

Marketing Communication Strategy of Pesona Maidah Bakery Based on Personal Selling in 2024

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Marketing Communication Strategy;
Personal Selling; Pesona Maidah Bakery

This study aims to describe the marketing communication strategy based on personal selling implemented by Pesona Maidah Bakery in 2024. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through structured interviews and field observations and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's model. The findings reveal that personal selling was carried out intensively and relationally by sales personnel through strong interpersonal approaches, including empathetic communication, suggestive persuasion techniques, product sampling, and attractive promotional offers. Sales agents actively targeted strategic locations such as traditional markets and public areas to find prospective customers, fostered emotional connections through informal conversations, and maintained customer loyalty via follow-up communication on WhatsApp. The product advantages communicated include the use of premium ingredients, absence of preservatives, and daily fresh production. The analysis indicates that this strategy effectively fosters emotional closeness, builds trust, and enhances customer loyalty. The personal selling strategy of Pesona Maidah Bakery reflects the principles of Relationship Marketing, emphasizing not merely transactional outcomes, but the development of long-term relationships with consumers through human-centered, adaptive, and consistent communication.

1. Introduction

Indonesia has witnessed substantial expansion in the bakery sector, which is a component of the culinary industry. Bread has emerged as a primary choice due to its practical and flexible nature, as the population's increasingly dynamic lifestyles have shifted food consumption patterns. The per capita consumption of white and sweet bread in Indonesia reached 3.01 kilograms in 2020, as indicated by data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS). This increase in bread consumption is consistent with the rapid tempo of life and increased mobility. This change has facilitated the establishment and expansion of a variety of bakery enterprises across the nation. Indonesia's bread sales in 2021 were the highest in Southeast Asia, with a total of USD 18.7 billion, or approximately IDR 2.6 trillion (Halidi, 2021). The Indonesian Bakery Entrepreneurs Association (APEBI) reported that the bakery industry has been expanding at an annual rate of 10–15%. Additionally, there were approximately 600 registered bakery enterprises in Indonesia as of April 2022 (Nurhidayah, 2016; Arum Wandhasari & Harisudin, 2022)

The promising potential of this industry for entrepreneurs is evident in the data. Nevertheless, the mere presence of product information does not ensure that consumers will make a purchase.

Consumers' hesitation or unpreparedness to make a purchase, perceptions of high prices, and the abundance of similar products can all impede purchasing decisions (Andri, 2022). Consequently, it is imperative to implement effective marketing communication in order to effectively communicate the value of products to consumers. In a dynamic market, effective marketing communication strategies are essential for maintaining a competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive business environment, particularly in the culinary sector (Syuhada et al., 2023).

Some bakery firms have implemented personal selling strategies as part of their marketing strategy. For instance, Sari Roti employs street vendors to sell their products directly to consumers, while Roti O establishes outlets in public areas. Local brands in Yogyakarta, including Swiss Bakery and Murni Roti, continue to adhere to conventional direct-selling strategies (Erin Mentari, 2023). In spite of this, there is a dearth of comprehensive research on personal selling strategies, particularly in medium-sized bakery enterprises like Pesona Maidah Bakery.

Pesona Maidah Bakery, which was founded in 2002, has prioritized personal selling as the foundation of its customer outreach strategy. This strategy is designed to forge intimate, personal connections with consumers in addition to increasing sales. This is significant because Pesona Maidah Bakery continues to prosper and expand despite not significantly relying on digital marketing technologies, which is a departure from the majority of its competitors (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2022).

In light of this context, the objective of this investigation is to delineate and evaluate the personal selling strategy that Pesona Maidah Bakery employs to promote its products. This research is anticipated to offer a practical and effective representation of personal selling practices and function as a reference for business actors in similar situations. Additionally, it endeavors to make a significant academic contribution to the advancement of marketing communication literature, with a particular emphasis on the culinary industry, by employing a personal selling approach.

2. Method

This research employs a descriptive qualitative methodology to conduct a comprehensive examination of the subject matter. Data is gathered through in-depth interviews or field observation techniques in descriptive qualitative research (Alfatih, 2017). This research generates pertinent descriptive data by offering a more thorough comprehension of the context being examined. The study's primary objective is to examine the marketing strategy for communication at Pesona Maidah Bakery, which is predicated on personal selling. Structured interviews and observation are implemented in the investigation

The observation technique (Haryono, 2020) is used to examine and describe the research setting, the participants involved, the meaning of events from their perspective, and the ongoing activities. The research entails the observation of numerous aspects of the subject, with a particular emphasis on the bread business that Pesona Maidah Bakery operates. Observations were conducted at distribution points in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, such as Bringharjo Market, Lempuyangan Market, and Demangan Market. Additionally, observations were conducted at Keden Pedan Market, Cawas Market, and Klaten Market in Klaten. The sales staff—Abdus Syakur, Winarto, and Mohammad Nurul Misbah—as well as the proprietor of Pesona Maidah Bakery, Joko Padmoyo, are all participants in the observational data collection. The sales personnel execute the seven-step personal selling procedure, which is the basis for the selection of informants. The observations concentrate on the manner in which the sales team executes the seven stages of the personal selling method: preparation, prospecting, pre-approach, presentation, objection handling, closing the transaction, and post-sale follow-up.

