

# *A New Angle to Ease Consumers' Pain of Large Consumption*

## *- Based on a Comparative Case Study of NIO*

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**Abstract:** Compared to the former essays, this essay proposes a new perspective on the existing theory of the pain of paying, which refers to the unpleasant emotional experience generated during the payment process that may affect consumer purchasing behavior since the economic and cultural trends have changed in recent years. The paper uses a comparative case study method with NIO, an innovative electric vehicle company in China, as the main case and traditional fuel vehicle companies (BMW Brilliance) as the auxiliary case, accompanied by field investigations, interviews, and secondary data analysis. Analyzing the existing literature review, market marketing problems of traditional fuel vehicle brands, market marketing innovation of NIO, and comparison between the two, the study aims to provide future trends and enlightenment at the end of the article, which is that extending service duration, improving service quality, and building a sense of community belonging do help NIO's customers reduce the pain of paying and can be the new future perspectives.

**Keywords:** pain of paying, customer behavior, large payment, electric vehicle, NIO

## 1. Introduction

In China, the history of the development of the new energy vehicle industry can be divided into three stages: the budding stage (2001-2008), the promotion stage (2009-2014), and the high-speed development stage (2015 to present). In the budding stage, the related concepts of new energy vehicles were first proposed, and the industry focused on establishing industry standards for new energy vehicles. In the promotion stage, new energy vehicles were officially launched, and the Chinese government began to provide policy incentives to support industry development. In the high-speed development stage, competition barriers caused by technology gaps and government subsidies gradually weakened, and new energy vehicle companies entered a stage of intense competition in supply chain and marketing strategies.

Specifically, as shown in Figure 1, the sales of new energy vehicles in China increased from less than 10,000 in 2010 to 3.3 million in 2021. The market size of new energy vehicles in 2021 was about twice that of the European market and five times that of the US market [1]. Notably, as shown in Table 1, the current Chinese new energy vehicle market shows a trend of oligopolistic competition: in

terms of sales, BYD Auto and Tesla China are in the leading position, followed by emerging car manufacturers such as XPeng Motors, NIO, and Li Auto [1].

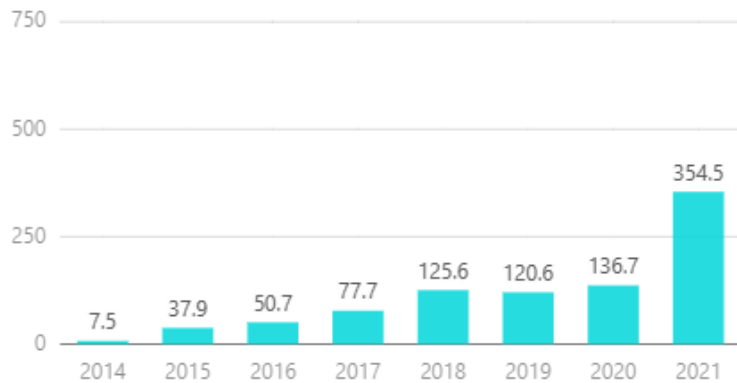


Figure 1: Sales Volume of EV in China, 2014-2021.

Table 1: EV Market Competition in China.

<i>EV Brands</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>Year-On-year Growth</i>
<i>BYD</i>	584,020	181,765	221.30%
<i>SGMW</i>	431,130	155,466	177.30%
<i>Tesla</i>	320,743	137,459	133.30%
<i>Great Wall</i>	133,997	56,261	138.20%
<i>AION</i>	126,962	60,033	111.50%
<i>SAIC</i>	110,065	44,792	145.70%
<i>XPENG</i>	98,155	26,159	275.20%
<i>Chery</i>	97,625	43,651	123.60%
<i>NIO</i>	91,429	43,728	109.10%
<i>Li Auto</i>	90,491	32,624	177.40%

With the rapid development of China's new energy vehicle industry, the technology and supply chain gap between new car-making forces and traditional fuel vehicle companies has significantly narrowed. The key point that currently hinders the further development and market share expansion of new car-making forces is in market marketing, especially the problem of alleviating payment pain. Specifically, when traditional fuel vehicle companies face the problem of consumer payment pain, they can alleviate it through a long history and culture, deep brand value, and complex internal combustion engine technology. However, when new energy vehicle companies, especially new car-making forces represented by NIO, XPeng, and Li Auto, face this problem, they lack the multiple aspects mentioned above to effectively alleviate payment pain.

