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Press Release

J.D. Power and Associates and *AUTO TEST* Report: A Satisfying Product Experience Drives High Levels Of Overall Vehicle Ownership Satisfaction and Loyalty

Models from Audi, BMW, Ford, Kia, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan and Toyota Rank Highest in Their Respective Segments in Satisfying New-Vehicle Owners in Germany

MUNICH: 24 June 2010 — Providing vehicle owners with highly satisfying product experiences has a considerable positive impact on overall satisfaction, which, in turn, drives higher levels of owner loyalty, according to the J.D. Power and Associates 2010 Germany Vehicle Ownership Satisfaction StudySM (VOSS) released today in association with *AUTO TEST*.

Product-related factors, including vehicle appeal, and vehicle quality and reliability, account for 58 percent of overall vehicle ownership satisfaction. While 40 percent of vehicle owners, on average, say they “definitely will” repurchase the same make of vehicle, more than three-fourths of owners who are highly satisfied (scores above 900 on a 1,000-point scale) with their vehicle’s appeal and quality say the same.

“The heavy emphasis placed on product-related factors in terms of overall vehicle ownership satisfaction helps to underline the importance of getting the product right the first time,” said Martin Volk, senior research manager at J.D. Power and Associates. “Otherwise, manufacturers may lose customers to other brands, especially in such a competitive marketplace.”

Engine and transmission-related problems have a particularly strong adverse impact on perceived quality—and, ultimately, a vehicle owner’s loyalty. Even a single engine or transmission problem may drive customers from a brand, as more than 20 percent of vehicle owners who experience one or more engine or transmission problems say they “probably will not” or “definitely will not” buy the brand again.

Satisfaction with dealer service is also an important driver of owner loyalty. For instance, on average, 15 percent of service customers overall say they “probably would not” or “definitely would not” consider using the dealership for paid service again. In contrast, vehicle owners who are highly satisfied with their service experience are seven times less likely to go elsewhere for paid service work (4%), compared with less-satisfied vehicle owners (28%).

Moreover, vehicle owners who are highly satisfied with their dealer service are approximately three times more likely to consider the dealer and brand when they purchase a new vehicle.

“Dealerships play a pivotal role in keeping vehicle owners loyal to their services and to the brand,” said Volk. “The reward for providing an exceptional service experience cannot be overstated, particularly with declining vehicle sales expected for this year.”

The study also finds that vehicle owners who indicate that they received an outstanding vehicle ownership experience are approximately three times more likely to purchase the same vehicle make than are less-satisfied customers.

The study measures customer satisfaction with the vehicle and dealer service based on evaluations of 67 attributes grouped in four key measures. In order of importance, they are: vehicle appeal (32%), which includes performance, design, comfort and features; vehicle quality and reliability (26%); ownership costs (22%), including fuel consumption, insurance and costs of service/repair; and dealer service satisfaction (20%).

Mercedes-Benz ranks highest in vehicle owner satisfaction among manufacturers with a score of 838. Mercedes-Benz performs particularly well in two of the four key measures: vehicle quality and reliability, and vehicle appeal. Rounding out the five highest-ranked brands are BMW and Dacia (tied at 836), and Mazda and Nissan (tied at 831).

“Rising to the top of the manufacturer rankings in ownership satisfaction requires an in-depth understanding of customer expectations and how to implement targeted improvement measures aimed at minimizing deficiencies in terms of the product and dealer service,” said Volk. “For example, a reputation for quality and reliability is among the most important purchase criteria for Mercedes-Benz owners. Exceeding customer expectations on their key purchase criteria is critical to providing an outstanding ownership experience.”

At the segment level, Mercedes-Benz models capture two awards for the C-Class (compact executive car) and CLK-Class (sports car). Also receiving segment-level awards are the Kia Picanto (city car); Nissan Note (small car); MAZDA3 (lower medium car); Toyota Prius (upper medium car); Audi A8 (executive luxury car); Ford S-MAX (MPV); and BMW X5 (SUV).

In the overall satisfaction model ranking, German models perform particularly well, earning awards in five of the nine segments. Mercedes-Benz models receive awards in two segments, while Audi, BMW and Ford receive awards for one model each.

“The German manufacturers seem to have well incorporated the customer’s voice into their operations, achieving excellent scores at the make and model levels,” said Olaf Schilling, chief editor of *AUTO TEST*. “After the end of the scrappage scheme, it is now all about the customer focus to keep the business going.”

The 2010 Germany Vehicle Ownership Satisfaction Study is based on the evaluations of more than 16,300 online interviews with German car owners after an average of two years of ownership. The study was fielded from January to March 2010.

