

Evaluating Customer Customer Service System through Customer Visit and Customer Call Methods: A Case in Indonesian Port Industry

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Abstract

This study examines the deployment of customer visit and customer call methodologies at PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok Pangkal Balam and their impact on corporate image. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive design, data were gathered via observation, interviews, and documentation from purposively selected customer service personnel. The empirical findings reveal that customer visits bolster trust and personalization through face-to-face diagnostics, whereas customer calls optimize responsiveness and reliability by maintaining communication continuity. These outcomes align with Basofi who demonstrated that customer service drives corporate reputation through empathy and consistent communication (Basofi et al., 2017). Furthermore, subsequent literature indicates that service quality extends beyond perception management to drive concrete behavioral outcomes like loyalty. This is supported by Normalasari who confirmed that customer satisfaction stimulates positive word-of-mouth and repeat patronage (Normalasari et al., 2023). Collectively, the synergy of both methods creates an adaptive, long-term relationship-oriented service infrastructure. Theoretically, this research reinforces the relevance of interpersonal dynamics within Customer Relationship Management frameworks; practically, it offers strategic insights for port enterprises to integrate digital and human-centric approaches to sustain competitiveness.

Article info

Article history:

Received 13 October 2025

Received in revised form 19 July 2026

Accepted 31 July 2026

Available online 09 Agustus 2026

Keywords: Customer Service, Customer Visit, Customer Call, Customer Satisfaction, Port

How to Cite: Fakhriyansyah. A.S., Johannes, J., Hasbullah, H., (2026). Evaluating Customer Customer Service System through Customer Visit and Customer Call Methods: A Case in Indonesian Port Industry. *Journal Ilmiah Manajemen dan Bisnis*, 12 (2), 225-234.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary era characterized by pervasive globalization and escalating market competition, the quality of customer service delivery has emerged as a cornerstone of corporate sustainability and long-term viability. Articulated that the paradigm of relationship marketing extends far beyond the mere acquisition of new clientele; rather, it fundamentally encompasses the strategic retention, maintenance, and enhancement of existing inter-organizational relationships through highly customized service structures and continuous value creation (Berry, 2002). Consequently, these

foundational principles of relationship marketing provide a robust conceptual framework for analyzing how both direct and indirect customer interactions contribute directly to organizational resilience and operational longevity. Furthermore, a highly responsive and adaptive service apparatus not only influences immediate customer satisfaction but also serves as a critical determinant of long-term customer loyalty and behavioral advocacy (Hasbullah et al., 2020). This operational relevance becomes exceptionally acute within the port services sector, an industry where day-to-day customer interactions directly dictate macroeconomic logistics efficiency and, by extension, national economic competitiveness.

A well-managed customer service infrastructure significantly fortifies an enterprise's competitive positioning, enabling it to dynamically adapt to volatile and evolving consumer demands (Yacob et al., 2019). Within the maritime and port services domain, the operational interface between service providers and end-users exerts a profound impact on the fluidity of supply chain logistics and broader national industrial capability. Yacob further highlighted that strategic customer service management plays a pivotal role in engineering positive corporate perceptions and anchoring consumer loyalty, thereby reinforcing the imperative of high-caliber service quality within highly competitive, capital-intensive industries (Yacob et al., 2019). As a vital State-Owned Enterprise (BUMN), PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok Pangkal Balam is under institutional mandate to uphold and elevate its service standards through the implementation of innovative, highly personalized client management approaches.

To optimize these relationship dynamics, Adrian Payne and Pennie Frow formulated a comprehensive, cross-functional, and process-based Customer Relationship Management (CRM) framework designed specifically to assist enterprises in bypassing narrow, purely technology-centric definitions of CRM, thereby unlocking its full strategic and enterprise-wide benefits (Payne & Frow, 2005). While instances of customer dissatisfaction occasionally surface within this operational ecosystem, empirical observation suggests that such friction is frequently linked to customer negligence in execution rather than deficits in institutional responsiveness. Nevertheless, the existence of such negative perceptions underscores the critical necessity for proactive engagement strategies designed to mitigate relational dissonance and prevent potential operational misunderstandings. Interestingly, the scholarly discourse on this matter presents varied perspectives; for instance, Fendy Fadillah discovered that service quality did not exert a statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction, indicating that alternative, exogenous variables might play a more decisive role in shaping customer outcomes (Fadillah, 2023).

