

Dialogic Customer Communication on Instagram: Representing Relationships Building in Slow Bar Coffee Shops

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how dialogic customer communication is represented through Instagram content published by slow-bar coffee shops. Using qualitative content analysis, the study analyzes 100 Instagram posts uploaded by two prominent slow-bar coffee shops in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, namely @klinikkopi and @tadasih, between January 1, 2022, and September 30, 2024. The analysis identifies eight elements of dialogic customer communication: openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, equality, trustworthiness, benevolence, and commitment. The findings reveal that commitment, benevolence, and positiveness are the most prominent elements represented in the Instagram narratives. Analysis of netizens' comments further indicates that audiences positively interpret and appreciate these relational values. The findings suggest that Instagram functions not merely as a promotional platform but as a digital dialogic space through which emotional attachment and long-term customer relationships are cultivated. The study contributes to the development of dialogic customer communication by demonstrating the salience of commitment, benevolence, and positiveness in digital hospitality contexts. Furthermore, the findings suggest that benevolence, which has received limited attention in interpersonal communication literature, may serve as a complementary dimension to DeVito's interpersonal communication framework. Practically, the study highlights the importance of communicating relational values through digital platforms to strengthen customer relationships and foster loyalty.

Keyword: customer relationship management; dialogic communication; interpersonal communication; relationship marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Communication plays a central role in organizational efforts to build relationships, understand customers, and deliver optimal service. Prior studies consistently demonstrate that effective interpersonal communication positively influences customer satisfaction and loyalty (Saputra & Dari, 2022; Negassa & Japee, 2023). In business contexts, communication enables organizations to convey information, allows customers to express needs, and facilitates appropriate organizational responses (Zahra et al., 2022). Although technological advancements and digital platforms have transformed customer relationship management, relationship-oriented communication remains particularly important in service industries that rely heavily on

personal interaction. Previous studies have also demonstrated that communication quality in mediated environments plays an important role in building trust and preventing customer switching behavior, even when interactions occur without direct face-to-face contact (Kussusanti et al., 2022).

Frontline employees act as key relational agents in service encounters, as their communication encompasses all direct interactions with customers. Two-way dialogue allows organizations to obtain feedback, improve service quality, enhance customer satisfaction, and foster retention (Florea & Duica, 2017). This interactive approach aligns with dialogic communication theory, which conceptualizes communication as a mutual, respectful, and participatory process between organizations and stakeholders. Dialogic communication emphasizes equality, active listening, empathy, support, and commitment in building sustainable relationships (Jamil & Eriyanto, 2021; Serfontein-Jordaan & Bornman, 2022). Effective dialogue further requires emotional sensitivity and self-regulation (Nadeem & Seema, 2016), highlighting the importance of affective dimensions in organizational communication.

Dialogic communication has been shown to strengthen relationships by fostering credibility, empathy, interpersonal involvement, and customer satisfaction (Casais et al., 2024). Credibility, in particular, is developed through honesty, transparency, and empathy, qualities typically associated with authentic interpersonal relationships and increasingly expected in company-customer interactions (Peppers & Rogers, 2017). Dialogue emerges not merely through message transmission but through active listening, eye contact, and the creation of a comfortable communicative environment. While listening is a core aspect of customer relationship management, it must be accompanied by understanding customer expectations and delivering added value (Kotler et al., 2022).

Although interpersonal communication theory was originally developed to explain dyadic face-to-face interaction, scholars have increasingly recognized that relational values such as openness, empathy, supportiveness, and equality may also be represented through mediated communication. In this study, Instagram posts are not treated as interpersonal interactions themselves, but as digital narratives through which interpersonal values are communicated and interpreted by audiences. Therefore, dialogic communication theory provides the broader framework within which these relational values are represented and negotiated in online contexts.

