



Press Release

J.D. Power Asia Pacific Reports: Overall New-Vehicle Appeal of Passenger Cars Improves in Thailand, While Appeal of Pickup Trucks Declines

Fuel Economy Becomes Increasingly Important to Overall Satisfaction With New-Vehicle Design and Performance

BANGKOK: 23 December 2011 — Overall new-vehicle appeal of passenger cars and utility vehicles has improved, compared with 2010, while appeal of pickup trucks has declined, according to the J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2011 Thailand Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) StudySM released today.

Now in its ninth year, the APEAL Study is an owner-reported measure of what gratifies owners in Thailand about their new vehicle's performance and design during the first two to six months of ownership. The study examines nearly 100 attributes covering 10 vehicle categories: exterior; interior; storage and space; audio/entertainment/ navigation; seats; HVAC; driving dynamics; engine/ transmission; visibility and driving safety; and fuel economy. APEAL Study performance is reported as an index score based on a 1,000-point scale, with a higher score indicating higher satisfaction.

Overall new-vehicle appeal averages 884 in 2011, a two-point decline from 2010. Satisfaction has decreased in most of the 10 vehicle categories, with improvements occurring only in seats (by one point from 2010) and audio/ entertainment/ navigation (by 22 points). Audio/ entertainment/ navigation is the only category that improves among passenger car, pickup and utility vehicle models.

The study finds that the importance of fuel economy to overall satisfaction has increased considerably, particularly among owners of passenger cars and utility vehicles. Among owners of passenger cars, the importance of vehicle exterior has also increased. However, the visibility and driving safety category continues to have the greatest influence on overall vehicle appeal, with a relative importance weight of approximately 20 percent.

"Passenger cars that are powered by alternative energy sources or new fuel technologies—such as eco-car, hybrid or CNG vehicles—are quickly gaining popularity in Thailand," said Loic Pean, senior manager at J.D. Power Asia Pacific, Thailand. "While pickup trucks remain widely sought after, the satisfaction gap between passenger cars and pickup trucks—in which pickup trucks have historically had higher levels of satisfaction—has decreased. This shift toward passenger cars is also reflected in new-vehicle sales; The units of passenger cars and pickups sold in Thailand in 2011 are nearly equal."

Model Results by Segment

Models from five different brands receive awards in 2011. Nissan and Toyota receive two awards each, while Chevrolet, Mazda and Mitsubishi each receive one award.

In the entry midsize car segment, the Mazda2 and Nissan Tiida rank highest in a tie (894 each). The Nissan Tiida ranks highest in the segment for a second consecutive year. The Honda Jazz (888) ranks third in the segment.

In the midsize car segment, the newly launched Toyota Prius (904) ranks highest. The Chevrolet Cruze, which replaces the Optra, ranks second in the segment with a score of 897. The Honda Civic and Mazda3 rank third in the segment, in a tie (890 each).

In the premium midsize segment, the Toyota Camry Hybrid ranks highest for a second consecutive year with a score of 919. The Toyota Camry ranks second in the segment with a score of 908, followed by the Honda Accord (902).

Among sport utility vehicles, the Mitsubishi Pajero Sport (909) ranks highest. The Honda CR-V and Isuzu MU-7 closely follow in the rankings, in a tie (904 each).

In the pickup extended cab segment, the Chevrolet Colorado (909) ranks highest, followed closely by the Mazda BT-50 Hi-Racer (907). The Nissan Frontier Navara Calibre (891) ranks third in the segment.

In the pickup double cab segment, the Nissan Frontier Navara Calibre (895) ranks highest, followed by the Mitsubishi Triton Plus, Toyota Hilux Vigo and Toyota Hilux Vigo Prerunner, in a three-way tie (889 each).

Additional Industry Findings

The study finds that high levels of satisfaction with new-vehicle design and performance have a strong positive effect on both owner advocacy and loyalty. Among owners of vehicle models with APEAL scores equal to or higher than industry average, 75 percent say they “definitely would” recommend their model. This figure declines to 41 percent among owners of vehicle models with APEAL scores below industry average. Similarly, among owners with above-average levels of satisfaction, 53 percent say they “definitely would” repurchase their make. In comparison, only 19 percent of owners with below-average satisfaction say the same.

“New-vehicle appeal performance is largely dependent upon the capacity of manufacturers to innovate and improve their vehicles in critical aspects such as usability, comfort, performance and safety, which drive customer excitement and satisfaction,” said Pean. “The automotive market in Thailand is growing, with an increasing number of models to choose from, so innovation and improvement of vehicle models is critical to increasing both consumer interest and positive word of mouth.”

The 2011 Thailand APEAL Study is based on evaluations from 4,248 owners who purchased their new vehicle between October 2010 and June 2011. The study includes 64 different passenger car, pickup truck and utility vehicle models covering 13 different makes. The study was fielded between April and September 2011.

About J.D. Power Asia Pacific

J.D. Power Asia Pacific has offices in Tokyo, Singapore, Beijing, Shanghai and Bangkok that conduct customer satisfaction research and provide performance analytics services in the automotive, information technology and finance industries. Together, the five offices bring the language of customer satisfaction to consumers and businesses in China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. Information regarding J.D. Power Asia Pacific and its products can be accessed through the Internet at www.jdpower.com. Media e-mail contact: xingtliu@jdpower.com.sg.

