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Enhancing Customer Satisfaction through Optimized Fast Track Lines: A Case Study of Pertamina Fuel Stations

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Abstract:
The Fast Track Special Lane at Pertamina gas stations is a form of service innovation that aims to improve operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. The implementation of this service still has several obstacles, especially related to the lack of clarity of the difference between the Fast Track lane and the regular lane, as well as the mismatch between customer expectations and the real experience they feel. This reduces the effectiveness of the service, so a strategic approach is needed to improve the performance of the service. This study aims to identify the most effective strategy in managing the Fast Track Special Lane in order to increase the level of user satisfaction. This study uses a qualitative and quantitative Mix method. In the quantitative method, the analysis is carried out by calculating the Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) based on data from 150 respondents who have used this service. While the qualitative approach is carried out through in-depth interviews with consumers and gas station managers, as well as direct observation in the field. Qualitative data is analyzed using NVivo software to find patterns and main themes related to the effectiveness of the Fast Track service. By integrating quantitative and qualitative analysis, this research is expected to provide strategic recommendations for Pertamina in optimizing the management of Special Fast Track Lines, ultimately leading to enhanced customer satisfaction and a more competitive positioning in the premium fuel segment.

Keywords: *Special Fast Track Lines, customer satisfaction, Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT), Pertamina fuel stations, mixed-method.*

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INTRODUCTION

As the global population and people's living standards increase, the demand for energy also rises. Energy is an important element for development, economic growth, and improving the quality of life (Chen et al., 2024; Mason & Lee, 2022; McDaniel, 2018; Meyer et al., 2020; Tremblay & Ainslie, 2021; Tuholske et al., 2021; Zlotnik, 2021). Oil and natural gas are the main energy sources; however, their limited and non-renewable nature presents major challenges in terms of sustainability and the environment (Amuda et al., 2023; Najicha, 2021; Rizvi et al., 2022). The energy sector in *Indonesia* faces various unique challenges, such as regulatory changes, technological limitations, and market volatility (Butts et al., 2015; Hakam & Asekomeh, 2018; Nurcahyanto et al., 2020). To overcome these challenges, companies are investing in innovation, implementing sustainable practices, and exploring alternative energy sources.

Oil and natural gas remain the primary sources of energy, yet they are limited and non-renewable. Even Allam et al. (2018) predict that oil and gas consumption will eventually decline in the coming years.

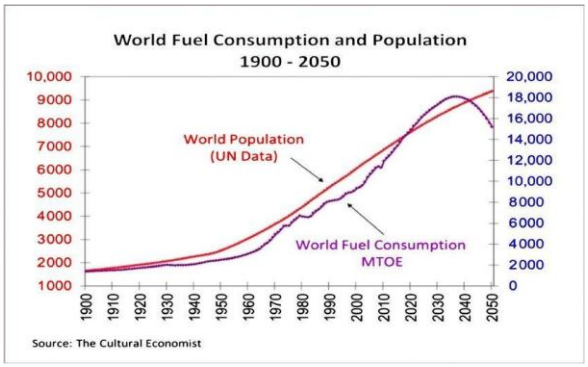


Figure 1. World fuel consumption 1900-2050 (Source: Allam et al., 2018)

The image above highlights how fuel consumption has sharply increased in tandem with population growth, particularly following the Industrial Revolution and massive urbanization. However, the graph also indicates a projected decline in fuel consumption after the 2020s, despite continuous population growth. This decline can be attributed to shifts in energy consumption patterns, technological innovations, and increased efficiency, which pose new challenges for fuel stations. The image also predicts a phenomenon of decreasing fuel consumption, which could be caused by resource scarcity occurring alongside a continuously growing population.

The business phenomenon related to resource scarcity and rising environmental awareness is driving organizations like *PT Pertamina (Persero)* to undergo significant transformation. *Pertamina* has introduced a special lane for customers purchasing non-subsidized fuel, whether for two-wheeled or four-wheeled vehicles. The company's goal is to speed up the refueling process and make it more convenient for customers. Beyond efficiency, this initiative also aims to encourage the public to switch to cleaner fuel as part of a national effort toward sustainable energy transition and carbon emission reduction. This aligns with *Pertamina's* vision to enhance the overall service experience and transform gas stations into more welcoming and integrated spaces for daily vehicle users.

The Special Fast Track Lines service is not only provided for customer convenience but also to fulfill societal needs (Mshiywa, 2014). The optimization of fast-track lanes at *Pertamina's SPBU* is a strategic move to respond to the evolving needs of customers. Although projections indicate a global decline in fuel consumption based on *Figure 1* above, public demand for time efficiency and excellent service at *SPBU* remains high. With increasing competition in the energy sector and growing expectations for an improved customer experience, optimizing special lanes can be a solution to enhance customer convenience, reduce long queues, and provide faster service, particularly for priority customers such as government vehicles, public transportation, or business customers.

This service aims to provide a premium experience for customers using non-subsidized fuels such as *Pertamax*, *Pertamax Turbo*, *Dex*, and *Dexlite*. The special lanes are designed to speed up the refueling process and prevent customers from waiting in long queues at regular lanes (Manggalani, 2024). However, the effectiveness of this service remains relatively low due to suboptimal adoption rates. One of the main factors contributing to the low adoption of Special Fast Track Lines is the lack of service differentiation compared to regular lanes. Customers do not perceive significant added benefits when using these dedicated lanes, as regular lanes are still able to provide relatively fast service. Consequently, customers lack strong incentives to switch to the special lanes.

Additionally, limited marketing and promotional strategies contribute to low customer awareness regarding the existence and benefits of Special Fast Track Lines. Product marketing strategy is crucial for a company, as it serves as the fundamental approach for business units to achieve their goals (Triyanto, 2015). However, in this case, the company may have focused more on introducing the service name rather than its advantages. Communication has been primarily centered on the fuel

product itself rather than the benefits of the refueling service, leading to a lack of customer understanding of the added value offered. As a result, this service has struggled to capture customer attention.

Customer preference for subsidized fuel also remains a significant barrier to increasing the use of Special Fast Track Lines. The lower prices of *Pertalite* and *Biosolar* make many customers prefer subsidized fuel over non-subsidized options, even if it means enduring longer queues at regular lanes. This factor demonstrates that price is a major consideration in customer decision-making (Ilmania, 2023; Santoso, 2016). Beyond price preference, the lack of clear service differentiation is another obstacle to increasing the use of Special Fast Track Lines. If customers do not perceive a significant difference in terms of speed or convenience compared to regular lanes, they are unlikely to utilize the dedicated lanes. Therefore, service improvements are necessary to attract customer interest.

