

Personal Selling Communication Strategy of Retail Assistants in Building Customer Satisfaction at Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the interpersonal communication applied by retail assistants in personal selling activities at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store. The research is motivated by the importance of interpersonal communication in building positive relationships with customers, understanding their needs, providing clear product information, and creating a comfortable shopping experience. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques including in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Research informants consisted of retail assistants as primary informants and customers as supporting informants, while data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that retail assistants apply interpersonal communication effectively through both verbal and nonverbal communication. Verbal communication is conducted by conveying product information clearly, using easily understood language, and exploring customer needs. Meanwhile, nonverbal communication is demonstrated through smiles, eye contact, and friendly attitudes that create comfort. Retail assistants also demonstrate empathy and active listening skills before providing appropriate product recommendations. The study concludes that friendly, informative, and responsive interpersonal communication plays a significant role in personal selling activities.

Keywords: *Interpersonal Communication, Personal Selling, Retail Assistant, Customer Satisfaction, Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store.*

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the retail industry in an increasingly competitive era requires companies not only to rely on product quality but also on the quality of service provided to customers. Efforts to improve quality are important for companies to meet consumer needs and expectations, maintain competitiveness, and obtain optimal profits (Andrianto & Fianto, 2020). In a business environment offering various product options with relatively similar characteristics, the customer experience during the purchasing process becomes one of the factors that can influence purchasing decisions and satisfaction levels after

transactions. Therefore, interaction between employees and customers is a crucial aspect in creating positive shopping experiences.

In the modern retail sector, communication is an inseparable element of service activities. Communication between employees and customers serves not only to convey product information but also to build closer relationships with customers. Through effective communication, customers can obtain needed information, feel valued, and receive solutions appropriate to their needs. Conversely, ineffective communication has the potential to create misunderstandings, discomfort, and even decrease customer satisfaction levels (Ramadhani, 2025).

Communication in business plays a vital role as a means of building relationships between companies and consumers. Effective communication enables companies to convey value, advantages, and product or service identity to the target market clearly. The purpose of communication in business is to increase consumer awareness of the existence of products or services that apply sustainability principles. Through appropriate communication, companies can provide understanding to consumers that the offered products or services not only meet needs and expectations but also demonstrate social and environmental responsibility (Fianto & Andrianto, 2022).

The interaction that occurs between sellers and customers in the discipline of communication science is categorized as interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is a process of message exchange that occurs directly between individuals, allowing immediate responses or feedback. The two-way nature of interpersonal communication enables both parties to mutually understand needs, expectations, and information to be conveyed. In customer service, interpersonal communication becomes a means that can help create better relationships between companies and their consumers (Huriyaty et al., 2026).

One form of interpersonal communication application in marketing activities is personal selling. Personal selling is a direct communication activity carried out by sales personnel to potential customers with the aim of providing information, influencing purchasing decisions, and building sustainable relationships. Unlike other promotional forms that are mass-oriented, personal selling provides opportunities for sales personnel to tailor messages according to customer needs and characteristics (Sausan & Oktivera, 2025). Therefore, the success of personal selling is greatly influenced by the communication skills possessed by sales personnel.

The existence of personal selling becomes increasingly important in the retail industry offering products with special characteristics requiring more detailed explanations to customers. Outdoor products, for example, generally have different specifications, functions, and uses, so customers often need additional information before deciding to make a purchase. In such conditions, sales personnel not only act as product promoters but also as information sources that help customers understand the benefits of products suitable for their needs (Andhy & Safina, 2025).

Information plays a very important and strategic role. The importance of information relates to the company's ability to convey product information to customers

quickly and effectively. The rapid development of information flow has brought significant changes to various aspects of business activities. One impact is the increasing need for companies to adapt to market dynamics and continuously evolving consumer behavior (Santoso et al., 2020).

Customer satisfaction is one indicator often used to assess the success of company services. Satisfaction arises when customers feel that the experience received matches or even exceeds their previous expectations. In addition to being influenced by product quality, customer satisfaction is also influenced by the quality of interaction during the service process. Customers who receive friendly, informative, and responsive service tend to have more positive perceptions of the company compared to customers who only focus on product aspects alone (Sari et al., 2026).

