

The Influence of Barista Interpersonal Communication on Customer Loyalty (Study on Coffee Memories Customers at Pondok Ranji Outlet)

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ABSTRACT: Interpersonal communication is an important element in creating a more intimate and personal relationship with customers, so that it can influence the interest in buying products. Baristas not only play a role in providing services, but also act as active listeners, who are able to respond to customer needs and preferences in real-time. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which Barista interpersonal communication influences customer loyalty at the Pondok Ranji outlet Kopi Kenangan. The approach in this study is quantitative with a positivistic paradigm. Data analysis in this study used SPSS to measure the relationship between concepts. The independent variables (X) are five characteristics of interpersonal communication and the dependent variables (Y) are four main characteristics that characterize customer loyalty. The results of the study showed that barista interpersonal communication has a significant and positive effect on customer loyalty at Kopi Kenangan, with a regression coefficient of 0.536 and a correlation value of 0.726, proving that the relationship between interpersonal communication and customer loyalty is quite strong.

KEYWORDS: Interpersonal communication, Customer loyalty, Social interaction

I. INTRODUCTION

In the ever-growing coffee industry, particularly with the emergence of modern coffee shops, the relationship between baristas and customers has become a crucial factor influencing customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is crucial for the sustainability of a business (Hermanto & Purwanti, 2020). Direct social interaction between sellers and buyers through face-to-face communication provides a more in-depth and meaningful experience for customers (Panggabean, 2017). When sellers and buyers meet face to face, sellers can easily show empathy, delve into customers' feelings and needs, and try to better understand their preferences.

This empathy allows the salesperson to convey immediate concern, making the customer feel valued. According to Irawan et al., a personalized response tailored to each customer's specific needs is a key aspect of good service, as it fosters stronger, more reciprocal relationships (Irawan *et al.*, 2024). This approach not only increases the effectiveness of communication, but also creates a more enjoyable and satisfying shopping experience. When customers feel heard and understood, they tend to build greater trust in the product or service being offered (Ardianto, 2017).

Through communication, sellers can construct effective messages to convey interesting information to customers (Sidharta *et al.*, 2024). In the business world, effective interpersonal communication is one of the main factors in building good relationships between sellers and buyers, employees and customers, or between colleagues in an organization (Sari, 2021). Relationships built through interpersonal communication allow for trust, openness, and the strengthening of ongoing loyalty (Devito, 2019). Interpersonal communication is an important element in creating a more intimate and personal relationship with customers, so that it can influence their interest in purchasing products or using the services offered (Purnamayanti et al., 2021). There has been extensive previous research on the importance of maintaining interpersonal communication with customers.

Several previous studies have revealed that interpersonal communication can maintain and increase customer loyalty Burleson, (2020); Mardarani *et al.*, (2022); Manusov, (2020); Venter, (2019); Purwanti, (2020). Overall, these studies suggest that interpersonal communication is key to creating positive and meaningful experiences in relationships between individuals, both in the context of customer service and everyday social interactions.

Unlike previous research, this study specifically analyzes the influence of barista interpersonal communication on customer loyalty. Baristas not only provide service but also act as active listeners, responding to customer needs and preferences in real time. This makes communication more personalized and relevant to customer desires. Good interpersonal communication between baristas and customers in coffee shops plays a crucial role in creating a more satisfying experience and supporting the growth of customer

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loyalty (Azis, 2024). Therefore, the author will examine interpersonal communication, including openness, empathy, support, and positive feelings, on customer loyalty. The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which barista interpersonal communication influences customer loyalty at the Pondok Ranji outlet of Kopi Kenangan.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is a dynamic process involving the exchange of information between individuals and interdependence in interactions, where one party's message influences the other's response. Meaning in communication is coconstructed, depending on the context and individual experiences. Furthermore, empathy and support are key to building strong relationships. Situational context also influences how communication occurs, making awareness of this context crucial in interpersonal interactions (Manning, 2020). Interpersonal communication is not just about exchanging information, but also about building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between sellers and customers. By understanding the importance of interpersonal communication in a business context, companies can create better service strategies, strengthen customer loyalty, and ultimately achieve sustainable success. When sellers are able to interact with customers effectively, in a friendly, and empathetic manner, this will build a positive image in the eyes of customers (Setiawan & Winduwati, 2020; Sidharta et al., 2021).

