

Exploring the Meaning of Direct Selling from Salespersons' Perspectives

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Abstract

In the digital era, where most marketing activities have shifted online, some individuals still engage in direct selling as a primary occupation. This study aims to explore the meaning of direct selling from the perspective of a salesperson. Using a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and literature review. The informant in this study is Dimas, a salesperson who actively works in direct selling. The findings reveal several emergent meanings. First, direct selling is perceived as a promising source of income. Second, it offers flexibility in managing working time. Third, it serves as a practical space for applying communication skills. Fourth, it is seen as a profession full of challenges. Finally, direct selling is often underestimated or viewed negatively by society. In conclusion, direct selling is not merely a sales activity but a meaningful profession shaped by both opportunities and challenges. It provides economic benefits, personal growth, and flexibility, while also requiring resilience in dealing with social perceptions and work-related difficulties.

Keywords: Direct Selling, Salesperson, Phenomenology, Meaning, Communication.

1 INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has driven significant changes in modern marketing practices. Today, marketing activities are increasingly carried out through various digital platforms such as social media, marketplaces, websites, and instant messaging applications. Digitalization has enabled businesses to reach consumers more broadly, quickly, and efficiently compared to conventional marketing methods. In addition, digital technology also offers various interactive features that facilitate communication between producers and consumers. This situation has made digital marketing one of the dominant strategies in marketing communication activities in the contemporary era. According to a survey by the BPS-Statistics Indonesia, in 2024, 42.02% of companies in Indonesia have conducted online sales or are categorized as e-commerce businesses [1].

The rapid growth of digital marketing is not without reason. This phenomenon is driven by changes in consumer purchasing behavior. Today's consumers increasingly prefer online shopping for various daily needs. A report by Kompas.co.id titled *FMCG E-commerce Outlook Report 2026* noted that the total sales value of fast-moving consumer goods in Indonesian e-commerce reached IDR 128 trillion as of November 2025,

growing by 27.1% compared to the same period the previous year [2]. This achievement highlights the role of e-commerce as a key channel for daily consumption among Indonesian consumers.

However, despite the rapid growth of digital marketing, conventional marketing practices are still found in various business sectors, one of which is direct selling. Direct selling is a marketing method that relies on direct interaction between sellers and consumers. In practice, direct selling practitioners usually conduct face-to-face product presentations, demonstrate how products are used, and build personal relationships with consumers. In Indonesia, this practice can still be observed in everyday life. Companies that still apply this method include: Yakult, MyRepublic, IndiHome, insurance companies, etc.

This phenomenon shows that direct selling practices are not entirely replaced by digital marketing. Instead, there is a tendency for direct selling practitioners to adapt to changes in the marketing environment. Face-to-face interaction, which is a key characteristic of direct selling, still appears to hold its own value as it is able to build emotional closeness, trust, and interpersonal relationships with consumers. As stated by Bayuputra et al. (2025), direct selling allows a salesperson to adjust to the needs and characteristics of consumers, enabling the development of closeness between salesperson and



consumers. This makes it one of the most effective and efficient promotional approaches for reaching consumers [3].

Unfortunately, many people question the effectiveness of conventional marketing strategies such as direct selling among the dominance of digital marketing. There is a perception that this strategy makes it more difficult to gain customers and increase sales, especially in digital era. In addition, direct selling is often seen as requiring more resources to implement. This becomes even more challenging as consumers now have easier access to product information through social media, marketplaces, and online reviews, making them more selective in choosing products. Another challenge is the increasing competition from various digital channels that offer faster, more transparent, and more convenient shopping experiences compared to traditional face-to-face interactions. This situation brings up critical questions regarding the relevance of direct selling in attracting new consumers, as well as maintaining customer loyalty in a fast-paced, information-driven digital era. Moreover, today's consumers tend to be less appreciative to direct face-to-face sales approaches.

In addition, currently not many Gen Z are willing to pursue careers in conventional marketing or sales. They tend to feel that it is not relatable to them. Compared to previous generations, Gen Z and Millennials demonstrate a twofold preference for product discovery via social platforms over conventional advertising or direct selling. This shift away from traditional marketing is driven by an inherent demand for genuine interactions and peer endorsements, rather than curated corporate messaging.

