

## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE BASED ON CUSTOMER JOURNEY (STUDY ON SELF-PHOTOS IN INSIDE STUDIO)



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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze Customer Experience based on the Customer Journey in photography services at Inside Studio and to identify pain points that emerge at each stage of the service process. This research employed a qualitative method with a descriptive approach through interviews with customers, staff, and the manager of Inside Studio. The findings indicate that customer experience is formed throughout all stages of the customer journey, namely before, during, and after the service, involving various touchpoints between customers and service providers. Customer experience is influenced by several key factors, including service communication quality, staff interaction, emotional experience, and operational performance. Although customers generally perceived the service experience as enjoyable and satisfying, several pain points were identified, such as slow administrative responses, inconsistent information, lack of staff proactiveness, limited facilities, and internal miscommunication. Therefore, an integrated service development strategy between front-stage and back-stage services is needed through improving communication, interaction quality, operational management, and experience-based service innovation in order to create a more optimal customer experience.

**Keywords:** Customer Experience, Customer Journey, Service Strategy, Studio Foto

## INTRODUCTION

The global development of the experience economy has shown significant growth, with consumers focusing not only on products but also on the experiences they receive (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). Customer experience (CX) is a key factor in creating competitive advantage and customer loyalty (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Companies that focus on customer experience have shown increased customer satisfaction and retention.

At the national level, Indonesia's creative economy industry is experiencing rapid growth, particularly in the photography and digital content subsectors (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023). High internet penetration, reaching over 77% of the population, and the dominance of the younger generation are driving changes in consumer behavior, increasingly oriented toward visual experiences and social media. (APJII, 2023). This phenomenon has given rise to the trend of self-photo studios, which offer an interactive, personal, and aesthetic experience as part of a modern lifestyle.

In the local context, Inside Studio, under the auspices of PT Lombok Media Utama, is one of the selfie studio businesses in Mataram City that is thriving amidst the competitive creative industry. However, there remains a potential gap between customer expectations and experiences at various service touchpoints, such as the reservation process, facility use, and post-visit service. This highlights the importance of integrated customer journey management to improve the quality of the customer experience.

Preliminary observations at the research site point to recurring frictions at several of these touchpoints: customers report delayed responses to booking inquiries submitted through Instagram and WhatsApp, inconsistent service information across these two channels, limited waiting space during peak hours, and occasional mismatches between printed photo results and customer expectations. Unlike retail, banking, or e-commerce settings, where customer experience is largely shaped by transactional efficiency and digital interface design, the self-photo studio context positions the customer as an active co-creator of the experience: customers pose, direct, and curate the visual content produced during the service encounter. This participatory and emotionally expressive character of the service suggests that the mechanisms shaping customer experience in self-photo studios may differ from those documented in more transactional service contexts, which is a distinction this study seeks to examine empirically.

Previous research has shown that the customer journey plays a crucial role in shaping customer experience through various touchpoints before, during, and after service (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Furthermore, customer experience is understood as a multidimensional response encompassing cognitive, emotional, social, and sensory aspects (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020). Research has also shown that identifying pain points in the customer journey is a crucial factor in improving the quality of customer experience, particularly in experience-based services (Hollebeek et al., 2023). However, most research still focuses on the retail, banking, and e-commerce sectors, thus limited studies on the self-photo studio industry, particularly in the context of the experience-based photography service industry on a local scale.

Beyond its practical relevance to Inside Studio, this study also seeks to contribute theoretically by extending customer experience and customer journey concepts — largely

developed and tested in retail, banking, and e-commerce contexts — to a participatory, in-person, experience-based service setting where the customer plays a more active role in producing the experience itself.

Based on this, this research is important for understanding customer experience holistically in improving business competitiveness. This research aims to: (1) identify and map the customer journey of customers in the self-photo service at Inside Studio Mataram; (2) analyze customer experience at each interaction point (touchpoints); and (3) formulate a customer experience development strategy based on the customer journey with a qualitative approach.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **1. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

Customer experience is a concept that explains how customers perceive their overall interaction with a service. Customer experience is not only shaped by the service itself, but also by the entire interaction process, involving cognitive, emotional, social, and sensory aspects (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020).

