Vehicle Dependability at All-Time High, J.D. Power Finds

Lexus Ranks Highest among Luxury Brands; Kia Ranks Highest among Mass Market Brands

TROY, Mich.: 18 Feb. 2021 — Vehicle dependability is at an all-time high, with the overall level of problems cited by owners declining 10% from a year ago, according to the J.D. Power 2021 U.S. Vehicle Dependability Study^{SM} (VDS), released today.

"The study results validate what we have known for some time," said **Dave Sargent, vice president of global automotive at J.D. Power.** "Automakers are making increasingly dependable vehicles—but there are still some problem areas that need to be addressed and some warning signs on the horizon."

The study, now in its 32nd year, measures the number of problems per 100 vehicles (PP100) experienced during the past 12 months by original owners of three-year-old vehicles. A lower score reflects higher dependability, and the study covers 177 specific problems grouped into eight major vehicle categories: audio/communication/entertainment/navigation (ACEN); engine/transmission; exterior; interior; features/controls/displays (FCD); driving experience; heating, ventilation and air conditioning; and seats.

The 2018 model-year vehicles measured in this year's study were first examined in the J.D. Power 2018 U.S. Initial Quality Study (IQS),^{SM} when new-vehicle quality had improved for the fourth consecutive year and reached its best level ever. Six of the 10 brands that ranked highest in that study also appear among the ten highest ranked in the 2021 VDS.

"Today's three-year-old vehicles are of higher quality and more dependable than in previous years," Sargent said. "Most owners aren't experiencing their vehicles breaking down or falling apart but, for many, vehicle technology continues to function poorly or inconsistently. If an owner can't rely on a system to work as they expect, it is also considered a lack of dependability. It affects their overall view of the vehicle and their likelihood of staying loyal to their automaker. In the future, dependability will partially be determined by the ability to solve problems through vehicle updates and the avoidance of technology obsolescence."

Following are key findings of the 2021 study:

- **Vehicle dependability improves to best level ever:** The industry average is 121 PP100—the lowest in the study's history—and a 13 PP100 (10%) improvement from 134 PP100 in 2020. This is a much greater rate of improvement than in the past two years, which had improvements of 2 PP100 and 6 PP100, respectively.

- **Trucks and SUVs have room—to improve:** Cars continues to be the segment with the most dependable vehicles, averaging 111 PP100, while trucks average 130 PP100 and SUVs average 122 PP100. Given that trucks and SUVs currently account for approximately 80% of retail sales each month, it's important for automakers to address problem areas in these two segments to achieve a similar level of dependability as for cars.

- **Korean and Japanese brands perform well:** Owners of Asian brand vehicles experience the fewest problems (115 PP100) compared with domestic brands (126 PP100) and European brands (131 PP100). This gap is due in part to Korean brands Kia, Hyundai and Genesis which, when combined, average just 99 PP100 and represent a 19-point gap vs. the Japanese brands (collectively 118 PP100).

- **All problem categories have improved:** All eight categories improve this year, led by exterior (3.7 PP100) and driving experience (2.2 PP100). ACEN (audio/communication/ entertainment/navigation) shows marginal improvement and remains the category with the most problems reported. "From early in the ownership experience, many owners complain about these systems being problematic," Sargent said. "It's a recurring theme. With smartphone apps increasingly giving owners an alternative, some will give up on the vehicle's built-in systems that caused that initial frustration. That's problematic for automakers, as a lot of the vehicle's value is tied up in these systems and they don't want to hand this business over to third parties."

- **Most Dependable Model:** The **Porsche 911** is the highest-ranked model in the 2021 study. It is the second time in three years that it has been named Most Dependable Model.

- **Tesla profiled for first time:** Tesla receives a score of 176 PP100. The automaker is not officially ranked among other brands in the study because it doesn't meet the ranking criteria. Unlike other manufacturers, Tesla doesn't grant J.D. Power permission to survey its owners in 15 states where it is required. However, Tesla's score was calculated based on a robust sample of surveys from owners in the other 35 states.

Highest-Ranked Brands

Lexus ranks highest in overall vehicle dependability among all brands, with a score of 81 PP100. This is the ninth time in 10 years that Lexus ranks highest. **Porsche** (86 PP100) ranks second, followed by **Kia** (97 PP100), **Toyota** (98 PP100), **Buick** (100 PP100) and **Cadillac** (also 100 PP100).

Kia shows considerable improvement, with a reduction of 35 PP100 from 2020. This is also the first time Kia ranks highest overall among mass market brands. Other brands above industry average showing the greatest improvement in PP100 are **Cadillac**, **Acura** and **Hyundai** (all by 31 PP100), and **Mitsubishi** (by 30 PP100).