However, despite the increasing digitalization of marketing and the ease with which consumers can purchase products online, there are still individuals who choose to work in direct selling. This phenomenon shows that for some people, direct selling remains relevant and effective, even in the face of various challenges brought by digital transformation. The presence of these direct selling practitioners is particularly interesting, as they do face-to-face sales activities and build personal interactions with consumers, which differs from the online transaction patterns today. Moreover, many of direct selling practitioners are young individuals who are also familiar with the digital world.

This condition indicates that direct selling remains part of the marketing ecosystem in Indonesia, opening up space for further research to explore the experiences, perceptions, and meanings that practitioners attach to direct selling practices in the digital era. In other words, although the world is increasingly moving toward full digitalization, direct selling still represents a unique form of conventional marketing continuity that is worth examining from an academic perspective.

A study on direct selling was conducted by Ersu, Raf, & Kartika (2021) [4], who examined the influence of

direct selling on consumers' purchase intention for automotive products, specifically cars. The research employed a quantitative approach involving 91 respondents. The findings indicated that direct selling has a significant effect on consumer purchase intention. Based on these results, the authors recommended that the automotive company under study continue to maintain and strengthen its direct selling strategy.

Another study on direct selling at a global scale was conducted by Behera & Mallick (2025) entitled *Economic Growth through Direct Selling: A Global Comparison with India's Insights* [5]. This study examines the performance of direct selling in India in comparison with global trends. The results show that direct selling is an important component of India's economy, contributing significantly to both turnover and employment. The study also highlights that direct selling offers various benefits at both individual and societal levels. It provides opportunities for individuals to generate income, achieve personal and professional goals, and enhance self-esteem. In addition, direct selling helps individuals develop essential skills such as communication, leadership, and entrepreneurship. These competencies not only empower individuals but also support the growth of industry and the broader economy.

Both studies, as well as other research on direct selling, primarily focus on its impact as a business strategy. They do not explore the meaning of direct selling from the perspective of the practitioners themselves. This becomes the distinguishing point of the present study, which aims to explore the meaning of direct selling based on the lived experiences, feelings, and interpretations of the individuals directly involved in it.

This study aims to explore and understand the meaning of direct selling in the digital era from the perspective of the practitioners' experiences. For this purpose, a phenomenological approach is considered the most appropriate. One of the key figures in phenomenology, Alfred Schutz [6], stated that *the social world is interpreted by the actor in terms of his own subjective meaning*. This means that individuals interpret a phenomenon subjectively, rather than through a collective meaning. He also noted that *all interpretation of the world is based upon a stock of previous experiences*. In this sense, experience becomes the central element in the process of interpretation.

In addition, Schutz distinguishes between two types of motives: *because-motives* (which are rooted in past experiences) and *in-order-to motives* (future-oriented goals that are planned), both of which form an important structure for understanding the reasons behind social actors' actions. In this study, the informant's experiences and motives will be explored in depth. Furthermore, the researcher will also examine the challenges faced by informant in carrying out direct selling as part of his lived experience (*lifeworld*). These three elements ultimately

lead to the meaning constructed by the informant regarding direct selling.

This study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how direct selling practitioners engage in marketing communication activities and build relationships with consumers, with a particular emphasis on the meaning they attach to direct selling in their everyday practice. The findings are expected to contribute new perspectives to marketing communication studies by highlighting how direct selling is understood and experienced by those who perform it. Therefore, the focus of this study is to explore the meaning of direct selling from the salesperson's perspective.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Direct Selling

Direct selling is a marketing strategy that involves selling products or services directly to consumers without going through traditional retail intermediaries such as physical stores or marketplace platforms. This method is not only viewed as a distribution channel but also as an intense form of interpersonal communication between sellers and buyers. It emphasizes personal interaction and direct experience, which differs from digital marketing strategies that are typically mass-oriented. Cochran et al. (2021) define direct selling as referring to *the sale of products or services directly to consumers through an independent salesforce, usually outside traditional retail locations* [7]. Meanwhile, Klein & Rouziou (2024) state that direct selling is a dynamic and adaptable industry that continues to grow globally, benefiting both sellers and consumers [8].

