



Press Release

J.D. Power Asia Pacific Reports: Tire Performance on Icy Roads Improves Industry-Wide, But Tire Manufacturers Are Challenged to Improve Basic Tire Performance

Michelin Ranks Highest in Customer Satisfaction With Winter Tires in Japan for Ninth Consecutive Year

TOKYO: 31 May 2012 — Owner satisfaction with performance of winter tires on icy roads has improved industry-wide in Japan, surpassing satisfaction with basic performance (performance on dry or wet roads, durability/reliability, and appearance), according to the J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2012 Japan Winter Tire Customer Satisfaction Index StudySM released today.

The study, now in its ninth year, measures customer satisfaction with winter tires by examining six key factors: tire performance in snow-covered road conditions (25%); performance in icy road conditions (22%); durability/reliability (17%); ride/quietness on dry or wet roads (14%); handling/traction on dry or wet roads (12%); and appearance (11%).

The study finds that customer satisfaction with winter tire performance on icy roads has improved during the past six years, surpassing satisfaction with performance on dry or wet roads, which has decreased during the same period. Customers express the lowest satisfaction with winter tires regarding the basic performance characteristics: poor fuel economy and ride, noise, and fast tire wear.

“The key area for tire companies to focus on improving customer satisfaction with winter tires is likely to shift, based on 2012 study results, to improvement in basic performance in areas other than winter road performance,” said Taku Kimoto, executive director of the automotive division at J.D. Power Asia Pacific, Tokyo.

In addition, the study finds that changes have occurred in customer purchase behaviors during the past six years. The percentage of customers who compare brands at the time of winter tire purchase has increased to 42 percent, an 8-percentage-point increase from the 2005 study.

“This indicates intensification of competition among brands,” said Kimoto. “This increased competition is due to the commoditization of winter tires and an increase in the number of customers who use the Internet to select tires.”

Satisfaction significantly affects winter tire brand repurchase intentions. The study finds that 25 percent of owners with overall satisfaction scores of 666 points or higher indicate that they “definitely will” repurchase the same brand the next time, while only 5 percent of those with lower satisfaction scores indicate the same.

“Further product differentiation is required for tire manufacturers to secure share in the maturing winter tire market. For this reason, it is necessary for manufacturers to return to improvement in basic tire performance based on the customer perspective,” said Kimoto.

Among the 10 brands ranked in the study, Michelin ranks highest in overall in customer satisfaction for a ninth consecutive year with a score of 644 points. Michelin performs particularly well across all factors. Bridgestone ranks second with a score of 614.

The 2012 Japan Winter Tire Customer Satisfaction Index Study is based on responses from 7,461 vehicle owners who purchased new winter tires for their personal passenger vehicle (including mini-cars) between May 2009 and February 2012 and who are still using these tires. The study was fielded in February 2012.

About J.D. Power Asia Pacific

J.D. Power Asia Pacific has offices in Tokyo, Singapore, Beijing, Shanghai and Bangkok that conduct customer satisfaction research and provide consulting services in the automotive, information technology and finance industries. Together, the five offices bring the language of customer satisfaction to consumers and businesses in China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand. Information regarding J.D. Power Asia Pacific and its products can be accessed through the Internet at www.jdpower.com. Media e-mail contact: shizue_hidaka@jdpower.co.jp

About J.D. Power and Associates

Headquartered in Westlake Village, Calif., J.D. Power and Associates is a global marketing information services company providing performance improvement, social media and customer satisfaction insights and solutions. The company's quality and satisfaction measurements are based on responses from millions of consumers annually. For more information on [car reviews and ratings](#), [car insurance](#), [health insurance](#), [cell phone ratings](#), and more, please visit JDPower.com. J.D. Power and Associates is a business unit of The McGraw-Hill Companies.