In "The Interpersonal Communication Book" (Fifteenth Edition), Joseph A. DeVito defines interpersonal communication as the process of exchanging information and emotions between individuals face-to-face. He emphasizes the importance of encoding and decoding messages, as well as feedback, in interactions. Situational, social, and cultural contexts influence how communication occurs, while emotional awareness and empathy enhance interpersonal understanding. DeVito emphasizes that by integrating openness, empathy, support, positive feelings, and similarity, individuals can build better relationships, increase engagement, and create more meaningful communication experiences (Devito, 2019).

According to Jason S. Wrench, interpersonal communication is a process involving interactions between individuals who have a mutually influential relationship. Wrench introduced the concept of "mindfulness" or full awareness in interpersonal communication, which means that individuals must be mentally and emotionally present in every interaction. This involves fully focusing on the interlocutor and avoiding distractions that can hinder communication. Interpersonal communication is two-way, where both the sender and receiver of the message play an active role in the exchange of information and meaning. In addition, social, cultural, and situational contexts greatly influence how messages are received and understood, and it is important to understand emotions, both overt and hidden, can enrich the quality of relationships and interactions between individuals. Overall, according to Jason S. Wrench, interpersonal communication is a mindful process, where relationships, emotions, and cultural contexts greatly influence how messages are delivered and understood (Wrench et al., 2020).

In the context of maintaining and increasing customer loyalty, especially for baristas, interpersonal communication plays a significant role in service industries like coffee shops. Baristas' interpersonal communication skills, such as their ability to listen to customers, provide appropriate suggestions, and create a comfortable and friendly atmosphere, can increase customer satisfaction. When customers feel cared for and well-served, they are more likely to develop an emotional connection with the brand or service provided (Pambayun & Soedarsono 2019). Friendly and personal interactions from baristas can create a pleasant experience, ultimately encouraging repeat customers. Customers who are satisfied with the service and feel a personal connection with their baristas are more likely to become loyal customers. Therefore, effective interpersonal communication can be a key factor in fostering customer loyalty (Pribadi & Bathesta, 2023).

B. Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is a form of emotional attachment and consistent actions that reflect a consumer's devotion to a particular product, brand, or company. Loyal customers will continue to make repeat purchases (Desveaud, 2019). They are also more likely to recommend the product or service to others and to stick with that brand even when there are more attractive or less expensive alternatives on the market. In other words, customer loyalty is when a consumer consistently chooses our product or service over competitors' because of a strong belief in quality, experience, or the relationship established. Loyalty is based not only on repeat purchasing habits but also on the emotional engagement and trust that develops between the customer and the company (Tariq Khan, 2013).

According to Kotler & Keller (2016), customer loyalty is a deep commitment to repurchase or reuse a particular product or service consistently in the future (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Customers are more likely to be loyal if the products offered are of high and consistent quality. Quality that meets or even exceeds expectations will increase customer trust and motivate them to make repeat purchases (Saman et al., 2023). This loyalty is more than just a response to product quality, but rather the result of a relationship cultivated through long-term interactions (Najjar & Najar 2023). Loyalty is often formed through an emotional bond between a customer and a brand. When customers feel a strong emotional attachment, they are more likely to demonstrate longterm loyalty (Abu-alhaija et al., 2018). According to Jill Griffin, there are four main characteristics that characterize customer loyalty:

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1. Repeated Product Purchases

Loyal customers will continue to purchase products or use services from the same company. They tend to stick with products they already trust rather than trying new brands.

2. Purchase a Variety of Products and Services

Loyal customers don't just buy one type of product, but also expand their purchases to other product categories or services offered by the company. They demonstrate broader interests and trust in the overall quality of the brand.

3. Recommend Products to Others

One important characteristic of loyal customers is their willingness to recommend products or services to others, such as friends, family, or colleagues. They act as brand ambassadors, actively helping to expand the company's customer base.