In light of these complex dynamics, PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok Pangkal Balam deployed an integrated, dual-methodology approach consisting of customer visits and customer calls. The customer visit initiative facilitates a profound, qualitative exploration of evolving user needs and fosters institutional trust through direct, face-to-face engagements. Conversely, the customer call mechanism

ensures uninterrupted communication continuity and provides critical long-distance operational support. Synergistically integrated, these complementary methods reflect a structured, deliberate organizational effort to cultivate relational loyalty and secure enduring, mutually beneficial cooperation with its strategic stakeholders.

Based on the aforementioned context, the central research questions driving this inquiry are formulated as follows: How is the customer service framework deployed through the dual mechanisms of customer visits and customer calls at PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok Pangkal Balam, and to what extent do these methodologies contribute to fostering customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty? Addressing these questions is crucial, particularly given the notable scarcity of rigorous empirical investigations evaluating the concurrent application of these two specific methodologies within the Indonesian maritime port landscape (Yacob et al., 2019). Resolving this inquiry is anticipated to yield comprehensive insights that not only enrich the broader Customer Relationship Management (CRM) literature but also formulate actionable, empirical strategies for port service enterprises aiming to enhance their institutional competitiveness.

Consequently, the primary objective of this study is to systematically analyze the operational execution of customer visits and customer calls, identify their respective facilitating and inhibiting determinants, and critically evaluate their overarching contribution to corporate image. Through this lens, the research aims to address the critical urgency of optimizing personal, interaction-based service delivery models within strategic utility and logistics sectors. Academically, this inquiry enriches the existing CRM discourse by underscores the enduring relevance of direct, interpersonal communication within the complex port services environment. Although contemporary scholarship heavily emphasizes the paradigm of service digitalization, the empirical insights derived from this study confirm that face-to-face engagements and personalized dialogues remain indispensable components for cultivating robust B2B relationships (Buttle & Maklan, 2019).

Furthermore, this research effectively addresses a distinct literature gap regarding the paucity of empirical data within the Indonesian port industry, while simultaneously offering a practical contribution through the conceptualization of an adaptive service framework. Beyond its immediate pragmatic utility, the study provides theoretical enrichment by demonstrating how traditional, high-touch interaction methods can synergistically coexist with emerging digital infrastructures. In doing so, it broadens the conceptual discourse surrounding Customer Relationship Management within intricate and capital-intensive service ecosystems. This dual-faceted contribution ensures that the investigation not only services the immediate operational needs of the industry but also meaningfully informs subsequent academic inquiries regarding the evolving dynamics of service quality, corporate reputation, and stakeholder loyalty.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design to provide a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of customer service practices executed via customer visit and customer call methodologies. The empirical investigation was centered at PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok Pangkal Balam. To secure relevant and specialized operational insights, a purposive sampling strategy was employed to select research informants based on their direct engagement and oversight of institutional customer service operations. Specifically, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with two key strategic informants: (1) the Deputy Manager of Operations and Engineering, and (2) the Senior Administration Officer for Finance, Human Resources, General Affairs, Marketing, and Customer Service. These specific roles were deemed highly strategic, as they encompass a holistic overview of both the operational complexities and administrative frameworks governing customer service execution, driven by their direct and continuous interaction with port service users at Pangkal Balam.

Within this operational context, Jean Paul emphasized that modern transport systems represent the culmination of a extensive historical evolution driven by technological innovations, wherein mobility functions as a fundamental component undergirding economic and social activities (Rodrigue, 2020). To capture the multi-dimensional nature of these logistics environments, empirical data collection was triangulated across three primary techniques: direct field observation of customer service activities, in-depth interviews with the designated key personnel, and documentary analysis of institutional artifacts, including Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), performance evaluation reports, and internal corporate archives. These combined data retrieval methods were systematically selected to secure factual, verifiable data concerning the real-world implementation of service programs, operational bottlenecks, and customer perceptions.

Following data collection, empirical materials were analyzed using a systematic qualitative approach consisting of three interactive stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The qualitative data generated from observations, transcripts of interviews, and documentary records were continuously cross-examined to identify recurrent patterns, thematic clusters, and contextual meanings. This analytical rigor allowed the researcher to systematically unpack the discrete contributions of customer visits and customer calls toward optimizing overall service quality and fortifying the overarching corporate image.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Customer Visit

The empirical findings demonstrate that customer visits at PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok Pangkal Balam are executed systematically and periodically as a strategic mechanism for direct stakeholder engagement. This proactive approach enables the enterprise to accurately diagnose authentic user

requirements, cultivate emotional proximity, and solidify organizational trust. Regular physical visits have proven highly effective not only in fostering closer inter-firm relationships between the port authority and its clientele but also in strengthening long-term customer retention. Furthermore, face-to-face interactions facilitate the gathering of high-fidelity feedback, thereby allowing the organization to resolve operational service discrepancies with greater efficiency and precision.