Customer relationship management (CRM) further institutionalizes relationship-focused communication by emphasizing satisfaction, credibility, and commitment. CRM strategies include providing clear information, encouraging interaction, and tailoring responses based on customer data and engagement patterns (Peppers & Rogers, 2017). Empirical evidence confirms that CRM positively affects customer satisfaction (Puspitasari & Febrianti, 2024) and corporate image (Kamaludin et al., 2019). CRM is also embedded within relationship marketing, which prioritizes long-term customer retention and loyalty over short-term transactions (Payne & Frow, 2017; Suharto & Hoti, 2023). Communication functions as a core element of relationship marketing, extending beyond pricing strategies to include continuous, meaningful interaction with customers (Gummesson, 2017).

Within hospitality industries, including hotels, restaurants, and retail business, communication quality between service providers and customers is a critical determinant of satisfaction and loyalty. The coffee shop industry, in particular, is highly dependent on interpersonal communication, with previous studies showing that baristas' communicative attitudes influence customer loyalty (Kwamila & Haryanti, 2019). Coffee shops also employ communication strategies to highlight product uniqueness and brand values through both direct interaction and social media (Yuliansya & Arviani, 2023).

In Indonesia, the emergence of slow bar coffee shops represents a distinctive service model that emphasizes personalized experiences and deeper interaction between barista and customers. Unlike fast-service or self-service models, slow bars encourage customers to engage with baristas during the brewing process, creating opportunities for conversation, storytelling, and relational closeness (Ahmadi & Destiwati, 2019). This concept has become increasingly popular in several cities, particularly Yogyakarta, which is widely recognized as one of Indonesia's coffee destinations. Among the prominent examples are Klinik Kopi (@klinikkopi) and Tadasih

(@tadasih), both of which are known not only for their coffee products but also for their emphasis on customer experience and conversational culture.

Klinik Kopi, established in 2013, is widely recognized as one of the pioneers of the slow-bar coffee movement in Indonesia. Meanwhile, Tadasih, established in 2021, represents a newer generation of slow-bar coffee shops that adopts a similar emphasis on conversation, hospitality, and customer relationships. These two coffee shops were selected because they consistently communicate their values, customer experiences, and relational philosophy through Instagram content. While the number of slow-bar coffee shops in Indonesia remains relatively limited, few actively articulate and document their communication practices through social media. Therefore, Klinik Kopi and Tadasih provide information-rich cases for examining how dialogic customer communication is represented in digital environments.

As slow-bar coffee shops grow and attract broader audiences, maintaining relational intimacy becomes increasingly challenging. Personalized communication that naturally occurs within physical spaces cannot always be sustained when interactions extend beyond the coffee shop. Consequently, small-scale specialty coffee shops face the challenge of communicating relational values and preserving emotional connections through digital platforms, particularly Instagram.

As digital media become increasingly integrated into everyday communication, relationship-building practices are no longer limited to face-to-face encounters. Social media platforms, particularly Instagram, have evolved into spaces where businesses narrate their values, share experiences, and sustain relationships with their audiences. Through captions, stories, and audience comments, Instagram enables organizations to extend dialogic interaction beyond physical settings and create digital representations of customer relationships. In this sense, Instagram functions not merely as a promotional medium but also as a dialogic communication space where meanings, emotions, and relational values are constructed and negotiated.

Despite growing scholarly attention to interpersonal communication in service contexts, existing studies have mainly focused on product quality, customer satisfaction, marketing strategies, or the effectiveness of face-to-face interaction in coffee shops (Kwamila & Haryanti, 2019; Yuliansya & Arviani, 2023). Although social media has increasingly been used to facilitate relationship marketing and build customer bonding (Deviacita & Kussusanti, 2023), previous studies rarely examine how dialogic customer communication is represented through social media content and how digital narratives contribute to relationship building in experience-oriented businesses. Furthermore, the integration of interpersonal communication elements with relationship marketing and customer relationship management perspectives remains underexplored.