Low awareness and insufficient information about the benefits of Special Fast Track Lines further contribute to its low adoption rate. Without effective promotion, many customers remain unaware of the existence of these dedicated lanes or the reasons they should use them.

This study focuses on optimizing Special Fast Track Lines at *Pertamina* gas stations, requiring attention to the aspects outlined in the fishbone analysis. Strategies to improve customer satisfaction must include solutions for supply chain efficiency, resource management, and the adoption of digital technology to reduce service time. Furthermore, strategic measures that consider environmental sustainability can serve as an added value in enhancing the company's image and meeting the expectations of increasingly environmentally conscious customers.

Pertamina Patra Niaga's Special Fast Track Lines were introduced to provide premium refueling services for non-subsidized fuel users, yet adoption remains low due to several key challenges. The primary issue lies in the lack of clear service differentiation, as customers perceive minimal time savings compared to regular lanes, removing the incentive to switch. Compounding this problem is inadequate marketing that fails to communicate the lane's benefits, coupled with *Indonesia's* strong consumer preference for subsidized fuels like *Pertalite* due to their lower prices. These factors collectively undermine the initiative's potential to drive premium fuel sales and enhance customer experience.

The program's effectiveness is further hampered by inconsistent station infrastructure, where many locations lack visibly distinct lanes or upgraded service features, making the Fast Track experience indistinguishable from regular service. This operational shortcoming, combined with the absence of tangible perks like faster payments or loyalty rewards, prevents the creation of perceived value. If unaddressed, *Pertamina* risks missing opportunities to grow its premium fuel segment and strengthen brand loyalty, particularly as competitors like Shell and BP offer more differentiated high-tier fuel experiences. The current implementation fails to capitalize on psychological factors that drive customer decisions, such as the appeal of time savings and exclusive treatment.

To transform this initiative, *Pertamina* must develop a comprehensive strategy that addresses both physical service differentiation and customer perception. This research seeks to identify the crucial factors influencing fuel tier upgrades, determine customer expectations for premium refueling experiences, and establish competitive differentiators against global brands. By implementing visible service enhancements, targeted digital marketing, and value-added features, *Pertamina* can create compelling reasons for customers to choose both premium fuels and the Fast Track service. Successfully optimizing this offering would not only increase non-subsidized fuel sales but also position *Pertamina* more competitively in *Indonesia's* evolving fuel retail market.

This study aims to address the research questions by focusing on the following three key objectives: to analyze the key factors influencing customers' decisions to switch from low-tier to high-tier fuel at *Pertamina* gas stations, in order to understand the motivations and barriers in customer purchasing decisions; to identify customer expectations regarding the Special Fast Track Lines service at *Pertamina* gas stations to enhance customer satisfaction and experience, thereby developing

service improvement strategies that align with customer needs; and to determine the service differentiation strategies that *Pertamina* should implement to effectively compete with other fuel providers such as Shell and BP, as well as to strengthen the competitive positioning of Special Fast Track Lines in the premium fuel market.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of *Pertamina's* Special Fast Track Lanes in enhancing customer satisfaction. The quantitative component utilizes surveys from 150 service users, analyzed through Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) metrics and descriptive statistics to identify satisfaction patterns and areas needing improvement. Complementing this, qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews with customers and station managers, along with field observations, provide deeper insights into customer expectations and operational realities. The interview data is processed using NVivo software for thematic analysis, while observations capture practical aspects of service implementation that surveys alone might miss, creating a robust foundation for understanding both the measurable and experiential dimensions of the service.

The research specifically examines the relationship between Fast Track Line Optimization (Variable X)—encompassing service speed, layout, accessibility, and promotion—and Customer Satisfaction (Variable Y). Quantitative analysis reveals specific service gaps, such as prolonged wait times and suboptimal lane organization, while qualitative findings highlight customer desires for more exclusive, premium experiences comparable to competitors like Shell and BP. This dual approach allows the study to not only measure satisfaction levels but also understand the underlying motivations behind fuel choice decisions and service expectations. The integration of CSAT data with thematic interview analysis provides a nuanced understanding of how different service elements influence customer perceptions and loyalty.

By synthesizing both quantitative and qualitative findings, the study addresses three key research questions: the factors driving premium fuel adoption, customer expectations for Fast Track services, and the necessary competitive differentiators. The results inform practical strategies for service enhancement, including lane redesign to improve flow, targeted promotional campaigns, and the development of more personalized premium services. This comprehensive analysis enables *Pertamina* to make data-driven decisions for optimizing Special Fast Track Lanes, ultimately strengthening its competitive position in *Indonesia's* evolving fuel retail market while meeting the growing demand for differentiated, high-quality service experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Key Factors Influencing Customers' Decision to Switch from Low-Tier to High-Tier Fuel

In explaining the key factors influencing customers' decision to switch from low-tier fuels (such as Pertalite) to high-tier fuels (such as the Pertamax or Dex Series) at Pertamina fuel stations, both survey and interview findings must be taken into account. A survey involving 150 respondents clearly revealed that customers at Pertamina gas stations have increasingly transitioned to high-tier fuel options. This is illustrated in the survey results below:

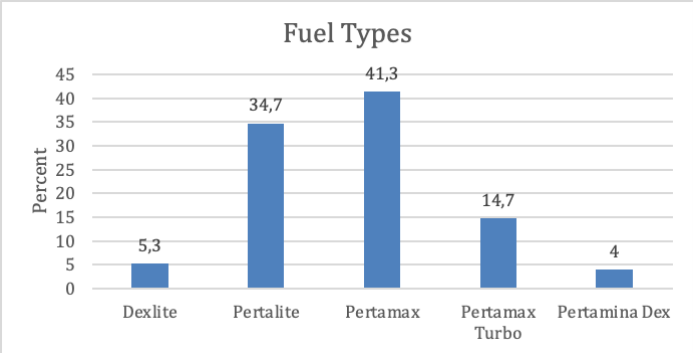


Figure 2. Fuel Usage Percentage

Low-tier fuel at Pertamina stations primarily refers to Pertalite, whereas high-tier fuels include Pertamax, Pertamax Turbo, Pertamina Dex, and Dexlite. As shown in the figure, customers have noticeably shifted toward high-tier fuels, with Pertamax (high-tier) topping the usage chart at 41.3%, followed by Pertalite (low-tier) at 34.7%. These data provide a strong foundation for exploring the key factors influencing this shift in consumer behavior. Based on interview data, the primary factors influencing customers' decision to switch are presented in the figure below:

