

Press Release

Overall New-Vehicle Quality in Thailand is Stable in 2015; Increase in Interior, Audio Problems Offset Improvements in Other Areas

[Honda and Toyota Receive Initial Quality Awards in Two Segments Each;](#)
[Mazda and Mitsubishi Receive One Award Each](#)

BANGKOK: 27 November 2015 — Although quality improves in three component categories and remains stable in two, a substantial increase in the number of reported problems in the vehicle interior and audio/entertainment/ navigation system (ACEN) categories offsets the other initial quality gains overall, according to the J.D. Power 2015 Thailand Initial Quality StudySM (IQS) released today.

The study measures problems experienced by new-vehicle owners during the first two to six months of ownership and examines more than 200 problem symptoms in eight component categories (listed in order of frequency of reported problems): vehicle exterior; engine/ transmission; driving experience; vehicle interior; audio, entertainment and navigation (ACEN); HVAC; features, controls and displays; and seats. All problems are summarized as the number of problems per 100 vehicles (PP100), with lower PP100 scores indicating a lower incidence of problems and, therefore, higher initial quality.

“Manufacturers have made strides in initial quality in most categories, most notably with vehicle exterior, engine/ transmission and driving experience components,” said **Siros Satrabhaya, branch manager at J.D. Power**. However, there is a misalignment of customer expectations when it comes to vehicle interior and audio system quality components, as new-vehicle owners increasingly report problems in these areas.”

Overall initial quality averages 91 PP100 in 2015, on par with 2014. The study finds that the percentage of interior problems has increased to 11% in 2015 from 8% in 2014, while problems with ACEN systems have increased to 8% vs. 6% last year. The most frequently cited problems in the vehicle interior category relate to difficulty using cup holders, squeak/ rattle noises from the instrument panel and poor quality interior materials. Key problems in the ACEN category are poor radio reception and speaker sound quality. The proportion of problems related to seats has increased slightly to 5% from 4% in 2014.

Satrabhaya cautioned that, despite a stable performance in the HVAC and features, controls and displays categories, manufacturers should be mindful of problem severity, as gaps in overall vehicle quality ratings between owners who experience a problem and those who do not are largest in these categories. In fact, these gaps are the largest since the study’s inception in 2000. “Air-conditioning is likely an issue due to a heat wave earlier in the year, and there is sensitivity around features, controls and displays as more features become standard offerings on new vehicles,” he explained. “Underperformance on in-cabin quality is a critical issue for manufacturers wanting to produce vehicles that live up to customer expectations.”

KEY FINDINGS

- Passenger car segments combined had 89 PP100 in 2015, a 4 PP100 increase compared with 2014.
- The highest- and lowest-performing segments are consistent with 2014, with premium midsize car owners reporting the fewest number of problems with their vehicle (59 PP100), and MPV owners reporting the highest number of problems (110 PP100).
- Nearly two-thirds (61%) of owners report at least one initial quality problem in 2015, compared with 51% in 2014.
- Excessive wind noise (9.6 PP100) remains the most frequently reported problem symptom this year, and has been so since 2008. Poor radio reception (2.4 PP100), which has a history of being among the top five most frequently reported problems, is once again among the top five after improving in both 2013 and 2014.
- Loyalty and repurchase intentions are proportional to customer satisfaction with overall vehicle quality, as 78% of delighted customers say they “definitely would” recommend their vehicle model and 61% say they “definitely would” repurchase their vehicle make; among disappointed customers, only 23% and 11%, respectively, say the same.

2015 Thailand Initial Quality Study Rankings

Honda receives two model-level awards: the **Civic** (72 PP100) in the midsize car segment and the **CR-V** (68 PP100) in the full-size SUV segment.

Toyota receives awards in two pickup vehicle segments: the Hilux Vigo Champ Prerunner Smart Cab (74 PP100) in the pickup extended cab segment, and the Hilux Revo Prerunner D-Cab and Hilux Vigo Champ Prerunner D-Cab in a tie (67 PP100 each) in the pickup double cab segment.

The **Mitsubishi Mirage** (101 PP100) ranks highest in the compact car segment. The **Mazda2** (77 PP100) ranks highest in the entry midsize car segment.