Addressing this gap, the present study positions Instagram as a digital representation of dialogic customer communication in slow bar coffee shops. Drawing on interpersonal communication theory, which includes openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality (DeVito, 2021), this study further incorporates trustworthiness and commitment as essential relational dimensions (Lee & Kim, 2021; Peppers & Rogers, 2017; Kotler et al., 2022). In addition, the study introduces benevolence as a complementary relational element that has received limited attention in interpersonal communication research. Although benevolence contributes to trustworthiness, integrity, and honesty (Kotler et al., 2022), it has been only briefly discussed in interpersonal communication literature (DeVito, 2021).

Empirically, this study analyzes 100 Instagram posts published by two prominent slow bar coffee shops in Yogyakarta, namely Klinik Kopi (@klinikkopi) and Tadasih (@tadasih), during the period from January 1, 2022, to September 30, 2024. In addition to captions, netizens' comments are examined to understand audience responses toward these representations of dialogic customer communication. The period from 2022 to 2024 represents an important phase in the development of Indonesia's post-pandemic coffee culture. During this period, slow-bar coffee shops increasingly utilized digital storytelling and social media engagement to maintain relationships with customers and communicate their distinctive values. As such, the selected period captures the emergence and consolidation of dialogic customer communication practices through Instagram, making it particularly suitable for examining how relational values are represented and communicated within the slow-bar business model.

Accordingly, the study addresses two questions: (1) How are elements of dialogic customer communication represented through Instagram content published by slow bar coffee shops? and (2) How do netizens respond to these representations of dialogic customer communication?

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative content analysis design, enabling in-depth interpretation of textual data. This approach emphasizes understanding the context and meaning embedded in texts, allowing for rich and contextual analysis. The analysis is conducted through a careful reading of texts to identify various dimensions of meaning and nuances contained within them. Researchers connect the data to recognized contexts and reformulate meanings based on those contexts. Context is crucial because every text carries meanings influenced by its use in specific social situations. Qualitative content analysis offers flexibility and depth to understand complex or subjective phenomena, such as emotions, stereotypes, or social meanings embedded in particular texts (Krippendorff, 2013).

One type of data that can be used in qualitative research is social media text (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Accordingly, this study focuses on Instagram content as a digital representation of dialogic customer communication in slow bar coffee shops. The objects of this research are the Instagram accounts of two prominent slow bar coffee shops in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, namely @klinikkopi, owned by Klinik Kopi, and @tadasih, owned by Tadasih coffee shop. These accounts are managed directly by the owners, who also serve as baristas, making Instagram an extension of their relationship-building practices and a space where they communicate values, experiences, and interactions with customers.

Data collection in this study began with online data searching (Bungin, 2017). Following content analysis procedures, the unit of analysis includes sampling units, context units, and recording units. The sampling units consist of 50 Instagram captions from @klinikkopi and 50 captions from @tadasih, published between January 1, 2022, and September 30, 2024, resulting in a total of 100 captions. This period represents the post-pandemic development phase of the Indonesian coffee industry, during which digital storytelling and social media engagement became increasingly important in maintaining relationships with customers. The context units refer to the situational meanings assigned by researchers to interpret the findings, whereas the recording units consist of eight elements of dialogic customer communication identified from interpersonal communication and relationship marketing literature: openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, equality, trustworthiness, benevolence, and commitment, as shown in Table 1. This table presents the operational definitions and coding criteria used to identify the representation of these eight dialogic communication elements within Instagram content.

Table 1
Definition of key construct

Construct	Definition	Coding criteria
Openness	Readiness to self-disclose and share pertinent personal information, as well as to listen attentively and respond sincerely.	Representation of openness toward customers reflected in Instagram content.
Empathy	Experiencing another individual's emotions from one's perspective while maintaining one's identity.	Representation of emotional understanding and sensitivity toward customer.
Supportiveness	Descriptive rather than evaluative conduct; tentative rather than dogmatic communication.	Representation of support and appreciation toward customers' attitudes, experiences, or opinions.
Positiveness	Affirmative attitudes and the conveyance of positive signals, such as friendliness, appreciation, and approval.	Representation of positive attitudes, and friendliness reflected in Instagram content.
Equality	An attitude that recognises each individual as a significant and valuable contributor to interaction.	Representation of treating customers equally and respectfully.