It is worth noting that, compared with XPeng Motors and Li Auto, NIO, which is positioned in the mid-to-high end, has adopted some new methods to achieve the purpose of alleviating payment pain. Therefore, this study attempts to summarize marketing strategies that are conducive to the further development of new car-making forces by analyzing the typical case of NIO's method of alleviating payment pain and tries to provide a new perspective on the strategy of alleviating payment pain after the changes in the future era.

This paper intends to use a comparative case study method with NIO as the main and traditional fuel vehicle companies (BMW Brilliance) as the auxiliary, accompanied by field investigations,

interviews, and secondary data analysis, to propose a new perspective based on changes in the era and consumer concepts on the existing theory of payment pain. Specifically, this paper analyzes based on the four aspects of “existing literature review”, “market marketing problems of traditional fuel vehicle brands”, “market marketing innovation of NIO”, and “comparison between the two”, and gives future trends and enlightenment at the end of the article.

### **2.1. Literature Review Concept of Consumer Payment Pain**

The concept of payment pain was first proposed by Ofer Zeller Mayer in 1997. Zeller Mayer believes that payment pain refers to the unpleasant emotional experience generated during the payment process, which may affect consumer purchasing behavior. The definition of payment pain refers to the discomfort and pain that consumers feel when paying. This pain may be caused by various factors, including but not limited to the size of the payment amount, the difference in payment methods, the difference in payment timing, personal consumption habits, and the frequency of payment [2]. For example, brands in the car industry usually recommend customers choose low-interest installments when purchasing a car rather than in full; in this way, customers can release the pain of paying, and brands can earn more interest.

### **2.2. Factors Influencing Consumer Payment Pain**

In terms of payment methods, Soman proposed in 2007 that non-cash payments like credit cards can significantly alleviate payment pain compared to cash payments. This is because the loss consciousness caused by cash payment occurs in real-time, but non-cash payments find it difficult to reflect the loss sense of abstract money [3]. Subsequently, Soman and Kamleitner respectively mentioned in 2003 and 2008 the new payment methods brought about by technological progress. They believe that money alienation is the main reason for reducing payment pain [4]. However, in 2016, Falk, Kunz, Schepers, and Mrozek found through research that there was no significant difference in payment pain between abstract payments exemplified by mobile payments and credit card payments [5]. In general, compared to traditional cash payments, abstract payment methods can reduce payment pain, but no significant difference has been found between different abstract payments.

In other aspects, Zeller Mayer obtained the factors affecting payment pain through the quantitative method of linear regression, which are fairness, investment and consumption, payment timing, payment object, payment duration, product price, and controllability. After excluding the obviously significant factor of product price, the remaining six factors explained more than 80% of the variance [2]. In 2014, Soster’s research team proposed the “Bottom Dollar Effect” and believed that whether the budget is sufficient or not also affects payment pain [6]. In 2017, Mazar’s research team believed that the size of the discount is also an important factor affecting the size of the payment pain, but a too-small discount has a negligible effect on payment pain [7].

It is worth noting that the focus of existing research is mainly on consumer individuals and payment interactions [8]. That is to say, research has not yet touched on marketing factors such as store environment, free additional services, customer relationships, brand identification, etc. Therefore, this study intends to focus on the automotive industry and propose a new perspective on alleviating payment pain through a comparative case study of NIO cars.

## **3. Marketing and Problems of Traditional Automobile Brands**

Given that this study employs a comparative research method, the first point of attention before analyzing NIO cars is the issue of market marketing for traditional car brands. However, car brands with different positioning have distinctly different marketing strategies, and the effects after

implementing the same strategy are also significantly different. Therefore, when exploring the pricing strategy of traditional car brands, this paper mainly focuses on brands positioned in the high-end market, such as the Sino-foreign joint venture brand “BMW Brilliance Auto”. For brief purposes, “BMW” is used in this paper below instead of “BMW Brilliance Auto”.