Toyota Motor Corporation receives five segment awards for the Lexus ES, Lexus GX, Toyota Avalon, Toyota Sienna and Toyota Tundra.

General Motors Company receives four segment awards for the Buick Envision, Chevrolet Camaro, Chevrolet Silverado HD and Chevrolet Tahoe.

Hyundai Motor Group also receives four segment awards for the Genesis G80, Kia Optima, Kia Sorento and Kia Sportage.

Chevrolet, **Kia** and **Toyota** each receive three segment awards, the most among all brands in the study.

The Consumer Ratings featured on JDPower.com, the car-shopping site, are generated using data from verified owners who have participated in J.D. Power automotive studies including U.S. Vehicle Dependability Study [SM] (VDS); U.S. Customer Service Index (CSI) Study[SM]; U.S. Initial Quality Study (IQS)[SM]; U.S. Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) Study[SM]; and U.S. Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) Study[SM].

"The insights uncovered about vehicle dependability are valuable not only to automakers but to car shoppers," said **Tanya Parkes, vice president of the consumer division at J.D. Power**. "Shoppers who visit JDPower.com can also learn how a vehicle compares to others, which brings more clarity to the shopping experience. The J.D. Power 100-Point Scores are based on independent and unbiased insights from

consumers who have actually owned these vehicles, and that's something in which shoppers are keenly interested."

The 2021 U.S. Vehicle Dependability Study is based on responses from 33,251 original owners of 2018 model-year vehicles after three years of ownership. The study was fielded from July 2020 through November 2020.

To learn more about the U.S. Vehicle Dependability Study, visit https://www.jdpower.com/business/automotive/us-vehicle-dependability-study.

See the online press release at http://www.jdpower.com/pr-id/2021010.

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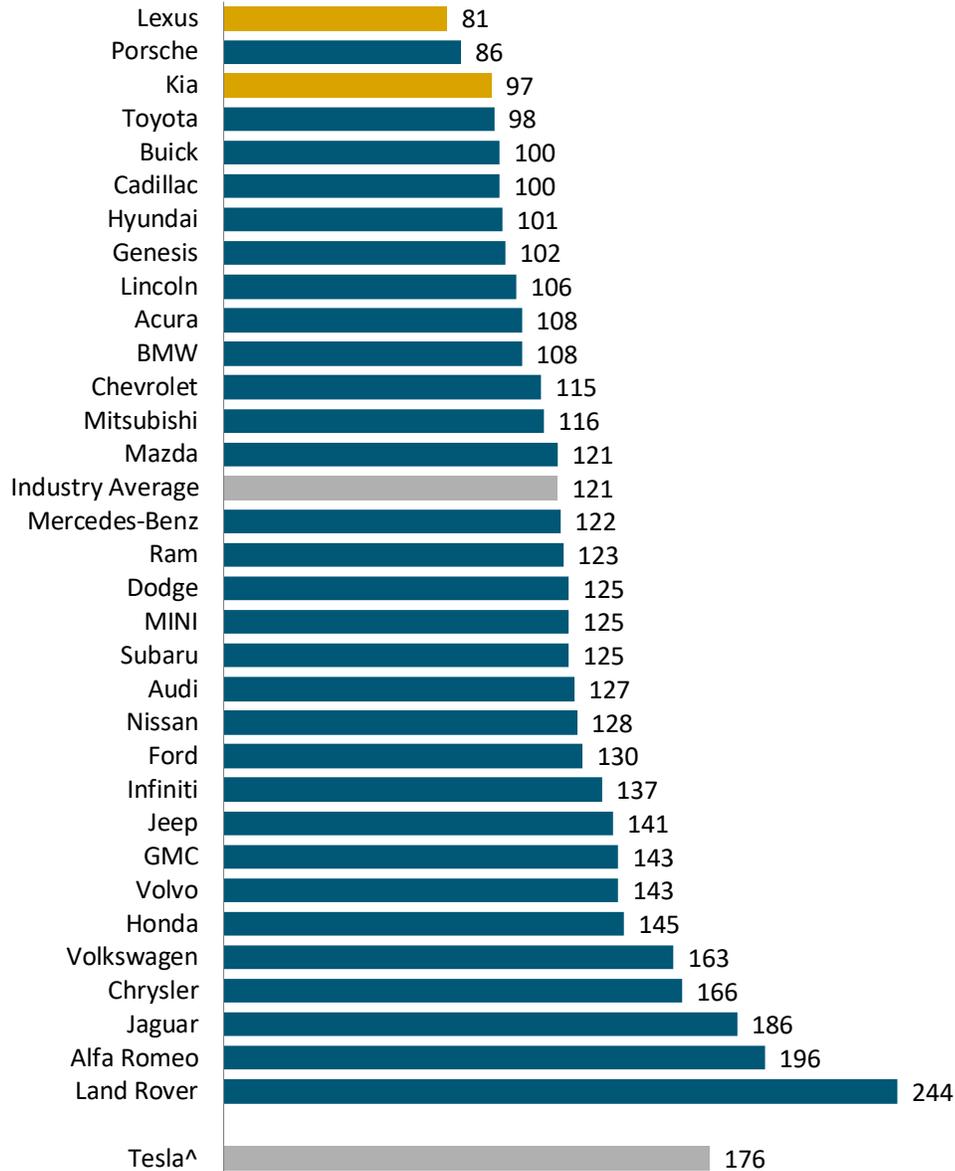
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NOTE: Four charts follow.