Recent research shows that customer experience is dynamic and shaped through customer interactions across multiple integrated touchpoints (Homburg et al., 2020). Furthermore, customer experience is also influenced by the increasingly complex digital context, necessitating companies to manage the customer experience holistically (Kranzbühler et al., 2022).

In experience-based industries, customer experience is a key factor in creating customer satisfaction and loyalty, as well as increasing a company's competitive value (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2020). Therefore, a deep understanding of customer experience is key to developing a service strategy.

### **2. CUSTOMER JOURNEY**

The customer journey is a series of interactions a customer goes through when using a service. The customer journey generally consists of three main stages: before, during, and after the service (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Recent research shows that the customer journey is no longer linear, but rather complex and involves multiple interaction channels, both online and offline (Tueanrat et al., 2021). Each stage of the customer journey consists of various touchpoints that play a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions of the service.

By understanding the customer journey holistically, companies can identify critical points that influence the customer experience, thereby designing more effective services that meet customer needs.

### **3. PAIN POINTS IN THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY**

Pain points are obstacles or challenges customers experience during their interactions with a service. Pain points can arise at various stages of the customer journey and have the potential to degrade the quality of the customer experience.

According to (Hollebeek et al., 2023), identifying pain points is a crucial step in improving the quality of the customer experience, particularly in experience-based services. Poorly managed pain points can lead to customer dissatisfaction and decreased loyalty.

In the service context, pain points can include communication issues, limited facilities, or a mismatch between customer expectations and the experience received. Therefore, identifying and managing pain points is a crucial part of developing a service strategy.

#### 4. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

A customer experience development strategy is an effort to improve the quality of customer interactions by managing every touchpoint in the customer journey. This strategy involves integrating service, technology, and human resources.

Research shows that effective customer experience management can be achieved through improving the quality of service interactions, developing innovation, and utilizing digital technology (De Keyser et al., nd). Furthermore, emotional aspects are also a crucial factor in shaping customer experiences, particularly in experience-based services (Kandampully et al., 2021).

A customer journey-based approach enables companies to understand customer needs more deeply, so that the strategies designed can be more targeted and oriented towards improving the quality of the overall customer experience.

#### 5. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Previous research shows that Customer Experience and Customer Journey are closely related in shaping customer perceptions and satisfaction.

Becker and Jaakkola (2020) view customer experience as a multidimensional concept formed from various customer interactions with services. Meanwhile, Homburg et al. (2020) emphasize that customer experience is not merely conceptual but also needs to be managed strategically to create added value for customers.

On the other hand, Tueanrat et al. (2021) revealed that the customer journey has become more complex with the integration of online and offline channels. This suggests that the customer experience is influenced not only by a single point of interaction, but by the entire customer journey.

Furthermore, Hollebeek et al. (2023) emphasized that identifying pain points in the customer journey is a crucial factor in improving service quality, particularly in experience-based services. Other research also shows that developing an effective customer experience requires considering the customer's emotional aspects, the quality of service interactions, and the use of technology (Kranzbühler et al., 2022; Kandampully et al., 2021).

Based on these various studies, it can be concluded that most studies still focus on sectors such as retail, banking, and digital services, with approaches that tend to be quantitative or systems-based. Therefore, this study fills this gap by qualitatively examining customer experience based on the customer journey in the context of local experience-based photography services.

Table 1 summarizes these studies in terms of context, method, key findings, and the gap addressed by the present study.

**Table 1.**  
**Summary of Previous Research**

| <b>Author<br/>(Year)</b>     | <b>Context</b>               | <b>Method</b>                   | <b>Key Findings</b>                                                                                                              | <b>Gap<br/>Addressed by<br/>This Study</b>                                                             |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lemon<br>Verhoef<br>(2016)   | & General<br>services/retail | Conceptual synthesis            | CX is formed<br>dynamically across<br>the customer journey                                                                       | Conceptual<br>only; no<br>empirical<br>grounding in a<br>single in-<br>person<br>business              |
| Becker<br>Jaakkola<br>(2020) | & Marketing/CX<br>theory     | Conceptual review               | CX = Does not<br>exposure/interaction<br>+ cognitive, local,<br>emotional, behavioral, participatory<br>response service setting |                                                                                                        |
| Homburg<br>al. (2017)        | et Multi-industry<br>firms   | Qualitative, grounded<br>theory | CEM depends on<br>mindset, strategy,<br>firm capability                                                                          | Managerial<br>focus; limited<br>attention to<br>customer-level<br>experience in<br>small<br>businesses |
| Tueanrat<br>al. (2021)       | et Multichannel<br>retail    | Systematic review               | Journey has become<br>non-linear,<br>multichannel                                                                                | Calls for<br>context-<br>specific<br>empirical<br>studies                                              |
| Kranzbühler<br>et al. (2022) | Cross-industry<br>CX         | Conceptual/multilevel<br>review | CX operates at<br>touchpoint, journey,<br>ecosystem levels                                                                       | Limited<br>empirical<br>validation in<br>single-site<br>businesses                                     |
| Kandampully<br>et al. (2021) | Hospitality                  | Literature synthesis            | Emotional<br>engagement is central<br>to CX                                                                                      | Hospitality-<br>specific;<br>unclear<br>transfer to self-<br>photo studios                             |