### 3.1. Pricing and Promotion Strategies of Traditional Car Brands

Generally speaking, traditional car brands can adopt the following four pricing strategies separately or in combination according to their brand positioning, including penetration pricing strategy, moderate pricing strategy, prestige pricing, and tiered pricing [9]. Specifically, the penetration pricing strategy aims to quickly occupy market share through low-price sales, whose price is usually around its cost, like 200,000 to 220,000, but the low profit and long recovery period are not conducive to the company’s capital accumulation and later R&D investment; the moderate pricing strategy aims to make the market quickly accept products at a relatively balanced price to obtain the average market profit as soon as possible, but this cannot maximize profits (for example, brands using this strategy set the similar price with their competitors whose costs are about 200,000 and prices are about 250,000, having no choice to compete in red ocean price range); tiered pricing, setting price from 270,000 to 230,000 with its 200,000 cost for instance, provides different product added values for consumers with different demands and levels, but this may damage the brand image. The above three common pricing methods are not applicable to NIO cars studied in this paper because they cannot meet the needs of consumers in the high-end market well, so even if low pricing can significantly reduce payment pain [2], it is not applicable to the high-end market. The last pricing method is prestige pricing, which increases the product’s pricing range based on additional factors such as brand value and popularity. Obviously, the high prices brought about by prestige pricing will bring huge payment pain to consumers, even in the high-end market.

Therefore, traditional luxury car companies try to use various promotion strategies to alleviate payment pain. Taking BMW, a traditional luxury brand of Sino-foreign joint ventures, as an example, the brand’s price positioning is the high-end market, and it focuses on the quality and performance of the product (for example, the prices of BMW’s three series, five series, and X1 models are all above 200,000 yuan, which is relatively expensive compared to other brands of the same level[10].). In order to alleviate consumers’ payment pain and carry out market marketing as much as possible, BMW usually does marketing by sports sponsorship, limited edition models, and other methods.

#### 3.1.1. Sports Marketing

Sports marketing occupies a very important part of BMW’s marketing strategy. BMW cars have long focused on driving performance and driving pleasure, so sports marketing is one of the important manifestations of the BMW car brand image. In China, BMW’s sports marketing activities mainly include the following four aspects: 1) Since 2012, BMW has become the official sponsor of the Chinese Super League; 2) BMW has become the official sponsor of the China Open Golf Tournament since 2014; 3) BMW has become the exclusive car partner of the Chinese Olympic Committee since 2010, providing official cars for the competition; 4) BMW also sponsored the national figure skating team, the Chinese sailing team, and the Chinese fencing team. Through this sports marketing, BMW not only improves brand awareness and brand image but also deepens consumers’ brand recognition. In addition, as Generation Z gradually becomes the main consumer force, consumers are more willing to pay for products that match their personality, image, and style [11]. Therefore, sports marketing helps BMW increase the process of brand recognition and successfully alleviates consumers’ payment pain.

### 3.1.2. Limited Edition Models

BMW's limited-edition models are an important part of its pricing strategy and a differentiated strategy in its marketing strategy. Limited edition models usually refer to special edition models with limited production quantities. Their prices are relatively high, but they also have higher performance and more luxurious configurations, such as the limited edition of the series, the five series limited edition, the X1 limited edition, etc. In order to alleviate the higher prices and payment pain brought about by higher performance and more luxurious configurations, BMW usually explains to consumers the complex technology of its engine (such as the V6 engine, zero to hundred acceleration time, etc.) and the concept that limited edition models want to express. From the results, BMW's limited edition model marketing has successfully brought it higher brand value and image and has a strong connection with consumers relying on brand loyalty. For example, the five series limited edition model has brought a group of collectors and car enthusiasts who recognize the brand culture and value of BMW. This limited-edition model has also brought higher sales to the ordinary five series and sold more than 9 million units worldwide in 2022[12]. It is worth noting that limited models usually come with such a high price that they cover only a small price range. Therefore, some car brands are willing to use aspects such as special colors, special configurations and unique names to create a "fake limited model." This move has been adopted by a large number of traditional car companies, not only BMW. For example, Audi named the Audi A7L with black paint "Darth Vader" and successfully achieved role of attracting customers for limited models through this differentiated naming, and successfully eased the pain of paying.

