

BEYOND THE CAR: STRATEGIES FOR MAZDA'S TRANSITION TO PREMIUM BRAND THROUGH CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND SALES EXCELLENCE IN JAKARTA

LEBIH DARI SEKADAR MOBIL: STRATEGI TRANSISI MAZDA MENUJU MEREK PREMIUM MELALUI PENGALAMAN PELANGGAN DAN KEUNGGULAN PENJUALAN DI JAKARTA

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ABSTRACT

Mazda, a prominent Japanese automobile brand, is undertaking a strategic transformation to establish itself in Jakarta's premium automotive market, traditionally led by European luxury brands. Through the launch of its 7th Generation (7G) models, Mazda seeks to appeal to affluent consumers who value exclusivity, high-quality design, and innovative technology. This study applies multiple theoretical frameworks—the Industrial Organization (I/O) Model, Porter's Five Forces, Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model, Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), and Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP)—to analyze Mazda's competitive positioning and brand transition strategy. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach of qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, findings reveal critical areas where Mazda can refine its sales strategies and customer experience to strengthen brand perception. Recommendations emphasize targeted improvements in salesforce training, alignment of customer experiences with premium expectations, and brand-focused marketing initiatives highlighting Mazda's unique attributes. The study demonstrates that with tailored customer engagement and brand differentiation, Mazda can effectively compete in Jakarta's premium segment and expand its positioning in emerging premium markets.

Keywords: Brand Positioning, Car Market, Customer-Centered Strategy, Sales Force Development

ABSTRAK

Mazda, merek otomotif terkemuka asal Jepang, sedang melakukan transformasi strategis untuk menetapkan posisinya di pasar otomotif premium Jakarta, yang biasanya didominasi oleh merek-merek mewah Eropa. Melalui peluncuran model Generasi ke-7 (7G), Mazda berupaya menarik konsumen kelas atas yang menghargai eksklusivitas, desain berkualitas tinggi, dan teknologi inovatif. Studi ini menerapkan beberapa kerangka teori—Model Organisasi Industri (I/O), Lima Kekuatan Porter, Model Ekuitas Merek Berbasis Pelanggan (CBBE) dari Keller, Proses Hirarki Analitis (AHP), dan pendekatan Segmentasi, Penargetan, dan Positioning (STP)—untuk menganalisis strategi transformasi merek dan posisi kompetitif Mazda. Dengan pendekatan metode campuran melalui wawancara kualitatif dan survei kuantitatif, temuan penelitian ini mengidentifikasi area penting di mana Mazda dapat memperkuat strategi penjualan dan pengalaman pelanggan untuk meningkatkan persepsi merek. Rekomendasi studi ini menekankan peningkatan pelatihan tim penjualan, penyelarasan pengalaman pelanggan sesuai ekspektasi premium, dan inisiatif pemasaran yang berfokus pada keunggulan unik Mazda. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa dengan keterlibatan pelanggan yang terfokus dan diferensiasi merek yang tepat, Mazda dapat bersaing secara efektif di segmen premium Jakarta serta memperluas posisinya di pasar premium yang berkembang.

Kata Kunci: Brand Positioning, Pasar Mobil, Strategi yang Berpusat pada Pelanggan, Pengembangan Tenaga Penjualan.

INTRODUCTION

Mazda, a well-known brand in the global automotive industry, is recognized for its advanced technology, innovative designs, and focus on driving pleasure. As consumer preferences in Jakarta shift toward premium offerings, Mazda is positioning itself to enter this high-end market, traditionally dominated by luxury

brands such as Mercedes-Benz and BMW. This study primarily aims to examine Mazda's strategic transition into the premium automotive segment in Jakarta, with an emphasis on enhancing customer experience and refining sales and marketing strategies to align with luxury brand standards.

To achieve this, the study has several objectives. First, it seeks to analyze Mazda's competitive landscape, using Porter's Five Forces and the Industrial Organization (I/O) Model to understand the external pressures and market dynamics that Mazda must navigate. This objective addresses the need to identify the barriers and competitive forces Mazda faces as it aims to establish itself in the premium sector, which is critical for strategic positioning against established luxury brands.

Second, the study aims to develop a clear roadmap for Mazda's brand development and differentiation, using Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model. By focusing on building strong brand awareness, associations, and loyalty, Mazda can strengthen its image as a premium choice. This objective underscores the importance of crafting a brand identity that resonates with affluent consumers and elevates Mazda's brand perception in Jakarta's luxury market.