From a marketing communication perspective, direct selling can be understood as part of the marketing communication mix that emphasizes two-way communication between sellers and consumers. Through this direct interaction, sellers are able to deliver marketing messages more personal, better understand consumer needs, and adjust their communication strategies accordingly. This approach allows for closer relationships between companies and customers, as the communication process takes place in a more dialogic and interactive manner. Therefore, direct selling is often seen as an effective marketing communication strategy for building consumer trust, enhancing product understanding, and encouraging purchase decisions.

From a communication studies perspective, direct selling is seen as a process of message exchange that takes place through direct dialogue, rather than merely one-way information delivery. It is not simply a typical go-to-market model, but rather a communication channel that places people at the center of the marketing and sales process. This perspective highlights that the role of a direct selling person goes beyond just transferring

products; they act as communicators who construct meaning, build trust, and develop long-term relationships with consumers.

Meanwhile, Ellsworth (2022) describes how direct selling operates as a model that removes the role of intermediaries, allowing sellers to interact directly with consumers, either through face-to-face encounters or other forms of personal contact [9]. He emphasizes that one of the key advantages of direct selling lies in empowering sellers to choose the most suitable approach for their target market and to build effective personal relationships with customers. This suggests that direct selling offers a more personalized marketing strategy compared to traditional or digital channels, which tend to be more impersonal.

Beyond functioning as a distribution channel, direct selling can also be understood as a form of marketing communication that emphasizes direct interpersonal interaction. In practice, the selling process is not only about delivering product information, but also involves persuasion, negotiation, and the development of trust between the seller and the consumer. This interaction allows sellers to customize their marketing messages more flexibly to the needs and characteristics of each consumer. This is one of the distinctive features of direct selling that sets it apart from mass marketing strategies, which tend to be more one-way in nature. The following are some of the benefits of direct selling as cited from *distri.id* [10]:

- a. Make it easier to target and segment consumers.
- b. Helps increase profits and sales.
- c. Allows direct feedback from consumers.
- d. Enables immediate evaluation of service and product quality.

On the other hand, direct selling also creates space for more intensive two-way communication between sellers and consumers. In this situation, consumers are not just passive recipients of messages, they also actively provide feedback on both the product and how it is presented. This feedback can influence the communication strategies used by sellers during the product offering process. Therefore, direct selling is not merely an economic activity, but also a dynamic social interaction process in which meaning, perception, and experience are shaped through direct communication between both parties.

In contemporary academic literature, direct selling is viewed as a phenomenon that continues to evolve alongside the development of digital technology. A review article by Hussain (2023) states that direct selling has become an important model in the modern economy because it is able to maintain personalized interaction even as consumers become increasingly accustomed to digital channels such as marketplaces and social media [11]. This is significant as it shows that direct selling

strategies can be strengthened within a digital context rather than being replaced by it.

In addition, a study by Seow (2022) shows that direct selling has evolved from a traditional practice into a global phenomenon that contributes to micro-business development and social relationships in various communities, rather than merely increasing sales volume [12]. According to Seow, direct selling offers a different perspective on marketing strategy by integrating social and economic aspects in the relationship between distributors and consumers. This further emphasizes that direct selling is an inseparable part of the contemporary marketing landscape.

This understanding is important in marketing communication studies because direct selling is not only related to transactional aspects, but also to the construction of messages that are adaptive to consumers' specific needs and contexts. This interaction reflects a dynamic two-way communication process, where sellers continuously adjust their approach based on direct feedback from consumers, creating a more meaningful buying experience.

Direct selling strategies play an important role in strengthening customer loyalty. Communication between salespeople and customers is especially crucial in this process. By using the right communication approach, a direct seller can encourage potential customers to spend time interacting with them, be more open to their ideas, and become interested in purchasing the products. In some cases, this interaction can even lead customers to recommend the product to others [13].