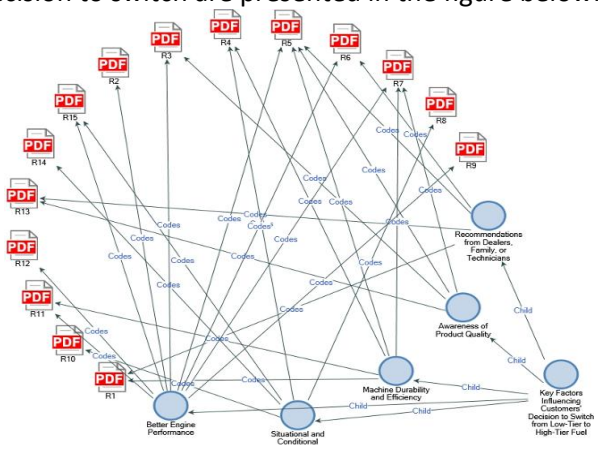


Figure 3. Key Factors Influencing Customers' Decision to Switch from Low-Tier to High-Tier Fuel

The figure identifies several key factors, including: improved engine performance, engine durability and fuel efficiency, recommendations (from dealers, family, or technicians), situational and conditional factors, and awareness of product quality.

Table 1. Interview Quotes Coding for Key Factors Influencing Customers' Decision

No.	Interview Quotes	Open Coding	Axial Coding
1	"Yes, ever, the performance of the engine has improved and improved..." (R2)	Increased machine	Improved Engine Performance
2	"Seeing from the performance of the engine, it is more optimal..." (R3)	Maximum engine performance	Improved Engine Performance
3	"The most influential thing is the performance of the vehicle, the economy of use, and the sense of safety for the engine..." (R5)	Performance efficiency, sense of security	Improved Engine Performance
4	"I see from the performance, the price, and how economical it is on the road..." (R6)	Performance and fuel efficiency	Improved Engine Performance
5	"If the vehicle is more comfortable	Comfort and	Improved Engine

No.	Interview Quotes	Open Coding	Axial Coding
	and economical, I choose a better one." (R7)	efficiency	Performance
6	"Ever, because I want to try something better for engine performance..." (R9)	Want to try better performance	Improved Engine Performance
7	"If the performance of the vehicle is better, I will choose higher fuel." (R11)	Choose BBM because of its performance	Improved Engine Performance
8	"Maybe it's because the engine is so good..." (R12)	The engine is good	Improved Engine Performance
9	"At any time, the performance of the engine becomes better." (R15)	Better performance	Improved Engine Performance
10	"The more engine maintenance the better... In order to maintain the machine..." (R1)	Better machine maintenance	Engine Durability and Efficiency

The table above shows the coding results of each respondent interview quote. Here is a further explanation:

Improved Engine Performance

One of the main motivations behind switching to high-tier fuel is the significant improvement in engine performance. Customers reported that their vehicles felt more powerful, responded better, and had smoother acceleration when using the Pertamax or Dex Series fuels. This was noted by respondents R2, R3, R5, R6, R7, R9, R11, R12, and R15. For example, R3 stated that the vehicle had “more power” and “optimal engine performance,” while R5 mentioned “smoother acceleration,” indicating direct experiential benefits. This factor highlights that consumers do not only consider fuel prices, but also the immediate comfort and performance of their vehicles.

Driving Comfort and Engine Performance Quality

Some respondents stated that a more comfortable driving experience was the main reason they switched to high-octane fuel. R6 and R7, for example, admitted that they had experienced performance problems when using low-octane fuel, so they finally chose higher-quality fuel for the sake of engine stability when used.

Engine Efficiency and Durability

There were also customers who considered the long-term impact on their vehicles. R1, R4, R5, R7, and R11 considered that higher-quality fuel provided efficient use and helped maintain the engine in prime condition. R1 said he wanted to take better care of his engine, while R11 prioritized efficiency as the main reason. R4 even stated that premium fuel gave him “better power” and was “efficient,” indicating that their perception of fuel is now more complex than just momentary performance.

Influence from Mechanics, Family, or Dealers

The decision to switch to premium fuel is also greatly influenced by recommendations from people who are considered knowledgeable, such as workshop technicians, vehicle dealers, or family. R1 said he followed the dealer's instructions, and R5 said it was a recommendation from the manufacturer. R6 even mentioned the influence of "friends, technicians, or information in the media" as influencing his decision. This shows that consumer decisions are not always purely based on personal experience, but are also influenced by parties they trust.

Situational and Conditional Factors

Some respondents chose high-octane fuel because of certain situations. R4, R8, R10, R14, and R15 admitted that their decisions were not routine, but more because of emergency conditions. R14, for example, said, "At that time the Pertalite queue was long, so I filled up with Pertamax," while R15

said because "I was in a hurry and the tank was almost empty." There were also those who switched because they felt that vehicle performance was starting to decline. These conditions could be an important moment for Pertamina to provide promotions or education so that customers would make premium fuel their permanent choice, not just a temporary alternative.

Awareness of Product Quality

Several customers recognized that high-tier fuels offer better quality and long-term benefits, even if they have not fully transitioned. Respondents R3, R5, R7, and R13 demonstrated an understanding of product quality and the importance of using fuel that matches engine specifications. For instance, R5 cited both performance and engine quality as reasons, while R7 acknowledged that the vehicle was “more comfortable and more efficient” when using better-quality fuel.

This awareness indicates significant potential for more intensive market education. Respondents like R13, who mentioned receiving information from family, also illustrate how perceptions of quality can spread through interpersonal communication. When customers have a strong understanding of product quality, they are more likely to remain loyal to high-tier fuels and recommend them to others—especially if the quality is consistently demonstrated over time.