Third, the study assesses key factors that premium car buyers in Jakarta value most, leveraging the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) to prioritize elements like design, technological innovation, and customer service. This objective is essential for aligning Mazda's offerings with the preferences of high-end consumers, ensuring that Mazda's brand attributes and product features meet market expectations.

Lastly, the study aims to identify and engage Mazda's target segments within the premium market, using the Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) framework to tailor marketing and sales strategies to affluent consumer groups in Jakarta. By refining its approach to reach high-potential customers, Mazda can effectively position itself in the minds of premium buyers.

This integrated approach, combining competitive analysis, brand equity development, consumer preference identification, and target market engagement, offers a comprehensive strategy for Mazda to achieve a sustainable advantage and secure its place in Jakarta's luxury automotive landscape.

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in this study to explore Mazda's transition to a premium brand in Jakarta. The methodology integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively understand the factors influencing brand perception and the strategies necessary for successful brand repositioning. The chapter begins with a discussion of the overall research design, followed by detailed descriptions of the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) and the quantitative online survey. This study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design to investigate the factors influencing consumer perceptions of Mazda as a premium brand.

- a. **Descriptive Design:** The study aims to describe consumer perceptions, preferences, and behaviors in the premium automotive market. By understanding how Mazda is currently perceived, the analysis can identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.
- b. **Exploratory Design:** The research explores new insights into consumer expectations and competitive dynamics within the premium market since Mazda is transitioning into a new market segment. The exploratory aspect is crucial for uncovering previously unexamined factors that may influence Mazda's brand positioning.

Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP)

The AHP is a structured technique used for organizing and analyzing complex decisions.

- a. **Objective:** To determine the attributes most important to car buyers in Jakarta and identify the gaps in Mazda's current offerings.
- b. **Process:**
 - 1) **Hierarchy Structuring:** The first step involves defining the primary goal (Mazda's transition to a brand), the criteria influencing this goal, and the sub-criteria.
 - 2) **Pairwise Comparisons:** Experts in the automotive industry and Mazda's target customers will be asked to compare the criteria and sub-criteria

to determine their relative importance.

- 3) Synthesis of Priorities: The pairwise comparison results will be synthesized to calculate a numerical priority for each criterion, indicating its relative importance in the decision-making process.
- 4) Consistency Check: The consistency ratio will be calculated to ensure the

reliability of the judgments made during the comparisons.

The AHP software uses mathematical calculations to convert these judgments to priorities for the four criteria. The software also calculates a consistency ratio that expresses the internal consistency of the judgments entered.

Table 1. Discussion Guide for AHP

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Quantitative Study

The quantitative study will use an online survey to gather consumer perceptions, brand equity, brand closeness, and brand usage data.

Respondent Criteria is car owners who purchased their vehicles new from 2020 onwards, vehicles with a price of Rp 500 million, respondents who are decision-makers in car purchases, middle to upper segment consumers. Survey design in this study about perception analysis, brand equity measurement, brand closeness and brand usage. Sample size in this research 100 respondents fitting the specified criteria.

The insights gathered from the AHP and the quantitative study will be integrated to fully understand Mazda's positioning and

the necessary steps for its transition to a premium brand.

- a. AHP Analysis: The results from the AHP will provide a prioritized list of crucial criteria and sub-criteria for Mazda's transition. This will highlight the areas where Mazda needs to focus its efforts, such as improving vehicle design, enhancing after-sales service, or building a stronger brand image.
- b. Quantitative Data Analysis: The quantitative survey data will be analyzed to identify perception gaps, measure brand equity and closeness, and usage patterns.
- c. Integration of AHP and Quantitative Insights: The final step involves combining the prioritized criteria from the AHP with the quantitative insights to

develop a strategic roadmap for Mazda. This integrated analysis will enable Mazda to develop targeted strategies, enhance customer experience, and position as a premium brand.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

a. Industrial Organization (I/O) Model of Above-Average Returns

Mazda's strategy utilizes the Industrial Organization (I/O) Model for Above-Average Returns (AAR), which highlights aligning with external market forces to achieve strong returns. Analytical models, such as Porter's Five Forces, Keller's Brand Equity Model, the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), and the STP framework, will analyze Mazda's positioning and strategic responses. Key goals in this chapter include:

1. **Analyzing Mazda's External Environment:** Using the I/O Model and Porter's Five Forces, this section evaluates the competitive pressures, buyer influence, and threat of substitutes in the premium segment.
2. **Building Brand Perception:** Through Keller's Brand Equity Model, Mazda's strategies for brand awareness, positive association building, and customer loyalty are assessed.
3. **Targeting Key Customer Preferences:** The AHP framework identifies premium buyer preferences, such as style, safety, and design, which guide Mazda's product positioning.
4. **Effective Market Segmentation:** The STP model informs Mazda's targeted approach to specific market segments, including affluent younger consumers, women, and tech-savvy buyers.

b. Market Dynamics and Strategic Positioning Brand Awareness

Mazda's positioning within the premium automotive market leverages insights from the I/O Model, providing a detailed understanding of how external forces shape Mazda's strategy toward competition, customer engagement, and brand advancement.

a. General Environment

Consumer preferences in Jakarta show an increased interest in high-quality premium brands, spurred by rising disposable incomes. Research indicates that 71% of surveyed respondents recognize Mazda's premium model, the CX-60, with 82% perceiving it as a premium vehicle. However, 18% are not fully convinced of Mazda's premium status, highlighting an area for enhanced marketing efforts to strengthen brand recognition and convert neutral perceptions into favorable opinions.

b. Industry Environment

The premium automotive market demands excellence in innovation, luxury, and customer service, with dominant brands like Mercedes-Benz GLS and BMW X3 setting competitive benchmarks. To secure a foothold, Mazda prioritizes unique design elements, technology integration, and high-quality materials—key attributes in the AHP analysis. This analysis prioritizes style (53.7%) and safety (16.98%) as critical factors valued by Mazda's target demographic, emphasizing the importance of both aesthetic and functional attributes for customer loyalty competitive Environment

Mazda competes in a challenging environment where brands like BMW and Mercedes-Benz maintain high customer loyalty. Mazda's differentiation strategy focuses on exceptional customer experience and unique styling, as well as addressing competitive gaps in loyalty programs and after-sales services.

c. Industry Attractiveness and Segment Targeting

Mazda's market entry in Jakarta's premium segment capitalizes on insights from the I/O Model and market segmentation frameworks, aiming to identify high-potential segments and align offerings with consumer expectations.

1. Evaluating Industry Attractiveness

Mazda's entry into Jakarta's premium automotive segment leverages insights from the **Industrial Organization**

(I/O) Model to assess and navigate the attractiveness of this market. The I/O Model highlights **high barriers to entry** in the premium segment, such as significant capital requirements, advanced technology, and strong brand recognition, which offer established players a considerable advantage over new entrants. These barriers are particularly high in Jakarta's automotive market, where consumer loyalty to well-known luxury brands like Mercedes-Benz and BMW sets a high standard for new competitors. The need for extensive brand trust, high-quality manufacturing, and cutting-edge technology makes it challenging for brands without an established reputation to succeed in this segment. Mazda's strategy in response to these barriers is to **capitalize on its established brand reputation** and distinctive innovations, such as its **SkyActiv technology** and **Kodo design philosophy**. SkyActiv technology sets Mazda apart by offering enhanced fuel efficiency, improved safety, and dynamic performance, aligning with premium buyers' expectations for vehicles that combine performance with advanced engineering. By focusing on these high-value attributes, Mazda meets premium consumers' demand for innovation, which is essential in a market where technology often defines luxury status. Furthermore, Mazda's **Kodo design philosophy** emphasizes elegance and refined simplicity, embodying the aesthetic appeal that premium buyers seek. This design language not only enhances Mazda's visual brand identity but also establishes it as a credible alternative in a market where visual appeal is a key differentiator. Kodo design allows Mazda to communicate exclusivity and sophistication, meeting the high expectations of premium consumers who prioritize both style and substance in their vehicle choices. By leveraging these unique assets, Mazda can overcome the high barriers to entry and establish a foothold in

Jakarta's competitive premium market. This approach allows Mazda to differentiate itself effectively and fulfill consumer expectations for exclusivity, performance, and design, ultimately enhancing its attractiveness in the premium automotive industry.

2. Target Market Segmentation

Mazda applies the **Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) framework** to precisely identify and cater to specific groups within Jakarta's premium automotive market. This framework allows Mazda to segment the market into distinct categories based on factors like lifestyle, personal preferences, and consumer behavior, creating a clear roadmap to reach each high-potential segment with tailored messaging and products.

