

## INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF GRAB DRIVERS IN ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS

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### *Abstract*

This study aims to analyze the communication strategies used by Grab drivers interpersonally in an effort to attract customers. In the era of technology and app-based transportation services such as Grab, communication between drivers and customers plays an important role in influencing customer experience and business success. This research uses a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews with a number of Grab drivers. The results of this study reveal several communication strategies commonly used by Grab drivers. First, the strategy of building rapport through casual and friendly conversations. Such interpersonal closeness can create a sense of trust and comfort for customers. Second, the strategy of customizing communication styles based on customer preferences. Some customers may prefer lively conversations, while others may prefer quieter conversations. Third, the strategy of presenting local information and recommendations to customers. Drivers who have knowledge of interesting places around the city can provide added value to customers by sharing this information.

*Keywords: Communication Strategy, Grab Driver, Interpersonal, Customer*

### INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and the development of information technology, the transportation sector has undergone a significant transformation. App-based services such as Grab have changed the traditional paradigm of transportation, providing efficient and convenient solutions for people's mobility. In this ecosystem, the role of communication between Grab drivers and customers is crucial. Effective interpersonal communication can shape positive perceptions, improve customer experience, and ultimately, contribute to business success.

This research will explore the communication strategies applied by Grab drivers in interacting with customers. Indonesia was chosen as the research context because as a country with rapid economic growth and high mobility, competition in the transportation service industry is intense. In the face of these dynamics, drivers need to adopt appropriate communication strategies to attract and retain customers.

The focus of this research is on interpersonal communication, which is the face-to-face interaction between drivers and customers. In the context of transportation services,

emotional and personalization factors greatly influence customers' perception of the service. Therefore, it is important to identify communication strategies that can enhance interpersonal interactions between drivers and customers.

Through this research, it is expected to reveal the various communication strategies used by Grab drivers. The results of this study can provide better insight into how drivers can improve the quality of their communication with customers, understand customer preferences, and provide a more positive experience. In addition, this study can also provide practical contributions for drivers, the Grab platform, and the transportation industry in general in developing more effective communication strategies that satisfy customers.

Through this research, it is expected to find interesting patterns and findings about Grab drivers' interpersonal communication practices. The results will provide practical guidance for Grab drivers to understand the importance of effective communication in improving customer experience. In addition, this study can also provide valuable insights for Grab company and the transportation industry as a whole in developing better communication training and guidelines for drivers.

This study focuses on customer perceptions of interactions with Grab drivers and does not involve the perspective of the drivers themselves. However, it is hoped that the results of this study can make a positive contribution to understanding Grab drivers' interpersonal communication strategies and their implications for attracting customers in the context of increasingly competitive transportation services.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

A qualitative approach is a research approach that aims to understand the meanings, interpretations, and experiences lived by individuals or groups in a particular context. The qualitative approach was used to gain in-depth insights into how drivers design and implement their communication in their daily interactions with customers. The following are the main steps that can be outlined in applying the qualitative approach in this study.

**Qualitative Research Design:** This research will use a qualitative research design with a focus on collecting diverse and context-rich data. This approach allows the researcher to explore the deeper perspectives and experiences of the participants.

**Participant Selection:** Research participants will be purposively selected based on certain criteria, such as length of experience as a driver, level of success in attracting customers, and geographical variation (e.g., different cities). The purpose of this selection is to obtain diverse views on the communication strategies implemented.

**Data Collection:** The main method of data collection that will be used is in-depth interviews. Interviews will be conducted with Grab drivers face-to-face or through online platforms, depending on the availability and preference of the participants. Interviews will be conducted in the form of open-ended questions that allow drivers to speak freely about their communication strategies, experiences interacting with customers, and the challenges they face.

**Data Analysis:** The data collected from the interviews will be analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. This analysis involves steps such as coding, identifying key themes, searching for patterns in the data, and developing in-depth interpretations. The results of the analysis will help identify the most common communication strategies used by Grab drivers.

**Ethical Considerations:** Ethical considerations are very important in qualitative research. Protection of participants' privacy, anonymity and rights must be guaranteed. Participants must provide written consent before being involved in the research, and the information provided must be kept confidential.