4. Resistant to Competitors' Appeal

Loyal customers have a high level of resistance to attractive promotions or offers from competitors. They prefer to remain loyal to companies they trust, even if other options offer short-term benefits.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The approach in this research is quantitative with a positivistic paradigm, prioritizing the collection and analysis of numerical data. This approach involves the use of strategies such as surveys and experiments, and includes activities such as measurement and observation. Furthermore, the quantitative approach also includes theory testing through statistical methods to ensure the validity of the research results (Creswell, 2018). The population in this study consisted of 6,546 customers who purchased Kopi Kenangan Pondok Ranji products. The Slovin formula was used to determine the sample size for the study (Adhikari, 2021).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Description: n = sample size or number of samples
N = population size or number of populations
e = margin of error of 10%

Sample calculation using the Slovin formula:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{6546}{1 + (6546)(0,1)^2} \\ n &= \frac{6546}{1 + (6546)(0,01)} \\ n &= \frac{6546}{1 + 65,46} \\ n &= \frac{6546}{66,46} \\ n &= 99,98 \end{aligned}$$

Table 1. Likert Scale

Description	Value/Score
Strongly Agree (SS)	4
Agree (S)	3
Disagree (TS)	2
Strongly Disagree (STS)	1

Source: (Sugiono, 2019)

The sample size for this study was 99.86. The final sample size was rounded up to 100 participants. The researchers used a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, and customers of Kopi Kenangan in Pondok Ranji completed the survey. A Likert scale was used to assess customer attitudes. Various incidents at Kopi Kenangan in Pondok Ranji were measured as variables, and quality indicators were used to construct a research instrument in the form of statements or questions. Respondents selected the appropriate answer from the multiple-choice options provided.

In an effort to alleviate respondents' uncertainty in providing answers, this study used a Likert scale with four categories. Therefore, the researcher chose a 4-point scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Data analysis in this study used SPSS with two, namely; independent variables (X) and dependent variables (Y). The relationship between concepts in this

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study explains the influence of barista interpersonal communication on customer loyalty. The independent variable (X) is the five characteristics of interpersonal communication consisting of openness, empathy, support, positive feelings and similarity. The dependent variable (Y) is the four main characteristics that characterize customer loyalty, namely; purchasing products repeatedly, purchasing a variety of products and services, recommending products to others and being resistant to competitors' appeal.

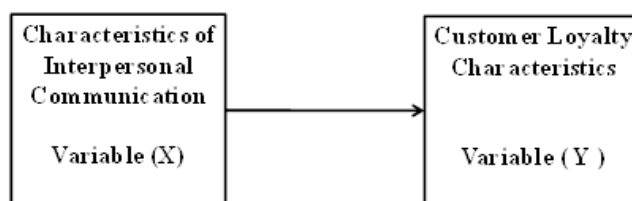


Figure 1. Relationship between variables

The t-test is used to examine the statistical significance between the independent and partial dependent variables, assuming the following conditions are met:

H₀: There is no effect of barista interpersonal communication on customer loyalty at Kopi Kenangan Outlet Pondok Ranji. If H₀ is rejected and H_a is accepted, the calculated t value is greater than the table t value.

H_a: There is an effect of barista interpersonal communication on customer loyalty at Kopi Kenangan Outlet Pondok Ranji. If H_a is accepted and H₀ is rejected, the calculated t value is greater than the table t value.

To determine the extent to which the independent variable (X) influences the change in the dependent variable (Y), whether increasing or decreasing, the coefficient of determination is used, represented as r² and expressed as a percentage. If the coefficient of determination is small and non-zero, it means the independent variable cannot significantly explain the dependent variable, while a high value indicates that the independent variable can significantly explain the dependent variable (Ghozali, 2016).

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Correlation Coefficient Test Results

This study used SPSS version 23 to conduct a correlation analysis to evaluate the relationship between two important variables: customer loyalty and interpersonal communication. SPSS is used to provide accurate results through various statistical methods. This correlation analysis was used to determine the extent to which interpersonal communication variables, such as openness, empathy, and support, influence levels of customer loyalty, such as repeat purchase frequency and willingness to recommend services to others.

Table 2. Correlation Coefficient Test Results

Correlations		Interpersonal Communication	Customer Loyalty
Interpersonal Communication	Pearson Correlation	1	.726**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Customer Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.726**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Results of researcher data processing

The correlation value ($r = 0.726$) was found based on data calculations. Within the interpretation range of 0.600-0.799, this correlation value indicates a strong relationship between interpersonal communication factors and customer loyalty. This means that Kopi Kenangan at the Pondok Ranji location has a high correlation with the barista's interpersonal skills and customer loyalty.

