

EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE, REFLECTION OF MANAGEMENT: KEY FACTORS OF COMMUNICATION IN COMMERCE

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Abstract

This paper studies the attitude of employees as a reflection of management and reveals how it influences the quality of communication in trade. The analysis carried out starts from the premise that the interaction between the customer and the employee is not only an operational dimension of services, but an expression of the organisational culture and managerial policies. The research results highlight the fact that many of the problems reported by customers cannot be explained exclusively by the lack of individual training, but reflect systemic deficiencies: insufficient training, lack of motivation or the absence of a clear orientation towards the customer, aspects directly influenced by managerial decisions. The attitudes shown by employees – willingness to help, empathy, way of expression or, on the contrary, apathy and lack of interest – become indicators of the way in which the organisation treats its human resources and defines its strategy for relating to the market. In this sense, effective communication with the customer is more than a simple interpersonal act; it constitutes a strategic competitive advantage, difficult for the competition to replicate. The central conclusion emphasizes that the success of commercial organisations depends on management's ability to promote a customer-oriented culture and transform employee attitudes into a vector of organisational values.

Keywords : *employees, management, commercial communication, organisational culture, customer satisfaction*

1. Introduction

In the current context of the commercial market, characterised by fierce competition and increasingly high expectations from consumers, effective communication between employees and customers becomes a factor that can greatly influence the success or failure of organisations. In this context, not only the quality of the products or services offered matters, but also the way in which employees interact with customers, responding to their needs and requests. Thus, the way in which an employee communicates and interacts with a customer can refer to the organisational culture found within the respective organisation.

Both theory and practice in the field demonstrate that, in any organisation, communication is a fundamental pillar of any commercial activity, being an essential component of the consumer experience, respectively of their satisfaction, especially in the conditions in which, as authors in the specialized literature mention, customers are transformed into "value creators" at the level of an organisation (Chen, Li, 2021). The communication that takes place between the customer and the employee, as a representative of an organisation, does not only involve an exchange of information, but represents a much more complex interaction, which involves mutual understanding, language adaptation, empathy (Wieseke et al, 2012), as well as the ability to manage conflict or uncertainty situations. Andelic et al (2025) state that the two major elements of successful communication are exchange and understanding. This interaction is, in many ways, a product of the managerial environment that shapes employee behaviour through policies, training (Anwar et al, 2021) and leadership styles, the lack of empathy can generate, as Bahadur et al (2018) mentions, a lack of customer satisfaction. As Giancaspro et al (2022) note, the way employees perceive the strategies applied at the organisational level subsequently to a high extent determines their behaviour, their role being an essential one in attracting customers, respectively influencing them (Hussein et al, 2023).

2. Theoretical background

Management plays an essential role in creating and supporting an organisational climate that favours quality communication. Through selective recruitment, continuous training, motivation and performance evaluation of employees, management influences the way in which they exercise their role in the relationship with the customer. Thus, the quality of communication can be seen as an indirect indicator of the effectiveness of the organisation's management.

In the commercial sector, where direct interaction between employee and customer is a defining factor for success, the efficiency of the communication process influences not only customer satisfaction, but also organisational performance, by building consumer loyalty and increasing sales. The consumer experience, as noted by Rahardja et al (2021) is directly related to the multiple, "sensory, emotional and cognitive" impact of the process. Homburg et al (2009) even consider that there are two objectives in terms of interaction with customers: on the one hand, "satisfying their needs", but also "trying to increase immediate sales". But, at the same time, difficulties and barriers in communication may arise, which can lead to dissatisfaction, conflicts and financial losses, generating a clear need to identify the factors that determine poor communication, but also those that can contribute to its improvement.

Communication difficulties in the commercial field are often generated by the lack of adequate training of employees, by psychological or organisational barriers, but also by the adopted management styles. Thus, an authoritarian or disinterested management can generate a defensive attitude among employees, limiting their ability to respond effectively to customer needs, while a management oriented towards employee development and the cultivation of an open organisational culture (Kim, Jung, 2022) favours transparent and empathetic communication, which become key elements in the relationship with customers. However, the literature in the field offers us an interesting perspective regarding the importance of the idea of empathy, also introducing the idea of "consumer empathy" (Wieseke et al, 2012), considering it "the ability to adapt to the employee's perspective and react accordingly".

The main objective of this article is to analyse how human resource management influences communication between employees and customers in the commercial field, identifying the factors that shape this relationship and providing recommendations for improving the communication process. The study also aims to highlight the importance of continuous professional training (Alabi et al, 2024), language adaptability and managerial strategies that support a climate favourable to communication. Meirinhos et al (2023) on the other hand, consider communication to be a leadership tool.

