

Research Article

**INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED
BARISTAS WITH CUSTOMERS;
CASE STUDY AT CAFÉ MORE WYATAGUNA BANDUNG CITY**

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ABSTRACT

This article examines interpersonal communication between baristas with visual impairments and customers in coffee shops. The research used a case study at Café More, Bandung, Indonesia, which Wyata Guna Special School manages. The research sought to reveal how visually impaired baristas interact and communicate with the coffee shop customers, most of whom do not have disabilities. The study focuses on the communication behavior of low-vision baristas in the form of oral, written, and non-verbal communication. Using the qualitative method and case study approach, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with two baristas with visual impairment as critical informants, five customers and a manager of Café More as primary informants, and two people with visual impairment who are also customers of Café More as supporting informants. The results of the study found that the blind barista of Low Vision Café More Bandung conducted two communications, namely verbal communication and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication between blind baristas and customers at Café More Bandung goes well even though it requires repetition of customer speech to ensure the messages are conveyed correctly because most supporting informants are regular customers. In nonverbal communication in research, namely a gesture or body movement and hand movements such as using fingers to determine the number of orders. With this research, it is hoped that people with disabilities will get the same place in jobs that require interaction and communication with consumers.

Keywords: *Coffee shop, Case study, Interpersonal communication, Visual impairments*

Introduction

Persons with disabilities are one group of individuals who have the same position, rights,

and obligations as Indonesian citizens. Officially, people with disabilities are categorized as a group of people who need PPKS (Social

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Welfare Services). PPKS is a group that accommodates community individuals with deficiencies or life difficulties so that they are less able to fulfill their physical and spiritual needs than other normal individuals (Larasati et al., 2017). Unlike ordinary people in general, people with disabilities have physical and mental limitations that prevent them from performing physical, spiritual, and social functions properly.

Law Number 8 of 2016 Article 17 concerning Social Welfare Rights emphasizes the importance of social empowerment for persons with disabilities. This empowerment, along with social rehabilitation, social security, and social protection, is a fundamental right. It inspires and motivates us to ensure their individual rights and welfare are fulfilled without discrimination from other community groups (Ashar et al., 2019). In addition, Law No. 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities, especially Article 53 paragraph 1, requires the government, local governments, and state and regional-owned enterprises to employ at least 2% of persons with disabilities from the number of employees. Article 2 requires private companies to use at least 1% of persons with disabilities (Undang-Undang (UU) Tentang Penyandang Disabilitas, 2016).

The World Health Organization (WHO) claims that the general public often views people with disabilities as destroying the harmony created between humans and their environment (WHO, 2013). According to its calculations, 80% of people with disabilities in

minority cases live in developing countries. People with disabilities are faced with an environment filled with poverty and increasingly tricky access conditions in terms of access to health, employment, education, and training (Erisa & Widinarsih, 2022).

The challenges faced by visually impaired people, such as discrimination from the environment, do not make visually impaired people give up easily (Monash, 2017). The choice is to keep working hard and not waste their opportunities, even though it is not easy. The limitations that are owned in no way reduce blind people with disabilities to not being responsible for their work. People with visual impairments face obstacles and problems in their daily lives (Mardiana et al., 2019).

There is an unfavorable reception in the community, such as offensive ridicule. There are barriers when serving customers at the cafe, with customers with total blindness using the braille menu when giving orders, which is explained again by the barista. People with low-vision disabilities can order coffee using assistive devices such as mobile phone voice or WhatsApp text. If with normal customers, there are no obstacles because normal customers ordering the coffee menu use verbal communication; it's just that one barista confirms back in the order menu ordered by regular customers using the braille menu. But if it is crowded in the cafe, the barista uses notes to help with the order.



Figure 1. Café More in Bandung Indonesia
Source: Authors Documentation (2024)

In Bandung, a unique coffee shop stands precisely in the Complex Area of the Social Rehabilitation Centre for Persons with Visual Impairments (BRSPDSN) Sentra Wyata Guna Bandung, where employees are people with disabilities, namely blind and low vision. This place is called Café More Wyata Guna Bandung, as shown in Figure 1. Café More Wyata Guna is one of the coffee shops that promote equality for people with disabilities who have low vision and is managed by BRSPDSN Wyataguna under the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in collaboration with Siloam Center for the Blind of Korea, with the motto "a cup of coffee that you pay is support for people with disabilities." One of the goals of establishing

this café is to change people's views on people with visual impairments and that they are able to work productively.

Café More Wyata Guna is a case study in research because Café More is one of the places where people with low vision disabilities can participate in the training process with their interests, namely baristas, so they become individuals who are ready to be in the midst of society. Through Café More, people with disabilities can also interact and adapt directly with customers to train their mentality and independence. Café More Wyata Guna also has great hopes for people with disabilities to remain enthusiastic about living life and fulfill all their needs by developing their potential.