| Author<br>(Year)        | Context                  | Method            | Key Findings                                       | Gap<br>Addressed by<br>This Study                                        |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hollebeek et al. (2023) | Complex digital journeys | Conceptual review | Pain points arise across multi-touchpoint journeys | Focus on digital journeys; little on small, low-tech, in-person services |

As Table 2 shows, the reviewed studies converge on the centrality of touchpoints, multidimensional experience, and pain points, yet remain predominantly conceptual or situated in retail, hospitality, banking, or technology-enabled contexts — confirming the gap this study addresses empirically.

## 6. FRAMEWORK

Based on theoretical studies of Customer Experience and the Customer Journey, this research seeks to understand the customer experience through a structured approach based on the stages of service interaction. The customer journey, consisting of stages before, during, and after the service, serves as the basis for identifying the interaction process between customers and service providers.

At each stage, various touchpoints play a role in shaping the customer experience. The interactions that occur at these touchpoints create a customer experience that encompasses cognitive, emotional, social, and sensory aspects.

Furthermore, based on customer experiences, various pain points that hinder the service process can be identified. These pain points can include communication challenges, limited facilities, or discrepancies between expectations and the customer experience.

Based on the identified pain points, this study then formulated a customer experience development strategy aimed at improving overall service quality. Therefore, the relationships between the concepts in this study are sequential and interconnected, ranging from the customer journey, customer experience, pain points, to service development strategies.

Rather than a strictly linear model, these relationships are better read as a set of feedback loops between front-stage customer interaction and back-stage operational processes: pain points are identified through customer experience at each touchpoint, and the resulting strategies feed back into how future touchpoints are designed and managed — particularly where back-stage issues such as internal staff coordination shape the front-stage customer experience.