Next, we shall explore both the theoretical aspects of communication in commerce and the role of HRM in this process, as well as relevant empirical data that support the need for effective managerial interventions. Emphasis will be placed on identifying common communication barriers and their impact on the customer experience, underlining the importance of a coherent and customer-oriented management strategy. This approach is necessary to better understand the complex relationship between employee and customer and to develop management models that support organisational performance through optimal communication. In a world where consumers are increasingly informed and critical, the ability of organisations to ensure clear, empathetic and tailored communication to individual needs becomes an essential competitive advantage.

In addition to aspects related to professional training (Sugianto, Suhardi, 2025), another determining factor for the success of communication between employees and customers is the managerial style and the support provided by the organisation's management, among the consequences of good communication being an increase in the level of satisfaction, an increase in the level of performance and productivity, but also that of dedication to the organisation (Almonaitiene, Zukauskas, 2015). Leadership also plays a central role in shaping employee behaviour and in creating an environment in which open and adaptable communication can flourish.

Studies have shown that participative and transformative leadership styles, which involve employees in decision-making and support their development, favour more effective communication and greater satisfaction among both employees and customers. In contrast, an authoritarian or rigid style risk to lead to a lack of motivation, defensive communication and the emergence of psychological barriers between employee and customer, which can negatively affect commercial results. Thus, management should not be viewed as a simple leadership structure, but as a shaping factor of the entire communication and relationship process within the organisation.

An essential element in the process of effective communication is also the ability of employees to adapt to different types of customers and situations. Language adaptability and communication flexibility are indispensable characteristics to respond to the diversity of consumer needs and expectations. However, these skills do not appear spontaneously, but are the result of a learning and training process, but also of an organisational culture that encourages openness and empathy. Bahadur et al (2018) suggest a model through which employee empathy can lead to an increase in customer attachment, respectively loyalty, which over time can generate a high level of customer loyalty.

In addition to these interpersonal skills, employees must understand and effectively manage communication barriers that may arise, such as lack of trust, difficulties in expression, emotional state or cultural differences. These barriers can create dysfunctions in the communication process and generate conflicts or misunderstandings, affecting both customer satisfaction and the employee's work atmosphere.

From a human resources management perspective, it is important for organisations to develop training programs dedicated to communication and conflict management skills, to promote an organisational climate that supports dialogue and constructive feedback, and to implement motivation policies that stimulate employees to be proactive and customer-oriented. Cho and Choi (2021) identify a link between the level of employee satisfaction and the level of dedication to the customer, the loyalty of the latter being also a consequence of the marketing mix (Metz et al, 2020). Through these measures, management can contribute to increasing the quality of the employee-customer relationship and, implicitly, to the overall performance of the organisation, there being a reciprocity relationship between what an organisation member offers to the customer and what he receives in return (Mathe et al, 2016).

It is also important to mention the idea that effective communication between employees and customers has a direct impact on the image and reputation of the organisation in the market. Positive customer experiences, based on both tangible and intangible elements (Kim, Baker, 2019), can be generated by clear and empathetic communication, leading to customer loyalty and positive recommendations, which may have a multiplier effect on the business. We can even talk about a "voice of the customer" (Chen, Li, 2021), which can even turn into a proof of loyalty to the organisation. The literature (Qi et al, 2023) recalls the importance of both employee loyalty (Alabi et al) and customer loyalty, identifying a positive association between the two, effective communication, respectively the ability to actively listen, can be shown to be vital (Tarannum et al, 2025). Therefore, investment in the development of communication skills and in human resource management should not be seen only as an operational expense, but as a long-term strategy for strengthening the market position. Zhu et al (2022) also speak of an "employee voice" that can contribute to the success of the organisation and which, at the same time, can prove to be an essential element for human resource management (Paulet et al, 2021).

Furthermore, the analysis of the literature highlights a series of indicators that can be used to evaluate the efficiency of communication in the customer-employee relationship, such as the level of customer satisfaction, the time to resolve problems, the frequency of communication barriers and the perceived degree of professionalism of employees. These indicators can be used as a basis for developing management strategies adapted to the needs of the organisation and for the constant monitoring of communication performances.

Communication between employee and customer is therefore an essential component of the commercial process, and management has a key role in creating the conditions to ensure its efficiency. Through a well-defined strategy, oriented towards employee development, adaptation to customer needs and effective management of communication barriers, commercial organisations can gain significant competitive advantages and ensure a sustainable path in the market.

In the context of the research presented, we aim to analyse these relationships and identify the specific factors influencing the efficiency of the customer-employee communication process in the commercial field. This approach will bring added value from both a theoretical and a practical perspective, by offering useful recommendations for human resource management in SMEs.

3. Research methodology

In order to analyse the customer-employee relationship from the viewpoint of the communication process efficiency, we conducted a questionnaire-based study, collecting information considered essential from a sample of respondents. The data collection method involved applying a questionnaire elaborated in Google forms, in the period October - November 2025, on a sample of 100 people.