### 3.2. The Problem of Information Asymmetry in Consumer Car Buying Decisions

According to a study conducted by Zellermyer as early as 1996, fairness and controllability are two of the six major factors affecting payment pain [2]. However, in the Chinese car market, the information asymmetry problem faced by consumers in the process of buying traditional fuel vehicles has seriously led to an increase in payment pain. This is caused by the sales model adopted by traditional fuel vehicle companies in China, the 4S dealership model. Simply put, in order to reduce risk and improve turnover rate, traditional fuel vehicle companies generally sell to 4S dealers, a third-party dealer, rather than directly selling to customers through their own stores [13]. However, this model leads to different 4S dealers, in order to increase their own profits, offering different prices to different customers for the same model. This price discrimination greatly increases the opportunity cost and time cost for consumers when buying a car, and even for a period of time after buying a car, they still worry about whether they have purchased the product at the most favorable and reasonable price. Therefore, in order to avoid this consequence, consumers usually hesitate when paying, which also leads to an increase in payment pain - not only is fairness and controllability difficult to guarantee but the payment time is also extended.

In general, traditional luxury fuel vehicle companies, exemplified by BMW, have adopted various marketing methods to try to alleviate consumers' payment pain, such as sports marketing and limited-edition models, and have indeed achieved significant results. However, the information asymmetry problem brought about by these companies' 4S dealership sales model has instead exacerbated payment pain. In order to find a new angle for marketing to alleviate payment pain and solve the problem of information asymmetry, the following will further analyze and summarize the marketing strategy of NIO cars in detail.

## 4. Analysis of NIO’s Innovative Marketing Strategy

### 4.1. Brand Positioning and Core Values of NIO

NIO is a new energy vehicle manufacturing company registered in Shanghai, China, in 2014. It represents high-end electric vehicles made in China and competes globally. It was listed on the New York Stock Exchange on September 12, 2018. The product line of NIO can be divided into four types: ET, ES, EC, and EP, where ET stands for touring cars, ES for mid-to-large SUVs, EC for coupe, and EP for performance sports cars.

NIO is committed to providing high-performance electric vehicles and ultimate service experiences, creating a pleasant lifestyle for users, contributing to energy conservation and carbon peak, and its slogan “Blue Sky Coming” not only conveys NIO’s ambition but also expresses the vision of creating an environmentally friendly company (Figure 2).



Figure 2: The Business Canvas of NIO.

### 4.2. Pricing and Innovative Car Purchase Plans of NIO

#### 4.2.1. Pricing of NIO

NIO targets the high-end market, with product pricing ranging from 250,000 to 700,000 RMB. Notably, NIO, which prides itself as a service-oriented company, provides a large number of free lifetime services for its products, such as roadside assistance, charging and swapping stations, home maintenance, and vehicle networking systems. Although providing these free services increases the financial burden of NIO (which still faces continuous losses), such ultimate services successfully help consumers quickly overcome hesitation and complete the payment process. Significant value-added services can effectively expand consumers’ psychological expectations, and in most cases, these value-added services are ultimately paid for by consumers. In addition, consumers who become car owners rely on the services provided by NIO, forming a high word-of-mouth and brand loyalty. For example, NIO car owners can use dedicated swapping stations when driving on highways, a service unique to NIO, which reduces the energy replenishment time to 6 to 10 minutes, while other new energy electric vehicles take more than 60 minutes to fully charge [14].

#### 4.2.2. Innovative Car Purchase Plans

Compared with traditional fuel vehicle companies, NIO has abandoned the 4S dealership sales model and instead opened offline stores, experience stores, and owner centers in major business centers. Notably, during field research, sales staff at NIO’s direct stores stated that consumers who intend to purchase a car are required to download the NIO app on their mobile phones and pay for the car on it. Compared with the cash payment and credit card loan payment recommended by traditional fuel

vehicle companies when consumers pay, mobile payment and online installment payment abstract money methods can better help consumers alleviate payment pain and are more willing to choose additional configurations. In addition, the direct store-to-mobile app and nationwide uniform pricing sales model compared to the 4S dealership model provide consumers with fairness and controllability, further alleviating payment pain.

Compared with any other new energy vehicle company, NIO currently has a unique battery replacement technology, which also leads to a variety of battery sales solutions that NIO can choose when selling vehicles. On the one hand, consumers can directly choose a common way to buy batteries and enjoy the subsequent lifetime free replacement service. On the other hand, consumers can choose to buy only the vehicle that does not include the battery and reduce the cost of the vehicle by 30,000 to 50,000 yuan. However, this means that consumers need to pay for the lease of the battery to NIO by year and only have a limited number of free replacement opportunities. More consumption choices give consumers more control, successfully reducing the pain of paying.

