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The impact of reducing customer confusion in choosing domestic automaker brands, based on brand quality and brand experience

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Abstract

This study was conducted with the aim of investigating the effect of reducing customer confusion in choosing domestic automobile manufacturers' brands, based on brand quality and brand experience. The research method is applicable in terms of its purpose, quantitative in terms of implementation method, and descriptive-correlational in terms of nature and method. The statistical population of the study consisted of sales and marketing managers of domestic automobile manufacturers such as Iran Khodro and Saipa Zamyad in Tehran. Due to the lack of accurate statistics on the number of incoming tourists, the Cochran formula was used for an unlimited population to determine the sample size, estimated at 384 people. A standard questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale was used to collect research data. The content validity of the tool was confirmed by specialists and experts, and Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability methods were used to measure the reliability of the tool. By distributing the questionnaire, the validity of the instrument was measured with three methods: construct validity (external model), convergent validity (AVE), and divergent validity. The AVE value for all variables should be greater than 0.5. SPSS and PLS software were used to analyze the data. The research findings show that brand quality, brand experience, customer satisfaction, and addressing this confusion and providing solutions to reduce it can help improve the shopping experience of domestic automobile manufacturers' customers and increase their satisfaction.

Keywords:

Customer confusion,
domestic automobile
brand selection,
brand quality,
brand experience,

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Today, the automotive industry is one of the key and vital industries in every country. With the rapid growth of technology and continuous changes in customer needs and demands, domestic automobile brands are facing serious challenges in attracting and retaining customers. Customer confusion, as a psychological phenomenon, can have a negative impact on customer purchase decisions. Customer confusion in choosing domestic car brands is a serious problem that can have a negative impact on purchasing decisions. By identifying the dimensions and components of this confusion and applying appropriate solutions, such as training and information, improving the user experience, providing quality after-sales services, and using modern technologies, the current situation can be improved. Ultimately, these measures can lead to increased customer satisfaction and strengthening their loyalty to domestic brands. (Karadayi-Usta, 2025). Customer confusion is one of the important challenges in today's competitive markets (zeinalitajani et al., 2025). This concept refers to a situation where the customer, when faced with multiple options and extensive information, is unable to correctly interpret the features and benefits of products and his decision-making is delayed or erroneous. Confusion can be caused by a wide variety of brands, similarity of features, contradictory advertising messages and information overload, and ultimately negatively affect customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty. Reducing this confusion helps customers make faster and more confident decisions and increases the value of the shopping experience (baniasadi et al., 2025). In the automotive industry, due to the complexity of technical features, the wide variety of models and extensive competitive information; the likelihood of customers encountering information overload or similarity between brands increases. In addition to increasing decision-making stress, this situation can undermine customer trust and reduce the perceived value of the brand, which ultimately has a negative impact on the final choice. Brand quality is one of the determining factors in choosing a car. Brand quality is defined as one of the key factors in consumer decision-making, beyond the characteristics of the product or service; and includes the customer's perception of performance, durability, service, and brand reputation. Brand quality plays an important role in building trust, increasing satisfaction, and reducing decision conflict, and can reduce the effect of confusion (fereydouni et al., 2024). Research has shown that brands with high perceived quality encourage customers to make more confident choices and have a more positive experience, and in the long run, increase brand loyalty and equity (doroudi et al., 2024). Customer confusion not only leads to delay in decision-making, but can also affect customer loyalty to the brand; therefore, reducing this confusion by increasing brand quality and enhancing brand experience can lead to more confident and satisfying customer choices. Hence, the researcher's concern led to the question: what is the effect of reducing customer confusion in choosing domestic automaker brands based on brand quality and brand experience?

Theoretical foundations

Customer experience

Customer experience, as a key concept in marketing and customer management, was first introduced as a set of customer perceptions and emotional, cognitive and behavioral reactions in interaction with the brand. Research shows that customer experience goes beyond mere satisfaction and includes all touchpoints or points of contact of the customer with the business (Kronheim et al., 2024). Every interaction, whether viewing a product, browsing a website, the purchase process, after-sales service or contacting support, can create a positive or negative experience for the customer that has a direct impact on his future purchasing behavior and loyalty (Gahler et al., 2023).

Brand quality

Brand quality, as one of the most important elements in brand management and consumer behavior, is a concept that has been considered in the marketing and strategic management

literature for decades (Sugianto et al., 2022). This concept goes beyond the technical quality of a product or service and refers to the consumer's perception of the value, credibility, and effectiveness of the brand. In other words, brand quality not only includes tangible product features, such as durability, performance, and reliability, but also intangible dimensions such as brand credibility, customer loyalty, and overall brand experience (Ismail, 2025).