However, direct selling also faces significant challenges in the digital era. The dominance of digital technologies such as marketplaces, e-commerce platforms, and social media has changed consumer behavior, made product information more accessible, and accelerated transaction processes. This is in line with what Draskovic & Haric (2021) highlight regarding the challenges that must be addressed [14], namely:

- a. Adapting to digital and technological changes.
- b. Competition from digital channels and online shopping habits.
- c. Impact of global crises (e.g., COVID-19) on business operations

This often raises questions about the relevance of direct selling as an effective marketing strategy amid the rapidly evolving digital technology landscape. Some researchers argue that the implementation of direct selling needs to be adapted to the digital context in order to maintain its relevance.

2.2 Salesperson

There are many terms used to refer to professionals in direct selling. Some refer to them as salespersons, sales

representatives, door-to-door sales agents, and others. In this study, the researcher uses the term "salesperson" to refer to individuals working in the direct selling profession. Although, linguistically, direct selling practitioners could be called "direct seller", in practice this term is not commonly used. The use of the term "salesperson" aligns with the definition by Kotler & Armstrong (2021), who state that *a salesperson is an individual acting for a company by performing one or more of the following activities: prospecting, communicating, selling, servicing, and information gathering* [15].

The form of direct selling discussed in this article refers to the *Single-Level Marketing model* (pure direct selling), rather than *Multi-Level Marketing* (MLM). In the single-level model, the focus of the practitioner is entirely on product sales and customer service, without any recruitment scheme or compensation from downlines. Salespeople in this model represent independent sales agents who concentrate fully on market penetration through direct interaction with end consumers. A key characteristic of these practitioners is their autonomy in managing sales territories and customer approach strategies, without the burden of building a network structure beneath them. This allows for a sharper focus on the quality of product presentation and the fulfillment of consumers' specific needs on a more personal level.

Kotler & Keller (2022) outline six stages in the direct selling process, namely: prospecting and qualifying, pre-approach, presentation and demonstration, handling objections, closing, and follow-up [16]. These six stages represent the steps in personal selling activities, which can also be applied in direct selling practices.

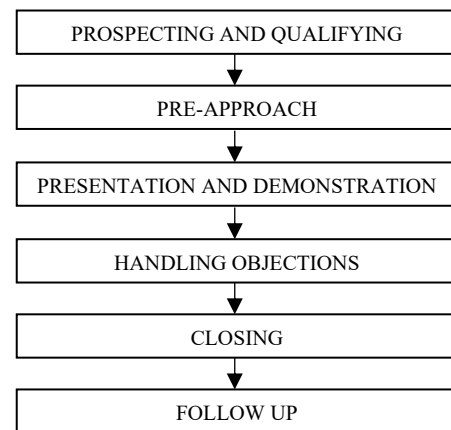


Figure 1. Stages of direct selling

A salesperson's success is largely determined by a strong command of product knowledge and the ability to deliver convincing demonstrations. Since they do not rely on recruitment systems to generate income, their earnings are directly correlated with the volume of sales they

achieve. Therefore, work efficiency and time management become essential competencies that must be mastered. According to Brown and Harrison (2023) in their study on direct selling effectiveness, the professionalism of modern salespeople has evolved into that of solution consultants who are able to provide technical advice that customers would not typically find on traditional supermarket shelves [17].

In carrying out their role, a salesperson acts as a key information bridge between company and consumers. They do not just sell products, but also collect valuable market feedback that is essential for future product development. The relationship formed between salesperson and customers is transactional in nature, yet carries a strong emotional depth due to the presence of personal trust. This creates a healthy business ecosystem in which customer satisfaction becomes the primary benchmark of individual success, rather than simply meeting company quotas.

Financial freedom is one of the main motivations that drives individuals to pursue this profession. As official partners of a company, they have full control over the income targets they aim to achieve through the intensity of their daily sales activities. Miller (2022) explains that a successful salesperson tends to have a significantly higher level of self-discipline compared to typical office workers, as they must be able to create their own work structure independently without direct supervision from a field supervisor [18]. This discipline ultimately shapes a strong entrepreneurial mindset.

Another prominent aspect of a salesperson is their ability to adapt to changes in communication technology. Although they still rely on face-to-face meetings, many practitioners now utilize digital platforms as interactive catalogs to facilitate ordering and tracking of goods by customers. This shift does not change the essence of direct selling. Rather, it accelerates administrative processes, allowing salesperson more time to focus on product education. The integration of interpersonal skills and technological efficiency has become a new standard of individual competence in this sector.