The interpretation of the above results indicates a shift in consumer preferences toward high-tier fuels at Pertamina fuel stations. Quantitatively, survey data from 150 respondents show that the majority of consumers (41.3%) now prefer Pertamax as their primary fuel, while Pertalite, which falls into the low-tier category, is used by only 34.7% of respondents. This percentage suggests an increasing consumer awareness of the quality differences between high-tier and low-tier fuels, with a clear trend toward using higher-quality fuels despite their higher cost. These findings serve as an early indication that factors beyond price are influencing consumer decision-making.

The qualitative approach, through interview findings, enriches the understanding of these quantitative results. Respondents reported switching to high-tier fuels due to better engine performance, improved fuel efficiency, and enhanced engine durability. Furthermore, recommendations from trusted sources such as mechanics, family members, or vehicle dealers significantly influenced consumers to try—and eventually regularly use—high-tier fuels. Situational factors, including fuel availability at specific stations and the condition of vehicles that increasingly require higher-quality fuel, also reinforced these decisions.

Ultimately, increased awareness of product quality and its impact on vehicle performance emerges as a key theme that unifies both the quantitative and qualitative findings. Although price remains a consideration, consumers appear to be viewing fuel as a long-term investment in engine health. This is also supported by field observations. The observed shift in preferences reflects an improvement in consumer literacy regarding fuel quality, which may be influenced by media education or Pertamina’s promotional efforts. Consequently, marketing strategies and services that emphasize the added value of high-tier fuels are highly relevant in sustaining and enhancing this trend.

Based on the explanation above, and in the context of the first research question, the findings suggest that the decision of customers to switch from low-tier to high-tier fuels at Pertamina stations is influenced by five main factors: improved engine performance, engine durability and fuel efficiency, recommendations from trusted sources (such as dealers, technicians, and family), specific situational conditions (such as queues or urgent needs), and awareness of product quality. Of the 150 respondents surveyed, 41.3% chose Pertamax as their main fuel, while only 34.7% still use Pertalite. This result is also in line with the interview, where many customers mentioned driving comfort, fuel efficiency, and long-term engine maintenance as the reasons they switched to high-octane fuel. This finding shows that customer choices are no longer just based on low prices. Many of them are starting to see the long-term benefits of better quality fuel. This could be an opportunity for Pertamina to strengthen education and promotion so that more customers are interested in using premium fuel.

Customers Expectation from Pertamina's Special Fast Track Lanes To Improve Their Satisfaction And Experience

Before discussing customer expectations, it is necessary to first see how they assess this service through a satisfaction score (CSAT). This value describes how satisfied they are after using Fast Track. If the value is high, it means that the service is in accordance with expectations. But if it is low, it means that something needs to be improved. This assessment uses a scale of 1 to 5. The focus is on those who give a score of 4 or 5 because that is considered a sign of satisfaction. From there, you can see which parts of the Fast Track service are good and which are still lacking. On this scale, scores of 4 and 5 typically represent "satisfied" and "very satisfied" responses. The Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) is calculated based on customer responses to a satisfaction question, measured on a 1–5 scale in this study, with an emphasis on the percentage of customers who gave a positive rating (e.g., 4 or 5 on the 5-point scale). On this scale, scores of 4 and 5 typically represent "satisfied" and "very satisfied" responses.

$$CSAT\ Score = \left(\frac{Number\ of\ customers\ who\ gave\ a\ positive\ rating}{Total\ number\ of\ customers\ who\ responded}\right) x\ 100\%$$

CSAT Score Interpretation:

- 70% – 85%: Indicates high customer satisfaction.
- 60% – 70%: Indicates good satisfaction, but with room for improvement.
- 50% – 60%: Indicates moderate satisfaction, requiring more attention.
- Below 50%: Indicates low satisfaction, necessitating significant corrective action.

Based on the data presented in the table above, customer satisfaction stands at 66.17%, which falls into the "good" category. Customers' expectations for Pertamina's Fast Track lane service primarily revolve around service speed and reduced waiting times. The Service Speed/Customer Waiting Time dimension achieved an average Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) of 73.17%, categorized as high, indicating that customers highly value reduced queuing time and the promptness of service delivery. Statements such as "the waiting time feels efficient" and "the service is faster than the regular lane" received significantly high satisfaction ratings, affirming that customers expect the Fast Track not only to be faster but also to deliver a more efficient and practical refueling experience compared to regular lanes.

In addition, customers expressed high expectations regarding ease of access, clarity in lane design, and the availability of promotional information related to this service. The Accessibility and Layout/Design dimensions showed fairly good CSAT scores, averaging 69.08% and 67.00% respectively, suggesting the importance of clear entry points, easily recognizable visual signage, and non-confusing lane arrangements. While awareness and promotion of the service received a decent score (69.33%), there remains room for improvement, particularly in educating more customers on the benefits of using the Fast Track lane. Overall, customers seek a refueling experience that is not only faster and more convenient but also easy to navigate and supported by clear information and attractive promotions.

This survey and CSAT results align with interview findings, which reveal several customer expectations as illustrated in Figure 4:

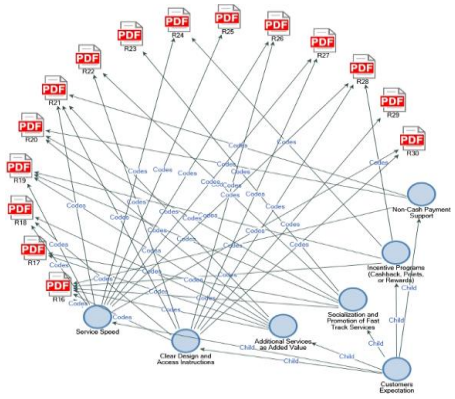


Figure 4. Customers' Expectations from Pertamina's Special Fast Track Lanes

The figure above outlines six main customer expectations for the Fast Track service at Pertamina fuel stations: (1) fast service delivery, (2) clear design and access directions, (3) additional services as value-added features, (4) extensive promotion and service awareness campaigns, (5) incentive programs, and (6) support for cashless payment options. These expectations were also observed during field observations.

Each expectation is elaborated as follows:

Fast Service Delivery

Speed of service was the most dominant expectation among respondents. Ten participants (R16, R18, R19, R21, R24, R25, R26, R27, R28, and R30) emphasized the importance of quick refueling without queuing, particularly during peak hours. For instance, respondent R18 remarked, "During rush hours, the Fast Track lane is extremely helpful," underscoring that speed is the primary driver of customer satisfaction.