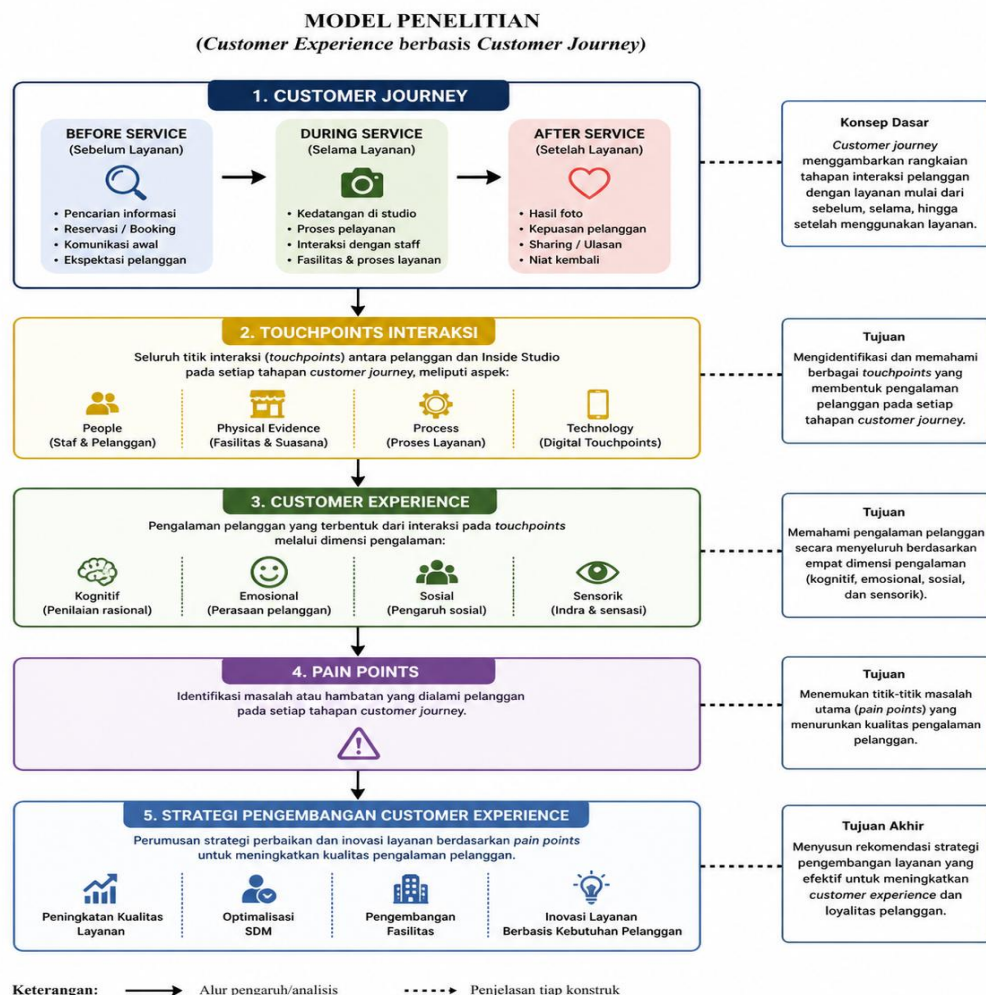


Figure 1 shows that the customer journey serves as the foundation for understanding the customer experience through various stages of service interactions. Each stage of the customer journey has touchpoints that play a role in shaping the customer experience.

These experiences are then analyzed to identify pain points that arise during the service process. These pain points serve as indicators of obstacles or inconsistencies in the service that need to be addressed.

Furthermore, the results of the pain point identification are used as a basis for formulating a more effective and customer-focused customer experience development strategy. Thus, this research model demonstrates a systematic process for understanding and developing the customer experience in photography services.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of customer experiences based on the perspectives of informants. A qualitative approach was chosen because it can explore meanings, perceptions, and subjective experiences that cannot be measured quantitatively (Creswell, 2016). This study specifically examines the Customer

Experience based on the Customer Journey in the context of photography services at Inside Studio.

The type of research used is descriptive qualitative, namely research that aims to describe phenomena systematically based on conditions that occur in the field (Sugiyono, 2023). This research was conducted at Inside Studio, a provider of experience-based photography services in Mataram City.

The informant selection technique used purposive sampling, which is the selection of informants based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives (Creswell, 2016). Informants in this study consisted of customers who had used photography services and employees directly involved in the service process. Customers were selected based on the criteria of having used the service and understanding the service flow, while employees were selected based on their direct involvement in interactions with customers.

Informants consisted of three groups corresponding to the perspectives referenced in the abstract: customers, frontline staff, and the manager of Inside Studio. The exact number and demographic characteristics of each group — e.g., age range, gender, and visit frequency for customers; length of service and role for staff — are [dilengkapi oleh penulis sesuai data lapangan]. The manager was included as the informant with oversight of internal coordination and service standards, complementing the customer- and staff-level accounts.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews to explore customer experiences, service interactions, and challenges encountered during the service process (Creswell, 2016). Additionally, observations were conducted to directly observe the service process, while documentation was used to collect supporting data such as customer notes and reviews.

The data analysis technique was carried out using an interactive analysis model consisting of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). The analysis was carried out by grouping data based on the stages of the customer journey, namely before, during, and after the service. Next, the data was analyzed to identify customer experiences and find pain points that arise during the service process, which then became the basis for formulating customer experience development strategies.

To maintain the validity of the data, this study uses triangulation techniques, namely source triangulation by comparing data from customers and employees, as well as technical triangulation through interviews, observations, and documentation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Customer Journey in Inside Studio Services**

Based on interviews with customers and employees, it was found that the customer journey follows the main stages of the Customer Journey: before, during, and after the service. This customer journey flow is shown in Figure 1, which depicts the customer interaction process, from learning about the service, placing an order, using the service, to post-service in Inside Studio.



