

Car, Light-Truck Shoppers Rank Quality, Dependability Number One in Buying Decision; Fuel Economy Ranks Second

Both car and light-truck shoppers ranked quality/dependability as the top factor considered when making a new-vehicle purchasing decision, according to the latest survey from NADAguides.com.

Fuel economy, cited as the most important preference of both car and light-truck buyers in last year's survey, was selected as the second-most-important factor by car shoppers in this year's survey. Light-truck shoppers ranked brand as second, one spot ahead of fuel economy.

"While higher gasoline prices and stiffer federal regulations have raised the profile of fuel economy over the past few years, the survey results clearly indicate that car and light-truck shoppers are looking for a trouble-free ownership experience above all else," said Jonathan Banks, executive automotive analyst for the NADA Used Car Guide.

Quality/dependability, brand, fuel economy and vehicle design were the top preferences for both car and light-truck shoppers surveyed, Banks said.

Just like the results from the fall survey in 2012, car shoppers showed a significant preference for vehicle design, safety and fuel economy, with an average 69 percent of respondents citing these factors as either important or very important.

On average, 60 percent of respondents shopping for a car rated versatility/utility and power/performance as either important or very important, Banks said. Similarly, an average 58 percent of car shoppers rated cost of ownership factors, such as warranty coverage, depreciation and maintenance fees, as either important or very important.

Car shopper preferences for navigation system, smartphone connectivity and driver-assist technologies were ranked the lowest by survey participants.

"With the advent of smartphones, particularly with its navigation capabilities, the desirability of built-in navigation systems seems to be waning among those surveyed," Banks said.

The preferences of light-truck shoppers surveyed were similar to car shoppers when determining the factors that had the greatest influence on their next vehicle purchase, although the ranking of each preference differed slightly, Banks said.

Safety, versatility/utility, vehicle design and fuel economy rounded out the top-five preferences of survey respondents shopping for a light truck, Banks said.

Similar to the survey respondents shopping for a new car, an average 58 percent of light-truck shoppers rated ownership cost factors, excluding insurance fees, as important or very important. Smartphone connectivity, navigation system and driver-assist technologies were ranked by light-truck shoppers as unimportant or very unimportant.

Banks pointed out that only 50 percent of survey respondents shopping for light trucks considered towing/payload capacity to be important or very important. The preference of towing/payload capacity increased in importance for shoppers of full-size pickup trucks and large utility vehicles, while fuel economy dropped.

The New-Car and -Truck Shopper Preference Survey is regularly conducted on NADAguides.com to assess the importance of features commonly considered by consumers when deciding which vehicle to purchase. Survey results are used to enhance NADA's used-vehicle valuation efforts, as well as raise vehicle manufacturer awareness to the qualities considered to be the greatest value to new-vehicle shoppers.

The survey, conducted on NADAguides.com in May 2013, garnered nearly 1,700 survey respondents who shared the types of vehicles they were looking to purchase in addition to what they currently drive. About 1,400 participants ranked the features they considered to be the most important when selecting their next car or truck.

Consumers surveyed on NADAguides.com were asked to select one of five answers – very unimportant, unimportant, neither, important and very important – for the purchase factors commonly considered when shopping for a new vehicle.

Respondents were also asked to identify the factor considered most important in determining a new-vehicle purchase.



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