The structured interview method used in this study involves direct, in-person conversations between the interviewer and participants, aiming to gather information for research, regardless of whether a strict format is followed (Naamy, 2022). This investigation implements structured interviews by developing research instruments that include written inquiries and prospective responses. During the interviews, the researcher will take notes and pose the same set of questions to all respondents. However, we anticipate a pleasant and calm interaction that will reduce potential

distress and stimulate relevant responses. The researcher will employ various devices, including laptops, mobile phones, and stationery, to ensure the successful completion of the interview sessions.

3. Result and Discussion

This study shares important results based on data collected from field observations and structured interviews with five main sources: one owner and three sales staff from Pesona Maidah Bakery, along with direct observations of sales activities at different distribution points. The personal selling strategy practices employed by Pesona Maidah Bakery were represented by five dominant themes that arose through data reduction and categorization techniques using Miles and Huberman's method. The paper addresses the following themes: (1) preparation and prospecting patterns, (2) initial consumer approach strategies, (3) product presentation methods and value communication, (4) objection management and closing sales processes, and (5) post-sales actions and customer relationship maintenance.

3.1. Pesona Maidah Bakery's Implementation of Personal Selling Stages in Bread Marketing

- a. The initial theme, preparation and prospecting patterns, suggests that the sales personnel of Pesona Maidah Bakery informally identify potential customers by utilizing densely populated areas and recommendations from existing customers. There were no digital customer data systems discovered. The marketers identify potential prospect targets through personal experience and intuition. Based on the efficacy of market response and geographical proximity, observational data indicates that distribution areas are progressively expanded.
- b. The second theme, which pertains to the initial strategies for approaching consumers, is characterized by a robust interpersonal approach that capitalizes on emotional intimacy and the direct use of persuasive language. According to one informant, the establishment of a rapport with consumers is essential for their success in the sales industry. In this approach, salespeople use the AIDA model by first grabbing attention with how the product looks, then sparking interest with stories about where the product comes from, and finally creating desire through tasting demonstrations.
- c. The third theme, namely product presentation methods and value communication, illustrates that product demonstrations are conducted by offering direct samples to potential consumers. Narratives about the hygienic bread-making process and the use of high-quality ingredients are incorporated into the presentations. The content is designed to build a positive impression of the product and increase the likelihood of purchase. Based on the observations, the presentations primarily relied on direct interaction without the use of supporting materials such as printed or digital media.
- d. The fourth motif, which pertains to the handling of objections and the closing of sales processes, demonstrates that the most prevalent customer objections are those regarding product durability and price. Sales personnel employ an argumentative strategy to address objections, highlighting the nutritional value and quality of the product. After resolving objections, sales personnel conduct sales closings by making straightforward requests. Sales success is frequently contingent upon the seller's capacity to interpret the emotional state of the consumer and their interpersonal communication skills, as indicated by interviews.
- e. The fifth theme, post-sales actions and customer relationship maintenance, emphasizes the diligent efforts of sales personnel to sustain long-term relationships with customers. These actions encompass routine visits, direct product deliveries, and greetings on special occasions, such as holidays. According to one informant, the objective of this methodology is to foster emotional consumer loyalty.

The results of this research suggest that Pesona Maidah Bakery's personal selling strategy is heavily reliant on personal interactions that cultivate emotional connections between sellers

and consumers. The marketers are not solely concerned with the transaction; they also strive to establish a positive experience that can foster consumer loyalty. Especially among consumers who perceive themselves as valued and appreciated, this practice is essential for boosting sales.