**Figure 1.**  
**Customer Journey of Inside Studio Service**

In the pre-service phase, customers learn about Inside Studio through social media, friend recommendations, and digital content. They then research and book through Instagram or WhatsApp. While customers found the reservation process quite convenient, they still encountered challenges such as slow admin responses and inconsistent information across platforms. This was reflected in an informant's statement: "Booking via WhatsApp is easy, but sometimes the response time is slow." This finding suggests that customer experience begins to develop early in the interaction (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

During the service phase, the customer experience was dominated by direct interaction with staff and the studio atmosphere. Customers felt happier and had more freedom to express themselves, especially during the selfie and themed photo sessions. Statements such as "I'm happy because I can freely pose with my friends" demonstrate that the emotional aspect is a key part of the customer experience. However, several pain points were still identified, such as staff being less proactive during busy times, difficulty using equipment at the start of the session, and limited waiting space.

In the post-service phase, customers are generally satisfied with the photos they receive and are likely to leave reviews or place repeat orders. However, challenges persist, including asynchronous print results and miscommunication between admin and operations. Overall, Figure 1 demonstrates that the customer experience is shaped through various touchpoints at each stage of the customer journey, making communication quality, service interactions, and operational coordination crucial for creating an optimal customer experience.

## 2. Customer Experience as a Result of Multidimensional Interaction

The research results show that customer experience is formed from a combination of emotional, social, and physical environmental aspects (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020).

The emotional aspect is evident in the feelings of joy and comfort experienced by customers during the photo shoot. The social aspect is reflected in the interactions between customers and staff and friends participating in the photo session. Meanwhile, the physical environment is evident in the studio's comfort, despite challenges such as limited waiting space during busy times.

These findings indicate that photography services are not only functional but also provide experiential value, which is a key factor in customer satisfaction. This reinforces the fact that in experience-based industries, the emotional aspect plays a more dominant role than the technical aspects of service.

This pattern is broadly consistent with prior work suggesting that emotional dimensions can carry considerable weight in experience-based industries (Kandampully et al., 2021); however, this study did not systematically compare the relative influence of emotional versus technical/operational aspects, so the finding should be read as a pattern in informants' accounts rather than a confirmed relationship.

## 3. Identify Pain Points Based on Customer Journey

**Table 2.**  
**Customer Journey, Experience, and Pain Points**

| Stage         | Customer Activity                                 | Customer Experience                | Pain Points                                       | Informant Quotes                                                                    |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Before</b> | Booking via IG/WA                                 | Practical & easy to access         | Admin response is slow; confirmation is not clear | "Booking is easy via WhatsApp, but sometimes the response time is slow." (Customer) |
|               | Looking for service info                          | Quite informative                  | Inconsistent information across platforms         | "Sometimes the information on IG and WA is different." (Customer)                   |
| <b>During</b> | Photo session (self & thematic with photographer) | Fun, free, relaxed                 | Initial difficulties using the tool               | "It's fun, I can freely express myself with my friends." (Customer)                 |
|               | Interaction with staff                            | Satisfied if the staff is friendly | Staff are less proactive when it's busy           | "If the staff is active, it's more comfortable." (Customer)                         |
|               | Waiting for your turn                             | Still comfortable                  | Limited waiting space when busy                   | "When it's busy, the waiting area is quite full." (Customer)                        |

| Stage    | Customer Activity     | Customer Experience        | Pain Points                                 | Informant Quotes                                                                       |
|----------|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| After    | Receive photo results | Satisfied with the results | Print info is out of sync                   | <i>"The results are good, but I was a bit confused about the printing."</i> (Customer) |
|          | Result retrieval      | According to service       | Admin–operational miscommunication          | <i>"Admin and internal departments sometimes have different information."</i> (Staff)  |
| Internal | Team coordination     | Service running            | Discipline and coordination are not optimal | <i>"Sometimes late or lack of coordination."</i> (Staff)                               |

Through data analysis summarized in Table 1, several Pain Points were found at each stage of the customer journey.

In the before stage, the main pain points relate to service communication, such as slow admin responses and inconsistent information across platforms. This indicates weaknesses in the communication system that can influence initial customer perceptions.

During the during phase, challenges that emerged included a lack of staff proactivity, customer difficulty using devices, and limited facilities during busy times. These conditions demonstrate that the quality of interactions and operational readiness significantly influence the direct customer experience.