The socio-demographic structure of the analysed sample reveals a significant diversity of respondents, which provides consistency and relevance to the results obtained. In terms of gender distribution, the sample is characterized by a slight predominance of females (57%) compared to males (43%). The analysis of the structure by age group highlights the fact that the largest segment of respondents is represented by people aged between 35 and 45 (38%), followed by the 25–35 category (24%) and the under 25 category (22%). People in the 45–55 age range represent a lower share (13%), while respondents over 55 are only 3% in the sample.

As for the level of monthly income, most respondents (50%) declare they earn between 2500–3500 lei per month, which indicates a strong concentration of the sample in the medium income area. Another 22% of people earn incomes between 1500 and 2500 lei, while 13% are in the range of 3500–4500 lei. The extreme categories are represented at a low level: only 9% earn below 1500 lei, generally being pupils or students, and 6% exceed the threshold of 4500 lei.

As regards the education level, the data shows a majority of people with a bachelor's degree (53%), followed by those with a high school degree (23%) and respondents who have completed a master's degree (21%). Only 3% of participants declared they have a doctoral degree.

Overall, the sample investigated is balanced in terms of gender distribution and reveals a significant concentration among adults, with predominantly middle incomes and a high level of education. This socio-demographic structure provides a solid basis for interpreting the results and confers a high degree of validity to the conclusions formulated in the research.

The main objective of the paper was to analyse the customer - employee - management relationship, from the perspective of the efficiency of communication issues.

The secondary objectives, on the other hand, aimed to the following:

Table no. 1 – Secondary objectives

SO1	Analysis of the difficulties encountered by respondents in communicating with employees in the commercial field
OS2	Identifying communication problems and how they are managed by employees in their relationship with customers
OS3	Determining the causes of poor communication and strategies that can ensure effective interaction, including the role of persuasion
OS4	Evaluating customer perception and satisfaction regarding employee professionalism, with a focus on responsiveness, problem solving, understanding and use of specialised language
OS5	Identifying communication patterns in the customer-employee relationship

4. Results and discussions

The first question in the study aimed to identify the frequency with which respondents encountered problems in fulfilling requests in the stores they frequented.

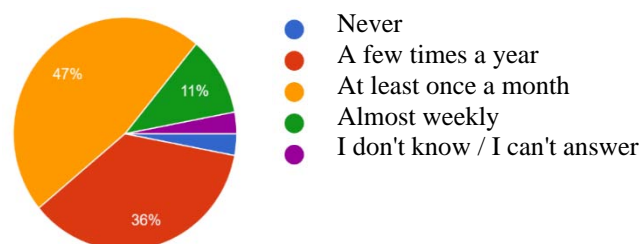


Figure 1

Frequency of problems encountered by respondents

Starting from the idea that, in commercial activity, both from the customers' and traders' points of view, various problems may arise due to diverse causes, the frequency of which differs (depending on the situation, the professional training of employees, customer requirements, various communication barriers, etc.), the way in which an organisation encounters these problems and seeks to solve them can determine its future course.

Based on the responses obtained, there is a clear trend towards high recurrence of difficulties. Approximately half of the respondents (47%) state they face such problems almost weekly, and another 11% state they are challenged by difficulties at least once a month. Together, these two categories account for 58% of the participants, which reflects a high and constant incidence of dissatisfaction in the customer-store relationship. In contrast, 36% of respondents report problems only a few times a year, indicating a rather positive perception of interactions, but with occasional shortcomings. The percentage of those who have never encountered difficulties is extremely low (2%), which shows that communication or satisfaction problems are almost generalised. Also, a small percentage (4%) chose the option "don't know/cannot answer", which may be associated with a lack of involvement or difficulty in assessing the situation.

The descriptive statistical analysis supports this conclusion. If we assign numerical values to the response categories, we get a 3.15 mean, which indicates that, on the average, customers tend to fall between the "at least once a month" and "almost weekly" categories. The median of the responses falls into the "almost weekly" category, confirming that more than half of the participants perceive problems with a high frequency. The variance calculated for the distribution is 0.84, and the standard deviation is approximately 0.92, which shows a moderate dispersion of the responses: opinions are not very scattered, but rather concentrated in the high frequency area. In conclusion, the data reflect a critical situation for stores, as most customers not only experience problems, but they occur regularly, which highlights the need for rapid and consistent intervention to improve the communication process and the quality of the services provided.

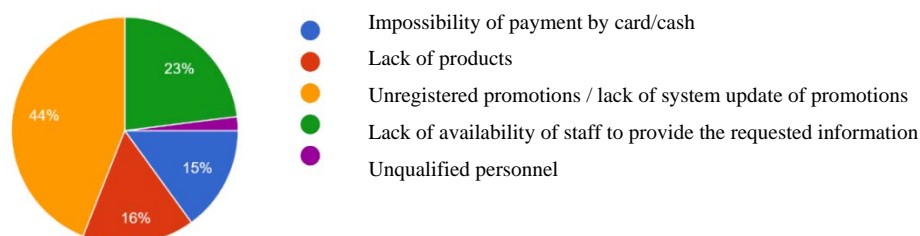


Figure 2

The most frequently encountered problem

The frequency and nature of issues encountered by customers in a store are directly related to their purchasing habits, individual preferences, and other secondary factors.