The annual J.D. Power and Associates study provides consumers with reliable and accurate information about many vehicle models, and helps manufacturers provide high levels of satisfaction to their customers. More comprehensive study results are published exclusively in *AUTO TEST*, which will be on sale Friday, June 25, 2010. A summary overview can be found in the June 25, 2010, edition of *AUTO BILD*.

About J.D. Power and Associates

The European headquarters of J.D. Power and Associates is located in Munich, Germany. With world headquarters in Westlake Village, California, U.S.A., 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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About *AUTO TEST*

AUTO TEST is a member of the international *AUTO BILD* group published by Axel Springer. Since 2003, *AUTO TEST* has been the leading special interest magazine for readers who are planning to buy a new car. More than 500 cars are tested each year, with more than 1.8 million kilometers driven to provide readers with detailed and objective model reviews to help them choose the best car for their money. Readers can also find tips on cutting running costs, used cars, service, finance and accessories.

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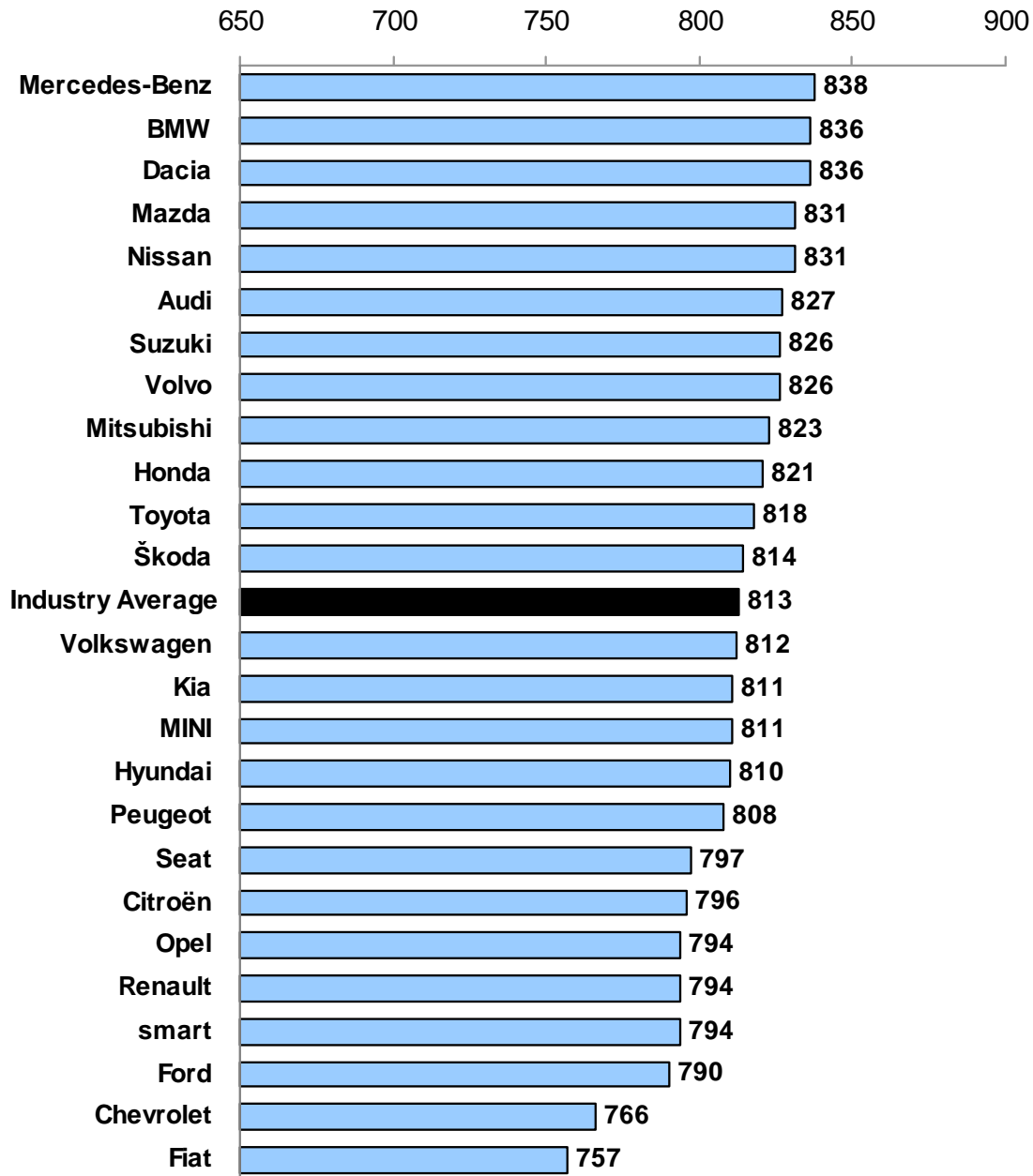
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NOTE: Three charts follow.

