

Communication Between Baristas and Coffee By Meraki Consumers

Shalma Calista Zahra, Desak Nyoman Intan, Farida Nurfalalah, Aghnia Dian
Lestari

Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, Indonesia

E-mail: Shalmacalista@gmail.com, intanapriliaassa@gmail.com,
farida.nurfalalah@ugj.ac.id, aghnia.dianl@ugj.ac.id

*Correspondence: farida.nurfalalah@ugj.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of modern cities has changed the landscape of the coffee business significantly. The large number of entrepreneurs in this sector creates a variety of food and beverage variants, encouraging the continued development of innovation and creativity. This study aims to find out how the characteristics of communication between baristas and their obstacles are. This study uses a qualitative method by collecting data from interviews with three informants with data triangulation techniques, then observation and study of book and journal literature. The data analysis is with the stages of data display, data reduction, and conclusion. This study discusses the results of interpersonal communication between baristas and consumers at Coffee by Meraki, using characteristics such as the first openness: baristas as communicators can communicate effectively then the service process depends on the responsiveness of the barista to consumer requests, the second is a sense of empathy: baristas will conduct marketing sessions that bring each other closer and create a sense of mutual trust, so there is a mutual bond, Third, support: Baristas interact directly to greet customers and build communication. Fourth, positivity: baristas must have a positive attitude to create consumer satisfaction and comfort. Fifth: equality: by treating all consumers equally and there is no difference in appearance or social class.

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Introduction

The rapid development of a city has made the number of entrepreneurs in the coffee business field manifest itself by more and more variants of food and beverages sold, innovations from creativity in the world of coffee so that there are always new products with unique tastes and names that can arouse interest in trying them. Barista skills are indispensable in a coffee shop because one of the factors resulting from a strategic role, the menu that can be said to be the soul of a coffee shop. Therefore, skills are a person's

ability to use their thoughts, ideas, and creativity. The discovery of coffee began in Ethiopia in the 9th century, causing the popularity of coffee to expand and become a favorite drink by many people (Rejo et al., 2011).

In recent years, in this millennial era, we can find coffee shops in almost all cities. The emergence of coffee shops with various interesting concepts and unique drink variations is now a rapidly growing phenomenon among young people, making the existence of the place phenomenal. It is undeniable that coffee shops are now popular among teenagers and have become a place to relax for all groups. A café that serves as a place to relax to spend free time with colleagues (Munawir et al., 2022). Coffee places continue to compete in terms of the arrangement of the place to the concept and design as iconic in each place. In addition, a coffee place can be a place to come up with innovative ideas with facilities that are usually available in the coffee factory. To be able to continue to compete with other coffee places, it is necessary to manage it properly. It is not just a concept of a place that is only designed, but the need to get consumers to come back or be able to become regular consumers. Therefore, the importance of communication patterns that exist between baristas and consumers (Mardiana, 2013; Rashif, 2023; Rawis et al., 2019).

There is a great influence on communication between baristas and consumers, because baristas are one of the most important elements in ensuring customer satisfaction in addition to the interest of baristas that affect the brand image of the barista itself. Therefore, companies need to design effective and efficient communication programs to build relationships with consumers so that interaction is the main key in communication. (Lestari & Erawati, 2019; Sari, 2022). Communication is an important medium for personal formation or development and for social contact. Through communication we grow and learn, we discover our persona and others, we get along, are friendly, hostile, love or love others, hate others, and so on.

Communication has an impact on the betterment of consumer satisfaction which is replaced by an example of being able to communicate to meet consumer desires by respecting consumer ideas or desires, A barista must also be able to build an image of himself in order to be able to attract the attention of consumers who will be able to describe the brand image of his store. Communication that occurs between baristas and consumers can be called interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is the sending of messages from a person and received by another person, or also a group of people with immediate effects and feedback. (Devito, 2011) provides 5 (five) characteristics of interpersonal communication, such as:

(1) Openness (openness) When dealing with consumers, baristas as communicators must be open to each other as communicators. When consumers are looking for information, baristas provide honest information. An open attitude is characterized by responding to stimulation honestly. (2) Emphaty (empathy) The willingness to understand what consumers and baristas are experiencing and feeling is based on the perspective of others, thus allowing them to understand what others want and motivate others. (3) Supportiveness (support) Both parties can support each other to ensure effective communication. According to Jack Gibb "Open communication and empathic can not take place in an environment that does not support(Devito, 2011). (4) Positiveness (positive feeling) Positive attitude in thinking and acting. Mutual respect between baristas and consumers to respect each other, take care of each other, treat each other well, give a good impression to both parties, and work together. (5) Equality (equality) An attitude to try to understand what others are experiencing or feeling from the other person's point of

view. Baristas can understand consumer needs and provide good service Consumers are people who come to the seller or have a habit of buying something from the seller (Pertiwi et al., 2022) Knowing what consumers need and want is very important. Good service quality in a company will create satisfaction for consumers (Kurniawati et al., 2013). In other words, consumers have a direct relationship with the future of the company. Therefore, consumers can determine the company's future performance prospects and even its brand image. Consumers are a very important factor, so business actors must always try their best to meet their needs. Customer satisfaction is a measure of the quality of service provided and can increase sales of a company (Kurniawan, 2017).

The first previous research was by Moch Rizky Agung Syaputra entitled *Analysis of Barista Interpersonal Communication to Consumers in Building Brand Loyalty in Kedai Nay Kopi Surabaya* (2022) This research aims to find out the interpersonal communication of baristas to their consumers in building brand loyalty in Nay Kopi shops based on Mead's three concepts of Symbolic Interaction and the levels of brand loyalty. This study uses a type of descriptive qualitative research whose goal is to obtain correct and objective data. The result of this research is to understand a certain meaning when interacting with the interlocutor

Furthermore, the second research was carried out by Hasriami Amanda entitled *Interpersonal Communication of Female Baristas in Maintaining Self-Image at Hanakata Coffeeshop* (2022), this research was conducted to find out the self-image of female baristas, both positive and negative images in conducting interpersonal communication with consumers in coffee shops. The results show that in conducting interpersonal communication, female baristas in maintaining their self-image always be kind to consumers and professionals at work.

Then the third research conducted by Sugeng Wahjudi entitled *Barista Personal Interaction with Consumers at Crematology Coffee Jakarta* (2022) with the results aiming to understand the importance of personal interaction between baristas and consumers at Crematology Coffee Jakarta and how communication in these interactions affects consumer satisfaction. The results of the study show that consumers are generally satisfied with the service at Crematology Coffee because of the suitability of procedures, the friendliness of the barista, and the responsive and direct interactive communication with consumers.

Based on the background that has been explained, the formulation of the problem in this study is "How is the interpersonal communication between baristas and consumers at Coffee by Meraki?" Then the first purpose of this study is to find the characteristics of Interpersonal Communication in Baristas and Coffee by Meraki Consumers and the second is the Barriers to Interpersonal Communication that occur in Baristas and Coffee by Meraki Consumers.

In the highly competitive coffee shop industry, the quality of interpersonal communication between baristas and consumers plays a pivotal role in ensuring customer satisfaction and loyalty. With the growing number of coffee shops, especially in urban areas like Cirebon City, effective communication has become a differentiating factor in fostering customer engagement and brand loyalty. Given the significance of baristas as the face of the coffee shop, there is an urgent need to explore the nuances of interpersonal communication and address potential barriers to create a seamless and satisfying customer experience.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of interpersonal communication in building brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction, yet few have specifically focused on

the dynamic interaction between baristas and consumers in the context of independent coffee shops like Coffee by Meraki. Moreover, while the influence of communication characteristics such as empathy, supportiveness, and equality has been studied, the specific challenges and practical strategies adopted by baristas to overcome barriers remain underexplored. This research aims to fill this gap by offering insights into the unique communication practices and challenges faced by baristas in a localized setting.

This study provides a fresh perspective by combining theoretical frameworks with practical observations to understand the interpersonal communication dynamics between baristas and consumers at Coffee by Meraki. Unlike earlier research that often focuses on general aspects of communication, this study delves into specific characteristics such as openness, empathy, and equality, and their direct impact on consumer satisfaction. Additionally, the inclusion of real-world challenges faced by baristas and their strategies to address them adds a novel dimension to the discourse.