The 2015 Thailand Initial Quality Study (IQS) is based on evaluations from 4,837 owners who purchased their new vehicle between October 2014 and July 2015. The study covers 12 different brands that include 89 different passenger car, pickup truck and utility vehicle models. The study was fielded from April through September 2015.

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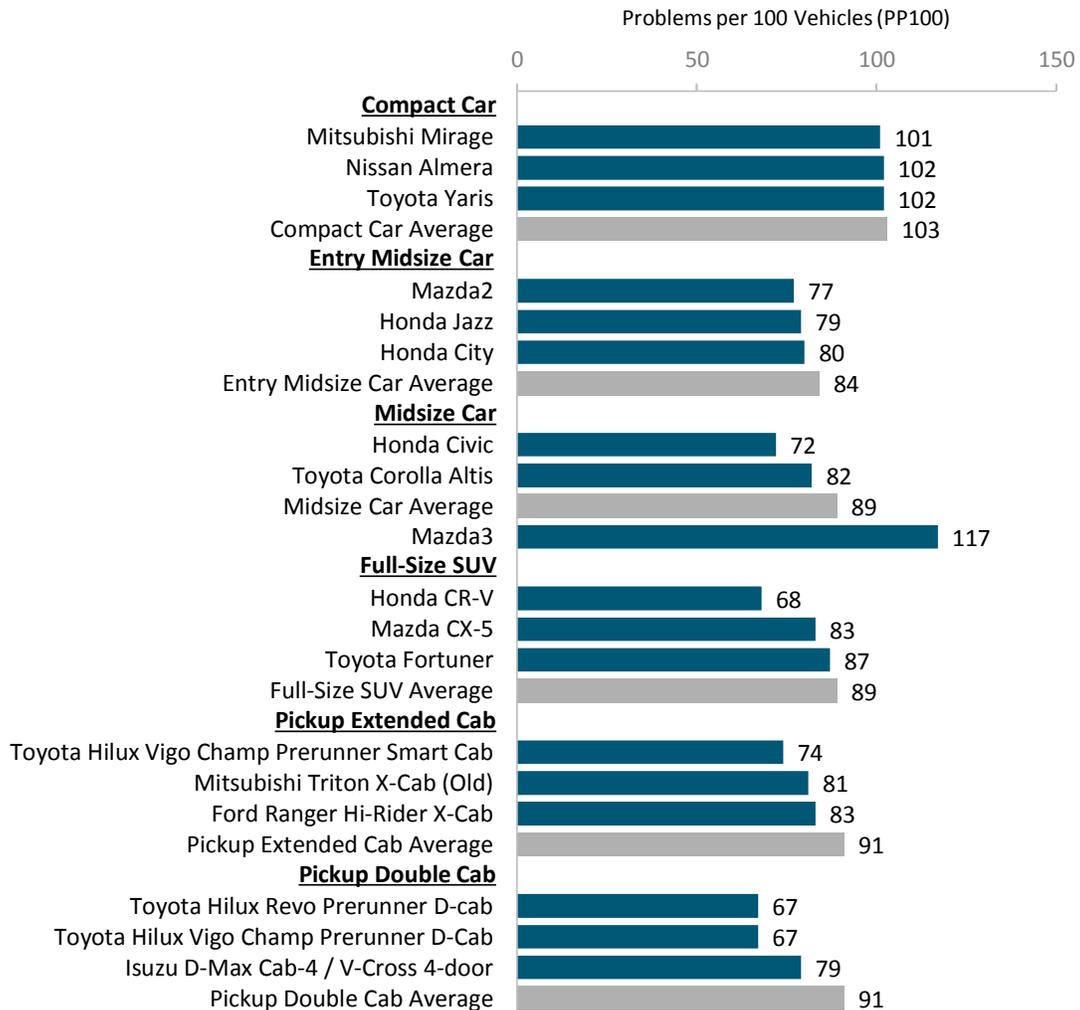
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NOTE: One chart follows.

J.D. Power 2015 Thailand Initial Quality StudySM (IQS)

Top Three Vehicles per Segment in Initial Quality

Lower score reflects higher quality performance



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 IQS score better than segment average. No official rankings are published for the premium midsize car, luxury car, compact SUV, MPV and pickup single cab segments.

Source: J.D. Power 2015 Thailand Initial Quality StudySM (IQS)

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