### **4.3. Multidimensional Services Based on Membership System**

#### **4.3.1. NIO House**

NIO House, which is the most innovative and unique touch point created in recent years in car industry, is an offline setup that best embodies the service ecosystem of NIO's membership system. It is a living space for NIO users and their friends, helping them share joy and grow together. Specifically, unlike traditional car brands' 4S stores, NIO House, as an offline central experience store, offers a variety of functions such as showrooms, offices, reading, leisure, growth, gatherings, and city cultural services. It is an extension of the brand value to offline services, committed to providing users with a warm "second home" or "third space". According to the "NIO Automobile 2021 NIO House Summary", since the first NIO House was established in Oriental Plaza, Beijing, in 2017, NIO has established 38 NIO Houses and 321 NIO Spaces in five years, covering 144 cities in China and received over 1.5 million user visits [15]. It is worth mentioning that in December 2021, NIO delivered 10,489 new cars, a year-on-year increase of 49.7%; a total of 25,034 cars were delivered in the fourth quarter, a year-on-year increase of 44.3%, achieving positive growth for seven consecutive quarters [16].

#### **4.3.2. NIO Space**

Compared with NIO House, NIO Space significantly reduces construction, rent, and marketing costs, with an average cost of around 1 million yuan. Its function focuses on test rides and sales, equivalent to a NIO House without a club function, offering higher cost-effectiveness [16]. This means that NIO Space is more like a front-line touch point for NIO to convert potential consumers rather than a private space for car owners. During field research, it was found that when potential consumers show a willingness to buy and test drive, NIO Space sales will accompany them to complete the test drive process and take them to NIO House to visit when paying the deposit.

#### **4.3.3. NIO APP**

Like traditional fuel car companies, NIO also provides car owners with convenient mobile software to help them remotely control their vehicles, such as pre-starting air conditioning and sensing unlocking. However, in addition to this, NIO has expanded the functions that car owners can use in the NIO APP and successfully built a social platform for car owners. Over 80% of car owners share their lives and connections with NIO in the NIO APP and even maintain long-term friendships with their original salespeople. It is worth noting that potential users who have not yet become NIO car owners can also

download and use the social section of the NIO APP, and they unconsciously increase their brand recognition of NIO by observing the social atmosphere of NIO car owners. Therefore, the NIO APP is also one of the important tools for the successful implementation of NIO’s “ripple model”, and interpersonal relationships and a sense of collective belonging successfully help NIO alleviate the payment pain of new customers.

#### 4.4. NIO’s Digital Marketing and Social Media Strategy

##### 4.4.1. Ripple Model

The ripple model, simply put, is a model that converts new users into NIO car owners through the word of mouth of old users. As shown in Figure 3, the center of the ripple model is the core car owner, followed by the ordinary car owner, the outer layer is the potential consumer, and the outermost layer is the interested consumer. Traditional fuel car companies focus more on converting potential consumers, namely the first four of the six processes of “know”, “like”, “love”, “buy”, “satisfy”, and “recommend”. However, NIO pays more attention to the last two points - it adjusts the order of the traditional consumer conversion six processes to focus on old users, namely “satisfy”, “recommend”, “know”, “like”, “love”, and “buy”. These highly satisfied core car owners will become spokespersons for NIO, and they will actively spread positive word of mouth about NIO through various social media.