This expectation is closely tied to time efficiency. R19 stated, "I hope the Fast Track can be faster and reduce queuing," while R21 added, "Ideally, I can be served immediately without waiting too long." These statements reflect that minimal waiting time is a core value customers expect from the Fast Track. The faster the service, the higher the level of satisfaction. Moreover, speed is also associated with overall service quality. R30 expressed a desire for not only faster service but also "responsive and friendly staff," indicating that service efficiency should be supported by staff performance to enhance the overall customer experience.

Clear Design and Access Signage

Nine respondents (R16, R18, R21, R22, R26, R27, R28, R29, and R30) noted that the signage and access routes to the Fast Track lane were suboptimal. Many customers expressed confusion in locating the lane due to insufficient or unclear signage. R21 commented, "Sometimes it's hard to see; maybe larger directional signs are needed," highlighting the on-ground ambiguity. Conditions at certain fuel stations also hindered lane visibility. R18 noted that the lane was "often blocked by bus or truck queues," making it difficult for customers to identify. R22 further stated, "It's not very accessible; the signage is small, and not all stations have it." These observations suggest that despite the implementation of the Fast Track, its visual design and physical guidance still require considerable improvement to be more effective.

Customers proposed enhancements such as more visible banners and signage. R27 suggested, "There should be banners so we can read them clearly," and R28 added, "Maybe add more signs indicating the Fast Track lane." Clearly marked visual cues will better fulfill customer expectations for accessibility and reduce potential confusion or misdirection.

Additional Services as Added Value

Several respondents (R16–R21) hoped for additional small services that could make the Fast Track experience more comfortable. R18, for example, said that simple assistance such as cleaning the windshield was very helpful. R19 also suggested light services such as free tire inflation or glass wipes.

Some also proposed unique ideas. R20 suggested automatic services such as tire pressure checks, or even free car fresheners. R16 wanted "small souvenirs like key chains," and R21 hoped for "car tissues or glass cleaning fluid refills." These simple things were considered to be able to give a premium impression and differentiate Fast Track from regular lanes.

Lack of Promotion and Service Education

Several respondents (R16, R17, R19, R20, R22, R23) said that information about Fast Track was still minimal. Many customers did not know that this service existed or did not understand its use. R19 emphasized the importance of promotion, because according to him, "there are still many people who do not know." R23 also complained about promotions that were "not clear enough."

They suggested that Pertamina be more active in conveying information, either through social media or banners or other promotional materials at gas stations. R22 mentioned the need to use digital media more optimally, while R17 observed the absence of banners or signs in the field. R20 even emphasized, "If it's not promoted, people won't know."

Incentives Such as Cashback and Loyalty Points

Some customers are also interested if there are rewards in the form of cashback, points, or small gifts. Respondents such as R16, R19, R24, and R28 mentioned this as a trigger for interest. R16 said, "If there is cashback or points, I would definitely be more interested." R24 said small things like "free mineral water" were enough to give a positive impression.

Simple incentives are considered a form of appreciation for customer loyalty. R19 acknowledged that small gifts can be a pleasant differentiator. R28 even said he wanted "exchangeable points," which means that customers also expect long-term benefits, not just one time.

Support for Cashless Payments

Transaction convenience is another important expectation. Three respondents (R16, R20, and R21) highlighted the need for digital payment methods such as MyPertamina, debit/credit cards, and QRIS. R16 noted, "Cashless payments make transactions faster," indicating that speed should also apply to payment processes.

Digital payment methods are perceived as more practical and aligned with the fast-paced urban lifestyle. R21 remarked, "Using MyPertamina or cards is more practical," reinforcing the idea that Fast Track should offer a premium and efficient experience. Customers should not have to deal with cash handling or change.

R20 emphasized the importance of integrating digital systems: "It really helps. Cashless makes the process quicker and less hassle." This expectation suggests that Pertamina must ensure sufficient digital infrastructure, including system reliability, staff training, and customer education, to provide a modern and satisfying service experience.

Based on the survey and interview findings, customers' primary expectations for Pertamina's Fast Track service are centered on fast service and reduced waiting times. The CSAT score for the Service Speed/Customer Waiting Time dimension, at 73.17%, reflects how highly valued this aspect is. This is supported by interview responses such as "the waiting time feels efficient" and "the service is faster than the regular lane." Customers seek not only speed but also an efficient, practical, and hassle-free refueling experience compared to regular lanes.

Beyond speed, customers also expect easy access facilitated by clear lane design and effective visual guidance. The Accessibility (69.08%) and Layout/Design (67.00%) dimensions show that, while satisfactory, there is still room for improvement in physical layout and signage. Interview results reinforce the need for intuitive design and unambiguous entry points.

Furthermore, customers express expectations for value-added services, incentive programs, and robust support for digital payment systems. Although promotional and awareness dimensions scored reasonably well (69.33%), interview data reveal a desire for more proactive education and comprehensive communication about the benefits of Fast Track. In short, customers not only want speed and convenience but also a modern, integrated, and rewarding experience. Therefore,

enhancements in promotional communication, added services, and payment convenience are strategic priorities for improving customer satisfaction and experience.

Within the context of the second research question, the findings indicate that overall customer satisfaction with the Fast Track service at Pertamina stations is at 66.17% (good category). Customers' expectations are strongly centered on service speed and time efficiency, as reflected in the high CSAT score (73.17%) for the Service Speed/Customer Waiting Time dimension. They desire a refueling experience that is fast, convenient, queue-free, and particularly beneficial during peak hours. Additionally, expectations include accessible and clearly marked lanes, supplementary services such as windshield cleaning or air refill, wider promotion and education, loyalty-based incentives, and cashless payment support — all of which contribute to a more modern, integrated, and satisfying customer experience. In essence, customer expectations extend beyond speed to encompass comfort, added value, and transactional ease, all of which are essential to fostering satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

Differentiation Should Pertamina Execute To Compete With Other Big Players

This section discusses the differentiation strategies Pertamina must implement in order to effectively compete with major players such as Shell and BP. Differentiation is particularly crucial in the context of fast track lane services, which are currently underutilized. This conclusion is based on survey data presented in:

