

Interior Styling and Design is Most Vital Contributor to New-Vehicle Appeal in Thailand, J.D. Power Finds

Toyota Receives Four APEAL Awards; Honda, Mazda and Suzuki Each Receive One Award

BANGKOK: 20 Dec. 2017 — Vehicle interior is the greatest contributor towards customer satisfaction with vehicle appeal among 10 overall vehicle components, according to the J.D. Power 2017 Thailand Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) Study,SM released today.

Across all vehicle segments, the relative importance of interior design and comfort elements in overall owner satisfaction with their new vehicle has increased this year from 2016. Vehicle interior — as a part of overall vehicle appeal — has the highest relative importance of all 10 vehicle components measured in the study. Vehicle interior includes the evaluation of a range of design elements, such as the instrument cluster and ambient lighting; comfort aspects such as cabin quietness, smell; and soft-touch interior parts, such as arm rests and door panels. Perceived quality and color coordination of interior materials are also essential elements.

“As new-vehicle buyers increasingly spend longer periods of time in their vehicle due to lengthier commutes, customer expectations with regard to interior design, specifically comfort, grow,” said **Siros Satrabhaya, Country Manager at J.D. Power**. “For example, interior quietness is of utmost importance, as it is one of the lowest-rated attributes across vehicle segments. Additionally, passenger car owners complain about the lack of comfort in resting their arms while driving. Brands that address these customer requirements will likely see an increase in satisfaction.”

Overall satisfaction averages 908 points (on a 1,000-point scale) in 2017, up from 901 in 2016, with scores in all vehicle segments except compact SUV improving year over year. Satisfaction also improves across all vehicle components, particularly in seats (+11 points) and driving dynamics (+10 points).

The study also finds that customers who experienced fewer initial vehicle quality problems than expected are most satisfied with overall vehicle appeal (919) than those who experienced the same or more problems than expected (897 and 885, respectively).

Following are some of the key findings of the study:

- **Exterior styling remains a key purchase driver:** Nearly one in four customers (24%) cite exterior styling as the main reason for purchasing their new vehicle, followed by vehicle performance (19%), previous experience with the brand (10%) and good fuel efficiency (10%).
- **Audio/ Entertainment/ Navigation system design requires improvement:** Navigation and audio system-related attributes are among the lowest rated, notably the ability of the navigation system to provide a desirable route and its ease of operation, as well as quality of bass and sound clarity at high volumes.
- **Driving pleasure boosts satisfaction:** Among customers who are highly satisfied (providing a satisfaction rating of 10 on a 10-point scale) with overall vehicle appeal, 51% say they find their new vehicle fun to drive, as compared with only 24% of pleased customers (rating of 8 to 9 points) who say the same. Furthermore, only 11% of customers who are disappointed or indifferent (ratings of 1 to 7 points) say their vehicle is fun to drive.

Study Rankings

Toyota receives four APEAL awards: the **Vios** (900 points) in the entry midsize car segment; the **Fortuner** (927) in the large SUV segment; the **Hilux Revo Prerunner Smart Cab** (914) in the extended cab pickup segment; and the **Hilux Revo Prerunner D-Cab** (923) in the double cab pickup segment.

Suzuki receives the award in the compact car segment for the **Ciaz** (897). **Honda** receives the award in the midsize car segment for the **Civic** (926). **Mazda** receives the award for the **CX-3** (915) in the compact SUV segment.

The 2017 Thailand APEAL Study is based on responses from 4,866 new-vehicle owners who purchased their vehicle from November 2016 through July 2017. The study covers 12 brands that include 76 passenger car, pickup truck and utility vehicle models. The study was fielded from May through September 2017.

The study is an owner-reported measure of what satisfies owners in Thailand regarding their new vehicle's performance and design during the first two to six months of ownership. The study examines nearly 100 attributes in 10 vehicle categories: exterior; interior; storage and space; audio/entertainment/ navigation; seats; heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC); driving dynamics; engine/ transmission; visibility and driving safety; and fuel economy.

