



Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates Reports:

Buying a Compact Vehicle Doesn't Mean Compromising on Seat Quality and Features or Satisfaction

Avanzar Interior Technologies, Ltd. and TS Tech Co., Ltd. Rank Highest in a Tie in Seat Quality

WESTLAKE VILLAGE, Calif: 16 August 2012 — Owners are buying a higher number of small vehicles that have more seat features than previous models, and they are more satisfied with the quality of seats, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2012 U.S. Seat Quality and Satisfaction StudySM released today.

Market share for compact and subcompact models has grown to 35.4 percent in the first seven months of 2012 from 32.0 percent during the same period in 2008.¹ In addition, 27 percent of new-vehicle owners replaced their vehicle with a smaller 2012 model.²

Along with the sales growth in compact and subcompact models, the market penetration of seat features in those vehicles has also increased. The study finds that market penetration in the compact and subcompact vehicle segments for heated seats has increased by 16 percentage points, compared with the 2008 study, while penetration for leather seats has increased by 10 percentage points, memory seats by three percentage points and cooled/ventilated seats by two percentage points. [T]

Vehicle owner satisfaction with seats is also increasing. Seat satisfaction among compact and subcompact vehicle owners averages 7.5 points on a 10-point scale, which is significantly higher than the 2008 study, as are ratings for seat material conveying an impression of quality (7.4) and seat styling (7.6).

“Owners have high expectations for their vehicle, and purchasing a smaller vehicle doesn't mean they want to forego amenities, especially regarding seats,” said Mike VanNieuwkuyk, executive director of global automotive at J.D. Power and Associates. “A vehicle's interior has been growing in importance to vehicle owners, and seats are paramount to driver and passenger comfort.”

According to the J.D. Power and Associates 2012 Initial Quality StudySM (IQS), interior comfort is the second-most-common reason owners cite for selection of their new vehicle. [T]

“Automakers are doing a good job of recognizing the importance of seat comfort and quality, identifying suppliers to provide the best seats available and integrating them into the vehicle,” said VanNieuwkuyk. “That's evident by the steady increase in seat satisfaction since 2008.”

While overall satisfaction with seats has increased, seat quality remains flat at 5.5 problems per 100 vehicles (PP100), compared with 2011, but has improved from 6.2 PP100 in 2008. A lower score indicates higher quality.

¹ Source: LMC Automotive. Includes the sub-compact conventional, compact conventional, compact CUV, compact MPV, compact sporty and compact utility segments.

² Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2012 U.S. Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) StudySM

Satisfaction with headrests has improved slightly from 2011, specifically headrest adjustment controls that are difficult to understand or use. Headrests have a significant impact on vehicle owner loyalty and satisfaction, and satisfaction declines when owners experience problems.

Among owners who did not experience a headrest-related problem, overall satisfaction averages 7.9, compared with only 6.7 among owners who did experience a headrest problem. In addition, 73 percent of owners who did not experience headrest problems say they “definitely will” recommend their vehicle to family and friends, and 46 percent say they “definitely will” repurchase a vehicle of the same brand the next time they shop for a new vehicle. However, among owners who experienced one or more headrest-related problems, only 47 percent say they “definitely will” recommend their vehicle and 27 percent say they “definitely will” purchase the same brand for their next vehicle.

Although fewer than 30 percent of owners have memory seats, cooled/ventilated seats, adjustable sliding rear seats or adjustable reclining rear seats in their current vehicle, more than 90 percent of those owners say they would like to have those features in their next new vehicle. In addition, the majority of owners who have fold-down rear seats, heated seats, power lumbar support or height-adjustable seat belts in their current vehicle indicate they would want these features again in their next vehicle. [T]

While seat satisfaction has steadily improved during the past few years, interest in seat features continues to grow. “Seats are a constant touch point for vehicle owners, and is central to providing a comfortable experience,” said VanNieuwkuyk. “Owners clearly are looking for more features and comfort from their vehicle seats, and it is evident there is an opportunity to raise the bar.”

Seat Supplier Quality Rankings

Avanzar Interior Technologies, Ltd.—a joint venture between Johnson Controls and SAT Auto Technologies, Ltd.—and TS Tech Co., Ltd. rank highest in a tie for seat quality, each with 3.3 PP100. This is the third consecutive year Avanzar ranks highest in seat quality.