An individual's credibility is the most valuable asset for a salesperson in maintaining their customer base. Amid the rise of online shopping fraud, the physical presence of salespeople who can explain product benefits and guarantee after-sales service provides a sense of security for consumers. At a macro level, the population of salespersons makes a significant contribution to product distribution in areas that are difficult to reach through conventional distribution networks. They serve as the frontline of the economy, driving household consumption through a more human-centered approach. Salespersons are independent economic agents capable of creating added value through personalized services that cannot be replaced by any e-commerce algorithm. Their

presence ensures that human interaction remains at the heart of global trade activities.

In contrast to digital marketing approaches that emphasize speed and broad reach, direct selling continues to preserve the value of interpersonal relationships as its unique strength. Direct selling can offer a more personal and context-sensitive consumer experience compared to purely digital transactions. This provides an important rationale for further exploring the meaning of direct selling practitioners' experiences within the context of modern marketing digitalization. Direct selling is not merely an outdated conventional marketing method, but a marketing strategy that continues to adapt and remains relevant when viewed from the perspective of interpersonal relationships and consumer experience.

2.3 Gen Z

Since the informant in this study comes from Generation Z, it is important to briefly discuss this generation. Generation Z, or Gen Z, generally refers to individuals born after the Millennial generation, approximately between 1997 and 2012. They have grown up during a period of rapid digital technological development, which means they have been familiar with the internet, smartphones, and social media from an early age. This condition has led Gen Z to be widely described as *digital natives*, as technology is not something new to them but an inseparable part of their everyday lives.

In terms of characteristics, Gen Z is known as a generation that is adaptive, quick to learn, and highly open to change. They tend to be more independent in seeking information, less reliant on a single authority, and accustomed to fast and instant access to information. In addition, Gen Z also shows a relatively strong concern for social issues, the environment, and diversity. In many cases, they are also more expressive in sharing their opinions, particularly through digital platforms.

When compared to Millennials (born around 1981–1996) and Generation X (born around 1965–1980), there are noticeable differences in how they view technology and the world of work. Generation X tends to be more stable, hierarchical, and values clear organizational structures. Millennials are more flexible and begin to prioritize work-life balance while being relatively comfortable with digital technology. Meanwhile, Gen Z is far more digitally connected from an early stage, faster in processing and switching information, and tends to prefer a more dynamic and less rigid work system.

In the context of the workplace, Generation Z has distinct orientations that have also been highlighted in academic studies. Zahra et al. (2025) emphasize that Gen Z tends to prioritize flexible, inclusive, and self-development-oriented work environments [19]. They do not view work merely as a source of income, but also as a

means for both personal and professional growth. Therefore, Gen Z is more attracted to organizations that provide space for creativity, strong technological integration, and collaborative work culture. These findings indicate that Gen Z has relatively high expectations of the workplace, particularly regarding work-life balance and opportunities for continuous learning and development. Furthermore, Gen Z is more adaptive to change, accustomed to digital environments, and shows a preference for flexible work patterns. Research also indicates that they tend to reject overly hierarchical and rigid structures, and instead prefer systems based on collaboration and open communication.

Several studies indicate that Generation Z faces particular challenges when adapting to certain types of work environments, especially those that require intensive face-to-face interaction and high levels of operational or field-based activity. According to an analysis published by Forbes (2024), Gen Z often experiences difficulty in workplaces that demand strong in-person communication skills and frequent mobility [20]. This is particularly evident in entry-level roles that are more operational and field-oriented, where flexibility tends to be limited.