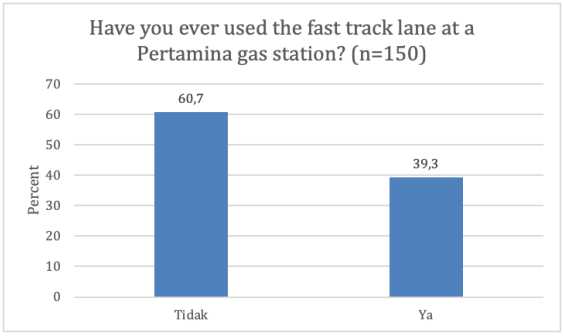


Figure 5. Fast Track Line Usage Percentage in Pertamina Gas Station

As shown in the figure above, only 39.3% of the 150 respondents reported using the fast track lane service—an indication of its relatively low adoption. Interviews with customers reinforce this finding, revealing that a significant number of respondents were either unaware of the service or had never used it. This suggests that Pertamina needs to adopt targeted strategies to enhance consumer interest and engagement with the fast track service. Differentiation, in this case, refers to the strategic efforts to distinguish Pertamina's products and services from those of its competitors, thereby making them more appealing to customers.

To determine the most relevant differentiation strategies, it is essential to incorporate consumer perspectives. Hence, insights gathered from in-depth interviews are particularly significant.

Based on the interview findings, seven key differentiation strategies are recommended for Pertamina:

Enhancement of Customer Service (Friendliness, Proactiveness, and Consistency)

Friendliness and consistency in service delivery are fundamental aspects of the customer experience. Several respondents noted that service attendants at Shell and BP stations were more courteous and proactive, greeting customers and providing efficient assistance. Respondent R42 remarked, "Shell attendants always greet you with a friendly 'Good afternoon'... I hope Pertamina can do the same."

Conversely, Pertamina was reported to lack in this area, with respondents describing service attendants as insufficiently trained or lacking courteous behavior. Respondent R44 suggested, “There should be proper training before one becomes an operator, to align with SOPs.”

Therefore, improving SOPs and conducting regular training are vital steps to ensure consistently positive customer interactions. In the long term, this will not only build customer trust and loyalty but also position Pertamina as a service-oriented fuel provider.

Additional Services at Fuel Stations (Windshield Cleaning, Tire Polishing, Car Wash, etc.)

Customers responded positively to minor but thoughtful services provided at Shell and BP stations, such as windshield cleaning and automatic tire inflation. These gestures are perceived as signs of customer care. R45 specifically mentioned, “Windshield cleaning is a nice additional service.”

Emotionally, such services signal attentiveness, enhancing the overall customer experience. R40 stated, “Maybe they could adopt that kind of service—being friendly and cleaning the windshield.” Integrating these extra services into a standardized operational model—potentially incentivizing proactive attendants—could create a strong and recognizable service advantage for Pertamina.

Improvement of Fuel Quality (Consistency and Performance)

Fuel quality is a key criterion for customers when comparing service stations. Several respondents reported better engine performance and fuel efficiency when using Shell and BP products. For example, R36 stated, “It feels lighter when accelerating with Shell and BP fuel,” while R45 urged Pertamina to “check the quality again.”

The desire for special additives and high-performance formulations was also noted. R34 recommended, “Improve fuel quality with specialized additives,” indicating that consumers expect more than just marketing claims. Consistency in fuel performance was a recurring concern, with R38 commenting on variability in quality. To address these concerns, Pertamina should implement transparent quality assurance protocols, provide clear technical specifications, and educate customers on the superior features of its fuel products.

Innovation in Digital Services (Advanced MyPertamina and Cashless Transactions)

Modern consumers expect seamless digital interactions. While Pertamina's MyPertamina app is a step in the right direction, respondents felt it needs further development. R31 commented, “Keep developing digital services like MyPertamina,” reflecting both enthusiasm and unmet expectations.

R35 added, “Make the app more advanced to help with finding stations and payments.” Today’s digital environment demands fast, integrated, and user-friendly applications that can handle payments, loyalty points, location tracking, and even fast track lane reservations. Enhanced digital services would symbolize Pertamina’s commitment to customer convenience, allowing it to compete with Shell and BP not only physically but also in the digital realm.

Environmentally Friendly and High-Tech Fuel Products

Environmental awareness among consumers is increasing. Several respondents highlighted the importance of developing cleaner, high-performance fuels. R32 and R33 stated, “They should innovate in environmentally friendly fuels.”

Fuel technologies that both improve performance and reduce emissions represent a major opportunity. Respondents R34 and R37 echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the growing importance of sustainability. By committing to eco-friendly fuel innovation, Pertamina can attract environmentally conscious consumers and elevate its reputation as a responsible energy provider.

Attractive Loyalty Programs and Promotions (Points, Cashback, etc.)

Loyalty incentives, such as reward points, cashback, or free fuel after a certain volume, are standard at competitor stations. R36 shared, “I once got a card where filling 25 liters gave me 1 liter free,” highlighting the effectiveness of such programs. R39 added, “Developing loyalty programs would be a value-added feature,” underscoring the desire for customer appreciation. Integrating

loyalty programs into the MyPertamina app would strengthen customer engagement, increase repeat visits, and build long-term brand affinity.

One-Stop Service Concept (Modern Retail, Coffee Shops, Mini Rest Areas)

Integrating retail services at fuel stations appeals to customers seeking convenience during travel. R36 stated, “One-stop service really helps... you can buy snacks, top up e-money,” pointing to the importance of efficiency and comfort. The combination of fuel service, coffee shops, mini-marts, and rest areas creates a more comprehensive and enjoyable stop. R43 noted, “It’s great... it can be a place to eat and rest too,” indicating the evolving expectations of customers. Pertamina can leverage this concept as a unique differentiator, especially in urban and highway locations, positioning itself as a modern and comfortable destination.

The seven differentiation strategies identified through in-depth customer interviews provide a comprehensive and consumer-driven framework for Pertamina to enhance its competitive positioning in the fuel retail market. These strategies—ranging from service quality improvements to environmental innovations—directly address consumer pain points and expectations, thereby offering practical pathways to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. By implementing enhancements in customer service, providing thoughtful add-on services, and ensuring consistent fuel quality, Pertamina can significantly improve the customer experience and align its service standards with or even surpass those of competitors like Shell and BP. Pertamina is now starting to make various adjustments to remain relevant to the needs of today's consumers. One of them is through the use of digital technology, the development of more environmentally friendly fuels, and loyalty programs that provide direct benefits to customers.