B. Results of the Determination Coefficient Test

To measure the influence of one variable on another, this study used the coefficient of determination. This coefficient provides information on the proportion of variance in customer loyalty that can be explained by interpersonal communication. In other words,

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the coefficient of determination indicates the strength of the relationship between interpersonal communication and baristas. The higher the coefficient of determination, the greater the role of interpersonal communication in influencing customer loyalty.

Table 3. Results of the Determination Coefficient Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.726 ^a	.528	.523	3.971

a. Predictors: (Constant), Interpersonal Communication

Source: Results of researcher data processing

Based on the results of the coefficient of determination test, it was found that interpersonal communication carried out by baristas has a contribution of R Square 52.8% to Kopi Kenangan customer loyalty. This shows that more than half of the variance in customer loyalty can be explained by the quality of interpersonal communication involving elements such as openness, empathy, support, and positive feelings. However, there are other factors outside the scope of this study that contribute 47.2% to customer loyalty, which can include other variables such as product quality, price, location, and the overall customer experience when interacting with the service. This analysis provides an understanding that although interpersonal communication plays an important role, there are many other factors that also significantly influence customer loyalty.

C. Hypothesis Test Results t-Test

The substantial relationship between the independent variable (X), namely interpersonal communication, and the dependent variable (Y), namely customer loyalty, was tested using a T-test. To determine whether barista interpersonal communication significantly influences customer loyalty, a comparison of the calculated t-value with the t-table value is necessary, or by examining the significance column in the calculation results. The decision-making steps are as follows:

1. If the calculated t-value is less than the t-table value, then the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted, indicating no significant influence between barista interpersonal communication and customer loyalty.
2. If the calculated t-value is greater than the t-table value, then the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted, indicating a significant influence between barista interpersonal communication and customer loyalty.

Table 4. Results of T-Test Hypothesis Test

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	4.540	2.402		1.890
	Komunikasi Interpersonal	.536	.051	.726	10.465

a. Dependent Variable: Loyalitas Pelanggan

Source: Results of researcher data processing

The calculated t-value is 10.465, and the table t-value for 5% significance with 98 degrees of freedom (df) is 1.984, consistent with the stated T-test findings. The null hypothesis (Ho) can be rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) can be accepted if the calculated t-value is significantly higher than the table t-value. This indicates that memorable coffee customer loyalty is significantly influenced by the human interaction conducted by baristas. This impact is highly statistically significant (sig < 0.05), as indicated by a significance value (sig) of 0.000. Based on the table coefficient analysis and its significance findings, we can conclude that X, the independent variable, and Y, interpersonal communication, are related. Therefore, the hypothesis that Barista Interpersonal Communication has a positive effect on Kopi Kenangan customer loyalty can be accepted.

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The results show that the regression coefficient for interpersonal communication (X) has a constant value of 0.536. This means that variable Y (e.g., customer loyalty) will increase by 0.536 units for every one-unit increase in variable X (e.g., a 1% increase in interpersonal communication). This positive regression coefficient indicates that interpersonal communication has a positive effect on customer loyalty. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient test produces a correlation value of $r = 0.726$, which is in the range of 0.600-0.799, indicating a fairly strong relationship between interpersonal communication and customer loyalty. The calculated t value of 10.465 with a significance level of 5% ($df = 98$) is 1.984, and this result is very significant, with a p value ($sig.$) = 0.000 (smaller than 0.05). Therefore, the hypothesis stating that barista interpersonal communication has a positive effect on Kopi Kenangan customer loyalty can be accepted. The coefficient of determination test shows that barista interpersonal communication contributes 52.8% to the variation in customer loyalty, while the remaining 47.2% is influenced by external factors.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this study is that barista interpersonal communication has a significant and positive effect on customer loyalty at Kopi Kenangan. With a regression coefficient of 0.536 and a correlation value of 0.726, it is evident that the relationship between interpersonal communication and customer loyalty is quite strong. The calculated t value is far above the t table and the very low significance level (0.000) supports the hypothesis that the better the barista's interpersonal communication, the higher the level of customer loyalty. In addition, 52.8% of the variation in customer loyalty can be explained by interpersonal communication, while the remaining 47.2% is influenced by other factors not covered in this study.

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