In addition, the report highlights a growing gap between Gen Z's expectations and the structure of more traditional job roles. This generation generally shows a stronger preference for flexible work arrangements, digitally supported environments, and greater autonomy in how tasks are completed. In contrast, jobs that involve repeated direct interaction and field activities are often perceived as less appealing. Based on these characteristics, it can be concluded that direct selling roles, which require extensive fieldwork, continuous face-to-face engagement, and high mobility, are generally less aligned with the preferences of Generation Z and therefore tend to be less favored by them. This becomes a unique finding, as the informants in this study, who come from Generation Z, choose a profession as salespersons engaged in direct selling activities.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Spradley (1980) explains that qualitative research can be used to study anything ranging from a single social situation to a complex society. A single social situation may consist of one individual, involving specific activities within a particular setting [22]. Meanwhile, Kuswarno (2009) explains that the number of informants in phenomenological research is not specifically mentioned. What is more important is the informants' ability to describe the meaning of the phenomenon in detail [23]. The informant in this study is Dimas, a 23-year-old salesperson at an internet service provider company who resides in Bandung City, West Java. The selection of Dimas is based on Kuswarno's

criteria, namely that informants must have directly experienced the phenomenon under study, be able to explain it both in terms of its reality and its meaning, voluntarily agree to participate, accept recording and observation, and consent to the publication of research findings. Dimas meets all of these criteria and was therefore chosen as the informant.

According to Creswell (2015), the aim of phenomenology is to represent individual's lived experiences of a phenomenon into a universal description [21]. Phenomenology does not study the phenomenon itself, but rather the meaning of a phenomenon or reality as experienced by individuals. In this study, the researcher explores the lived experiences of direct selling practitioners (salespersons) in order to uncover the meaning of direct selling for them, particularly in today's digital era.

During the research process, the researcher applied bracketing to the phenomenon in order to allow it to reveal itself without interference. The researcher then elaborates on both textual meaning and structural meaning to obtain the final result in the form of emergent meaning.

Data in this study were collected using three techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and literature review. Data analysis followed the steps outlined by Creswell (2015), namely: (1) describing individuals' personal experiences of the phenomenon, (2) compiling a list of significant statements, (3) grouping statements into units of meaning, (4) creating a textural description, (5) creating a structural description, and (6) composing a combined textural and structural description.

Next, to test the credibility of the data, the researcher carried out the following steps: (1) Prolonged engagement, conducted with the aim of obtaining depth, breadth, and certainty of the data. The researcher builds rapport to establish familiarity and trust with the informants; (2) Technique triangulation, where data were collected through interviews and then compared with observations and literature review; (3) Use of reference materials, such as photographic documentation.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

People's experiences are often important because they shape how events influence their lives. An experience is commonly understood as a feeling or a way of perceiving and thinking about something, such as an event, a problem, a lack of skill, an understanding, or the choices available for action [24]. In this study, the researcher will first describe the informant's experiences as a salesperson engaged in direct selling activities.

The informant in this study works as a salesperson for an Internet Service Provider (ISP) company in Indonesia, MyRepublic. He is 23 years old, unmarried, and resides in Bandung City, West Java. He has been

working as a salesperson for approximately three years: one year at an IT consulting company selling cashier application software, followed by two years at MyRepublic, where he is currently employed. Before becoming a salesperson, the informant worked as a cashier at a minimarket for approximately 10 months.

Regarding employment status, the informant is not directly employed by MyRepublic. Instead, he works under a manpower provider company that collaborates with MyRepublic. His status is that of a contract employee under the manpower provider, not a permanent employee. Among all salespeople in his company in the Greater Bandung area, only a small number come from Generation Z.

The informant shared that he is the youngest salesperson in his office. In fact, some of his colleagues are in their 50s. He once asked his older colleagues about their motivation for continuing in this profession. Some said that they have been in the field for a long time and are reluctant to leave the profession because they already understand it thoroughly. According to the informant, one of his colleagues has even been working as a salesperson for 23 years. The following is the informant's account of what his senior colleagues who have long been engaged in direct selling have said: *"This is basically my world now. And yeah, the income's pretty good too, that's what they say. The hours are nice, I get more time with my family, and I'm still making money as well."*

The informant explained that the first six months of working as an ISP salesperson were a relatively challenging period for him. Although he already had prior experience as a salesperson, he stated that during this time he faced difficulties related to product knowledge, customer approach strategies, and other aspects of the job. This was mainly due to differences in the characteristics of the products being offered. Throughout this six-month period, he admitted that he was not yet able to fully focus on achieving the sales targets set by the company.

Each salesperson in his workplace is assigned a monthly sales target of 15 customers. If this target is achieved, the salesperson receives rewards or additional bonuses. The informant shared that he was only able to meet this target in his seventh month of employment.