Based on the results illustrated in Figure 2, which capture the problem most frequently encountered by customers in relation to stores, a fairly clear picture of the main difficulties reported emerges. The most frequent problem is represented by unregistered promotions or their lack of updating in the system, mentioned by 44% of respondents. This shows a major deficiency in trade communication and transparency towards the customer, having a direct impact on consumer trust and the perception of the store's fairness. Secondly, the lack of availability of staff to provide the requested information appears in a proportion of 23%, which highlights organisational and training difficulties, with negative effects on the quality of the relationship with the customer. The next two problems – absence of products (16%) and the impossibility of paying in the card/cash option (15%) – are almost balanced in importance, indicating both logistical and supply shortages, as well as limitations related to the payment infrastructure. Only 2% of respondents indicated unqualified staff as the main problem, which suggests that, although there are behavioural or knowledge deficiencies at the individual level, these are not perceived as a dominant cause of difficulties. The analysis thus reveals that the main issues identified by customers are of an organisational and structural nature: the lack of promotions updating and the unavailability of staff to provide informational support. Infrastructure problems (payments, supply) are felt by an important, but smaller part of customers, and those related to staff qualification are perceived as marginal. This picture outlines the priority directions for managerial intervention: improving the promotions management system and increasing the availability and proactivity of employees in interacting with customers.

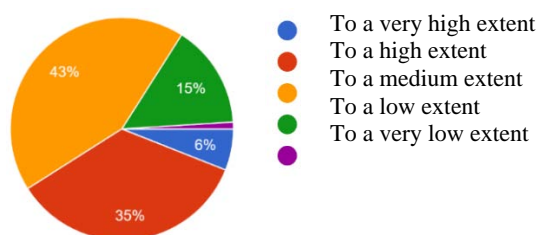


Figure 3

The extent to which problem resolution time is reasonable

The problems that customers encounter in a store with the products they purchase are closely related to their resolution.

The graph above captures customers' perception of the extent to which the resolution time for problems related to purchased products is reasonable. The results show a relatively unbalanced distribution. The majority of respondents (43%) consider that the resolution time is reasonable to a medium extent, which suggests the existence of a partially satisfactory experience, but which fails to fully convince customers. On the other hand, 35% of participants state that the resolution is to a high extent done within a reasonable range, while only 6% consider that this happens to a very high extent, highlighting that only a small part of respondents perceive the process as being excellently managed. In contrast, 15% of customers chose the option "to a low extent", which indicates significant dissatisfaction with the duration of the process. It is noteworthy that no person selected the option "to a very low extent", which shows that although there are criticisms, totally negative perceptions are absent.

From the perspective of descriptive statistics, if we assign numerical values to the categories (1 = to a very low extent, 2 = to a low extent, 3 = to a medium extent, 4 = to a high extent, 5 = to a very high extent), the results are presented as follows. The resulting arithmetic mean is 3.37, which places the overall assessment between "medium extent" and "high extent", with a slight inclination towards a positive perception. The variance is equal to approximately 0.63, and the standard deviation records a value of 0.79, which shows a reduced dispersion of the responses, the opinions being

relatively homogeneous and concentrating between a medium and a high level. The majority of customers thus consider the problem-solving time reasonable, but the perception remains at a level rather moderate than excellent. Only a minority appreciates it as very efficient, which signals that the stores have managed to ensure an acceptable operation, but there is considerable potential for improvement. Investments in optimizing complaint resolution processes and increasing promptness could transform moderate satisfaction into a predominantly positive perception.

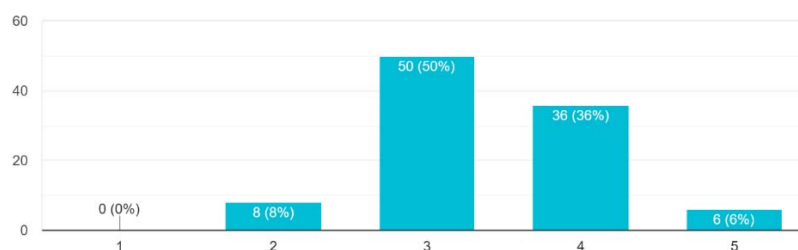


Figure 4

The qualification level of employees, compared to customer requirements

The graph presented analyses the customers' perception of the qualification of the employees in the commercial field to meet their requirements, using a scale from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). The results show a distribution strongly concentrated in the average and slightly positive area. Half of the respondents (50%) opted for the value 3, which suggests a moderate assessment – the customers perceive the employees as sufficiently qualified, but not at a high level. At the same time, 36% rated them with a grade of 4, which indicates a high degree of satisfaction, and 6% awarded the maximum score of 5, confirming the existence of a minority that considers the staff very well trained. In contrast, 8% of the respondents opted for a grade of 2, which reflects occasional dissatisfaction. No person selected the minimum value of 1, a sign that extremely negative perceptions are absent.