- a. **Young Affluent Buyers:** This segment includes affluent young professionals and entrepreneurs, generally aged 25-35, who are drawn to brands that reflect their success, ambition, and modern lifestyle. These consumers seek vehicles that embody **prestige, sophistication, and innovation**, as they view their car as a status symbol that represents their accomplishments. For this group, Mazda emphasizes its **Kodo design philosophy**, which combines elegance and modernity, and **SkyActiv technology** for an engaging driving experience. By positioning itself as a brand that blends innovation with luxury, Mazda appeals to young affluent buyers who aspire to own products that set them apart.
- b. **Safety-Conscious Women:** Mazda also targets affluent female consumers who place high value on **safety, comfort, and aesthetics** in their vehicle choices. Typically aged 25-55, these consumers prioritize reliable brands that offer robust safety features, ease of use, and a high level of comfort. Mazda's marketing for this segment highlights the **i-Activsense safety technology**, which includes advanced driver assistance systems and safety innovations that protect drivers and passengers. The brand's focus on style and comfort also resonates with this demographic, as these elements align

with the premium expectations of women seeking luxury and security in their vehicles. Mazda's outreach for this segment may include partnerships with female influencers and brand ambassadors, reinforcing its appeal through relatable and trustworthy figures.

- c. **Tech-Savvy Consumers:** This segment includes buyers across age groups who are drawn to the latest **technology, high-performance features, and innovative design**. These consumers are particularly interested in cars that integrate cutting-edge technology and enhanced driving dynamics, valuing vehicles that demonstrate both advanced engineering and forward-thinking design. Mazda's **SkyActiv technology** serves as a key selling point, appealing to this tech-oriented audience by offering optimized fuel efficiency, seamless performance, and environmental sustainability. Additionally, Mazda's continuous innovation in digital interfaces, connectivity, and in-car technology makes it an attractive choice for consumers who view technology as essential to a premium vehicle experience.

By segmenting its market through the STP framework, Mazda effectively tailors its **positioning and communication strategies** to resonate with each specific group's values and expectations. For young affluent buyers, the focus is on prestige and modernity; for safety-conscious women, it's reliability and comfort; and for tech-savvy consumers, it's innovation and high-performance technology. This targeted approach enhances Mazda's appeal across diverse premium consumer profiles, enabling it to establish a strong presence in Jakarta's luxury automotive market while addressing the unique preferences of each segment.

d. Positioning Strategy

Mazda's positioning strategy is carefully crafted to appeal to the premium market segments by emphasizing three core elements: **premium quality, innovation, and strong brand resonance**. This

approach ensures that Mazda's brand message and customer experience align with the expectations of affluent consumers who seek exclusivity, cutting-edge technology, and a reliable, high-quality brand. Mazda specifically targets high-potential segments, such as affluent young professionals, tech-savvy consumers, and individuals who prioritize safety and aesthetics. By tailoring its positioning to these groups, Mazda strengthens its appeal in a highly competitive market dominated by established luxury brands.

The model CX-60 serves as a flagship vehicle in Mazda's premium lineup, designed to showcase the brand's commitment to quality and innovation. Quantitative data from market surveys indicates that the CX-60 has achieved a notable level of **brand awareness**, with many consumers recognizing its premium attributes. This positive awareness provides Mazda with a strong foundation to build **brand loyalty** and deepen **brand associations** within the premium segment. To capitalize on this, Mazda focuses on developing a unique customer experience that goes beyond the initial purchase, aiming to create an ongoing relationship with each customer.

To further cultivate loyalty and premium brand associations, Mazda incorporates **tailored customer engagement** initiatives and **exclusive experiences**. For example, Mazda may offer personalized service packages, VIP maintenance plans, or early access to new models. These exclusive experiences allow customers to feel valued and connected to the Mazda brand, reinforcing Mazda's positioning as a premium option. Additionally, Mazda can strengthen its brand resonance by incorporating feedback from these segments, continuously adapting its services and offerings to reflect the preferences of its premium customers.

By building on brand resonance through focused customer engagement and quality assurance, Mazda's positioning strategy effectively differentiates the brand. This approach not only meets the specific demands of Jakarta's premium market but also establishes Mazda as a credible

competitor in the broader premium automotive sector, appealing to discerning consumers seeking a blend of innovation, quality, and exclusivity.

e. **Strategy Formulation**

Mazda's strategy formulation is centered on building strong **brand equity** to solidify its presence within Jakarta's premium automotive market. To achieve this, Mazda focuses on three key pillars: **differentiated design, exclusive customer experiences, and targeted branding campaigns**. Together, these elements work to create a cohesive and compelling brand identity that resonates with the premium market's high expectations and discerning tastes.