The primary objective of this research is to analyze the characteristics and barriers of interpersonal communication between baristas and consumers at Coffee by Meraki. The study aims to offer actionable insights that can enhance communication strategies, ultimately improving customer satisfaction and fostering loyalty. By understanding these dynamics, coffee shop managers can implement targeted training programs for baristas, creating a more engaging and inclusive customer experience.

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it contributes to the body of knowledge on interpersonal communication in the service industry, emphasizing its importance in shaping consumer perceptions and satisfaction. Practically, it provides coffee shop owners and managers with a framework to evaluate and improve communication practices, thereby enhancing customer retention and competitive advantage. Furthermore, the study highlights the need for addressing communication barriers, ensuring that baristas are equipped with the skills and strategies required to navigate diverse consumer interactions effectively.

Research Methods

This research was conducted on consumers and Coffee by Meraki baristas who often come to Coffee Shops in Cirebon City. The Coffee Shop that became the research was Coffee by Meraki. By using qualitative research methods to be able to analyze social reality in depth, qualitative research is one of the research procedures that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and the behavior of the observed people (Ahmad & Tambak, 2018). Data collection techniques carried out through observation (offline) and in-depth interviews (in depth interview). In addition, the study was also carried out on the theory used based on the information we got by collecting interviews from Meraki Coffee Baristas in Cirebon City with informants by triangulation of data as many as 1 consumer and 2 Meraki Coffee baristas. The informants in this study are from Baristas and Coffee by Meraki Consumers.

The theory used (Devito, 2011) provides 5 (five) characteristics of interpersonal communication, to facilitate or clarify its meaning, such as 1. Openness (openness), 2. Emphaty (empathy), 3. Supportiveness , 4. Positiveness , 5. Equality . The data analysis is with the stages of data display, data reduction, and conclusion.

Results and Discussions

To identify how baristas communicate with consumers at Coffee by Meraki, researchers looked at interactions using several traits that affect the effectiveness of interpersonal communication, as stated by Devito (2011): openness, empathy, support, positivity, and equality. Based on these five aspects, we can determine whether interpersonal communication is effective.

Barista interaction with consumers is very important in increasing consumer satisfaction apart from characteristics such as venues, varied food and beverage menus and *Standard Operating Procedures*.

Barista Interpersonal Communication with Consumers

a. *Openness*

Openness is an important factor that affects the development of effective interpersonal communication. In terms of interpersonal communication at Coffee by Meraki barista is the main target, because their role has a significant impact on increasing consumer satisfaction (Pambayun & Soedarsono, 2019). The service process is about the willingness of baristas to respond to consumer demands. This is an aspect of communication that creates good perceptions and opinions so that they are appreciated by consumers. This was revealed by the following Coffee by Meraki barista Sherly who said:

"In our opinion, to establish closeness with consumers using several ways, namely remembering their names, asking about preferences related to drinks, and offering best-selling products from Coffee by Meraki. In every interaction, listen, understand, and respond attentively to the desires of consumers. This helps build strong relationships with consumers." (Interview with Sherly, Tuesday, June 18, 2024)

Barista Coffee by Meraki remembers the name of the consumer so that consumers can visit the next day and say "hello" to him which will give a good impression and interact with the consumer in a friendly manner, in order to get closer to the consumer. Ethics are achieved by building friendly and consistent positive relationships, which helps to increase Coffee by Meraki consumer satisfaction. In addition, baristas are also obliged not to discriminate between consumers, both old and new consumers. Therefore, there is no envy among Coffee by Meraki consumers. Baristas must be friendly so that all consumers feel comfortable and get good *reviews* from consumers. This was said by the Barista Coffee by Meraki Rizky Gilang as follows:

"By paying attention to what consumers like and remembering the products they like, it can make it possible to understand consumers' desires and preferences to keep them coming back to Coffee by Meraki. Building good relationships by providing attention and friendliness, both during and outside of working hours, without any difference between baristas and consumers." (Results of an interview with Rizky Gilang, Tuesday, June 18, 2024)