Figure 2. Barista with visual impairment serving customers
Source: Authors Documentation (2024)

Figure 2 shows that the baristas at Café More Wyata Guna are visually impaired individuals, one of whom has low vision. This unique workforce not only benefits the café but also serves as a platform to nurture the skills and confidence of people with low vision disabilities in the workplace. The data, based on insights from 2 key informants, is a testament to the reliability of our research. In serving customers, baristas with low vision disabilities conduct interpersonal communication with customers with disabilities and customers without disabilities.

Interpersonal communication has a significant impact on the course of the relationship between the two parties. According to Roudho-

nah (2019), interpersonal communication refers to communication between two people where one person is in direct contact with another person in the form of dialogue (Pandaleke et al., 2020). According to Joseph A. Devito, interpersonal communication is a condition of sending and receiving messages between two or more people, which gives some effects and feedback (Anggraini et al., 2022).

Interpersonal communication is essential in barista interactions with customers, creating comfort for consumers who use services or make product purchases. Baristas in Indonesia generally have unique and diverse interaction patterns through verbal and nonverbal cues,

such as neat clothing or an attractive face, to attract attention and change the concept of 'buyer' to 'customer' (Prihandini & Handoyo, 2014).

Based on previous research from Ahdiyant (2023), which discusses public relations activities in promoting Sunyi House Coffee and Hope Yogyakarta. The aim is to conduct promotional activities for the people of Yogyakarta. Carrying out the promotion of Sunyi House Coffee and Hope Yogyakarta to the public is in accordance with the target market, concept, and education that still needs to be created in Yogyakarta as well as making promotional activities that will be carried out, such as choosing the time for promotion and approaching the target market by conducting a campaign during the grand opening of Sunyi House Coffee and Hope Yogyakarta (Ahdiyant, 2023).

Furthermore, previous research by Ramadanti (2022) has shed light on the communication behavior of the blind friend's community. The verbal communication behavior in the Netra Friends Community, which includes speaking, listening, and writing, is not only among community members but also among Persons with Visual Sensory Disabilities. WhatsApp serves as the primary communication tool. Nonverbal communication behaviors involve touch, sound, space, and visualization. Despite the barriers in the form of technical, semantic, and psychological disorders, four communication patterns have emerged in the community. The research underscores the crucial role of feedback in shaping these communication patterns (Ramadanti, 2022).

This research focuses more on the interpersonal communication behavior of baristas with low vision disabilities with regular customers at Café More Wyata Guna Bandung, their verbal and nonverbal communication behavior, and the barriers faced by baristas with low vision disabilities. In the communication process, many communication barriers can damage the course of communication (Bukhari et al., 2023). Researchers also examined how Café More Wyata Guna baristas interact with customers, superiors, or fellow baristas to determine their language and body gestures. This research is expected to help baristas with low vision disabilities interact with regular customers.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. In a case study, the author collects data by conducting in-depth interviews with informants, observation, and documentation studies (Qathrunnada & Nugroho, 2023). The interviews focused on the communication behavior of baristas with low vision disabilities with normal customers at Café More Wyata Guna Bandung. The reason researchers use the case study method is to make it easier to explore the implementation of activities from communication behavior carried out by blind people with disabilities with customers at Café More Wyata Guna Bandung so that researchers will get in-depth information.

Case studies use various sources of information in data collection to provide a detailed and in-depth description of the response to an event (Creswell, 2016). Through the case study method, the researcher provides an in-depth picture of the communication behavior of visually impaired people in Café More Wyata Guna Bandung. The research informants are two baristas with blind disabilities as critical informants, five customers and a manager of Café More as primary informants, and two people with blind disabilities who are also customers of Café More as supporting informants.

Result and Discussion

Researchers explained the communication behavior of baristas with low vision disabilities with regular customers at Café More Wyata Guna Bandung. Behavior in communication has several definitions, such as overt and inert behavior. Communication behavior is an act or act of nonverbal and verbal communication that occurs in human behavior. The discussion of the communication behavior of baristas with low vision disabilities with customers at Café More Wyata Guna Bandung uses the theory of interpersonal communication, which is a communication process between two or more people, whether verbal or nonverbal.

Speech and Written Communication of Barista Café More With customers

Barista Café More Bandung uses oral communication to customers and fellow baristas

café more Bandung. Therefore, when communicating with customers with disabilities or normal customers, they communicate orally. According to Mulyana (2009), verbal symbols or messages are all symbols that use more than one word. Language can be interpreted as a verbal code system (Mulyana, 2009).

Verbal communication occurs and is carried out by baristas to customers by repeating sentences or pronunciations slowly so they can be understood. In addition, sometimes baristas with low vision have difficulty explaining to buyers when communicating using writing with blind customers. Sometimes, human nature differs from others, so it cannot be adequately understood. For example, when baristas communicate with eight supporting informants, namely customers when making transactions for two informants, baristas communicate slowly and repeatedly, which is like explaining the menu at Café More Bandung. So when done slowly and repeatedly, customers can understand the menu variants in Café More Bandung.

Barista's communication behavior with customers at Café More Bandung sees verbal interactions through repeated affirmations and spoken words. When communicating, employees and customers often experience difficulties when placing orders; this is what is needed so that visitors who experience disabilities can more easily understand the context of repetition needed for people with disabilities because it can help make their choices easier.