Trustworthiness	The extent to which someone is perceived as honest, dependable, and responsive to customer needs.	Representation of honesty, reliability and credibility.
Benevolence	The virtue characterised by the tendency to act for the benefit of others.	Representation of willingness to help and serve customers.
Commitment	Dedication and consistency in positioning service quality as a strategic priority.	Representation of dedication and consistency in providing the best customer experience.

Source: Compiled by researchers, 2024

To address the second research question, the researchers also analyzed purposively selected netizens' comments associated with the 100 Instagram posts. Comments containing expressions of appreciation, agreement, emotional attachment, or references to openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, equality, trustworthiness, benevolence, and commitment were included in the analysis. These comments were treated as supplementary textual data to provide insight into how audiences interpreted and responded to the relational values communicated through Instagram narratives.

The data analysis process was carried out through several stages (Creswell & Creswell, 2018): (1) organizing and preparing the data for analysis, (2) reading and reviewing all the data, (3) coding the data, (4) generating descriptions and categories, and (5) presenting and interpreting the findings. The coding process involved identifying and categorizing textual segments that represented the eight elements of dialogic customer communication derived from interpersonal communication and relationship marketing literature. These categories were then interpreted contextually to understand how relational values were represented through Instagram narratives. In line with qualitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2013), the analysis emphasized meanings embedded in the texts rather than numerical frequency alone. Therefore, the findings were interpreted to explain how slow-bar coffee shops construct and communicate dialogic customer communication through Instagram content.

To enrich the interpretation of textual findings, the researchers also conducted an interview with Firmansyah, the owner and barista of Klinik Kopi. The interview consisted of several unstructured and predominantly open-ended questions designed to explore his perspectives regarding customer relationships, communication values, and the meanings underlying the narratives shared through Instagram. Therefore, the interview data served as supplementary information to contextualize and support the interpretation of the content analysis findings rather than as the primary source of analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Instagram content published by slow-bar coffee shops portrays these establishments as spaces characterized by conversation, intimacy, comfort, and memorable experiences. Rather than functioning merely as promotional media, Instagram captions are used to narrate values and communicate how relationships with customers are understood and maintained. As illustrated by @klinik kopi (July 18, 2022):

"Some people came here one or two years ago. They returned just to reconnect and make sure we're doing well... Some people say, 'The place may change, but the soul of the shop remains the same. There's a warm conversation, a cheerful greeting, and a wish to meet again next year.'"

Interview data with Firmansyah further support this interpretation: 'What sets slow-bar coffee shops apart is the communication. Klinik Kopi builds strong relationships with its customers through intimate communication... The approach is more from the heart. People come here for inspiration and authentic conversations between barista and customer.' This aligns with Ferza Febrian of Tadasih, who argued that marketing should not merely focus on visibility, but on creating sustainable relationships with customers.

Audience responses found in Instagram comments further indicate that followers and customers appreciate these relational narratives. As shown in Table 2, netizens frequently associate slow-bar coffee shops with intimacy, warmth, conversation, and memorable experiences.