Based on the results of interviews from several informants, it can be known that the self-openness of baristas and consumers must be open to each other in order to give a good impression in the eyes of consumers, Coffee by Meraki baristas must have an open attitude in order to create a warm atmosphere and have a good attitude towards consumers. Baristas must maintain ethics in serving consumers. This means that the openness of both parties must be open to each other, if one of the parties is not open

in communicating, then there will be no openness between them and therefore there will be no closeness between them.

b. *Empathy* (empathy)

Empathy plays an important role in building relationships and even maintaining relationships with each other. This is related to interpersonal communication between baristas and Coffee by Meraki consumers (Priyambada & Triwardhani, 2023). Barista Coffee by Meraki shows empathy by engaging and listening to consumers well, allowing Barista to receive feedback and conduct marketing sessions with consumers. As said by Rizky Gilang Barista Coffee by Meraki, namely:

"Through listening to what consumers want from the advantages or disadvantages of Coffee by Meraki products.

Next, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of products in Coffee by Meraki." (Results of an interview with Rizky Gilang, Tuesday, June 18, 2024)

Based on the results of interviews from Barista, Coffee by Meraki listens and empathizes with consumer desires. Furthermore, the barista will explain the advantages and disadvantages of coffee and non-coffee products, and if there are consumers who do not understand, especially those who do not understand coffee, the barista will conduct a marketing session to create empathy among consumers and the barista will immediately finish.



Figure 1 Barista and Consumers of Coffee by Meraki
(Source: Researcher Documentation)

c. *Supportiveness*

To produce effective services, it is very important for consumers to support their quality. In actual operations, consumers can actively cooperate and support the realization of services, but this depends on the services provided by the baristas at Coffee by Meraki. When a barista serves customers, they immediately interact with each other, but after that the barista decides whether to invite them for interpersonal communication or not. As said by Sherly Barista Coffee by Meraki, namely:

"For the way of communication, it adjusts to who we interact with. If we interact with old consumers who often come, we can interact more like friends, if we intend new consumers, we try to welcome them well and then ask about what drinks they like and recommend superior products from Coffee by Meraki." (Interview with Sherly, Tuesday, June 18, 2024)

Coffee by Meraki has many consumers, but the consumers who visit every day are always different, both old and new consumers. That's why all consumers who come can interact directly to welcome different consumers and build interpersonal communication with consumers. As said by Rizky Gilang Barista Coffee by Meraki, namely:

"Of course there are differences, this is based on consumers who come and are influenced by their respective needs and problems. By welcoming all consumers with relaxed sentences, smiles, and friendly attitudes until the order is completed, so that consumers can enjoy the service and feel comfortable. We also always recommend the Coffee by Meraki flagship menu." (Results of an interview with Rizky Gilang, Tuesday, June 18, 2024)

When serving consumers, baristas must have a friendly attitude and most importantly convey pleasant sentences. But the reality is that baristas also look at consumer responses on their first visit. In working directly with Coffee by Meraki consumers, baristas treat consumers very well as if they are close friends by telling funny things to be bolder. Because there is an element of closeness For new consumers, baristas act conditionally or depending on the situation and consumer reaction by inviting conversations about the limits of consumers and baristas (Devi & Yusuf, 2022).

Close relationships with each other can also build interpersonal communication that brings each other closer and creates mutual trust. Therefore, close interpersonal communication is felt by the existence of mutual bonds.



Figure 2 Consumers are ordering Coffee by Meraki products
(Source: Researcher Documentation)

d. *Positiveness*

Positive attitude refers to a person's positive outlook that is judged by their actions and attitudes. The form of behavior and attitude means that we must have a positive attitude, action, feeling, and thought every time we interact or communicate with others right with Barista Coffee by Meraki. It can be seen that Baristas interact more with consumers during the service process. Baristas must have a positive attitude to create consumer satisfaction and comfort. To build a positive attitude, baristas must use polite language and communicate like close friends, then involve consumers at Coffee by Meraki by communicating the plastic waste reduction program by using drinking bottles/*tumblers* to get a 20% discount on every coffee purchase. Coffee by Meraki encourages consumers to maintain a good environment, offer promotions and

discounts on menu products at Coffee by Meraki and make consumers able to act appropriately. As said by Sherly Barista Coffee by Meraki, namely:

"In our opinion, take a positive attitude in service by inviting consumers to talk casually and politely, offer the best products, and inform about discounts."
(Interview with Sherly, Tuesday, June 18, 2024)

Related to the above statement, the barista of Coffee by Meraki shows how to value interpersonal communication and service behavior, provide solutions to problems, and improve the existing program at Coffee by Meraki.