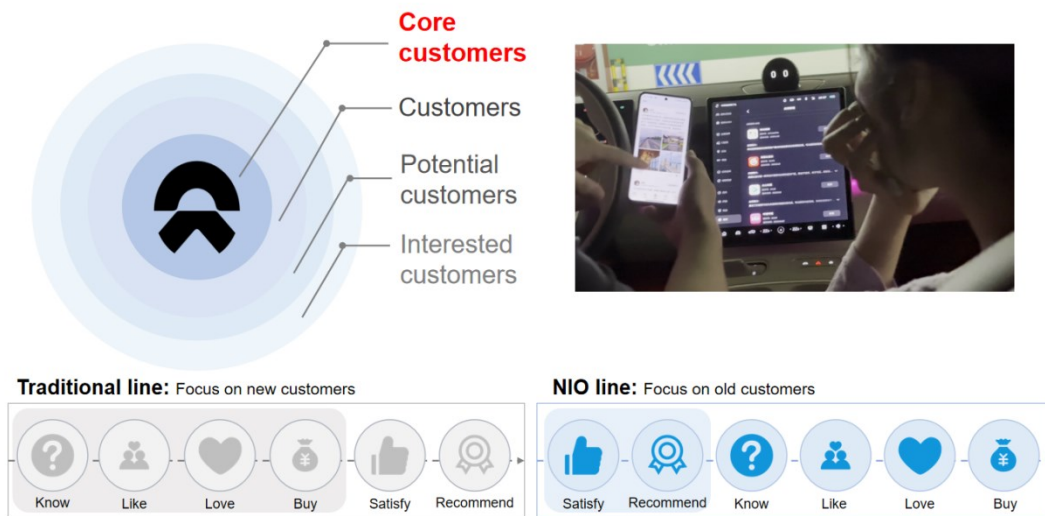


Figure 3: The Ripple Model of NIO.

This is not to say that NIO does not use the traditional funnel model. In fact, NIO uses both. There is a bridge connecting these two models - the ultimate service. NIO will transform ordinary car owners into highly satisfied car owners by providing ultimate services, thereby playing the ripple effect again and forming a virtuous cycle over and over again [17]. Therefore, it can be seen that the ultimate service provided by NIO is also a key link in the role of users as channel members. As shown in Figure 3, with the help of the ripple model, NIO’s sales have been continuously rising in recent years, especially the EC6 model, which achieved an astonishing growth rate of 730% in 2021 [16] (table 2).



Table 2: Sales increase of NIO’s cars.

<i>Sales Volume</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>Increase Rate</i>
<i>ES8</i>	20,050	10,791	185%
<i>ES6</i>	41,474	27,961	148%
<i>EC6</i>	29,905	4,096	730%

#### 4.4.2. Sensory Marketing Model

“Sensory imprint” is a concept expounded by Krishna in 2013. She believes that through a specific sensory experience, consumers can think of a specific brand. If so, then that brand has successfully shaped a sensory imprint [18]. NIO also fully utilizes the theory of sensory imprint and designs its own sensory marketing model. The above-mentioned 4.3.2 mentioned that NIO’s sales staff do not use the KPI assessment mechanism. In fact, NIO Automobile has built a VAU assessment method based on the sensory management awareness formed from top to bottom. VAU stands for Vision, Action, Upgrade. After the senior management sets goals each quarter, they are broken down layer by layer, with the aim of forming a consensus on goals and making all employees’ goals revolve around users. Therefore, the service-first philosophy of all NIO Automobile sales staff makes consumers feel respected and high-level needs for self-realization, and through thoughtful full-process service, consumers feel happy before payment, successfully alleviating payment pain [19].

#### 4.4.3. Experience Marketing Model

NIO knows well that its target market is the high-end car market, so potential consumers will definitely think carefully and face considerable payment pain when deciding to buy a car. Therefore, the main purpose of NIO’s experience marketing model is to help users understand what they need and how to pursue a higher experience-cost ratio. For NIO compared with traditional fuel car companies, NIO is more willing to brand itself as a service provider rather than a car seller - NIO has created a lifestyle platform. After users buy a vehicle, it is like getting the key to enter the community. Interacting with the brand and users in the community has become a part of every NIO car owner’s life. Car owners share their life experiences, 40% of which are unrelated to NIO, such as novel designs, delicious food, exciting sports, etc.; the part related to NIO includes both praise and criticism. At the same time, NIO understands user feedback in various ways, including communities, continuously iterates various services, and continuously upgrades through OTA of the whole vehicle.

Secondly, NIO’s service is full of 3 keywords: “lifetime”, “free”, and “one-click”, similar to lifetime free warranty, lifetime free battery swap, one-click worry-free call service, etc. All services are helping users to interact better with people and products. For example, NIO’s value-added service coupons can enjoy services such as designated driving and airport valet parking. When you go out for a party and drink or travel on a business trip, you can also reduce worries and use the car with peace of mind.