**Reliability and Validity:** To ensure the reliability and validity of the research, concepts such as triangulation (using multiple methods or data sources), researcher reflectivity (recognition of the researcher's personal influence), and theory testing will be applied.

The qualitative approach in this study will provide in-depth insights into Grab drivers' interpersonal communication strategies in attracting customers. By focusing on participants' experiences and views, this research will provide a more comprehensive understanding of communication dynamics in app-based transportation services.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Results**

In the context of globalization and shifting consumer behavior, Grab drivers' interpersonal communication strategies are not only concerned with creating positive customer experiences, but also have broader implications. Effectively, drivers'

interactions with customers can shape a strong brand image and support the company's marketing efforts. Customers who feel valued and receive personalized attention are more likely to speak well of the service to others, creating a viral effect that can positively impact business growth.

In addition, a successful interpersonal communication strategy can also create a sense of customer ownership and affiliation with the Grab brand. Customers who feel cared for and valued by drivers tend to feel more attached to the service. This can form deeper customer loyalty, which in turn can reduce customer turnover rates and increase the company's long-term revenue.

Not only that, in an era where many human interactions are shifting to the digital world, positive interpersonal experiences can provide valuable added value. Customers may be more inclined to choose services that provide a humanized and personalized experience, as opposed to fully autonomous interactions. Grab drivers therefore have an important role to play in bridging the gap between technology and deeper social interactions.

In an increasingly connected and competitive world, Grab drivers' interpersonal communication strategies can be considered as the key to success in creating positive differentiation among other app-based transportation services. By paying special attention to the customer experience, drivers have the opportunity to become living brand ambassadors, creating positive stories that spread widely among the user community.

Furthermore, using technology as a tool to integrate communication strategies can yield even greater benefits. The use of notifications or in-app messages to provide information about the ride, offer recommendations, or ask questions before the ride can deepen the interaction and create a memorable personal impression.

By practicing effective interpersonal communication strategies, Grab drivers are not only drivers who take customers to their destinations, but also carriers of meaningful experiences. With every interaction, they can shape customers' opinions about the service, build stronger relationships, and positively impact the Grab ecosystem as a whole.

Finally, Grab drivers' interpersonal communication strategy is an important foundation in facing the dynamic challenges in the modern transportation industry. By

maintaining strong human relationships and providing memorable experiences, drivers play a central role in strengthening Grab's user network and making it the first choice amidst increasingly fierce competition.

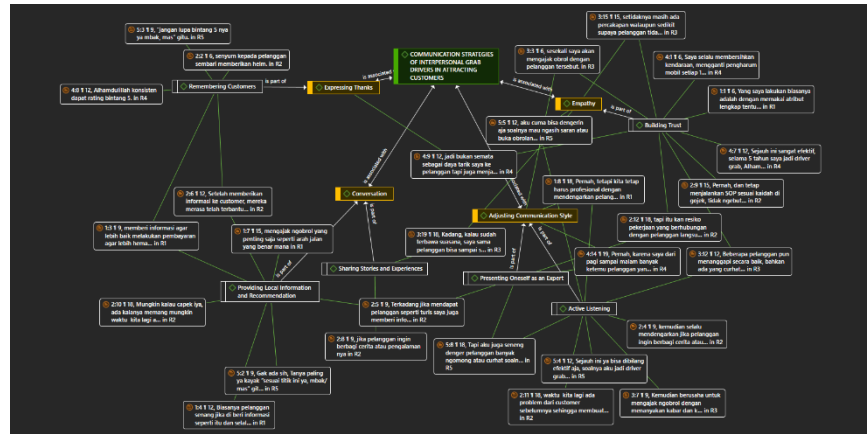


Figure 1.

## Discussion

The article discusses the interpersonal communication strategies employed by Grab drivers to attract customers, aiming to create positive interactions, build good relationships, and provide a satisfying experience for passengers. Here are some strategies that drivers can apply to enhance their appeal to customers:

1. **Friendly and Polite Conversations:** Initiating conversations with friendly and polite greetings is the first step in creating a comfortable atmosphere. Using words like "good morning," "thank you," and "please have a comfortable seat" can leave a positive impression on passengers.
2. **Active Listening:** Actively listening is key to understanding customers' preferences and needs. Ask about their travel goals, whether they have specific preferences, or if there's anything special they'd like to discuss. This creates a more personal and relevant interaction.
3. **Adjusting Communication Styles:** Every customer has a different communication style. Some may want to talk a lot, while others prefer a quiet ride. Drivers need to understand and adapt their communication style to match customers' preferences to create an enjoyable experience.
4. **Providing Local Information and Recommendations:** Drivers with knowledge of interesting places around the city can offer information and recommendations to

passengers. Giving tips about tourist attractions, restaurants, or local events can provide significant added value.