This phenomenon shows that interpersonal communication plays a significant role in shaping customer experience during the purchasing process (Al'Azmi & Dharma, 2025). The ability of sales personnel to understand customer needs, provide easily understood explanations, demonstrate empathy, and build comfortable relationships can contribute to the formation of customer satisfaction. Interpersonal communication is not only a tool for conveying information but also an important part of creating good service quality.

The object of this research is the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store. The selection of the research location was based on the consideration that this store is one of the Eiger outlets with relatively high customer service activity in Surabaya. As an outdoor equipment brand widely recognized in Indonesia, Eiger offers various products requiring detailed product explanations, making interaction between retail assistants and customers an important part of the service process. This condition provides an opportunity for researchers to directly observe how interpersonal communication is applied in personal selling activities.

Furthermore, customers visiting the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store come from diverse backgrounds and needs. Some customers need products for hiking activities, travel, outdoor sports, or daily use. These different needs require retail assistants to be able to adjust their communication style, provide relevant product recommendations, and build comfortable relationships with each customer. This situation makes communication interaction activities within the store interesting for further research.

The selection of the research location on Jalan Basuki Rahmat, Surabaya, is also an important consideration. This area is one of the centers of economic and trade activity in Surabaya with high community mobility and diverse customers. Additionally, the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Store is one of the three largest Eiger stores in Surabaya based on store area and relatively high visitor numbers. This can be seen from Google Maps reviews showing more than 3,800 reviews with a rating of 4.6. This condition enables more dynamic and diverse communication interactions between retail assistants and customers, resulting in richer and more contextual data.

Based on previous research reviews, studies on personal selling generally focus on its influence on purchasing decisions, customer loyalty, and customer satisfaction through quantitative approaches. Meanwhile, research specifically examining interpersonal

communication processes occurring in personal selling activities in the outdoor retail sector is still relatively limited. This condition indicates research space that can be developed to understand how communication processes occur directly between retail assistants and customers in the context of retail service.

Through a qualitative approach, this research attempts to gain a deeper understanding of interpersonal communication practices carried out by retail assistants in personal selling activities. The research focus is not only directed at the final outcome of customer satisfaction but also at the communication process occurring during service. Thus, this research is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between interpersonal communication, personal selling, and customer satisfaction in the outdoor retail environment.

Based on this description, this research is conducted to understand how personal selling communication strategies applied by retail assistants at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store shape customer satisfaction through interactions that occur during the service process.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study research type. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to understand in depth the interpersonal communication process carried out by retail assistants in personal selling activities and how this communication shapes customer satisfaction at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store. This approach emphasizes understanding meaning, experience, and social interaction that occurs directly between retail assistants and customers in the context of retail service. According to Sugiyono (2015), qualitative research is a research method used to examine natural object conditions, where the researcher acts as the main instrument, data collection techniques are conducted through triangulation, and data analysis is inductive in nature. This approach is considered relevant because interpersonal communication phenomena in personal selling cannot be measured solely through numbers but need to be understood through interaction processes, language, behavior, and communication experiences occurring directly in the field.

The type of research used is a case study because this research focuses on one specific object, namely personal selling communication activities carried out by retail assistants at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store. Through case studies, researchers can explore in depth the communication strategies used by retail assistants, from the approach process to customers, product information delivery, building interpersonal relationships, to how these interactions influence customer satisfaction (Rifka Alkhilyatul Ma'rifat, I Made Suraharta, 2024). The use of a qualitative case study approach in this research is also based on the need to obtain contextual and holistic understanding of interpersonal communication phenomena in the outdoor retail environment.

The research subjects in this study are the parties who become sources of information or informants. Primary informants are those who know most and are directly involved in the phenomenon under study. The primary informant in this research is Kiara

Ringga as a Retail Assistant working at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store, selected based on criteria including having worked for at least one year, actively conducting face-to-face interactions with customers daily, having experience serving various customer characters, and being willing to participate voluntarily. Supporting informants are those who provide perspectives from the service recipient's side to strengthen and verify data from primary informants. Supporting informants in this research are customers who have directly interacted with Retail Assistants at Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya.