Toyo Seat ranks third (4.0 PP100), followed by NHK Spring Co., Ltd. (4.6 PP100) and Daewon Sanup Co. (4.8 PP100)

Among suppliers that perform well in overall seat satisfaction are Bridgewater Interiors, LLC.; Faurecia; Lear Corporation; Magna; and Toyota Boshoku Corporation.

The 2012 U.S. Seat Quality and Satisfaction Study provides automotive manufacturers and suppliers with quality and satisfaction information related to automotive seating systems. New-vehicle owners are asked to rate the quality of their vehicle seats and seat belts based on whether or not they experienced defects/malfunctions or design problems during the first 90 days of ownership. The study is based on responses from more than 74,700 owners of new 2012 model-year cars and light trucks. The study was fielded between February and May 2012.

About J.D. Power and Associates

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J.D. Power and Associates Media Contacts:

John Tews; Troy, Mich.; (248) 680-6218; media.relations@jdpa.com

Syvetril Perryman; Westlake Village, Calif.; (805) 418-8103; media.relations@jdpa.com

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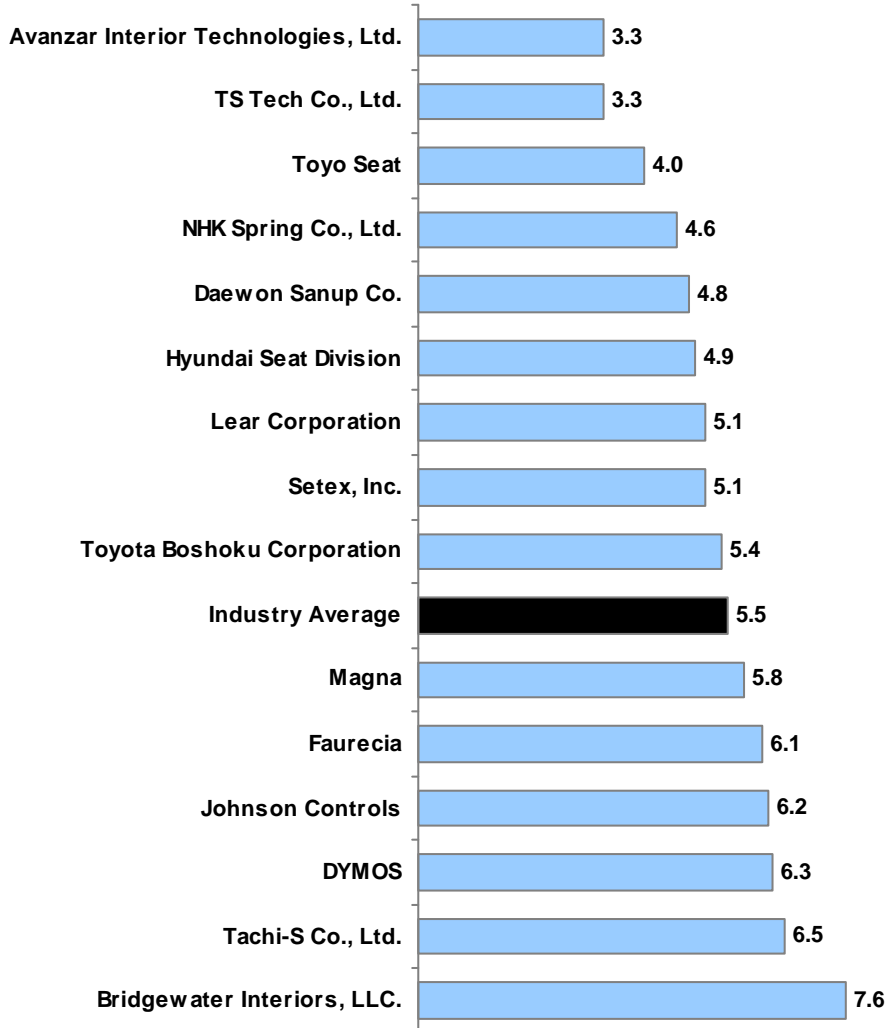
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NOTE: One chart follows.

J.D. Power and Associates 2012 U.S. Seat Quality and Satisfaction StudySM

Seat Supplier Quality Ranking

Problems per 100 Vehicles*



*Problems per 100 vehicles is measured via actual owner feedback related to the number of "things gone wrong." A lower score reflects better quality performance.

Note: Only award-eligible suppliers are included in the ranking. To be award eligible, a primary supplier (does not include suppliers that split sourcing) must have sufficient sample size, source at least five models or represent one percent or more of the study sample.

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2012 U.S. Seat Quality and Satisfaction StudySM

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