Baniasadi et al. (2025) investigated "The Mediating Effect of Customer Experience Variable on Reducing Customer Confusion in Corporate Banking: A Mixed Research Approach". After extracting the required data, the researchers presented their paradigm model in the form of 6 main dimensions and 27 sub-dimensions by analyzing the data and using open, axial, and selective coding. The goal of corporate banking is for a company to be able to receive all financial services in a fast and effective way, so that instead of providing limited services to a large number of customers, which leads to increased bank costs and prevents customization of the services provided, it can provide extensive and special services to its highly valued customers to reduce operating costs and increase the bank's long-term productivity. The result showed that consumer confusion has an impact on customer experience. Ghasemi Naji (2024) studied "Customer experience, customer relationship management and service quality with the mediating role of customer satisfaction on customer profitability and loyalty". The results showed that 6 hypotheses were confirmed at a 95% confidence level, and 2 hypotheses were not confirmed. Customer experience with the mediating role of customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty of Kowsar Insurance in Gilan Province. Customer relationship management with the mediating role of customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty of Kowsar Insurance in Gilan Province.

Research Method

The present study is applicable in terms of purpose, and descriptive-analytical in terms of method. Library and field methods were used to collect data. The statistical population of the study was formed by sales and marketing managers of domestic automobile manufacturers such as Iran Khodro and Saipa Zamyad in Tehran. Due to the lack of accurate statistics on the number of incoming tourists, the Cochran formula was used for an unlimited population to determine the sample size, and the sample size was estimated at 384 people. The sampling method was simple random sampling. A questionnaire was used to collect field data. The reliability of the questionnaire was measured by calculating Cronbach's alpha and calculating the composite reliability coefficient (cr). The value of Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability coefficient for each variable are between zero and one, and if the value obtained is higher than 0.7, the questionnaire has appropriate reliability. The results of the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability of the questionnaire confirm the appropriate reliability of the questionnaire used.

Research findings

The research findings showed that improving the quality of brand information, promoting brand quality, and creating a positive brand experience play a significant role in reducing customer confusion in the selection process. The results of path analysis indicate that reducing customer confusion directly increases their satisfaction, and this satisfaction in turn leads to strengthening positive word-of-mouth. Brand quality also has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction and can improve their perception of the brand. In summary, integrated management of brand information and quality, along with a focus on brand experience, pave the way for more informed customer decision-making and desirable behavioral outcomes for the brand.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study showed that brand information has a positive and significant effect on reducing customer confusion. The positive path coefficient and the value of the T-statistic indicate a direct and significant effect of this variable. This finding is consistent with previous research; for example, Baniasadi et al. (2025) have stated that providing clear and accurate

information to customers plays an effective role in reducing confusion and improving decision-making. Also, Ghasemi Naji (2024) showed that comprehensive and reliable information increases the customer's ability to process options and make informed choices. Based on these results, it can be said that improving the quality and transparency of brand information is an effective tool for managing customer confusion. Brand quality also had a positive and significant effect on reducing customer confusion. The results showed that customers evaluated brands with high perceived quality more easily and made decisions faster. This finding is consistent with the studies of Ismail (2025) and Prabowo et al. (2023) that brand quality increases trust, reduces ambiguity, and reduces customer decision conflict. In general, brands that provide consistent messages and reliable quality have the ability to reduce customer confusion, which directly affects their informed choice and final satisfaction. Brand experience or customer experience also plays an important role in reducing confusion. The results showed that a positive customer experience simplifies the information processing process and makes customer choices clearer. This finding is consistent with the studies of Kronheim et al. (2024) and Roustaei Gholpaygani et al. (2023) who state that brand experience includes emotional, cognitive and behavioral interactions of the customer and that a positive experience reduces conflict and confusion in decision-making. Therefore, designing an optimal brand experience is the key to reducing confusion and increasing customer satisfaction. The results of the study showed that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on reducing confusion. Satisfied customers, with greater trust in the brand and its information, are less confused and have more confident decision-making. This result is consistent with the research of Khanzadeh (2024) and Behera et al. (2024) that customer satisfaction, as a mediating factor, facilitates the shopping experience and information processing and strengthens customer loyalty behavior. Therefore, improving customer satisfaction is one of the most important strategies for reducing confusion and increasing the effectiveness of brand strategies.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no financial or non-financial, personal, professional, or institutional conflicts of interest relevant to this work.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

AI Use Statement

The authors declare that no generative artificial intelligence (AI) or AI-assisted technologies were used in the preparation, writing, or editing of this manuscript.

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Ethics Approval

All procedures performed in this study were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible institutional and national research committee.