The research object is the focus of problems or phenomena that become the center of attention in the research. The research object in this study is the personal selling communication strategy carried out by retail assistants at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store in building customer satisfaction. This research focuses on how retail assistants apply communication directly to customers through face-to-face interaction, starting from greeting customers, exploring needs, providing product information, offering appropriate recommendations, to handling customer questions and complaints.

Data in this research consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data are main data obtained directly from the first source in the field. In this research, primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with retail assistants and customers, direct observation of personal selling communication activities at the store, and direct interaction between researchers and informants to explore information related to communication strategies and customer experiences. Secondary data are supporting data obtained from existing sources used to complement and strengthen primary data. In this research, secondary data were obtained through documents and archives related to retail activities and customer service, books and scientific literature relevant to marketing communication, personal selling, and customer satisfaction, previous research journals supporting the theoretical framework, and credible online sources related to company profiles and concepts used.

Data collection techniques were conducted through three methods. In-depth interviews were conducted to obtain direct information from informants regarding experiences, views, and understanding of personal selling communication strategies. Interviews were conducted semi-structurally, where researchers prepared interview guidelines but still provided flexibility for informants to develop answers. Observation was conducted by directly observing communication activities between retail assistants and customers at the Eiger store. The observation used was non-participant observation, where researchers were not directly involved in the observed activities but only acted as observers. Documentation was used to complement data obtained through interviews and observation. Data documentation can be in the form of photos of research location activities, relevant notes or archives, company or store profiles, and other supporting documents.

Data analysis techniques used in this research include data reduction, which is the process of selecting, focusing attention, simplifying, and transforming raw data obtained from the field. Data presentation is conducted in the form of narrative descriptions, matrices, tables, or charts that facilitate researchers in understanding data

comprehensively. Conclusion drawing and verification are the final stages where conclusions are drawn based on analyzed data. Conclusions produced are initially tentative but will become stronger with increasing data and continuous verification processes. Researchers conduct verification by comparing data from various sources (triangulation) so that conclusions obtained have a high level of validity.

Data validity in this research was ensured through triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing and rechecking the degree of trust of information obtained from various data sources. In this research, data were obtained from retail assistants as personal selling communicators and customers as service recipients. By comparing information from both sources, researchers could obtain more accurate and objective data. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained through various data collection techniques, namely in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The use of these various techniques aimed to ensure the consistency of data obtained in the field.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

RESEARCH RESULT

Profile of Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store

The Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store is one of the retail outlets marketing various outdoor activity equipment to consumers in Surabaya and surrounding areas. The presence of this outlet serves as a means for customers to obtain products supporting adventure activities, travel, and daily use needs. The diverse product categories available make interaction between customers and retail assistants an important part of the service process. The retail industry not only focuses on product sales but also on service quality provided to customers. In the retail scope, direct interaction between employees and customers becomes an important element that can influence shopping experiences and customer satisfaction levels. Good service is demonstrated not only through speed in serving but also through effective, informative, and responsive communication skills to customer needs. This condition makes the role of retail assistants as the frontline of service have a significant contribution to building positive relationships with customers.

Service Structure at the Store

The service system implemented at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store positions retail assistants as those who interact directly with customers. This role is not only related to sales activities but also includes providing information, product consultation, and customer assistance during product search processes. Service interaction begins when customers enter the store area. At this stage, retail assistants attempt to build initial communication through greetings and polite service offers. This step serves as a means to recognize customer needs before providing relevant product recommendations. Retail assistants are also responsible for maintaining customer comfort while in the store. This is done through polite communication, the use of easily understood language, and friendly, non-pressuring service attitudes. In practice, service activities at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat

Surabaya Store are not only oriented toward sales transactions but also toward building good relationships with customers to create customer loyalty to both the store and the Eiger brand.

Characteristics of Retail Assistants

The retail assistant who became the primary informant in this research is Kiara Ringga, a retail assistant at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store. The informant was selected because they have worked for more than one year and have experience serving various customer characters. As a retail assistant, the informant possesses fairly good interpersonal communication skills. Based on observation results, the informant appears actively communicating with customers through friendly greetings, casual conversations, and detailed product explanations. Additionally, the informant appears capable of adjusting communication styles to different customer characters. This makes interpersonal communication skills an important aspect of personal selling activities at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store.