J.D. Power
2021 U.S. Vehicle Dependability Study[SM]

Brand Ranking

Problems per 100 (PP100)

Brand	PP100
Lexus	81
Porsche	86
Kia	97
Toyota	98
Buick	100
Cadillac	100
Hyundai	101
Genesis	102
Lincoln	106
Acura	108
BMW	108
Chevrolet	115
Mitsubishi	116
Mazda	121
Industry Average	121
Mercedes-Benz	122
Ram	123
Dodge	125
MINI	125
Subaru	125
Audi	127
Nissan	128
Ford	130
Infiniti	137
Jeep	141
GMC	143
Volvo	143
Honda	145
Volkswagen	163
Chrysler	166
Jaguar	186
Alfa Romeo	196
Land Rover	244
Tesla^	176

Lexus ranks highest among Premium brands, and is noted by a gold bar.
Kia ranks highest among Mass Market brands, and is noted by a gold bar.
Note: ^Brand is not rank eligible because it does not meet study award criteria.

Source: J.D. Power 2021 U.S. Vehicle Dependability Study[SM]

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Most Dependable Model

Porsche 911

Top Three Models per Segment

Car Segments

Compact Car

Highest Ranked: Volkswagen Beetle
Chevrolet Cruze
Toyota Corolla (Tie)
Toyota Prius (Tie)

Midsize Car

Highest Ranked: Kia Optima
Hyundai Sonata
Ford Fusion

Compact Premium Car

Highest Ranked: Lexus ES
Lincoln MKZ
BMW 4 Series

Midsize Premium Car

Highest Ranked: Genesis G80
Cadillac CT6
BMW 5 Series

Large Car*

Highest Ranked: Toyota Avalon
Chevrolet Impala

Midsize Sporty Car*

Highest Ranked: Chevrolet Camaro
Dodge Challenger

Small Premium Car*

Highest Ranked: BMW 2 Series
Audi A3

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*No other model in this segment performs at or above segment average.

Models must have sufficient sample to be considered for the most dependable model award. Models are considered from all segments regardless of segment eligibility.

There must be at least three models with 80% of market sales or four models with 67% of the market sales in any given award segment for an award to be presented. In the City Car, Compact Multi-Purpose Vehicle, Compact Premium Sporty Car, Compact Sporty Car, Large Premium Car, Large Premium SUV, Midsize Premium Sporty Car, and Small Car segments, these criteria were not met, thus no awards have been issued.

Source: J.D. Power 2021 U.S. Vehicle Dependability Study^{SM}

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Top Three Models per Segment

SUV Segments

Compact Premium SUV

Highest Ranked: Porsche Macan
Lexus NX
Lincoln MKC

Midsize Premium SUV

Highest Ranked: Lexus GX
Cadillac XT5
Lexus RX

Compact SUV

Highest Ranked: Buick Envision
Toyota RAV4
Subaru Forester

Midsize SUV

Highest Ranked: Kia Sorento
Toyota Highlander
Ford Edge

Large SUV

Highest Ranked: Chevrolet Tahoe
Chevrolet Suburban
GMC Yukon

Small Premium SUV*

Highest Ranked: Mercedes-Benz GLA
Audi Q3

Small SUV

Highest Ranked: Kia Sportage
Buick Encore
Hyundai Tucson

No other model in this segment performs at or above segment average.

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Top Three Models per Segment

Pickup and Van Segments

Large Heavy Duty Pickup*

Highest Ranked: Chevrolet Silverado HD
Ram 2500/3500

Large Light Duty Pickup

Highest Ranked: Toyota Tundra
Chevrolet Silverado
Ram 1500

Midsize Pickup*

Highest Ranked: Nissan Frontier
Honda Ridgeline

Minivan

Highest Ranked: Toyota Sienna
Dodge Grand Caravan
Chrysler Pacifica

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