3.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications of the Personal Selling Strategy at Pesona Maidah Bakery for the Marketing of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

The results of this study emphasize that the personal selling strategy implemented by Pesona Maidah Bakery plays a central role in fostering emotional closeness with customers and enhancing customer loyalty. This aligns with the research problem that seeks to explore the forms and effectiveness of marketing communication based on a direct approach in 2024. The findings reveal that personal selling practices, carried out by sales personnel from prospecting to follow-up stages, succeed in creating meaningful interactions that are not only oriented toward immediate sales but also toward maintaining intense and continuous long-term relationships. This strategy is consistently applied amidst the dominance of digital marketing, demonstrating the success of a human-centered approach in preserving the relevance of conventional marketing communication within the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The interpretation of these findings within the framework of the AIDA model reinforces the validity that each stage of the model—Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action—is effectively brought to life by personal sellers using communication techniques adapted to the social context of customers. At the attention stage, emotional closeness is built through personal greetings and light interactions tailored to the characteristics of consumers, the majority of whom are elderly and more responsive to personal touches. This shows that attention based on emotional stimuli has a strong influence on triggering deep consumer engagement (Hung et al., 2025)

At the interest and desire stages, salespeople actively present products with narratives about high-quality ingredients and clean production processes while also allowing customers to sample them—a technique that enhances both sensory and emotional engagement simultaneously (Gasparin et al., 2022). This strategy sparks the desire to purchase and increases trust in the product's quality (Song et al., 2021). The action stage is activated through empowering persuasion techniques, such as offering purchase bonuses or positioning the purchase as a form of social contribution, as exemplified by consumers purchasing large quantities of bread for their employees (Waters et al., 2025)

Furthermore, the post-sale phase reveals systematic efforts to build emotional customer loyalty through festive greetings and product catalogs sent via WhatsApp. This practice underscores the importance of after-sales service in strengthening customer retention and fostering loyalty through ongoing communication (Othman et al., 2021). These findings are also consistent with the study by Manafe & Pramita (2022), which asserts that the effectiveness of personal selling significantly increases when linked to the psychological dynamics of consumers during the purchasing process, as modeled in the AIDA framework. Similarly, the procedural theory, which emphasizes seven key stages in personal selling, proves to provide a strategic and consistent field practice structure, as supported by studies in the context of SMEs by (Pritandhari et al., 2014)

When compared to previous studies, this research reinforces the findings of Heriana et al., (2025) on Lavanda Brownies in Karawang, which highlighted that face-to-face personal selling progressively and sustainably builds consumer trust. This strategy is also similar to the approach used by Janji Jiwa Café in the study by (Lengkey, 2022), where a combination of personal selling and word-of-mouth successfully attracts and retains consumers by prioritizing humanized communication. However, it is important to note that some studies also highlight the limitations of this approach, as revealed by (Resdiani & Indrawati (2024), who stress the importance of synergy between personal selling and digital support to ensure the strategy can efficiently reach a broader market.

The scientific contribution of this article lies in the in-depth exploration of personal selling practices in the context of small-scale bakery businesses that maintain conventional approaches amidst the digital marketing ecosystem. This article expands the theoretical horizon in marketing

communication literature by emphasizing that interpersonal strategies such as personal selling are not merely sales transaction tools but also highly valuable relational instruments in building brand trust and long-term loyalty (Alarcón, 2024.). By placing humans at the center of the marketing process, this finding enriches the understanding that empathetic and direct communication remains a strategic asset in the era of automated digital marketing (Angelini, n.d.)

4. Conclusion

This study synthetically finds that the marketing communication strategy based on personal selling implemented by Pesona Maidah Bakery has proven effective in building emotional closeness, enhancing trust, and fostering customer loyalty. Through the consistent application of the seven stages of personal selling, from prospecting to post-sale follow-up, as well as the use of an interpersonal approach grounded in the AIDA model, the sales force has been able to conduct communication that is not only transactional but also relational. Each stage is implemented contextually, based on the social situation and characteristics of the customers, making this strategy not only relevant but also adaptable to local needs. The descriptive qualitative approach employed effectively depicts the dynamics of this conservative marketing practice amidst the wave of digitalization while addressing the research questions previously established.

Conceptually, this article contributes to strengthening the marketing communication literature by asserting that personal selling strategies still hold an important position in the contemporary marketing landscape, especially in the micro and small business sectors. This study shows that relationship-based communication approaches remain relevant and strategic, particularly in building long-term loyalty that cannot be fully replaced by technology. These findings enrich theoretical understanding of the sustainability of traditional marketing strategies in the digital era while filling a gap in the literature that has previously tended to focus on digital strategies and integrated marketing.

As an implication, this study suggests that similar businesses maintain and develop their interpersonal capacities within their marketing strategies while also exploring the potential for limited integration with digital media to support the effectiveness of personal selling without diminishing its relational value. For future research, it is recommended to employ a mixed methods approach to quantitatively test the impact of this strategy on variables such as customer satisfaction, sales growth, and brand loyalty in a more comprehensive manner. Cross-context and cross-sector approaches could also expand the applicability of these findings in the development of inclusive and sustainable marketing practices.

5. Acknowledgement

The researcher would like to express gratitude to Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta for their support in the publication of this journal. The researcher also extends appreciation to Erwan Sudiwijaya, S.Sos., MBA., M.A., as the supervisor of this research.

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