Compared with traditional fuel car companies that are product-centric, NIO expands the product to be sold to product plus service, which means that consumers realize when they pay that what they are buying includes subsequent ten-year or even longer lifetime services, rather than the short-term guarantee of traditional cars. Long-term ultimate service makes consumers feel that their payment is full of cost-effectiveness, and their payment pain is also reduced accordingly.

### 5. Comparison of Marketing and Effects Between NIO and Traditional Car Companies

Traditional fuel vehicle companies, such as BMW, usually adopt marketing strategies that rely on a long-standing brand heritage and historical culture, such as price promotions, sports marketing, and

limited-edition models. Compared with them, NIO, which does not have this advantage, uses a large number of marketing strategies that rely on service quality, such as the ripple model, sensory marketing, and experience marketing. Although NIO does not have the luxury brand image deeply rooted in the hearts of people like traditional luxury fuel vehicle companies led by BMW, NIO, as an emerging brand, focuses on promoting its sense of technology and future, emphasizing assisted driving and environmentally friendly corporate image.

With the continuous change of the main force of consumers, the brand image favored by consumers also changes accordingly. NIO's marketing strategy has successfully expanded brand recognition and alleviated consumers' payment pain, which is also reflected in the sales data of NIO in 2022.

Through the above marketing strategies, NIO has successfully survived and stood out in the Red Sea competition field of automobiles. As of the available data in 2022, NIO's annual sales reached 91,429 units, and its ET5 and ET7 models even successfully squeezed into the top 10 of China's high-end car (over 300,000 yuan/unit) sales ranking in 2022; although traditional luxury fuel vehicle companies still occupy most of the list, their year-on-year growth rate is far less than that of NIO, a new energy vehicle company[20].

## 6. Future Trends and Implications

Facing the development and transformation of consumer groups and the intensification of competition in the automobile market, the gap between various car companies in technology and supply chain management is getting smaller and smaller, and the focus of future competition will be on how to market customer groups and how to alleviate payment pain, in order to avoid consumers turning to competitors. NIO entered the automobile market to compete with traditional fuel vehicle companies without the advantage of early entry and successfully gained a place in the Red Sea competition with its unique service system, ripple model, and sensory marketing model.

For new energy vehicle companies, because the policy subsidies from the Chinese government, such as consumer car subsidies, unlimited green license plates, and unlimited roads for new energy vehicles, are about to disappear in the next few years, the competition in the new energy vehicle industry is gradually fierce. Thus, when facing the same dilemma, the marketing model of NIO can serve as their reference experience. Traditional fuel vehicle companies that are impacted by new car-making forces can also avoid maintaining market share by means of price wars in competition by changing sales channels, improving service quality, extending service time, etc.

The future automobile market will gradually shift to direct sales, and the problem of consumer information asymmetry will also be solved with the development of technology and industry competition. When the technical strength of all car companies gradually converges, and the technical barriers gradually disappear in the future, the task of providing competitive advantages for enterprises will fall on service and marketing. Building a perfect lifelong service system and a car owner community with a sense of belonging is the main means to form new competitive barriers and alleviate consumer payment pain.

## 7. Conclusion

This article, through a comparative case study of NIO's marketing strategy, draws a new perspective on alleviating payment pain. Compared with the marketing strategy of traditional fuel vehicle companies, taking BMW as an example, NIO does not have factors such as a long-standing culture that fuel vehicle companies have to ensure corporate recognition; on the contrary, NIO uses the ripple model and sensory marketing model to make car owners think of NIO when they think of services and build brand recognition from a new perspective. It is worth noting that the existing research on

payment pain mainly focuses on fairness, investment and consumption, payment timing, payment objects, payment duration, commodity prices, controllability, and payment methods, while NIO further alleviates consumers' large payment pain when buying a car through three aspects: extending service duration, improving service quality, and building a sense of community belonging.

However, since this article is based on case study analysis and lacks sufficient quantifiable data support, whether the impact of service and belonging on alleviating payment pain is significant enough has not been discussed; in addition, this article only focuses on the research of consumer payment pain when buying a car, and the universality of these two factors has not been further studied. Therefore, the future development of this research can mainly focus on solving the quantitative regression research and universal research of service quality, service duration, and community belonging.

Finally, the factors affecting payment pain are closely related to the changes in consumer groups. As the Z generation gradually becomes the mainstream consumer group in the future, what factors they care about when paying is also worth studying.

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