Table 2
Examples of Comments on Slow Bar Coffee Shops

Comment	Instagram
I am so happy with this kind of slow bar atmosphere. It feels more intimate and comfortable.	@tadasih, June 25, 2022
Happy to come back for coffee there. Coffee + apem + chatting is a sweet and complete combo.	@tadasih, July 9, 2022
So many stories are created in every cup of coffee served.	@klinikkopi, February 3, 2023
Memories are one of the best remedies for the soul. Moreover, they are often created from delightful conversations.	@klinikkopi, December 2, 2022
The place is cozy, the coffee tastes great, and the comfort of the service and ambiance make it even better. It doesn't feel like a customer-and-seller interaction; it feels more like hanging out with siblings and friends while joking around.	@klinikkopi, September 3, 2022
No matter how bitter the coffee, it's always enjoyable to chat with the barista. The magic lies in the communication.	@klinikkopi, March 4, 2022
Thank you for the knowledge and short conversation that afternoon, Bro. I was so happy to have the chance to try Atu Lintang. I wish you good health and hope to meet again at Tadasih.	@tadasih, February 7, 2023
Always intrigued by the bar counter talks and the different crowd each day.	@tadasih, December 25, 2022
What you are selling is not just coffee and cakes—we are buying the interaction and the experience.	@klinikkopi, June 16, 2024
You even made it to our "must visit" list in Jogja, Bro. It is for the warm coffee and the warm atmosphere at Bro Pepeng's place. Feels like a family gathering.	@klinikkopi, February 28, 2024

Source: Compiled by researchers, 2024

This study identifies eight elements of dialogic customer communication in the Instagram content of both accounts, with the distribution shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Distribution of Dialogic Customer Communication Elements (n=100)

No.	Element	@tadasih	@klinikkopi	Total (%)
1	Openness	1	5	6
2	Empathy	4	1	5
3	Supportiveness	1	2	3
4	Positiveness	15	7	22
5	Equality	2	5	7
6	Trustworthiness	2	3	5
7	Benevolence	11	12	23
8	Commitment	14	15	29
	Total	50	50	100

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2024

Openness—the willingness to share experiences, values, and information transparently—appears in 6% of the analyzed content. @klinikkopi (June 14, 2022) exemplifies this: “Our manual brew business is simple, straightforward, and easy to adopt. We are delighted and open to such things if somebody comes to us for research or a comparative study.” Another post (July 7, 2022) reinforces this:

“For us, coffee is a bonding tool, not a subject for debate. Whether the filter paper is rinsed or not, whether a scale is used, these debates can turn into lengthy discussions, even disputes. It is not about the brewing method but how we build two-way communication. Our customers should feel comfortable enjoying their coffee; we explain things very simply.”



Figure 1. Representation of openness in dialogic customer communication

These narratives represent openness as a relational value underlying dialogic communication, portraying coffee as a medium for building connections rather than asserting technical superiority. These findings support DeVito's (2021) proposition that openness facilitates self-disclosure and reciprocal understanding, and extend that concept to digital narrative contexts aligned with dialogic communication theory's emphasis on transparency and mutuality.

Empathy, which refers to the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, is represented in 5% of the Instagram content analyzed in this study. An example can be found in an Instagram post published by @tadasih on February 6, 2023, as shown in Figure 2, which contains the following narrative:

"One day, the couple came to the shop. They asked me to take their picture... hearing that someone met their soulmate at Tadasih brings a whole new level of joy and happiness. When good people meet in a good place, their relationship will constantly improve. To all our guests, may kindness always spread here at Tadasih."



Figure 2. Representation of empathy in dialogic customer communication

These narratives represent empathy through emotional involvement and appreciation for customers' personal experiences. The findings support DeVito's (2021) view that empathy is essential to effective interpersonal communication, and resonate with dialogic communication theory's emphasis on responsiveness and mutual understanding (Lane, 2020). Such emotional

responsiveness is also a key element of CRM, as perceived empathy strengthens customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Supportiveness is the least frequently represented element of dialogic customer communication, appearing in only 3% of the Instagram content analyzed in this study. Supportiveness refers to expressions that encourage, appreciate, and validate others' experiences, attitudes, and opinions. An example can be found in an Instagram post published by @tadasih on November 18, 2022, as shown in Figure 3, with the following caption excerpt:

"I always respond to conversations with enthusiasm and shared happiness... We must understand that we can make others happy simply by listening and appreciating the joyful stories they share... The art of communication is about speaking well, listening attentively, and controlling our egos."