Characteristics of Customers

Customers who became supporting informants in this research are customers who have made purchases more than once at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store. The interviewed customers come from different backgrounds, ranging from students, workers, to nature enthusiast communities. Based on interview results, customers come to the Eiger Store with different needs. Some customers look for products for mountain climbing activities, traveling, or daily use. These different needs require retail assistants to be able to adjust their communication style and product recommendations to each customer. Additionally, customers also have different communication characteristics. Some customers actively ask about products, while others tend to be passive and only view products without much conversation.

Service Activities at the Store

Service activities at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store begin when customers enter the store area. Retail assistants make initial approaches by greeting customers and politely offering assistance. After that, retail assistants try to understand customer needs through direct interpersonal communication. Based on observation results, service activities are conducted through verbal and nonverbal communication. Verbal communication is evident through the use of polite language, product explanations, and casual conversations with customers. Meanwhile, nonverbal communication is evident through smiles, eye contact, body language, and facial expressions of retail assistants while serving customers. In addition to providing product information, retail assistants also conduct product demonstrations so customers better understand the function and quality of offered products. These service activities show that personal selling is the main strategy in the marketing process at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store.

Verbal Communication Process of Retail Assistants

Observation results in the field show that verbal communication is the most frequently used form of interaction by retail assistants during customer service. Through verbal communication, retail assistants can convey product information, explore customer needs, and create a more comfortable communication atmosphere during the purchasing process. According to DeVito (2016), verbal communication enables direct message exchange accompanied by quick feedback, making it easier for both parties to reach mutual understanding. The effectiveness of verbal communication is determined not only by the content of the message conveyed but also by word choice, information clarity, voice intonation, and the communicator's ability to adjust communication style to the communicant's characteristics.

The retail assistant stated that initial greetings are important to create a positive first impression on customers. When customers enter the store, retail assistants usually immediately greet customers with polite and friendly language. "Usually we greet first like 'welcome to Eiger,' then ask what they are looking for so customers feel noticed." Based on observation results, the greetings given by retail assistants do not sound too formal or stiff but are more relaxed, creating a comfortable communication atmosphere. Additionally, retail assistants also use word choices that are easy for customers to understand when explaining products.

In the verbal communication process, retail assistants do not immediately offer specific products but first ask about customer needs. This approach is taken so that recommended products match customer needs. "If customers want to climb mountains, the recommendations are usually different from customers looking for everyday use products." This shows that verbal communication conducted by retail assistants is not only informative but also persuasive and interpersonal. Besides using easily understood language, voice intonation is also an important part of verbal communication. Based on observation, retail assistants use calm voice intonation and do not speak too quickly so customers more easily understand the information given. Customers also expressed that verbal communication by retail assistants made them feel comfortable asking about products. "The explanations are easy to understand and not too formal, so it's comfortable to ask questions."

Nonverbal Communication of Retail Assistants

Service provided by retail assistants is also supported by various forms of nonverbal communication. During the observation process, researchers found that facial expressions, eye contact, body gestures, and service attitudes shown by retail assistants play a role in creating positive impressions on customers. The presence of these nonverbal elements helps strengthen messages conveyed verbally, making interactions more effective. When customers enter the store, retail assistants are seen giving smiles and eye contact as a form of initial acceptance of customers. This attitude creates the impression that customers are well received while in the store. "Sometimes before saying anything, they've already smiled, so it feels more comfortable entering the store."

In addition to smiles, retail assistants' body language also appears quite open when communicating with customers. Retail assistants do not show hurried or indifferent attitudes toward customers. During observation, retail assistants often nodded when listening to customers as a nonverbal response that they understood what customers were saying. The standing position of retail assistants is also not too far from customers so communication feels closer and more interpersonal. This physical proximity makes customers feel more comfortable asking about products. These findings align with DeVito's (2016) interpersonal communication theory, which explains that nonverbal communication has a great influence on interpersonal communication effectiveness. Facial expressions, eye contact, and body language can influence comfort and perceptions of the communication process.