From the perspective of descriptive statistics, the average of the responses is 3.40, which places the overall assessment between “medium” and “high”. The calculated variance is approximately 0.51, and the standard deviation is 0.71, which shows a low dispersion of the responses – the customer opinions are relatively homogeneous and cluster around average and slightly positive assessments. Most customers do not dispute the staff training, but they do not consider it exceptional either. This result signals that there is a solid base of skills, but also considerable potential for improvement. Investments in specialized training, the development of communication skills and a stronger focus on customer needs could raise the assessment from a satisfactory level to an excellent one, thus strengthening consumer trust and loyalty.

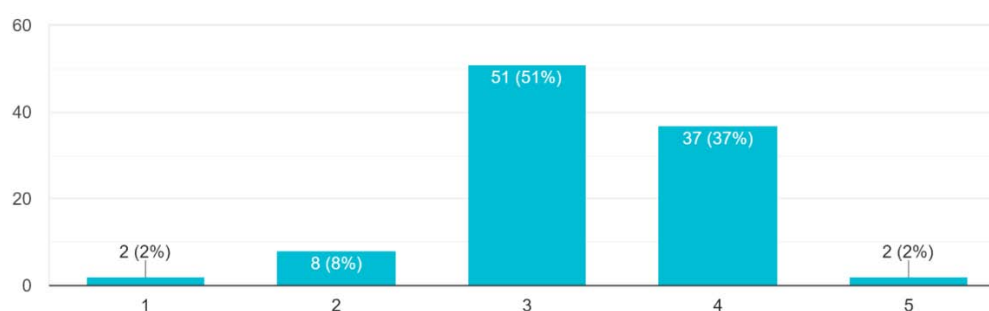


Figure 5

The extent to which employees provide useful information

The graph presented analyses the manner in which customers assess the ability of sales employees to clarify problems encountered and provide useful information, using a scale from 1

(very poor) to 5 (very good). The results highlight a distribution concentrated in the medium and positive area, but with low maximum values. The majority of respondents (51%) assigned a score of 3, which reflects a neutral perception, with employees partially managing to provide clarifications, but not in a completely satisfactory way for customers. A significant part, 37%, assigned a score of 4, which indicates a positive assessment and a relatively high level of satisfaction. In contrast, only 2% awarded the maximum score of 5, which suggests that excellent experiences are very rare. At the opposite end, 8% selected a score of 2, and 2% the minimum score of 1, which signals the existence of dissatisfied customers who consider the interaction with the staff insufficient or even deficient.

Statistically, the average response is 3.27, which places the overall rating between "medium" and "high", with a slight positive trend. The dispersion of the responses is relatively low, with a variance of approximately 0.71 and a standard deviation of 0.84, which shows that customer opinions are generally close and tend to cluster around the medium level.

Customers therefore consider that employees are to a high extent able to provide useful information and clarifications, but the prevailing perception remains one of moderate efficiency. The low level of maximum responses (score 5) indicates that there is a deficit of excellence in customer interactions. From a managerial perspective, these results signal the need to improve the quality of communication through training programs focused on developing active listening skills, clarification and providing personalized solutions. Such an investment could raise the level of satisfaction from mediocre to predominantly positive and strengthen customers' trust in the skills of sales staff.

We were interested in finding out further if customers encountered problems when making returns in the store.

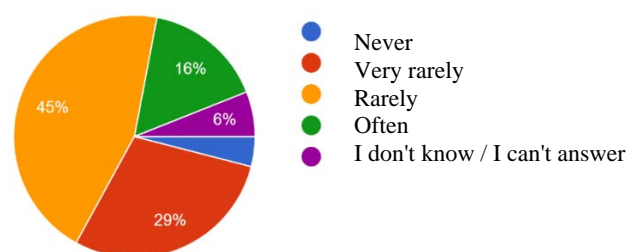


Figure 6
Frequency of encountering problems upon return

The graph presented highlights the frequency with which customers declare that they have encountered problems in the product return process. The results show that the situation is quite divided, but with a predominantly positive trend. Most respondents, 45%, state they have encountered return problems only rarely, which suggests that these situations exist, but are not the rule. A significant percentage, 29%, mention they have faced difficulties very rarely, reinforcing the idea that problems occur occasionally, not constantly. Also, 16% of respondents declare they often have to cope with return problems, which is an alarming signal, as it shows that almost one in six customers repeatedly faces difficulties. Only 4% state that they have never encountered problems, and 6% ticked the option "don't know/cannot answer", possibly because they have not had any return experiences before.