Figure 3. Representation of supportiveness in dialogic customer communication

These narratives represent supportiveness through messages emphasizing appreciation, active listening, and emotional validation. The findings are consistent with DeVito's (2021) proposition that supportiveness creates a non-defensive communication climate. They also resonate with dialogic communication theory's emphasis on active listening and mutual understanding (Lane, 2020), as well as CRM principles highlighting the importance of attentiveness and meaningful interaction (Peppers & Rogers, 2017).

Positiveness is the third most frequently represented element of dialogic customer communication, appearing in 22% of the Instagram content analyzed in this study. Positiveness refers to the expression of positive attitudes and messages that convey friendliness, warmth, and appreciation. One example of this element is represented in an Instagram post published by @tadasih on August 2, 2022, as shown in Figure 4, with the following excerpt:

"A slow bar is not a formal, rigid, or distant stage. Just like an open bar, a small street food stall, or a local eatery. Simple, flexible, fluid, and relaxed. Just take it easy, treat guests as you would welcome visitors into your home. Greet them warmly and serve them appropriately. A slow bar should always remain humble, equal, and down-to-earth."



Figure 4. Representation of positiveness in dialogic customer communication

These narratives represent positiveness through warmth, humility, and approachability. The findings are consistent with DeVito's (2021) proposition that positive attitudes encourage acceptance and relational satisfaction. From the perspective of Customer-Dominant Logic, emotional warmth becomes part of the value that customers construct in their interactions with the brand (Strandvik & Heinonen, 2015). Consequently, positiveness functions as a strategic relational resource that enhances emotional attachment and supports long-term customer relationships.

The next element represented in the Instagram content of slow-bar coffee shops is equality. The findings indicate that equality appears in 7% of the analyzed content. In the context of dialogic customer communication, equality refers to the representation of customers as valued partners and to the emphasis on mutual respect without hierarchy or condescension. An example can be found in an Instagram post published by @tadasih on February 5, 2023, as shown in Figure 5, with the following excerpt:

"Being a friendly neighbourhood coffee shop is not just a slogan. It is the essence of how this shop positions itself. We do not seek the spotlight or strive for prestige. Instead, we want to remain on the same level, equal with our guests."



Figure 5. Representation of equality in dialogic customer communication

Another post (September 14, 2022) elaborates: "I chose to place myself on equal footing with the guests, even those who are not yet familiar with coffee... On the other hand, when hosting coffee enthusiasts, I'm flexible enough to become a discussion partner for more in-depth technical conversations."

These narratives represent equality through non-hierarchical relationships in which customers are valued conversational partners regardless of their coffee knowledge. The findings support DeVito's (2021) proposition that equality encourages mutual respect and minimizes relational distance. From the perspective of Customer-Dominant Logic, equality allows customers to become active participants in value creation (Strandvik & Heinonen, 2015), thereby strengthening emotional attachment and contributing to long-term relationships.

The findings of this study indicate that trustworthiness is represented in 5% of the Instagram content analyzed. In the context of dialogic customer communication, trustworthiness refers to the representation of honesty, reliability, and the continuous effort to maintain customers' confidence. An example of this element can be found in an Instagram post published by @klinikkopi on September 13, 2024, as shown in Figure 6, with the following excerpt:

"Maintaining trustworthiness is one of the most challenging things. What does it mean? To protect, nurture, and sustain... Running a business is, at its core, about earning trustworthiness and knowing how to sustain it."



Figure 6. Representation of trustworthiness in dialogic customer communication

A @tadasih post further emphasizes that trust is granted through customers' decision to visit and must be reciprocated through a continuous commitment to quality. These narratives represent trustworthiness as a relational asset requiring constant nurturing rather than a static outcome. The findings support DeVito's (2021) proposition that trust facilitates openness and reduces uncertainty. They also align with Yustikasari et al.'s (2025) argument that trustworthiness emerges from empathetic and supportive communication. From a CRM and relationship marketing perspective, trust reduces uncertainty and encourages customer loyalty (Payne & Frow, 2017; Peppers & Rogers, 2017).