5. **Building Trust:** Building trust is key in interpersonal interactions. Drivers should demonstrate professionalism, trustworthiness, and openness in their conversations. This can help create a strong sense of trust between the driver and the customer.
6. **Presenting Themselves as Experts:** Drivers can offer practical information about the fastest routes, alternative roads, or tricks to avoid traffic jams. This can help passengers feel that the driver is a reliable navigation expert.
7. **Sharing Stories and Experiences:** Sharing light stories or personal experiences within appropriate boundaries can create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. However, it's important to avoid sensitive or controversial topics.
8. **Addressing Complaints or Issues with Empathy:** When passengers have complaints or issues, drivers can respond with empathy and concern. Listening to complaints seriously, acknowledging the problem, and seeking satisfactory solutions can enhance customer satisfaction.
9. **Thanking and Saying Goodbye:** After the journey, drivers can express gratitude to customers for choosing Grab's services. A friendly and sincere farewell leaves a positive final impression.
10. **Remembering Customers:** If possible, trying to remember repeat customers can provide a personal and special touch. This can make customers feel appreciated and more likely to use the service again.

Additionally, technological advancements offer new opportunities to enhance communication strategies. In-app messaging features or travel notifications via text messages can serve as additional communication channels between drivers and customers. These can be used to provide additional information, inquire about customer preferences before the journey, or even send thank-you messages after the trip.

It's important to always remember that each customer is unique. Effective communication strategies are those that can flexibly adapt to customers' characteristics and preferences. Drivers need to continuously read the situation, show empathy, and genuinely interact to make their interpersonal interactions an effective tool in achieving customer attraction and retention in this increasingly competitive industry.

In developing interpersonal communication strategies, Grab drivers can also leverage feedback from customers. Feedback provided by customers after a trip can offer valuable insights into how they felt about the interaction with the driver. By paying attention to positive and constructive feedback, drivers can continually improve the quality of their interactions and adapt their communication strategies to be more effective.

Equally important, effective communication strategies should align with the integrity and ethics of the profession. Drivers should maintain professionalism, avoid inappropriate or controversial comments, and maintain appropriate boundaries in their interactions with customers.

In the face of technological advancements and fierce competition in the app-based transportation service industry, effective interpersonal communication strategies can be a significant differentiator. Grab drivers who can wisely and consistently apply these strategies will have a better chance of retaining and growing a loyal customer base and making a positive impact on Grab's overall service image.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the era of advanced app-based transportation, Grab drivers' interpersonal communication strategies play a crucial role in attracting customers. The strategy of building rapport through casual and friendly conversations turns out to be an effective approach in creating emotional bonds with customers. Drivers who are able to adapt their communication style to customers' preferences also succeed in creating a more personalized and positive experience. In addition, providing local information and recommendations to customers proved a significant value-add in improving customer perceptions of the drivers and the service as a whole.

The implications of these findings are highly relevant in the context of transportation businesses and services. Drivers need to recognize the importance of positive interactions, emotional intelligence, and responsiveness to customer preferences. By implementing good communication strategies, drivers can create memorable experiences and build customer loyalty. This also contributes significantly to the growth of their business and the Grab ecosystem as a whole. Implementing this communication strategy also has its challenges. Different languages, complex traffic situations, and variations in customer preferences can be obstacles that need to be

overcome. Therefore, the recommendation to provide effective communication training for drivers and the development of practical guidelines for interacting with customers are important.

In conclusion, Grab drivers' interpersonal communication strategies have a significant impact in attracting customers. Through good rapport, customizing communication styles, and providing useful information, drivers can create a positive experience for customers. By improving the quality of these interactions, drivers can not only win customers, but also build a strong foundation for long-term success in this competitive transportation service industry.

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