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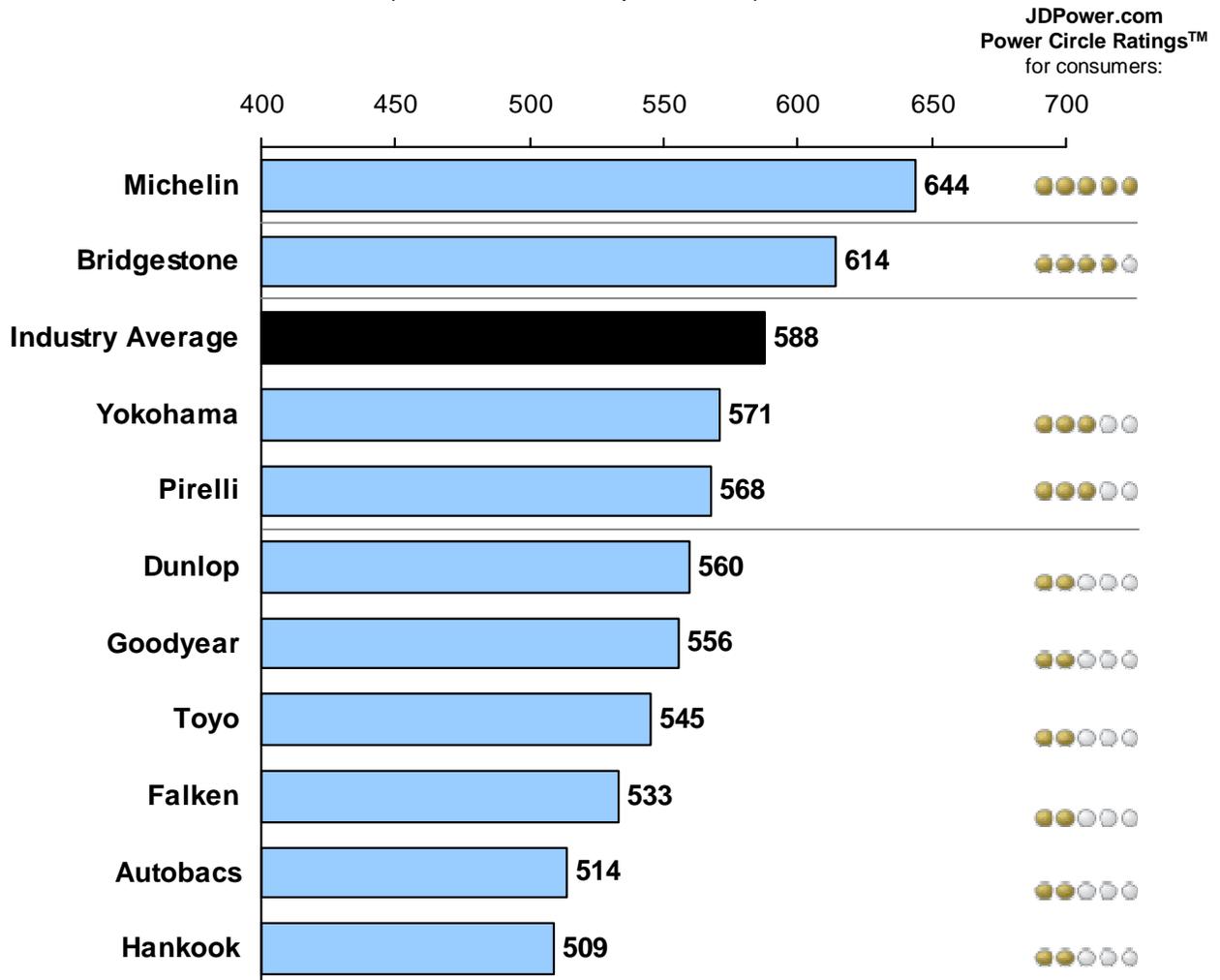
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NOTE: Two charts follow.

J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2012 Japan Winter Tire Customer Satisfaction Index (W-TSI) StudySM

Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking (Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Power Circle Ratings Legend
 ●●●●● Among the best
 ●●●●○ Better than most
 ●●●○● About average
 ●●○●○ The rest

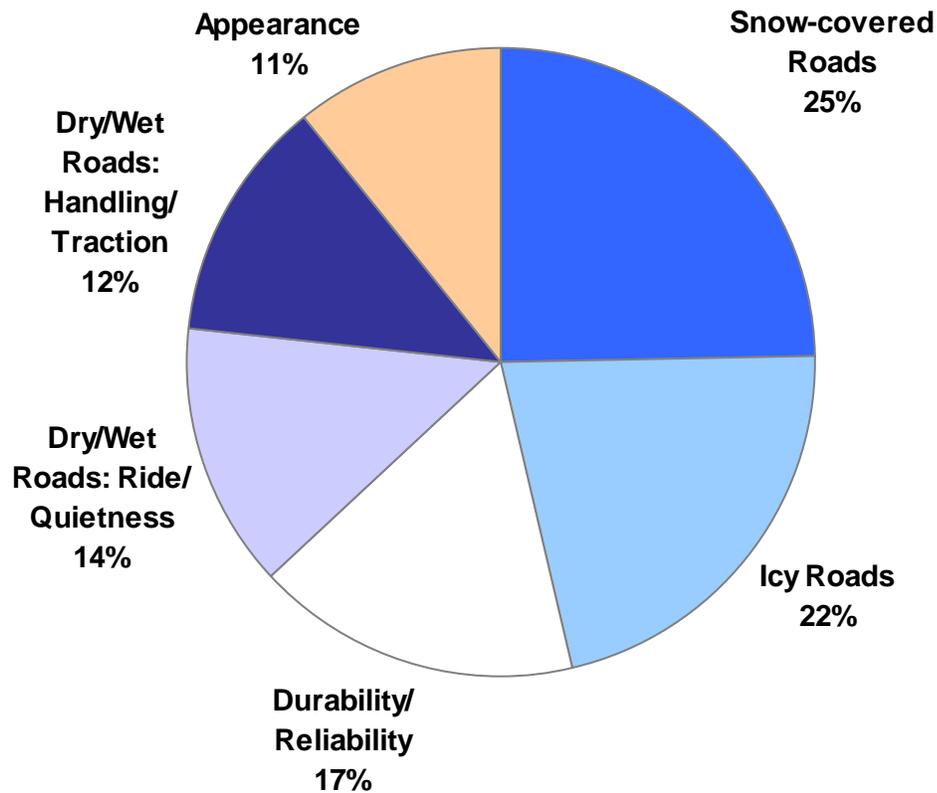
NOTE: Included in the study, but not ranked due to small sample size is Kumho.

Source: J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2012 Japan Winter Tire Customer Satisfaction Index (W-TSI) StudySM

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Factors Contributing to Overall Satisfaction



Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Source: J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2012 Japan Winter Tire Customer Satisfaction Index (W-TSI) StudySM

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