In addition, the concept of gas stations is also starting to be directed as a complete stopover, not just a place to fill up with gas. For example, there are retail stores or rest areas that can be used by drivers and passengers to take a break. This certainly adds comfort during the trip. When viewed as a whole, this strategy can be a surefire way to maintain long-term relationships with customers. In the midst of increasingly tight competition, this approach helps Pertamina stand out and remain the main choice in the market.

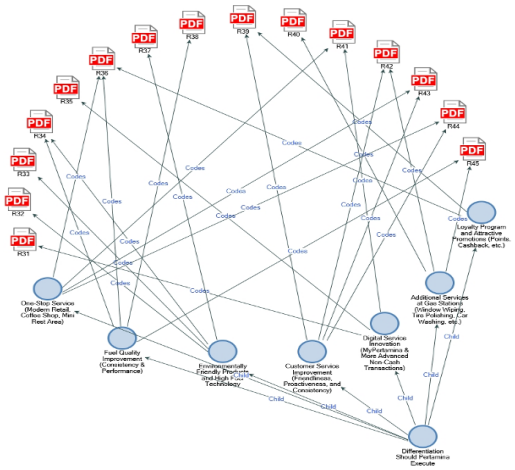


Figure IV.5 Recommended Differentiation Strategies for Pertamina to Compete with Major Players such as Shell and BP

One of the main focuses of this study was to find out what influences customers’ decisions when they decide to switch from low-octane fuel to higher-octane fuel at Pertamini gas stations. The researchers wanted to dig deeper into what the reasons behind the choice were both what prompted them to switch and what made them hesitate. From the findings, it is known that there are five main things that influence this decision, namely engine performance, engine efficiency and durability,

recommendations from trusted parties, emergency conditions, and increasing awareness of product quality.

A survey of 150 respondents showed that Pertamax is used by 41.3% of customers, while Pertalite is only 34.7%. This data is reinforced by the results of interviews, where many respondents mentioned the real benefits of using high-octane fuel. This finding shows a shift in the mindset of customers who were previously sensitive to price, now starting to consider long-term value. If we look deeper, the reason customers switch to premium fuel is not just about the price. Many of them said that after using Pertamax, the engine pull became lighter and the car felt more powerful. In addition, they also felt that their fuel consumption was more efficient and their engine was more durable.

Interestingly, some of them dared to try Pertamax because they got advice from people they trusted, such as mechanics at workshops, dealers, or even family. Advice like that made them more confident in switching and eventually got used to using high-octane fuel. If we look deeper, the reason customers switch to premium fuel is not just about the price. Many of them said that after using Pertamax, the engine pull became lighter and the car felt more powerful. In addition, they also felt that their fuel consumption was more efficient and their engine was more durable.

Interestingly, some of them dared to try Pertamax because they got advice from people they trusted, such as mechanics at workshops, dealers, or even family. Advice like that made them more confident in switching and eventually got used to using high-octane fuel. On the other hand, several customers also said that they switched to Pertamax because of certain situations such as long queues in the Pertalite lane or urgent refill needs. Interestingly, the first experience often resulted in a positive impression.

The last factor that also influenced this was the growing awareness of the importance of fuel quality and its long-term benefits. Interviews showed that customers felt that their vehicles were more comfortable, more fuel efficient, and easier to maintain after using high-octane fuel.

Overall, these results show a shift in consumption patterns from initially focusing on price to now focusing more on quality and long-term utility. Customers increasingly appreciate the technical and functional benefits of premium fuel. For Pertamina, these findings can be used as an opportunity to strengthen consumer education and more targeted promotional strategies. Some customers interviewed felt that the polite attitude of the staff, the existence of small services that help, and the easy-to-use digital system are things that they really pay attention to. For them, what is measured is not only the fuel, but also how they are treated and how smoothly the refueling process is. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data in this study provides a comprehensive picture: for Pertamina's differentiation strategy to be successful, its approach must touch on the emotional, functional, and practical needs of customers.

By utilizing this input, Pertamina can design a more targeted and sustainable strategy not only to increase the use of the Fast Track lane, but also to strengthen its position in facing global competitors such as Shell and BP, especially in terms of customer loyalty and satisfaction. Emphasize the added value of high-tier fuels specifically engine performance, fuel efficiency, and vehicle protection.

In general, customer expectations for Fast Track services at Pertamina gas stations revolve around speed, convenience, ease of transactions, and added value that can make them satisfied and remain loyal in the long term. These results show that understanding customer expectations is important if Pertamina wants to optimize this service as a competitive advantage. Although the satisfaction level is quite good, at 66.17%, there is still a lot of room for improvement. Many customers see Fast Track not just as an additional facility, but as a solution to the queue problem that often makes them uncomfortable.

The thing that is most often mentioned as the main expectation is about the speed of service. This can be seen from the CSAT score for the "service speed/waiting time" dimension which reached 73.17%. This means that customers really appreciate a fast and uncomplicated fuel filling experience,

especially during peak hours. If the queue is too long or the service feels slow, customers usually immediately judge Pertamina's overall service as less than satisfactory. In addition to speed, they also want the Fast Track lane to be easily accessible. A clear lane, easy-to-find directions, and an unconfusing entry position are things they also pay attention to. Beyond that, some customers also expect additional services, such as windshield cleaning or tire inflation little things that can add to the comfort and give an exclusive impression.

Other expectations come from the ease of transactions and forms of appreciation. Features such as non-cash payments, cashback, or loyalty point systems are considered attractive and can encourage customers to use these services repeatedly. Some also suggest that Pertamina be more active in socializing the benefits of Fast Track, because it turns out that many still do not really understand its function. So, to summarize, customers don't just want fast service. They also expect a complete experience efficient, practical, and premium.

Based on the survey and interview results, there are seven main strategies that are considered important to implement. First, customer service must be improved friendly and responsive officers can give a positive impression and make customers feel at home. Second, additional services such as cleaning the windshield or polishing tires can be an added value that is immediately felt. Third, the MyPertamina application actually has great potential, but still needs to be maximized. Many customers hope that features such as non-cash payments, collecting points, or checking purchase history can be used more smoothly and simply, so that it is not complicated at the gas station. Fourth, the issue of fuel quality is also a concern. Customers want what is promised such as better engine power or more efficient use to be truly felt. So, consistent fuel quality is important so that their trust does not fade.