The second most frequently represented element of dialogic customer communication is benevolence, appearing in 23% of the Instagram content analyzed in this study. Benevolence refers to the willingness to help others and to act in ways that promote their well-being. Within service contexts, benevolence is represented through narratives emphasizing attentiveness, care, and a genuine orientation toward serving customers. One example can be found in an Instagram post published by @klinikkopi on May 18, 2023, as shown in Figure 7, with the following excerpt:

“Most importantly, we must have a spirit of service, just like a preacher must be ready to speak in public. We must also be prepared for various customer requests because brewing is just a small part of serving. We are the service providers.”



Figure 7. Representation of benevolence in dialogic customer communication

Another post (March 2, 2024) reinforces: “I never get tired of serving. The frontline of a small, home-style coffee shop like this is service... If we serve wholeheartedly, it will be felt by the customers—deep in their hearts as well.” @tadasih similarly recounts how the owner fulfilled a customer's personal request to send a cake via courier so she could share the experience with her husband.

These narratives represent benevolence through sincerity, hospitality, and a strong service orientation extending beyond product preparation to respond to personal customer needs. The findings support DeVito's (2021) proposition that effective communication requires attitudes characterized by concern for others. Benevolence reinforces the dialogic principle that relationships are sustained through genuine responsiveness (Lane, 2020). From a CRM perspective, customers develop stronger loyalty when they perceive genuine care for their well-being (Payne & Frow, 2017; Peppers & Rogers, 2017).

Interestingly, benevolence emerged as the second most prominent element. Although it has received limited attention in interpersonal communication literature, its prominence suggests that it deserves greater theoretical consideration as a complementary dimension to DeVito's (2021) interpersonal communication framework, particularly in hospitality and experience-oriented service settings.

Commitment is the most frequently represented element of dialogic customer communication, accounting for 29% of the Instagram content analyzed in this study. Commitment refers to the representation of dedication, responsibility, and consistency in maintaining service quality and customer relationships over time. One example of this element can be found in an Instagram post published by @klinikkopi on September 23, 2024, as shown in Figure 8, with the following excerpt:

“Beyond passion, commitment emerges. Commitment means having a sense of responsibility for what you have chosen. Business is not a game but must be taken seriously. From commitment comes consistency... It does not happen in just one or two years, but takes time. Love what you do, stay committed, be consistent, and let a strong identity form over time.”



Figure 8. Representation of commitment in dialogic customer communication

Another post (April 30, 2022) summarizes: "Serving is an art. Serving is a commitment. Serving is the soul of the business we pursue." These narratives represent commitment as a long-term relational value rooted in passion, responsibility, and consistency that gradually shapes organizational identity. The findings support DeVito's (2021) proposition that effective communication is sustained by continuity and relational maintenance. They strongly resonate with dialogic communication theory, which identifies commitment as a foundational principle of sustainable relationships (Lane, 2020). From a CRM and relationship marketing perspective, commitment encourages trust and loyalty (Payne & Frow, 2017). Customer-Dominant Logic further suggests that customers construct value through accumulated experiences and relational continuity (Strandvik & Heinonen, 2015).

Commitment's dominance indicates that relationship-building in slow-bar coffee shops is characterized primarily by continuity and dedication rather than mere self-disclosure. Together with benevolence and positiveness, it forms the core of dialogic customer communication in digital hospitality contexts.

Audience responses toward the representations of dialogic customer communication were generally positive. These responses can be observed in the comments posted by netizens on the Instagram accounts of both coffee shops. The comments indicate that audiences not only engage with the narratives shared by the coffee shops but also appreciate the relational values communicated through the content. Several examples of these comments are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Netizens' Responses to Representations of Dialogic Customer Communication

Element	Representative Comment
Openness	• Yes, that's right. I agree. Very true, bro... In Islam, even debating is discouraged, even if we are in the right (@tadasih, September 29, 2022). • Thank you for always being willing to share (@klinikkopi, August 29, 2024). • Always keep an open mind to the flavor characteristics of the brewed coffee, and don't be afraid to express what you feel from the coffee you taste (@klinikkopi, August 19, 2024).
Empathy	• We completely agree. Many of us, intentionally or not, ask very private questions, what begins as light conversation can turn into something uncomfortable. Hopefully, we can be more discerning in our communication, because closeness doesn't have to come through small talk that might end up hurting someone (@tadasih, March 26, 2023).