From a statistical point of view, if we assign numerical values (1 = never, 2 = very rarely, 3 = often), the table regarding the frequency of problems encountered when returning products highlights a distribution dominated by answers in the medium and positive area. The majority of respondents, 45%, state that they have encountered return problems only rarely, and 29% mention that these situations have occurred very rarely. Together, these two categories account for almost three quarters of the sample (74%), which indicates that, in general, return difficulties are not frequent and tend to occur occasionally. However, a significant percentage, 16%, state that they have faced problems often, which signals the existence of systemic deficiencies that constantly affect a part of the customers. Only 4% stated that they have never encountered return problems, and 6% could not answer, most likely because they have not had direct experiences with returns.

From a descriptive statistical perspective (taking into account only valid responses and excluding the “don’t know/can’t answer” option), the calculated mean is 3.22, indicating an overall perception between “rarely” and “very rarely”. The median and mode are both 3 (rarely), confirming that the typical experience of customers is to encounter occasional problems. The standard deviation, of approximately 0.85, shows a moderate dispersion of responses, with opinions relatively concentrated around rare and very rare experiences, but with a significant minority experiencing frequent difficulties.

Therefore, the general perception of the returns process is rather positive, with most customers experiencing occasional or even very rare problems. However, the 16% who experience frequent difficulties cannot be ignored, as they indicate structural shortcomings in the returns procedures. For management, the results signal the need to simplify and standardize the returns process, reduce bureaucracy and increase the efficiency of the responsible staff. In parallel, continuous monitoring of customer feedback can help to identify and promptly eliminate factors that generate repeated dissatisfaction.

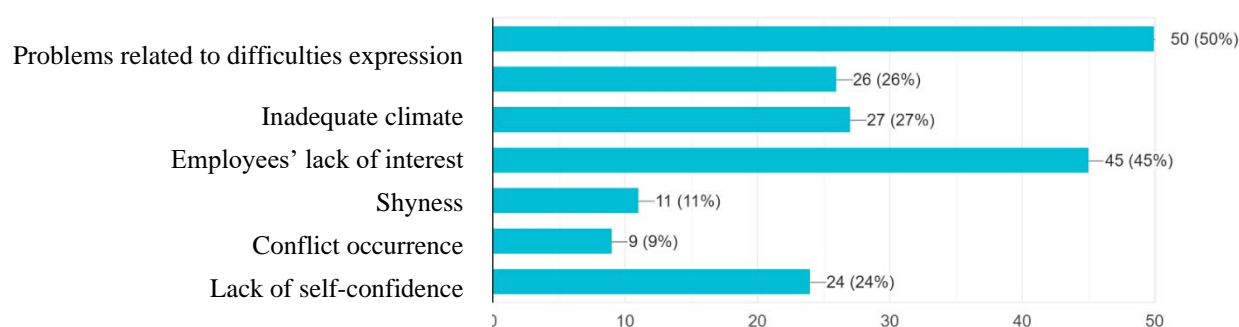


Figure 7

Problems that employees faced in the process of communicating with employees

The graph above highlights the main difficulties encountered by customers in the process of communicating with sales employees, and the distribution of responses outlines several major directions of dissatisfaction. The most frequently reported problem is represented by the difficulty in clearly expressing personal requirements or needs, mentioned by 50% of respondents. This suggests that communication barriers are not only related to employee skills, but also to the way in which customers manage to convey their expectations. Closely related, 45% of participants consider the lack of interest of employees to be a significant obstacle, emphasizing the perception that staff are not sufficiently involved in customer interaction.

Problems related to the external context also appear in significant proportion: 27% mentioned the inappropriate climate (e.g. noise pollution, crowding), which indicates that the environment in which commercial interaction takes place can affect the quality of communication. Other difficulties, of a personal or emotional nature, complete the picture: 24% face a lack of self-confidence, and 11% declare shyness as a factor that hinders effective communication. Moreover, 9% of respondents reported the occurrence of conflicts, which, although a lower percentage, indicates the existence of tense situations that can damage the customer-employee relationship.

From a descriptive statistical perspective, the mean of reported problems varies between structural causes (related to employee attitudes and the external context) and individual causes (related to customers), which highlights the complex nature of commercial communication. The two peaks of the distribution — difficulty expressing oneself (50%) and lack of interest from employees (45%) — concentrate the majority of responses, suggesting that these are the most pressing areas for intervention to improve customer relations.

These results show that the communication process between customers and employees is influenced by both internal factors (staff attitude, willingness to listen and understand) and external and personal factors. To increase the quality of commercial interactions, employee training programs

focused on empathy, active listening and clear communication, as well as initiatives to improve the environment in which customer interaction takes place, would be necessary.