Fifth, now more and more people care about the environment. Therefore, Pertamina also needs to provide a choice of fuel that is more environmentally friendly and suitable for new vehicles with increasingly sophisticated technology. Sixth, an attractive loyalty program can be a separate attraction. The right promos and reasonable prizes often make people come back, especially if they feel appreciated as loyal customers. Seventh, gas stations can be developed into more complete stopping places, for example by providing coffee shops, rest areas, or other modern facilities. So, gas stations are not just places to fill up on gas, but can also be a fun place to stop during the trip. The combination of these seven strategies is expected to strengthen Pertamina's position in the premium fuel market while improving customer satisfaction and experience overall.

This study successfully identified three core focal points for enhancing customer satisfaction at Pertamina gas stations through Fast Track services and strategic differentiation. First, customer decisions to switch from low-tier to high-tier fuels are influenced by five key factors: engine performance, efficiency and durability, trusted recommendations, emergency conditions, and heightened awareness of fuel quality. Survey results among 150 respondents reveal a growing preference for Pertamax over Pertalite, indicating a shift in consumer orientation from price sensitivity to long-term value and functional benefits. This presents a strategic opportunity for Pertamina to educate the market through promotions highlighting the technical and functional advantages of high-tier fuels. Second, regarding expectations for Fast Track services, customers seek speed, convenience, accessibility, and value-added features such as cashless payments, incentives, and supplementary services (e.g., windshield cleaning). While satisfaction levels are good, substantial room for improvement remains. Third, the study proposes seven key differentiation strategies that Pertamina should adopt to effectively compete with Shell and BP: enhancing customer service, providing additional services, driving digital innovation through MyPertamina, ensuring consistent fuel quality, offering environmentally friendly products, launching loyalty programs, and developing a one-stop service model. These strategies are believed to strengthen Pertamina’s positioning as a modern, innovative, and customer-focused premium fuel provider.

Based on the findings of the study, Pertamina faces several critical challenges in elevating customer satisfaction and enhancing its competitive position in the premium fuel market. The first problem that still often arises is the price. Some customers still consider the cost very much, so they still choose low-grade fuel even though there are better quality options. Although the trend has started to shift towards long-term thinking, in fact many are still hesitant to switch because the price is immediately felt in their pockets. A possible solution that can be applied is a marketing strategy that targets behavior, for example through free trial promos, discounts for first use, or temporary upgrade programs. Pertamina can also work with workshops or technicians to directly demonstrate the difference in engine performance between low and high octane fuels, so that the benefits are more tangible to customers.

The second problem is related to waiting times and speed of service that are not as expected, especially during peak hours. Although customer satisfaction scores are generally quite good (66.17%), customers' desire to be served quickly remains high—especially on the Fast Track route. For this reason, improving services alone is not enough. Pertamina can consider using technology such as smart queue systems or real-time route monitoring so that queues can be managed better and customers do not have to wait too long.

Integrating AI-powered traffic prediction and flow management through the MyPertamina app can help customers plan their visits more efficiently. There are still many things that can be developed from the Fast Track infrastructure side. One of them is by providing automatic pumps and special areas so that the filling process is faster and does not involve many officers, so that it can reduce queues and speed up service.

The next problem is the lack of additional services that are truly in accordance with the expectations of today's customers. Consumers now not only need fast gas stations, but also a comprehensive experience. For example, they want facilities such as glass cleaning, tire pressure checks, smooth non-cash payments, and incentives that feel personal. To answer this, Pertamina can try a bundling service system—for example, every purchase of certain fuels can be accompanied by additional services. Or, a tiered membership system can also be created in the MyPertamina application, where users with certain levels can enjoy special lanes or exclusive services. Collaboration with fintech platforms can also be a solution to make digital payments more convenient, while increasing appeal through special promos.

Another pressing problem is the still low public awareness of the existence of the Fast Track service. Many do not know, or have only heard briefly without really understanding its benefits. Most likely, the low level of public understanding of this service is due to the lack of information provided, both through digital media and directly at gas stations. To overcome this, Pertamina needs to develop a more creative promotional strategy that reaches more people. For example, by placing digital advertisements that adjust to the user's location, collaborating with automotive communities or relevant public figures, and adding promotional materials that attract attention to the gas station area strategy. Pertamina can also implement an incentive system for new users or an invite-a-friend program so that this service is better known and tried.

On the other hand, Pertamina also needs to realize that their services are not really different from global competitors such as Shell or BP, which have been known to be innovative and customer-oriented. So that Fast Track is not just an ordinary additional feature, a comprehensive strategy is needed. There are at least seven things that can be done: first, improving the quality of officer services through regular training and evaluation; second, expanding the types of additional services offered; third, encouraging digital transformation through MyPertamina; fourth, maintaining stable and proven superior fuel quality; fifth, adjusting products to environmentally friendly energy trends; sixth, creating an attractive and data-based loyalty program; and seventh, developing gas stations into comfortable stopovers with facilities such as cafes, lounges, or light vehicle services. With this holistic

approach, Pertamina can create a superior experience and build long-term loyalty amidst increasingly competitive fuel industry.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to address three core questions, namely the factors influencing customers' decisions to switch to high-tier fuels, customers' expectations of the Special Fast Track service, and the differentiation strategies necessary for *Pertamina* to remain competitive in the premium fuel segment. First, the findings reveal five primary factors that drive customers to switch from low-tier to high-tier fuel: engine performance; fuel efficiency and durability; recommendations from trusted sources; emergency needs; and increased awareness of product quality. These findings indicate a shift in customer behavior from price-oriented considerations toward long-term value perceptions offered by high-tier fuels such as *Pertamax*. Second, customers expect the Fast Track lane at *Pertamina* gas stations to be faster, easier to access, and more practical—particularly through the integration of digital payment methods. Unfortunately, some customers feel that this service has not yet met their expectations. Third, amidst competition with Shell and BP, *Pertamina* needs to improve service quality, add simple yet value-adding facilities (such as tire pressure checks or windshield cleaning), and maximize the use of the *MyPertamina* application. Additionally, implementing loyalty programs and promoting environmentally friendly fuel options could help attract more users and strengthen *Pertamina's* position in the premium fuel market.

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