Empathy in Interpersonal Communication

Research findings explain that empathy is one of the abilities supporting the effectiveness of retail assistants' interpersonal communication. Before providing product recommendations, retail assistants first try to understand customer needs, product usage purposes, and customer conditions. This approach helps retail assistants provide more appropriate solutions compared to only focusing on sales activities. This is done by asking about customer activities, product usage purposes, and customer preferences for certain products. "If customers are confused, we usually help find their needs first so they don't choose the wrong product."

Based on observation results, retail assistants often engage in casual conversations before offering products. For example, by asking about the purpose of customer climbs, estimated climb duration, or tourist locations to be visited. This approach creates a more relaxed communication atmosphere and makes customers feel closer to retail assistants. "The communication style is relaxed and not too sales-oriented, so it's more comfortable." Empathy is also evident when retail assistants face customers who are confused in choosing products. Retail assistants do not immediately force customers to buy certain products but try to provide several alternative options according to customer needs. These findings align with research by Sari et al. (2026), which explains that interpersonal communication based on empathy can create emotional closeness and increase customer comfort during service.

Active Listening Ability

The ability to listen is an important aspect of communication between retail assistants and customers. Based on research findings, retail assistants do not rush to offer products but instead give customers opportunities to explain their needs and experiences first. This communication pattern allows the service process to proceed more personally and helps retail assistants understand customer needs more accurately. According to DeVito (2016), the ability to listen is part of interpersonal communication that allows communicators to understand the needs, feelings, and expectations of conversation partners so that responses given become more appropriate. In personal selling practice, the

listening process is not only aimed at obtaining information about customer needs but also at building closer relationships through two-way communication.

When customers explain needs or certain problems, retail assistants appear to listen attentively before providing product recommendations. In some situations, customers share experiences using previous outdoor products or product needs for certain activities such as hiking, traveling, or daily use. "If customers explain their needs first, we usually listen until they finish before giving recommendations so they are more appropriate." Based on observation, retail assistants do not interrupt customer conversations and provide responses gradually to questions asked by customers. This attitude shows active listening in the interpersonal communication process. In addition to listening to customer needs, retail assistants also try to understand customer complaints about certain products. In some situations, customers were found confused about choosing backpack sizes, types of outdoor sandals, or outdoor jacket specifications that suit their needs. "Sometimes customers come still confused about what they're looking for, so we have to listen first to what their activities are usually like."

Building Relationships with Customers

Interactions occurring at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store show that retail assistants are not only oriented toward achieving sales targets but also strive to build positive interpersonal relationships with every customer. In daily service practice, retail assistants try to create relaxed, warm, and personal communication so customers feel more comfortable while in the store. This approach is taken so the service process does not feel stiff or merely focused on transactional activities but becomes a communication process capable of building emotional closeness between retail assistants and customers. This condition helps create a more familiar atmosphere so customers become more open in expressing needs, preferences, and experiences related to outdoor activities.

Based on observation results, retail assistants often engage in casual conversations with customers outside product discussions. For example, by asking about customer activities, travel experiences, or outdoor activities often done by customers. "Usually we also chat casually with customers so the atmosphere is more comfortable and not too formal." The initial stage in the personal selling process begins with efforts to establish first contact with customers. Based on observation results, retail assistants try to create a friendly atmosphere from the moment customers enter the store area. This initial interaction is not only aimed at opening conversation but also at taking the first step to understand customer needs more deeply. Additionally, retail assistants also try to remember customers who have come before. In some situations, retail assistants greet loyal customers more personally and ask about their experience using products previously purchased.

Message Clarity

Based on interview and observation results, retail assistants at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store strive to convey product information clearly, simply, and easily

understood by customers. Information delivery is not only focused on product specifications but is also tailored to customer needs so the information given becomes more relevant. Retail assistants use communicative language, avoid difficult technical terms, and provide examples of product use in daily activities and outdoor activities. Observation results show that retail assistants provide explanations about the function, benefits, materials, and differences of each product systematically. When customers still feel doubtful or do not fully understand the information given, retail assistants repeat explanations in simpler language until customers truly understand the product offered. "We usually explain product functions slowly, adjusted to customer needs. If they're still confused, we explain again in simpler language." Customers also expressed that the information provided by retail assistants was easy to understand, helping them determine appropriate products. "The explanations are clear and not confusing, so I'm more confident when choosing products."