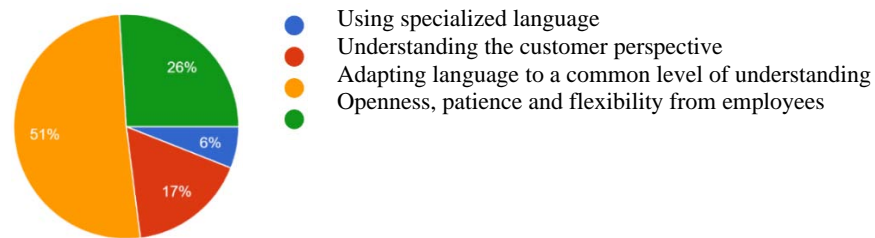


Figure 8

Criteria for effective communication between customers and employees

The graph above highlights customers' priorities regarding the determinants of effective communication with sales employees. The distribution of responses indicates that adapting language to a common level of understanding is perceived as the most important dimension, selected by 51% of respondents. These results suggest that, beyond the use of professional or technical language, customers most value employees' ability to explain things in a simple and accessible way, avoiding jargon or ambiguous expressions. In the second place, 26% of participants consider employees' openness, patience and flexibility to be essential for effective communication. This choice reflects customers' expectation that staff should be available, calm and adaptable in managing interactions, especially when misunderstandings or difficulties arise. 17% of respondents indicate that understanding the customer's perspective is essential, which shows that, although important, empathy and the ability to see the situation from the consumer's perspective are not considered as high a priority as clarity of language or the employee's attitude. In contrast, only 6% of respondents consider the use of specialized language to be the main factor for effective communication, which confirms the general preference for simple and accessible approaches, to the detriment of excessive formalism.

Interpreting these results indicates a clear orientation of customers towards functionality and accessibility in communication. From a managerial perspective, these data should encourage investment in training programs focused on developing clear and empathetic communication skills, but also on cultivating an open and flexible attitude on the part of employees. Thus, the emphasis should not be placed on the use of specialized language, but on the ability to translate information into a simple form, adapted to the level and needs of each customer.

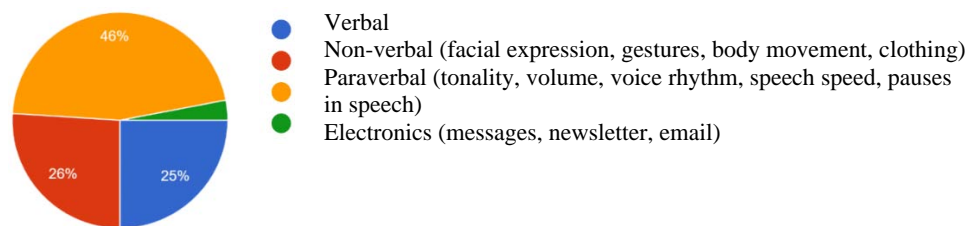


Figure 9

Efficiency of communication forms

The graph illustrates the opinions of customers regarding the forms of communication considered most effective in the field of commerce, and the results highlight a majority preference for the paraverbal dimension. Thus, 46% of respondents consider that elements such as tone, volume and rhythm of voice, speed of speech or pauses used in conversation play an essential role in the effective transmission of the message. This choice emphasizes the fact that, in commercial interactions, not only the verbal content matters, but also the way in which it is expressed, which can strongly influence the customer's understanding and perception. In second place, almost equally, are non-verbal communication (26%) and verbal communication (25%), which shows that both facial

expressions, gestures and posture, and the actual words have almost equal importance for customers. Basically, the message transmitted verbally needs to be supported by coherent and authentic body language in order to be perceived as effective. In contrast, electronic communication (3%), such as messages, newsletters or emails, is considered by a minority to be the most effective. This result suggests that, in sales and direct relationship interactions, customers value personal contact and authenticity of information transmission more than impersonal digital channels.

The data collected thus show that the effectiveness of communication in commerce is perceived as a complex phenomenon, in which the tone and rhythm of the voice have even greater importance than the words used. The results confirm that the success of a commercial interaction depends on the coherence between what is said (verbal), how it is said (paraverbal) and how the message is visually supported (non-verbal). Thus, in order to develop quality communication with customers, employees should be trained not only in the use of clear language, but also in managing the voice, gestures and general attitude, in a unified and credible whole.

We were further interested in finding out to what extent customers are satisfied with the customer support service of the stores they frequent.

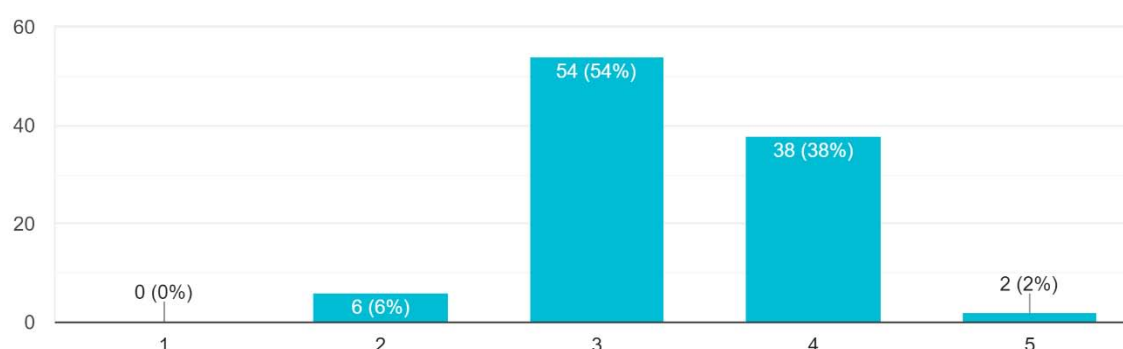


Figure 10

The extent to which customers are satisfied with the client support service of the stores they frequent

The graph of satisfaction with client support services in stores frequented by customers shows a relatively concentrated distribution in the middle and upper part of the scale. The majority of respondents, 54%, rate their satisfaction with a score of 3 (average), suggesting that customer experiences with this service are generally acceptable but not exceptional. This result shows that customer support is able to perform its basic functions, but there is significant room for improvement.