Café More visually impaired barista and customers, especially customers with disabilities, cannot see the menu in written form. Therefore, the baristas give an oral explanation to the blind customers. Meanwhile, normal customers can see the writing on the menu. Related to this, the Café More Bandung barista explained the reason for the written communication on the Café More Bandung menu. Written communication at Café More Bandung is usually done by normal visitors. When using the menu displayed, they are able to read and see the menu so they can understand what the menu means. Unlike blind people with disabilities who, because of their deficiencies, cannot see and read the menu in writing, they can read the writing through braille writing.

The baristas at Café More can also use technology and digital media, such as smartphones, which use screen reader applications. With smartphone devices, they can communicate and interact with others. Smartphones are generally accessed visually, but it turns out that with the help of a screen reader, it is beneficial for blind people to use smartphones both to assist in the learning process and to interact with their environment, such as being used in taking notes on the subject matter, because it is easier than writing with braille letters that require precision and skill. (Mardiana, 2020).

Nonverbal Communication of Visually Impaired Baristas of Low Vision with Customers

In conducting interviews between blind, low-vision baristas and customers at Café More Wyata Guna Bandung, nonverbal communication occurs in the ongoing interaction process. According to Hall et al. (2019), nonverbal communication includes all stimuli (except verbal communication stimuli) in a communication setting produced by individuals and users of the environment by individuals who have potential message value for the recipient or sender, whether intentional or not (Hall et al., 2019).

There are several forms of nonverbal communication carried out by customers and low vision baristas at Café More Bandung, namely the distance between customers and low vision baristas of Café More Bandung. In an interaction, activity cannot be separated from the distance between individuals and other individuals. The distance carried out at Café More Bandung is when doing the interaction process where the distance is limited by the barista table. The low-vision barista and the blind customers or normal customers do not have significant problems in the distance.

Body movements and gestures between customers and low-vision baristas Café More Bandung uses body parts in the interaction process between low-vision baristas and customers at Café More Bandung hand gestures, such as in ordering drinks, determine the amount without realizing it is always hand gestures. In addition, head and body posture becomes a communication tool between baristas with disabilities and customers. This part of the

body is used when the customer confirms something, such as nodding the head up and down to the side to refuse. And a hunched posture is different from that of other regular customers.

Communication Barriers of Visually Impaired Baristas of Low Vision Café with Customers

Barriers often occur in the process of interaction and transactions between baristas and customers. Sometimes, a work partner is needed to help blind employees by assisting them with work in the café to make it easier. According to expert informants, baristas with low vision in Café More help each other or back up the other baristas' tasks. So how are the communication barriers that occur between low vision baristas and customers at Café More Bandung.

Communication barriers that occur interfere with the course of communication and can hinder the smooth process of sending and receiving a message. The barriers that arise between baristas and customers are semantic barriers, where the communication behavior of low vision blind baristas with customers who are blind or not in seeing communication barriers, such example, when the barista explains that the espresso menu tastes bitter and sour, then the response of the customer or buyer is silent for a moment and indicates that the customer does not understand the intention of the low vision blind barista. To overcome this barrier, an explanation is needed slowly, and repetition is carried out so that the buyer understands the purpose of the barista and that there are no misunderstandings or differences in meaning.

In addition, there are also physical barriers, such as blind people not being able to read the situation or facial expressions of both baristas and customers. They also have difficulty reading existing writing, such as on the drink menu. Other barriers are mechanical barriers, which are barriers related to the problems of baristas when interacting, such as difficulties when inputting orders at the cash register. Psychological barriers also occur in baristas towards customers, such as a lack of confidence that they can work like ordinary people. However, the

café provides training for three months so that they can be confident and get used to working.

Communication behaviour that occurs at Café More Bandung is a café barista to customers when making transactions such as recommending menus that are widely purchased so that they can make changes in desire to try new things in this café. Baristas with low vision can also adapt to the environment of the world of work in general. They can work like normal baristas in general. There is no noticeable difference compared to normal baristas; they can perform their duties as baristas well. They can explain the menu well to visually impaired customers so that they can understand it. Although there is a difference in posture between customers and baristas, it is not a significant problem.

Conclusion

Verbal communication is carried out between blind, low-vision baristas and customers at Café More Bandung in communicating, namely. In this research, it produces repetition of sentences and is more effective in using spoken language compared to writing because the majority of supporting informants are normal customers. In explaining, a word must be spoken repeatedly and slowly to ensure customers understand the meaning of the menu to be ordered.

In nonverbal communication that occurs, namely a gesture or body movement and hand movements, such as using fingers to determine the amount of the order. Messages are delivered with head movements, such as nodding the head up and down to determine yes or no in the interaction process that occurs during ordering.

Communication barriers occur when employees re-explain what is meant; they must repeat the information and speak slowly because they, especially blind buyers, cannot see the menu and drinks clearly. So, it must be repeated and done slowly to be understood. The Barista of Low Vision Café More Bandung conducts two communications: verbal and nonverbal. Verbal communication consists of using sentences verbally and nonverbal communication using gestures and body movements.

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