenario, the PEV share under the new dual-credit policy scenario increases by 0.5% in 2023. However, the total PEV share (11.4% in 2023) in the new dual-credit policy scenario is smaller than it (12.6% in 2023) is in the CAFC only scenario. This is because the CAFC rules could incentivize the production of more PHEVs, which can be helpful for further reducing the industrial CAFC.

3.2 PEV Market Projection

The NEOCC can also reveal the possible PEV shares by powertrain technologies under the dual-credit policy (2021-2023). Figure 5 shows the market share of PEV sales in 2023. Totally, the PEV sales could reach about 11.4% by year 2023 if the sales continuously grow up as what the market did in 2017. Considering the downturn in the vehicle market in 2018-2019 and negative impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, the projection could be harder to achieve. At the same time, it shows that nearly 69% of PEVs will be sedans. Among these sedans, the BEVs are still much more popular than the PHEVs. The BEVs with longer electric range (more than 300 km) are especially welcomed. This might be because the cost related to charging activities (BEV-300 km and BEV-400 km is better at saving this cost, as shown in Figure 3) takes much in the total cost of ownership on the PEVs, and both the dual-credit policy (2021-2023) and the government subsidies more clearly favour the BEVs with longer electric range [6]. However, on the other hand, it is found that 99% of the daily driving distances of a personal owned vehicle in China is no more than 88.0 to 112.0 km, which means that BEV-150 km could still meet most daily needs of personal vehicle drivers if the electric range anxiety is not considered [13]. Thus, while BEVs with long electric range could be used by the public-fleet drivers (such as taxis, or shared mobility), the BEVs with short electric range can still have their reasonable market space for the personal vehicle drivers. For example, the GM and SAIC’s Wuling released a car model – Hong Guang Mini EV with electric range at 120 km or 170 km, which does not target on the government subsidies but aims to meet the driver’s basic travel patterns and the potential low-income buyers who are more sensitive to vehicle price [14]. In the SUV/crossover segment, the PHEVs and the BEVs with longer electric range are more popular. This is might because the SUV/crossover keeps more welcomed in the current market, and people who want to buy an SUV/crossover are less sensitive to the vehicle price while having larger range anxiety.