Also, 38% of respondents chose level 4, which reflects a positive perception, with a high degree of satisfaction. However, only 2% rated the services at the maximum level (5), indicating that very good experiences are rare and probably fail to become the standard. In contrast, 6% of customers gave the score 2, which reflects significant dissatisfaction, and the minimum level (1) was not selected by any respondent.

From a descriptive statistical perspective, the average satisfaction score is 3.36, which places the overall perception slightly above average. The standard deviation, of approximately 0.64, indicates a relatively low dispersion of responses, signalling that customer opinions are quite consistent, without strong extremes.

Therefore, the Client Support services in commerce are perceived by the majority of respondents as functional, but with an medium level of quality. Although there is a considerable proportion of customers who declare themselves satisfied (level 4), the low number of very satisfied (level 5) and the percentage of partially dissatisfied customers show that the experience offered fails to consistently exceed expectations. From a managerial point of view, these results indicate the need to strengthen the training of support staff, optimize the procedures for resolving requests and

introduce practices oriented towards creating exceptional experiences, which will transform satisfied customers into loyal customers.

5. Discussions and conclusions

The analysis of the research results highlights that the interaction between customers and store staff cannot be reduced to a simple exchange of punctual information, but represents a visible expression of the policies, strategies and organisational culture promoted by management. The employee's attitude is, in fact, an extension of the way in which the organisation defines and applies its values, standards and objectives. Therefore, customer dissatisfaction should not be interpreted exclusively as individual errors of contact staff, but as a reflection of insufficient human resources management and the absence of a clear customer orientation at the managerial level.

In the literature, employee attitude is considered a key element of perceived service quality. However, this attitude is not an autonomous product, but the result of a combination of institutional factors: recruitment, training, motivation and continuous evaluation of staff. When management adopts a reactive perspective, limiting itself to the punctual resolution of complaints, employee attitudes tend to be marked by apathy, rigidity and lack of involvement. In contrast, a proactive approach, focused on the formation of a customer-centric organisational culture, generates behaviours characterized by empathy, openness and professionalism.

From a business perspective, effective communication between employees and customers is a competitive advantage that is hard to replicate. Prices, promotions, and inventory may be matched or surpassed by the competition, but the quality of human interaction is a long-term strategic differentiator. Therefore, management must understand that investing in developing communication skills, cultivating a positive attitude, and motivating employees is not an additional cost, but a source of added value.

The research results indirectly confirm this hypothesis: customer complaints were often associated with a lack of interest or availability of staff. This absence of involvement cannot be separated from how employees perceive the support and direction provided by management. Employees who work in an environment lacking recognition, where internal communication is deficient and where responsibility towards the customer is not valued, will inevitably exhibit withdrawal or effort-minimizing behaviours.

Thus, in order to turn customer interaction into a satisfying experience, commercial organisations must act simultaneously on two levels: on the one hand, on a managerial-strategic level, by defining clear customer orientation policies, integrating satisfaction indicators into performance evaluation and creating an organisational framework in which the customer's voice has real value; and on the other hand, on an operational-tactical level, by continuously training contact personnel, by developing motivation programs (financial and non-financial) and by strengthening team spirit, so that employees perceive the relationship with the customer as a shared responsibility and not as an isolated task.

Moreover, communication in commerce is not limited to transmitting information about products or processing transactions; it includes subtle dimensions such as tone of voice, nonverbal expression, willingness to listen and the ability to find personalized solutions. All of these dimensions are deeply influenced by the organisational climate promoted by management. A people-oriented leader who promotes openness, respect and cooperation creates the psychological framework in which employees can manifest their communicative potential. In the absence of this climate, even the best-trained employees can manifest defensive or formal attitudes, which erode the quality of the customer experience.

The attitude of employees directly reflects the attitude of the organisation towards its own human resources and, implicitly, towards customers. An organisation that treats its employees with respect, offers them development opportunities and involves them in decision-making processes will naturally generate respectful and open behaviours towards customers.

In the context of today's economy, characterised by intense competition and increased consumer mobility, this connection becomes a basic element: customer loyalty is no longer gained through low prices, but through the quality of the interaction experience. From this perspective, management must not limit itself to the punctual correction of problems reported by customers, but must systematically address their main source – organisational culture and employee attitudes.

6. References

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