About J.D. Power and Associates

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power and Associates is a global marketing information services company operating in key business sectors including market research, forecasting, performance improvement, Web intelligence and customer satisfaction. The company’s quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumers annually. J.D. Power and Associates is a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

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Media Relations Contacts:

XingTi Liu; J.D. Power Asia Pacific; 08-Shenton Way, #44-02/03/04; Singapore, 068811; Phone +65-67338980; xingtliu@jdpower.com.sg

John Tews; Director, Media Relations; J.D. Power and Associates; 5435 Corporate Drive, Suite 300; Troy, MI, 48098 U.S.A.; 001 248-312-4119; john.tews@jdpa.com

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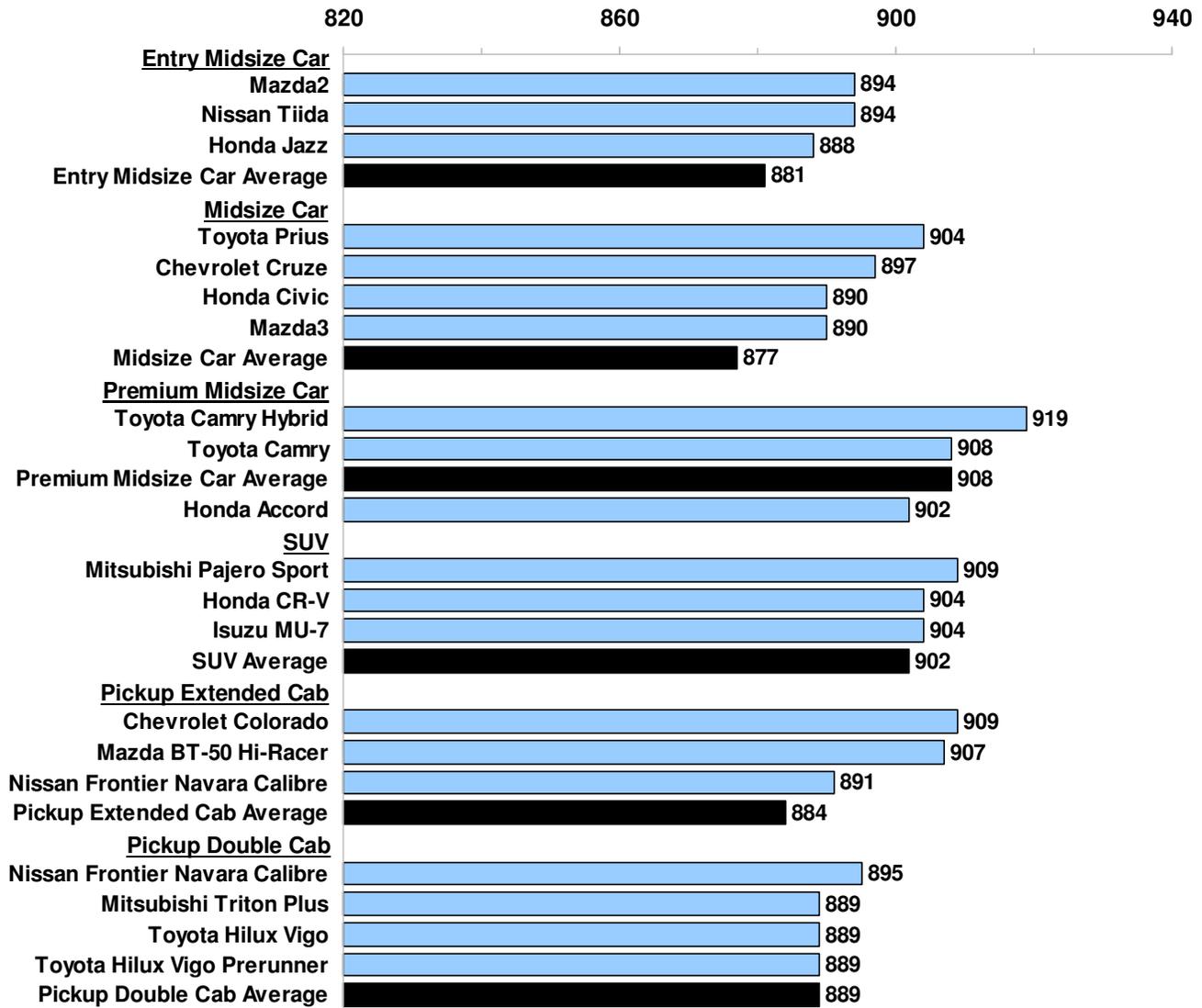
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NOTE: One chart follows.

J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2011 Thailand Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) StudySM

Top Three Vehicles per Segment in APEAL

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Note: Only the top three models per segment are shown above. Official rankings are published only for segments with at least three models with sufficient sample and at least one with an APEAL score better than segment average. No official rankings are published for the compact car, luxury car, MPV, and pickup standard cab segments.

Source: J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2011 Thailand Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) StudySM

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