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THE IMPACT OF DACOFFE EMPLOYEES' INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates how employee interpersonal communication at DAcoffe influences customer satisfaction. The study intended to investigate the impact of interpersonal communications between DAcoffe employees and customers on customer satisfaction. This research is quantitative and has utilized the survey method in collecting data. A questionnaire with 23 statement items was distributed to 95 randomly selected DAcoffe customers. This study is based on Social Exchange Theory, Interpersonal Communication Theory, and Customer Satisfaction Theory. Normality of data distribution, linearity of the relationship between the variables, and hypothesis testing were performed through statistical analysis. The results reveal a significant positive relationship between effective interpersonal communication and customer satisfaction. The normality test will ensure that the data have a normal distribution, and linearity testing is to show that there was a linear relationship between the variables. Also, from hypothesis testing, it is manifested that interpersonal communication significantly influenced customer satisfaction.

Keywords:
Interpersonal Communication, Customer Satisfaction, DAcoffe.

INTRODUCTION

Modern cafes provide a unique experience through drinks like coffee and non-alcoholic beverages, signature dishes, relaxed atmospheres, aesthetically pleasing interior designs, and entertainment options such as music, television, and reading materials [1]. The lifestyle of young people, driven by the need for social spaces, globalization, and the desire to establish their identity within a community, has made cafes a preferred spot for socializing, working, or simply enjoying the ambience [2]. This trend is further supported by innovations from cafe owners, such as DAcoffe, which offers distinctive features like children's play areas and spotless bars while continuously improving service quality through meaningful interactions between staff and customers. Interpersonal communication between employees and customers plays a crucial role in maintaining customer loyalty, building a positive brand image, and enhancing the competitive edge of cafes. As the front line of service, employees are expected to possess technical skills and strong communication abilities to ensure satisfying customer experience. Personalized and responsive service encourages customers to become regular patrons, significantly contributing to the sustainability of cafes amid intense competition. This approach is especially relevant for cafes aiming to remain the top choice for young people while attracting customers from diverse segments [3]. With a blend of lifestyle appeal, marketing strategies, and exceptional service quality, the cafe business continues to be solidifying its position as a hub for social activities among young people. Future research could investigate the relationship between service innovation and customer satisfaction across various market segments [4].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a multidisciplinary framework rooted in psychology, sociology, and economics, highlighting how human relationships are governed by cost-benefit analyses and reciprocal exchanges [3][5]. In interpersonal and organizational contexts, SET underscores that relationships thrive when perceived rewards outweigh sacrifices and deteriorate when they cease to provide mutual benefits (Sunyoto,

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2023). Within organizations, social exchanges often extend beyond economic considerations, incorporating trust, flexibility, and intrinsic rewards like growth and cooperation, making it indispensable for understanding employee and customer dynamics [6].

Interpersonal communication, defined as direct interaction between individuals, plays a vital role in relationship management by fostering understanding, empathy, and trust[7]. Dyadic communication, a core of interpersonal communication, ensures effective relationship-building and conflict resolution within organizational and service settings[8]. Effective interpersonal communication incorporates openness, positivity, empathy, supportiveness, and equality, significantly impacting business relational dynamics and enhancing customer experiences[9].

Customer satisfaction, a critical determinant of business success, hinges on quality service, emotional connection, and the perceived value of offerings[10]. Key drivers include product quality, responsiveness to complaints, emotional value, and cost-effectiveness. Satisfied customers exhibit loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and repeat patronage, reducing customer acquisition costs and bolstering market competitiveness[11]. Trust and commitment deepen satisfaction by solidifying long-term relationships while addressing relational dialectics fosters sustainable interactions[12].

This review bridges SET and interpersonal communication, emphasizing their joint impact on customer satisfaction. Businesses like DAcoffee can enhance service quality and secure lasting customer loyalty by aligning employee communication skills with customer expectations.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at DAcoffee, Samarinda, East Kalimantan, from May to October 2024. The quantitative research aims to measure the relationship between the quality of interpersonal communication (independent variable) and customer satisfaction (dependent variable). Data was collected through observation and questionnaires using a Likert scale, with a sample size of 95 respondents calculated using Slovin's formula and purposive sampling techniques[13]. Primary data were derived from direct interactions between employees and customers, while secondary data was sourced from relevant literature. The indicators for interpersonal communication include openness, positivity, empathy, supportiveness, and equality. Customer satisfaction was assessed through investment, commitment, trust, and comfort with relational dialectics. The research instruments were validated using Pearson Bivariate and tested for reliability with Cronbach's Alpha. Results showed all items on variables X (12) and Y (11) were valid, with reliability scores of 0.661 and 0.878, respectively, indicating consistency in the measurement tools. Data were processed using SPSS through editing, coding, data entry, and cleaning [14]. The analysis aims to identify the significant impact of interpersonal communication on customer satisfaction. These findings are expected to provide practical insights into DAcoffee to enhance customer experiences through effective and quality employee interactions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Respondents' Demographic Profile