Beyond routine relational management, these physical visits are strategically prioritized during formal negotiation processes, where interpersonal trust and institutional credibility are paramount. In examining the operational ecosystem, Zurkiyah highlighted that optimal port performance can only be achieved through the synthesis of robust physical infrastructure, highly skilled personnel, and effective management frameworks, which underscores the imperative of service quality in sustaining customer satisfaction and loyalty (Zurkiyah & Asfiati, 2021). In tandem with trust and credibility, structural infrastructure and service reliability serve as critical operational determinants. For instance, Edwin Japarianto established that logistics service quality exerts a direct impact on customer satisfaction and customer retention, although immediate satisfaction does not invariably fortify that relationship (Japarianto, 2018). This convergence of relational and operational dimensions indicates that customer satisfaction within maritime logistics emerges from a dual structure of interpersonal engagement and systemic operational efficiency.

Interestingly, the empirical data reveal that customer visits are not exclusively initiated by the company; rather, service users frequently initiate these encounters, reflecting a mutual recognition of the significance of direct dialogue. This reciprocal engagement strengthens the perception of strategic partnership and establishes that customer visits function as a bidirectional communication channel rather than a unilateral corporate initiative. From a theoretical standpoint, Morgan and Hunt asserted that relationship commitment and trust constitute the core pillars of relationship marketing, as both variables generate cooperation and foster loyalty within complex business networks (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This seminal theoretical foundation provides a robust analytical framework for interpreting the role of customer visits as a primary trust-building mechanism within high-stakes port service environments.

Effectiveness of Customer Call

In tandem with field operations, customer calls function as a critical mechanism for responsive, long-distance stakeholder communication. This methodology proves highly effective in disseminating real-time updates regarding port operations, addressing and resolving customer grievances, and sustaining communicative continuity when geographical or logistical constraints preclude face-to-face engagements. Nonetheless, certain operational challenges persist, particularly regarding technical constraints and inconsistent follow-up procedures in specific cases. In evaluating these service

dimensions, Husni Hasbullah demonstrated that service reliability, responsiveness, and assurance exert a statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction within the logistics sector (Hasbullah et al., 2020). Despite the aforementioned challenges, the systematic deployment of customer calls ensures that the enterprise remains highly accessible and receptive to client demands, thereby undergirding continuous service quality enhancement.

Intriguingly, the technical barriers identified within these customer call initiatives do not stem from deficits in physical infrastructure, human capital, or system integration, but are instead linked to the behavioral responsiveness of the clients themselves. Empirical observations indicate instances where outbound corporate communications receive no immediate response from the customer, thereby impeding timely operational coordination and delaying strategic decision-making processes. This operational limitation underscores the distinct dependency of telephonic communication methods upon customer availability and engagement. To mitigate this structural vulnerability, the implementation of structured, pre-scheduled call arrangements or the integration of automated, complementary reminder mechanisms could be strategically deployed to ensure more synchronous and timely inter-organizational communication.

Academic and Practical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study advances a deeper comprehension of customer service practices by underscores the enduring significance of direct, interpersonal interactions within capital-intensive and complex service industries, such as the maritime port sector. It illuminates the imperative for enterprises to systematically balance digital efficiency with a high-touch human element in service delivery frameworks. While technology undoubtedly catalyzes operational speed, scalability, and process standardization, personal engagement remains the primary driver for cultivating institutional trust, empathy, and long-term relational capital. By synthesizing these dual dimensions, organizations can simultaneously fulfill immediate operational mandates and nurture sustainable customer loyalty, thereby positioning themselves advantageously in a market where service quality serves as a core strategic differentiator.

Pragmatically, the empirical insights offer concrete recommendations for port management corporations to fortify personal, relationship-based methodologies alongside existing digital infrastructures. In evaluating the contemporary service ecosystem, Wimpi Srihandoko emphasized that customer service delivery in the digital era is frequently confronted with systemic challenges, including escalating complaint volumes, human resource deficiencies, and strict temporal constraints (Srihandoko & Ayu, 2021). Nevertheless, they posited that superior communication proficiencies and rigid adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) can effectively convert these operational bottlenecks into strategic opportunities for trust cultivation and loyalty enhancement. These micro-level

operational hurdles highlight the necessity for overarching strategic frameworks that seamlessly merge technological capabilities with customer-centric value creation. This aligns with the paradigms established by Philip Kotler, who asserted that the generation of superior customer value and the facilitation of interactive engagement via digital technologies lie at the very core of contemporary marketing strategies (Kotler et al., 2018). Consequently, these findings encourage maritime service providers to institutionally integrate customer visit and customer call methodologies into their broader Customer Relationship Management (CRM) frameworks to augment market competitiveness and preserve stakeholder loyalty.