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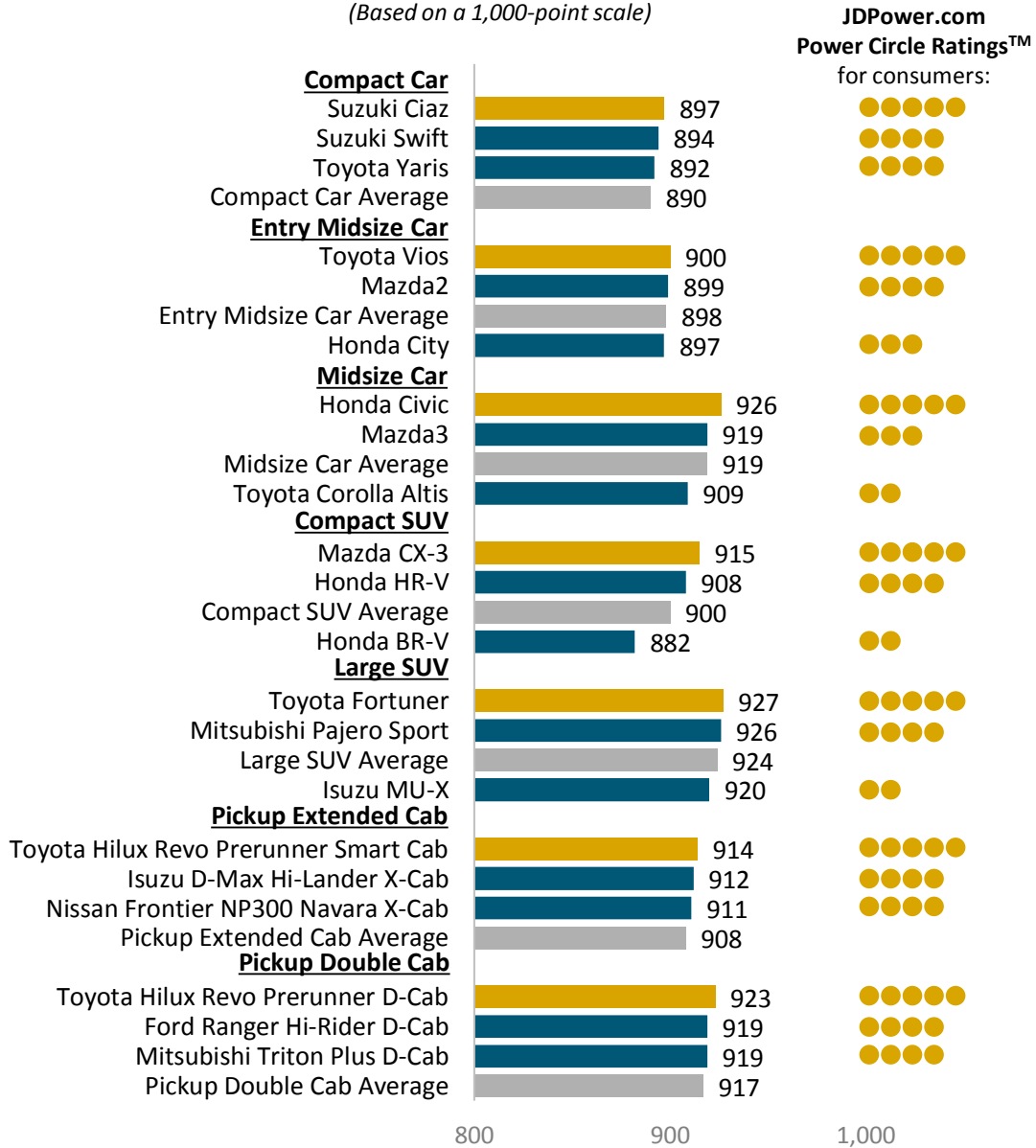
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NOTE: One chart follows.

J.D. Power 2017 Thailand Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) StudySM

Top Three Models per Segment in APEAL

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Note: Only the top three vehicles 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 luxury car, midsize SUV, MPV, pickup single cab and premium midsize car segments.

Source: J.D. Power 2017 Thailand Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) StudySM

Power Circle Ratings Legend

Among the best
 Better than most
 About average
 The rest

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