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. Most respondents were female (69.5%), while 30.5% were male. Regarding age, most respondents (52.6%) were between 18 and 21 years old, followed by 33.7% who were between 22 and 25 years old and 12.6% between 26 and 29 years old. Only 1.1% of respondents were between 30 and 34 years of age. Regarding employment status, 64% of the respondents were students, 10% were entrepreneurs, and 5% were civil servants. The rest, 21%, had other employment statuses. Regarding educational background, most respondents (65%) completed high school, followed by 20% with a diploma and 15% with a bachelor's degree. As for monthly income, the majority (64%) earned less than IDR 2,500,000, reflecting that most of the respondents were students, while 36% earned more than IDR 2,500,000

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Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Profile

No	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender		
	Male	29	30.5%
	Female	66	69.5%
2	Age		
	18-21 years	50	52.6%
	22-25 years	32	33.
	26-29 years	12	12.6%
	30-34 years	1	1.1%
3	Employment Status		
	Civil Servant	5	5%
	Entrepreneur	10	10%
	Student	64	64%
	Other	21	21%
4	Education		
	High School	65	65%
	Diploma	20	20%
	Bachelor's Degree	15	15%
5	Monthly Income		
	<IDR 2,500,000;	64	64%
	>IDR 2,500,000;	36	36%

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024

Multiple Linear Regression Test Table 2.
The Result of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.571	2.090		5.057	.000
	Komunikasi Interpersonal	.646	.053	.783	12.121	.000

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024b

The results of data processing using SPSS Version 30 obtained the results of the multiple linear regression equation:

$$Y=10.571+0.64640=41.041$$

The regression equation can be explained as follows:
1. Y represents Customer satisfaction, the dependent variable we are trying to predict or explain based on the independent variable (Interpersonal Communication).
2. 10.571 is the constant (also called the interception). It represents the baseline value of customer satisfaction when there is no interpersonal communication (i.e. when the value of XXX is 0). So, when communication is absent, the predicted level of customer satisfaction is 10.571.
3. 225.84 results from multiplying the coefficient of Interpersonal Communication (0.646) by the specific value of X (in this case, 40, which represents the level of interpersonal communication). This value (25.84) indicates the change in customer satisfaction due to increased interpersonal communication.

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4. The calculation 0.646 x 40 = 25.84 shows how much the customer satisfaction score increases when interpersonal communication increases by 40 units. So, for every unit an increase in interpersonal communication, customer satisfaction increases by 0.646. With X = 40, the increase in satisfaction is 25.84.

5. Finally, Y = 10.571 + 25.84 = 41.041 gives the predicted customer satisfaction score when the level of interpersonal communication is 40. So, when interpersonal communication is at 40, the predicted customer satisfaction is 41.041.

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CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted on the influence of employee interpersonal communication on customer satisfaction at DAcoffe, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. **Impact of Interpersonal Communication on Customer Satisfaction**
   The study confirms a significant positive effect of interpersonal communication on customer satisfaction at DAcoffe. The employees' ability to effectively communicate with customers, including providing clear information, listening attentively to complaints, and offering friendly service, directly enhances customer satisfaction. The results of hypothesis testing show that interpersonal communication substantially influences the satisfaction of DAcoffe's customers, as indicated by a significant value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold.

2. **Demographics of Respondents**
   Most respondents (52.6%) are aged between 18 and 21 years old, with a higher proportion of female customers (69.5%) compared to male customers (30.5%). This demographic insight indicates that DAcoffe attracts a young customer base, particularly appealing to young adults who frequent cafes for socializing, studying, or relaxing.

3. **Key Communication Factors**
   The study identified several key factors of effective interpersonal communication contributing to customer satisfaction: empathy, openness, supportiveness, and equality. Customers expressed high satisfaction when employees demonstrated positive behaviours, such as smiling, greeting customers warmly, and being responsive to their needs and complaints. These factors created a positive and comfortable customer environment, encouraging repeat visits.

4. **Customer Satisfaction Indicators**
   The research also revealed that customer satisfaction is influenced by trust in employees' skills, comfort with relational dynamics, and the willingness to remain connected with the café. The data showed that customers who felt valued and understood by the staff were likelier to report high satisfaction and loyalty, as evidenced by their willingness to stay in touch and engage with DAcoffe offline and online.

5. **Normality and Linearity of Data**
   The data collected in this study followed a normal distribution, and the relationship between interpersonal communication and customer satisfaction was linear, as confirmed by the normality and linearity tests. This further validates the reliability of the results and the conclusion that interpersonal communication significantly affects customer satisfaction at DAcoffe.

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