Supportiveness	• Always calm when reading the caption, an enlightening story. Thank you for reminding us of the art of speaking (@tadasih, November 18, 2022). • The slow bar concept is actually the concept of a traditional Indonesian coffee shop because it's interactive, and customers are treated like friends. (@klinikkopi, January 25, 2024)
Positiveness	• An important lesson about etiquette in speaking to others (@tadasih, November 18, 2022). • What matters is that it always feels warm (@tadasih, August 2, 2022). • This guy is really humble, uncle (@klinikkopi, May 15, 2024).
Equality	• Equal and down to earth (@tadasih, August 2, 2022). • Flexible in understanding conversation partners. That is rarely found in baristas from the TikTok and slot machine generation. Yes, I share the same pattern for building communication with guests. Awesome, wishing you continued success and good health (@tadasih, September 14, 2022).
Trustworthiness	• Totally agree. A good reputation is built through good treatment. Trustworthiness is the most valuable asset. Do business as a path of piety, not merely as a way to seek wealth (@klinikkopi, January 16, 2024).
Benevolence	• It was my first time here yesterday, but the hospitality was excellent (@klinikkopi, June 16, 2024). • In the slow bar concept, hospitality truly plays a crucial role, aside from the coffee needing to be high-quality. The hospitality from the 'owner' makes customers feel like they are at home (@klinikkopi, January 18, 2024).
Commitment	• Because you work with heart, I, as a customer, always feel pampered with coffee that consistently brings us joy and happiness every time we enjoy it. Wishing you health and happiness always (@tadasih, February 1, 2023), • Cooool, one hundred percent true (@klinikkopi, September 23, 2024).

Source: Data processed by researchers, 2024

These audience responses demonstrate that Instagram functions not only as a dissemination medium but as a dialogic space where relational meanings are interpreted, reinforced, and shared. The strongly positive reception of commitment, benevolence, and positiveness further validates these as the most resonant relational values in the slow-bar digital communication landscape.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Instagram functions not merely as a promotional platform but as a digital space through which slow-bar coffee shops represent and extend dialogic customer communication. Through the analysis of 100 Instagram posts published by @klinikkopi and @tadasih, the study identifies eight elements of dialogic customer communication, namely openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, equality, trustworthiness, benevolence, and commitment. Audience responses reflected in netizens' comments further indicate that these relational values are positively interpreted and appreciated.

The findings reveal that commitment, benevolence, and positiveness are the most prominent elements represented in the Instagram narratives of both coffee shops. This suggests that relationship-building communication in digital hospitality contexts emphasizes long-term dedication, service orientation, and emotional warmth rather than merely self-disclosure or emotional understanding. These findings reinforce the importance of dialogic communication in cultivating emotional attachment and sustaining long-term customer relationships.

The study also contributes theoretically by demonstrating that Instagram can function as a digital dialogic space and by highlighting benevolence as an important relational value that deserves greater attention in interpersonal communication research. While benevolence has traditionally been associated with customer relationship management and relationship marketing literature, the findings suggest that it may serve as a complementary dimension to DeVito's interpersonal communication framework, particularly in hospitality and experience-oriented service settings.

Practically, the findings suggest that hospitality businesses may benefit from communicating relational values consistently through digital platforms. Beyond providing information about

products, social media content can be utilized to communicate commitment, hospitality, and emotional warmth in ways that strengthen customer relationships and foster loyalty.

This study is limited to Instagram content published by two slow-bar coffee shops in Yogyakarta and therefore does not capture actual face-to-face interactions between baristas and customers. Future studies may combine digital content analysis with observations or interviews involving customers and baristas to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of dialogic customer communication in hospitality settings.

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