Stages of Personal Selling

Initial Approach. The initial stage of personal selling carried out by retail assistants at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store begins with approaching customers. Based on observation results, retail assistants usually greet customers when they enter the store using polite and friendly language. The initial greeting is done to create a positive first impression while building initial communication with customers. Retail assistants also offer assistance to customers seen looking for certain products. In addition to greetings, retail assistants also pay attention to customer responses when making initial approaches. If customers appear to want to see products themselves first, retail assistants do not immediately force product offers. The relaxed initial approach makes customers feel more comfortable while in the store.

Product Presentation. After obtaining information about customer needs, retail assistants begin to provide explanations about products considered suitable. Information conveyed includes product characteristics, main functions, materials used, and advantages compared to alternative products. Information delivery is conducted interactively so customers have opportunities to ask questions or request additional explanations. Based on observation results, product presentations are conducted communicatively and interactively. Retail assistants do not only speak in one direction but also give customers opportunities to ask about products. Customers also expressed that product explanations given by retail assistants were quite detailed and helped them understand the quality of outdoor products offered. In addition to providing verbal explanations, retail assistants also show products directly to customers so customers can see product quality more clearly.

Product Demonstration. For some product types, retail assistants conduct direct demonstrations to help customers understand product functions and usage methods. Demonstrations are conducted as a supporting form of verbal explanation so customers obtain a clearer picture of the benefits of offered products. Based on observation results, retail assistants demonstrate how to open backpack compartments, explain waterproof features on jackets, and show product materials to customers. Product demonstrations help

customers obtain direct pictures of product quality and functions, thereby increasing customer confidence in offered products. Additionally, product demonstrations also help create more interactive communication between retail assistants and customers.

Handling Customer Objections. During the service process, not all customers immediately accept recommendations given. Some customers still have doubts about price, specifications, or product suitability with their needs. To handle this situation, retail assistants attempt to provide additional relevant explanations without putting pressure on customers to immediately make purchases. When facing customer objections, retail assistants strive to maintain friendly and non-defensive communication. Retail assistants try to understand the reasons for customer objections before providing explanations. In addition to providing explanations, retail assistants also try to provide alternative products more suitable for customer needs and budgets. Based on observation results, retail assistants do not force customers to buy certain products even if customers have not shown purchasing decisions. This approach makes customers feel more comfortable and not pressured during the service process.

Transaction Closing. The transaction closing stage is conducted after customers determine the product choice to be purchased. At this stage, retail assistants reconfirm that the selected product matches customer needs. In addition to assisting the payment process, retail assistants also provide additional information related to product usage and maintenance so product benefits can be obtained optimally. Retail assistants usually reconfirm products chosen by customers before the payment process. Additionally, retail assistants also provide additional information about product care so products can be used for longer periods. In some situations, retail assistants also offer additional products still related to customer needs, such as outdoor accessories or other supplementary equipment. However, these offers are still made casually and do not force customers.

Customer Follow-up. The relationship between retail assistants and customers does not always end after transactions are completed. Based on research findings, retail assistants still strive to maintain good relationships with customers who have made purchases through informal communication when customers revisit the store. Retail assistants explained that customers who frequently come are usually easier to communicate with because they are already familiar with the service atmosphere at the store. Based on observation results, retail assistants also often ask about customer experiences with products previously purchased. This form of communication shows efforts to build long-term relationships with customers.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of Retail Assistant Interpersonal Communication

Based on research findings, interpersonal communication conducted by retail assistants is the main element in the customer service process at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store. The interactions that occur function not only as a medium for conveying product information but also as a means of building closer relationships between retail assistants and customers. Research findings show that interpersonal communication is

realized through a combination of verbal and nonverbal communication that complement each other. The use of easily understood language, friendly attitudes, listening skills, and appropriate responses to customer needs are factors supporting communication effectiveness.