J.D. Power and Associates 2010 Germany Vehicle Ownership Satisfaction StudySM (VOSS)

VOSS Manufacturer Index Ranking

(Based on a 1,000-point scale)



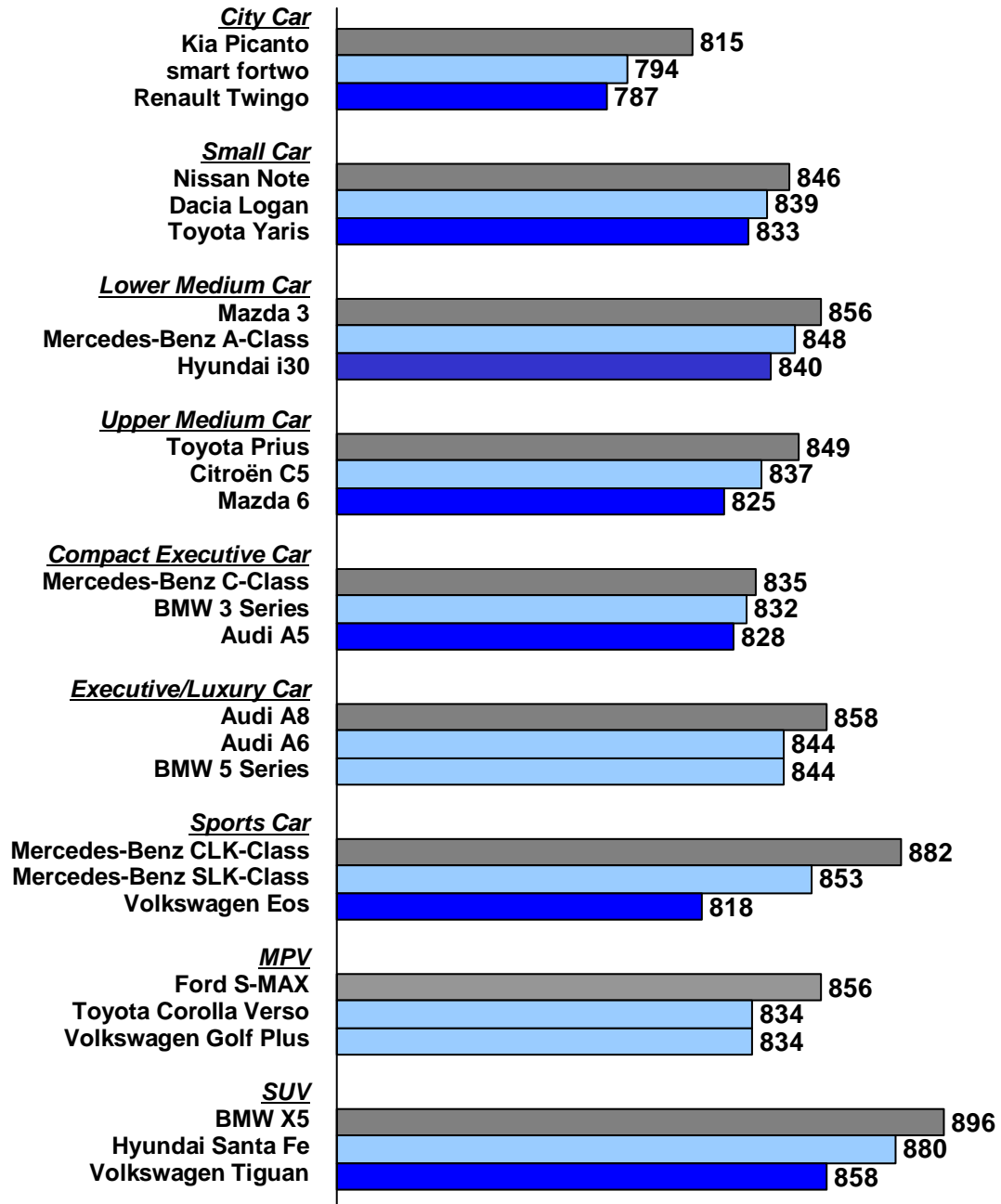
Included in the study, but not ranked due to small sample size are: Alfa Romeo, Chrysler, Daihatsu, Dodge, Jeep, Lexus, Porsche, SAAB and Subaru.

Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2010 Germany Vehicle Ownership Satisfaction StudySM (VOSS)

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J.D. Power and Associates 2010 Germany Vehicle Ownership Satisfaction StudySM (VOSS)

Top Three Models per Segment Overall VOSS

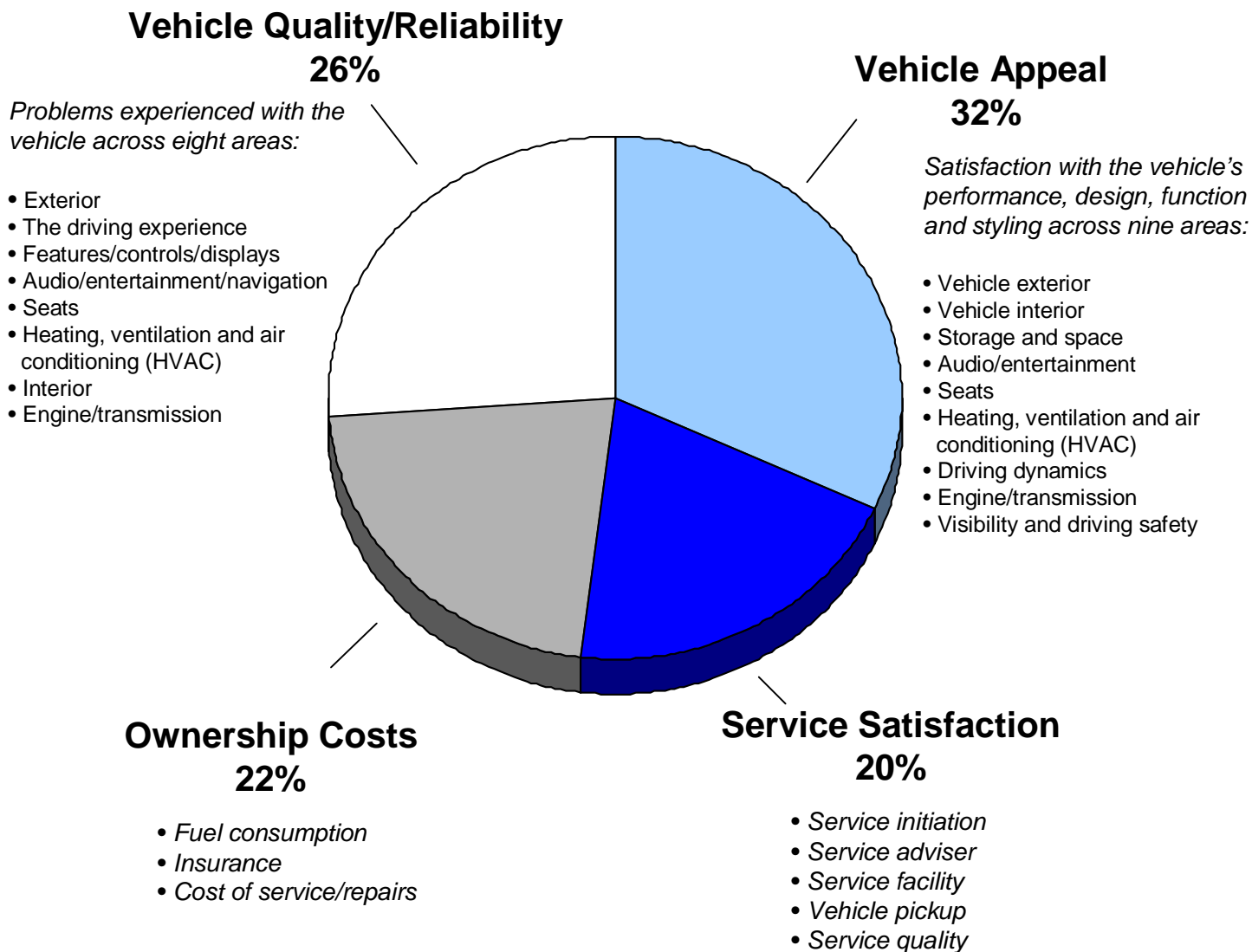


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J.D. Power and Associates 2010 Germany Vehicle Ownership Satisfaction StudySM (VOSS)

Factors Contributing to Overall Vehicle Ownership Satisfaction



Source: J.D. Power and Associates 2010 Germany Vehicle Ownership Satisfaction StudySM (VOSS)

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