In the after-process phase, the main issues were miscommunication regarding printouts and coordination between administration and operations. Furthermore, internal challenges were identified, such as a lack of coordination between staff and suboptimal work discipline.

These findings indicate that pain points originate not only from customer interactions, but also from internal operational systems, so improvements need to be made comprehensively.

#### 4. Data Analysis with Coding Approach

Data analysis was conducted through a coding process consisting of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In the open coding stage, researchers identified various keywords from the interview results, such as "slow response," "inconsistent information," "happy," and "active staff."

Next, in the axial coding stage, the codes are grouped into categories such as service communication, staff interaction, emotional experience, operations, facilities, and service output.

The selective coding stage produced the main research themes, namely service communication quality, staff interaction quality, customer emotional experience, operational performance, and service output quality.

These themes show that customer experience is formed holistically through interactions at each stage of the Customer Journey.

## 5. Customer Experience Development Strategy

**Table 3.**  
**Findings-Based Development Strategy**

| <b>Pain Points</b>               | <b>Root of the Problem</b>             | <b>Strategy</b>                                          | <b>Objective</b>           | <b>Basis of Findings</b>          |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Admin response is slow           | Admin burden & manual system           | Standardized responses + templates + clear service hours | Fast & consistent response | Complaints about late response    |
| Inconsistent info                | Channels are not integrated            | Integrated IG–WA integration + FAQ                       | Uniform information        | Difference between IG and WA info |
| Difficulty using the tool        | Lack of initial guidance               | Short briefing + visual guide                            | Ease of use                | Initial customer confusion        |
| Staff is less proactive          | Soft skills are not evenly distributed | Service excellence training                              | Warmer interactions        | Experience depends on staff       |
| Service is not optimal when busy | Scheduling is not yet neat             | Time slotting + task distribution                        | Reduce bottlenecks         | Complaints during peak time       |
| Limited waiting space            | Physical capacity                      | Rearrangement/addition of seats                          | Comfort                    | Discomfort when crowded           |
| Print info is out of sync        | Weak coordination                      | SOP print flow + checklist                               | Minimal service errors     | Printout confusion                |
| Weak internal coordination       | Discipline & SOP                       | Daily briefing + evaluation                              | Consistency of service     | Staff statement                   |
| Limited service variations       | Innovation is not routine              | Add a theme (graduation, vintage, etc.)                  | Attraction increases       | Development proposal              |

Based on the analysis results presented in Table 3, the development strategy was formulated with reference to the pain points found. The root causes summarized in Table 2 were inferred by the researchers from patterns across informant statements and observation notes, rather than confirmed through direct managerial audit data; they represent an interpretive synthesis that should be validated in Inside Studio's subsequent service planning.

Proposed strategies include:

- improving the communication system between admin and operations
- staff training to improve the quality of service interactions
- facility development and operational management
- experience-based photography service innovation

This strategy demonstrates that improving customer experience doesn't just focus on front-stage services, but also requires improvements to operational systems (backstage).

Furthermore, in the context of experience-based photography services, strategies that focus on emotional and interactive aspects are key to increasing customer satisfaction.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that customer experience in Inside Studio photography services is formed through the entire customer journey, which includes stages before, during, and after the service. Customer experience is influenced by the quality of service communication, staff interactions, emotional experiences, and operational performance. In general, customers experience a positive and satisfying experience, but still found several obstacles such as slow admin response, inconsistency of information, lack of staff proactivity, limited facilities, and internal miscommunication. These findings indicate the need for integration between front-stage and back-stage service aspects to improve overall service quality and create a more optimal customer experience. This research is limited by its focus on a single photography studio, making it unable to broadly represent the selfie studio industry. Furthermore, the limited number of informants means that the diversity of customer experiences is not fully captured. The qualitative approach used also yields contextual findings that rely heavily on the informants' subjective perceptions. Inside Studio recommends improving the service communication system by integrating information between admin and operations to reduce miscommunication. Furthermore, regular staff training is needed to improve the quality of customer interactions, along with improvements to facilities and operational management during peak hours to ensure customer comfort. For further research, it is recommended to expand the research object to several other photography studios and use a mixed methods approach to obtain a more comprehensive picture of customer experience in the experience-based photography services industry.

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