When viewed through DeVito's (2016) interpersonal communication perspective, the interactions reflect a two-way message exchange process that enables immediate feedback. This condition is evident when customers express their needs and retail assistants provide responses tailored to the situation faced by customers. Research findings also show that interpersonal communication quality influences customer comfort while in the store. Customers who receive communicative service tend to feel more valued, more confident in recommendations given, and find it easier to determine product choices according to their needs. Thus, interpersonal communication in this research is not only a communication tool but also a service strategy supporting the creation of positive shopping experiences for customers.

Analysis of Personal Selling in Outdoor Retail

Research findings show that personal selling is the main approach used by retail assistants in serving customers at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store. Through direct interaction, retail assistants have opportunities to understand customer needs more specifically so product recommendations can be adjusted to each customer's conditions. Research findings show that personal selling stages have been applied sequentially from initial approach, product information delivery, product demonstration, handling customer objections, to transaction closing. Each stage is conducted with a flexible communication approach so customers do not feel pressured during the purchasing process.

In practice, the success of personal selling is determined not only by the ability to explain products but also by the ability of retail assistants to build positive interpersonal relationships. The ability to listen to customer needs, provide relevant solutions, and demonstrate empathy are factors supporting the effectiveness of personal selling activities in the outdoor retail environment. Thus, personal selling applied at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store functions not only as a sales technique but also as a service strategy that helps create more positive shopping experiences for customers.

Customer Satisfaction as a Communication Outcome

Based on research findings, interpersonal communication conducted by retail assistants has an influence on customer satisfaction at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store. Customers feel satisfied because they receive friendly, communicative, and informative service during the purchasing process. Interview results show that customers feel more comfortable when retail assistants can understand their needs before offering products. Customers also feel more confident about recommended products because they receive detailed and easy-to-understand explanations. Research findings show that customers value service that can understand their needs compared to service only oriented toward sales. This is evident from customer statements who feel more comfortable when

retail assistants first listen to needs before providing product recommendations. Additionally, customers also feel satisfied because retail assistants do not force customers to buy certain products. The relaxed communication approach makes customers feel freer in asking questions and considering purchasing decisions. Customer satisfaction is also influenced by the ability of retail assistants to respond to customer questions quickly and clearly. Customers feel noticed when retail assistants provide direct responses to customer needs and complaints.

CONCLUSION

Research on interpersonal communication applied by retail assistants in personal selling activities at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store shows that the quality of interaction between employees and customers is an important factor in shaping positive shopping experiences. The communication process does not only occur through oral information delivery but is also supported by various forms of nonverbal communication that reflect friendliness and readiness to serve customers. Research findings show that retail assistants can convey product information in easily understood language, provide relevant explanations, and respond to customer questions appropriately. On the other hand, the use of friendly facial expressions, good eye contact, and open body language also helps create a comfortable interaction atmosphere during service.

In addition to the ability to convey messages, retail assistants also demonstrate empathetic attitudes and listening skills for customer needs. This approach allows them to provide product recommendations more suitable to customer needs and preferences. As a result, customers feel more valued and receive a more personal service experience. The interpersonal communication theory used in this research can explain the communication process conducted by retail assistants at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store. The empathy aspect is evident through the retail assistants' ability to understand customer needs, listen actively, and provide product recommendations appropriate to customer needs. The message clarity aspect is realized through product information delivery using easily understood, clear, and communicative language, making it easier for customers to understand product functions and benefits. Meanwhile, the relationship building aspect is reflected in retail assistants' efforts to create friendly, warm, and sustainable communication through personal interactions that make customers feel comfortable, valued, and more confident in the service provided.

These three aspects of interpersonal communication mutually support the success of personal selling strategies in building customer satisfaction at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store. The relationships built during the interaction process also show a service orientation not solely focused on sales transactions. Relaxed, warm, and communicative communication contributes to the growth of customer trust in retail assistants and in the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store as a whole. In personal selling implementation, retail assistants have carried out personal selling stages from initial approaches to customers, product information delivery, product demonstration, handling customer objections, to transaction closing and post-purchase follow-up. These practices align with the concept of

personal selling emphasizing the importance of adjusting approaches to customer needs and forming long-term relationships. Effective interpersonal communication provides a positive contribution to customer comfort, the quality of relationships between customers and retail assistants, and customer satisfaction levels when shopping at the Eiger Basuki Rahmat Surabaya Store.

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