Furthermore, Sri Widyastuti demonstrated that consumer loyalty is significantly reinforced through the concurrent influences of trust, satisfaction, and mutual commitment, which highlights the critical role of emotional bonds and customer-centric service designs in sustaining long-term B2B relationships (Widyastuti, 2015). A pivotal contribution of this study lies in establishing the operational complementarity of the two examined communication methods. Specifically, customer visits exhibit maximum efficacy during formal negotiations and strategic relationship-building phases, whereas customer calls are optimally suited for real-time operational coordination and urgent information dissemination. Although lacking a rigid schedule, the enterprise's flexible workflow ensures that both modalities are deployed responsively based on situational exigencies. The empirical data indicate that clientele generally exhibit high appreciation for this dual-method approach, placing equal value on the trust engineered through face-to-face engagements and the agility afforded by telephonic communication. Ultimately, this bifurcated strategy demonstrates how service providers can successfully synthesize relational depth with operational agility to sustain institutional loyalty and fortify corporate reputation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the strategic deployment of customer visit and customer call methodologies at PT Pelabuhan Tanjung Priok Pangkal Balam branch plays an essential role in optimizing service quality, cultivating stakeholder trust, and cementing institutional loyalty. Customer visits enable the organization to directly diagnose authentic user requirements and foster emotional proximity, whereas customer calls ensure highly responsive, long-distance communicative continuity. This operational synergy aligns with the findings of Abdullateef, who established that knowledge management and technology-driven Customer Relationship Management (CRM) architectures significantly improve first-call resolution rates, thereby elevating customer satisfaction within service touchpoints (Abdullateef, 2011).

The integration of these dual modalities underscores that contemporary customer service excellence necessitates an equilibrium between face-to-face and remote interactions. This balanced

paradigm simultaneously drives customer satisfaction and fortifies a positive corporate image, as interpersonal engagement establishes trust and personalization, while remote channels guarantee accessibility, responsiveness, and operational fluidness. By synthesizing these complementary communication vectors, organizations can effectively address heterogeneous client needs, minimize service-delivery gaps, and secure long-term relational retention. Ultimately, this bifurcated strategy illustrates that sustainable market competitiveness within high-stakes service industries depends not merely on technological efficiency, but fundamentally on the relational depth achieved through consistent, meaningful client engagement.

Furthermore, the flexible workflow governing these visits and calls illustrates an adaptive service pipeline tailored to the maritime environment. This parallels the conceptualization by Martin, who emphasized that contemporary logistics and supply chain architectures must be engineered as flexible pipelines capable of rapid adaptation to volatile market dynamics (Christoper, 2016). The documentation of these stakeholder touchpoints, even when maintained through informal corporate mechanisms, equips administrative management with critical insights regarding recurring operational bottlenecks and negotiation trajectories, thereby supporting data-driven strategic decision-making. Over the long term, this systematic capturing of customer engagement not only bolsters institutional resilience but also provides an empirical foundation for continuous service innovation and delivery refinement.

From a theoretical perspective, this inquiry underscores the imperative of synthesizing interpersonal and communication-centric models within broader service management literature. This reflects the frameworks articulated by Jochen, who posited that sustainable service excellence is achieved through the harmonization of frontline employee empowerment, rigorous service blueprinting, and digital infrastructure integration. Pragmatically, these empirical insights offer a valuable reference framework for other service-oriented firms seeking to optimize relationship-driven service effectiveness (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2016). Nonetheless, this investigation is bounded by its single-case study design, which limits the immediate generalizability of the findings. Consequently, subsequent scholarship should expand this analytical scope to include multi-port comparative studies or evaluate the interplay between these conventional interaction models and fully digitized service ecosystems to provide a more holistic understanding of service quality delivery.

Finally, the empirical insights indicate that combining direct personal interactions with foundational communication methods yields superior efficacy in operational contexts characterized by disparate customer technological readiness. Interestingly, while Santo Igno Gelu, John and Simon established that the deployment of advanced information technology exerts a profoundly positive and vital impact on both customer satisfaction and loyalty, this study highlights the necessity of anchoring such digital support alongside human-centric service delivery (Gelu et al., 2022). Strengthening both

proactive physical visits and synchronous telephonic coordination ensures service delivery inclusivity. Consequently, this allows the enterprise to successfully engage and support all stakeholders, irrespective of their baseline digital literacy, thereby mitigating technological friction and securing enduring corporate partnerships.

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