1. **Differentiated Design:** Mazda's design philosophy, known as Kodo (Soul of Motion), is essential to distinguishing Mazda from other premium competitors. By focusing on the seamless integration of elegance and functionality, Mazda aims to provide a unique aesthetic that appeals to luxury consumers who value artistry in automotive design. The emphasis on style, as highlighted in the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) findings, positions Mazda's vehicles as both visually striking and intuitively engineered. This differentiated approach in design allows Mazda to stand out in a segment dominated by brands with long-established luxury identities, such as Mercedes-Benz and BMW.
2. **Exclusive Customer Experiences:** Mazda understands that premium consumers are not only purchasing a vehicle but also an experience. To enhance its brand value and customer loyalty, Mazda provides exclusive experiences, such as VIP servicing, personalized customer care, and access to exclusive events. These services reinforce Mazda's commitment to a premium customer experience, which aligns with Keller's Brand Equity Model. By focusing on unique, high-touch interactions, Mazda builds positive associations that contribute to long-term brand loyalty and enhance the perception of quality. These experiences are designed to make each customer feel

valued and connected to Mazda, strengthening emotional ties to the brand.

3. **Targeted Branding Campaigns:** Mazda leverages insights from **Porter's Five Forces** and **market dynamics** to craft branding campaigns that specifically target the premium segment in Jakarta. The campaigns emphasize Mazda's core values—innovation, quality, and exclusivity—using tailored messaging and channels that resonate with affluent and aspirational consumers. By utilizing data from the I/O Model, Mazda can assess market forces and adjust its branding strategies to align with customer preferences. This targeted approach ensures that Mazda's brand image is consistently associated with premium quality, advanced technology, and distinctive style, creating a brand identity that stands apart from competitors.

By combining these pillars, Mazda's strategy formulation aligns its market entry goals with actionable insights from key analytical frameworks. The I/O Model helps Mazda understand and adapt to external market forces, while Porter's Five Forces analysis informs Mazda's competitive positioning against other premium brands. Insights from the AHP model also guide Mazda's prioritization of critical attributes, such as design and technology, ensuring that each strategic decision is aligned with consumer preferences and market demands.

Through this comprehensive, customer-oriented strategy, Mazda not only establishes itself as a premium option within Jakarta's automotive market but also positions itself to compete effectively against established luxury brands. By delivering sustained value and enhancing brand equity, Mazda's approach aims to build a reputation for innovation and quality, reinforcing its distinct place in the premium segment.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study has analyzed Mazda's strategic transition to the premium automotive segment in Jakarta, utilizing

frameworks like the Industrial Organization (I/O) Model, Porter's Five Forces, Keller's Brand Equity Model, AHP, and STP. Through these frameworks, critical internal and external factors impacting Mazda's positioning in the premium market were identified. The findings underscore that design and quality are pivotal in Mazda's appeal to premium consumers, with models such as the CX-60 garnering significant interest due to their blend of reliability and innovation. By aligning its marketing strategy and enhancing after-sales service, Mazda is positioned to build customer loyalty and create a sustainable competitive advantage within Jakarta's premium market. The approach outlined holds potential as a scalable model for Mazda's broader expansion across Indonesia, reinforcing its brand equity and positioning Mazda effectively alongside established luxury brands.

To solidify its presence in the premium segment, Mazda should focus on the following:

1. **Enhancing Brand Perception:** Continuous investment in brand-building activities that emphasize Mazda's unique design and quality features, aligning closely with affluent consumer expectations.
2. **Expanding Customer Experience:** Offering exclusive after-sales services, such as personalized maintenance plans and premium customer engagement programs, to build lasting loyalty and enrich brand associations.
3. **Market-Specific Customization:** Adapting product features and marketing messages to reflect the preferences of Jakarta's premium consumer demographics, using insights from AHP and STP to focus on design and safety attributes that resonate strongly in this market.
4. **Leveraging Digital Channels:** Increasing brand presence across digital and social media to reach affluent younger audiences, emphasizing Mazda's commitment to innovation and advanced technology.

This approach aims to deepen Mazda's brand resonance and create a

sustainable impact within Jakarta's competitive luxury automotive market.

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