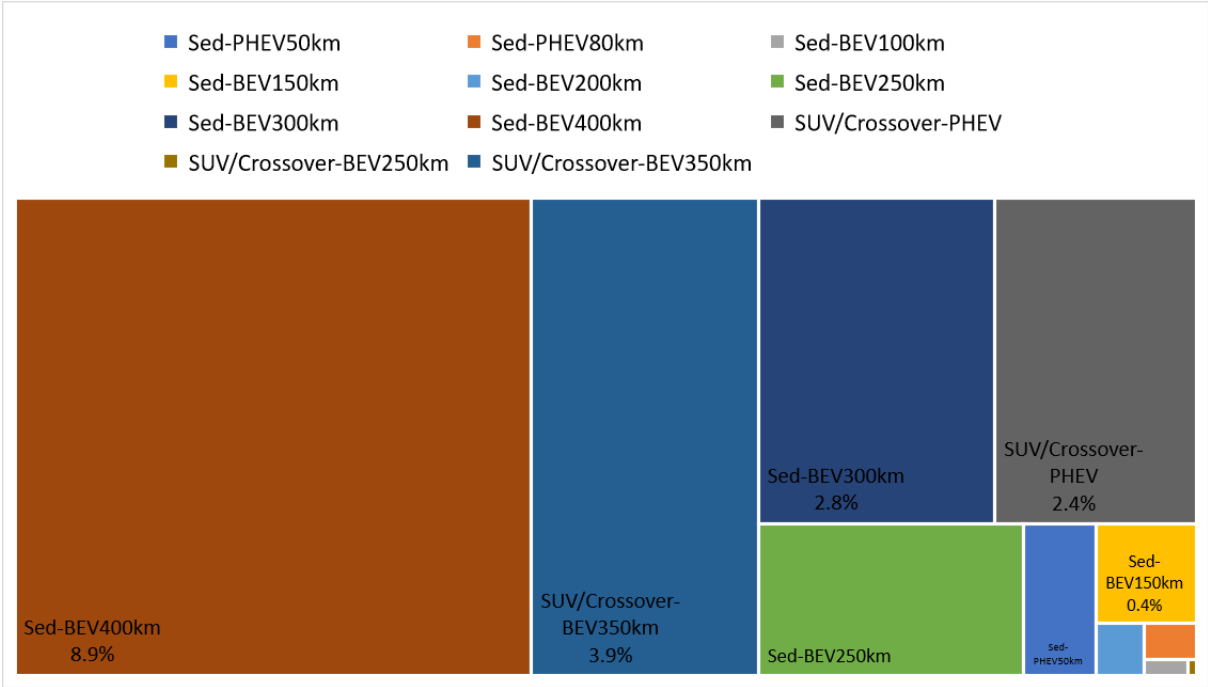


Figure 5: Market shares of PEVs in year 2023 under the dual-credit policy (2021-2023)

4 Conclusions

By adopting the vehicle policy analysis tool – NEOCC model, this study quantified the impacts of the dual-credit policy for 2021-2023 (official version released in June 2020) on the vehicle market in China. Policy scenarios are compared and market dynamics by 2023 are projected. Major findings are concluded based on the simulation results by the NEOCC model:

- a) The cost of vehicle ownership impacted by the charging activities is least for BEVs with electric range at 400 km;
- b) Owning a dedicated residential parking spot can largely reduce the cost related to charging activities;
- c) Compared to the dual-credit policy (2018-2020), the dual-credit policy (2021-2023) can contribute more sales of high fuel-efficient vehicles in the market. For example, comparing with the dual-credit policy with old NEV-rules scenario, the ICE-Low FC will increase by 0.51% in 2023 with dual-credit policy (2021-2023);
- d) Under the constraints with the dual-credit policy for 2021-2023, the share of PEVs in the passenger vehicle market can reach about 11.4% by 2023.;
- e) The dual-credit policy (2021-2023) can indeed incentivize more PEVs than the dual-credit policy with old NEV-rules. For example, compared to the dual-credit policy with old NEV-rules scenario, the PEV market share will increase by 0.5% in 2023 under the dual-credit policy (2021-2023).
- f) The BEVs with longer electric range (such as sedan BEV with electric range at 400 km) would be most popular during 2021-2023.
- g) Although the sedan BEVs with electric range at 150 km have also met most travel demands of personal vehicle drivers, the BEVs with short electric range are less favourable by the dual-credit policy for 2021-2023 and the government subsidies.
- h) The PHEVs in the SUV segment would be one of the most popular vehicle types in the investigated PEVs in this study.

It is worthy to note that these conclusions mentioned above are based on the premise that PEV sales will continuously grow up as it did in 2016-2019. Considering that the vehicle market experienced a severe downturn during 2018 and 2019 and the uncertainties brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, we believe it is still an open question for researchers whether the electrification transition will continuously expand in this rapidly developing market. However, it is still meaningful to draw a general picture for the public, specifically for policymakers, to understand the possible future trend of the electric vehicle market in China under the dual-credit policy (2021-2023) – one of the most significant vehicle policies in recent years.

The contribution of this study is to create a framework and to discuss the potential impacts of vehicle policy, specifically the dual-credit policy (2021-2023) on the vehicle market through utilizing the quantitative modelling tool. Currently, some assumptions such as the projections of the fuel economy and battery cost are based on review on recent literature; and some calculations are simplified for the data analysis. The market data needs close follow-ups and revisions as more is learnt. The analysis and the NEOCC model will be continuously updated and improved.

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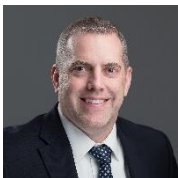
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