Figure 3 Barista Delivering Consumer Orders
(Source: Researcher Documentation)

e. *Equality*

Related to Barista Coffee by Meraki who treats all consumers equally, all consumers who visit are treated with good service, and there is no difference in appearance or social class. However, to increase consumer satisfaction, baristas rely on good interaction and communication. However, at Coffee by Meraki, there is no difference in calling consumers, and everyone calls "kaka" even though they are different ages for waiters are still the same as other consumers. As said by Rizky Gilang Barista Coffee by Meraki, namely:

"Ensuring equality in service to all consumers regardless of their appearance. We treat all consumers the same way when interacting with consumers of the same age or younger generation.

We communicate personally to create a friendly and comfortable atmosphere."
(Results of an interview with Rizky Gilang, Tuesday, June 18, 2024)

Coffee by Meraki shows equality by treating all consumers equally and providing the same service. When it comes to increasing consumer satisfaction, baristas are constrained in their communication because age differences affect the way they communicate when serving consumers.



Figure 4 Baristas Provide Good Service to Consumers

Barista Communication Barriers with Coffee by Meraki Consumers

Every job must have obstacles and experiences, and that also applies to baristas at Coffe by Merami. When serving customers in a café, the role of the barista is to talk to customers, choose menu items, and take orders. Service occurs when there is interaction between the servant and the person served, the process. The process will definitely not continue to run smoothly, there are always obstacles such as misunderstandings when writing menus. There are differences of opinion between baristas and consumers, and many more. This is used as an obstacle as a barista coffee by meraki. This is what Rizky Gilang, who plays the role of a barista at Coffee by Meraki, said the following:

"We face challenges when consumers use uncommon terms, especially when the situation is busy at Coffee by Meraki. While we understand consumer intent, sometimes consumers don't understand the term. Even if there is an error Use a personal approach to correct those mistakes and make sure they stay comfortable. This helps baristas in improving professionalism and satisfying the consumer experience for the future." (Interview with Rizky Gilang, Tuesday, June 18, 2024)

As with Coffe by Meraki, every failure and mistake must have a solution to fix it, including the role of a barista who is more interactive with consumers. Mistakes and failures are inevitable, but these failures are not an obstacle because baristas have many options and strategies in dealing with them to be satisfied.

Conclusion

It is concluded that in these 5 characteristics, personal communication in baristas and Coffee By Meraki consumers clarifies the meaning, such as: 1. Openess (openness), When dealing with consumers, baristas as communicators must be open to each other as communicators. By remembering the names and products that consumers often buy, it can build a good communication strategy. In interacting, baristas listen, understand, and respond

what consumers want. 2. Emphaty (empathy), An attitude of understanding something that consumers or baristas are experiencing or feeling based on the perspective of others and being able to understand other people's desires and motivate others. 3. Supportiveness , Mutual support between both parties so that communication can run effectively. Interacting with old consumers who often come we can interact more like friends, if we intend the new consumer try to welcome them well and then ask about what drinks they like and recommend superior products from Coffee by Meraki. 4. Positiveness

, Mutual respect for baristas and consumers to respect each other, take care of each other, and treat consumers well, as well as give a good impression to both parties to work together. 5. Equality , An attitude to try to understand what others are experiencing or feeling based on their point of view. When serving customers in a café, the role of the barista is to talk to customers, choose menu items, and take orders.

In this process, it will definitely not continue to run smoothly, there are always obstacles such as misunderstandings when writing menus. This is used as an obstacle as a barista coffee by meraki.

Every job must have obstacles and experiences, and that also applies to baristas at Coffe by Merami. Every failure and mistake must have a solution to fix it, including the role of a barista who is more interactive with consumers. Mistakes and failures are inevitable, but these failures are not an obstacle because baristas have many options and strategies in dealing with them to be satisfied.

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