The informant stated that he does not feel burdened by the target system. What he finds more challenging is having to divide his time and attention between sales targets and his academic activities at university. He is not particularly pressured by sales targets because he holds the principle that what matters most is to never stop trying to find new customers. *"Whether I get any customers or not, I just gotta keep trying"*, the informant said.

Formally, the working hours of a salesperson at MyRepublic are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, since much of the work is conducted outside the office, these working hours are highly flexible. As proof of attendance,

a salesperson only needs to log in through a mobile application that can be installed on a smartphone. The login must be completed no later than 8 a.m. each day.

Within the application, salesperson also input their planned visits for the day, including the intended locations for direct selling activities based on the company's regional database. The primary targets for these visits are residential areas. Once they arrive at the designated location, they confirm their presence again through the application, indicating that they have completed the visit.

Through this system, supervisors or managers are able to monitor the activities of the sales team. During field visits, salesperson may go individually or in groups. However, even when traveling together, they will split up once they arrive at the location and carry out their activities separately.

When engaging in direct selling activities, the informant always wears a complete uniform and an ID card. According to him, both are very important as personal identification while performing the job. Initially, not all members of the direct sales team used uniforms and ID cards when going into the field. However, the informant proposed to the supervisor that uniforms should always be worn during field activities so that consumers can clearly identify them and do not become suspicious.



Figure 2. The informant (left) is conducting direct selling activities with his team.

The informant then described the sequence of activities he typically carries out upon arriving at a location. After parking his motorcycle in a safe place, he immediately prepares the brochures he brings. There are two types of brochures: the standard company brochure and one that he creates himself. He explained that he makes his own brochure because, in his view, the information provided in the company's standard brochure is not sufficiently complete. He usually prepares around 50 to 100 copies of his self-made brochures in his bag.



Figure 3. Official brochure from the company.



Figure 4. Brochure created by the informant.

The next stage is when the informant begins door-to-door sales activities by walking around residential areas. If he meets the homeowner, he will immediately conduct a sales pitch. However, if he is unable to meet the residents, he leaves the brochure in front of the house. For the informant, the brochure serves as a “weapon” because it not only contains product information but also includes his personal contact number. After finishing one area, the informant quickly moves on to another area, as he explained: *“After finishing canvassing in one area, I’d immediately check out in the app, then move on to the next area and do the same thing. In one day, I can cover up to three areas at most.”* What the informant refers to here is his door-to-door direct selling activity.

The informant explained that when meeting a potential consumer, he begins by introducing himself and the company. He then asks whether the consumer already subscribes to a home Wi-Fi service. If the consumer says they are already subscribed, he will ask which company they use, what package they are on, how much the monthly fee is, and whether they have experienced any issues with their current provider.

When consumers express complaints about their current provider, the informant quickly introduces MyRepublic’s products. However, if the consumer states that they have no issues with their current Wi-Fi subscription, the informant tends to shift the conversation to more casual topics unrelated to the product. For example, when meeting a consumer who is cleaning a birdcage, he would talk about birds. Once the consumer

feels comfortable speaking with him, he will then reintroduce the product topic and attempt to persuade them to switch services.

At this stage, consumers usually respond that they need to discuss the decision with their family first. The informant then provides a brochure for them to review. If possible, he also tries to obtain the consumer’s contact number, although this is not always easy as not all consumers are willing to share it. At times, he suggests that consumers simply save his contact number instead.

The most memorable experience the informant had while carrying out direct selling activities occurred during the month of Ramadhan. At that time, he was visiting a potential consumer’s home when it was already time to break the fast. Surprisingly, the consumer invited him into the house to join the family for iftar. To this day, the relationship between the informant and that consumer remains close, resembling that of close friends. In fact, when the consumer’s relatives express interest in subscribing to a Wi-Fi service, the consumer consistently informs the informant about it.

The negative experience the informant once encountered was being scolded by someone he had just met. The chronology was as follows: right after he introduced himself, the person suddenly asked him to leave while speaking angrily. The informant tried to explain that he only intended to introduce the product, but the individual refused to listen and continued to reprimand him. With a bitter smile, the informant said to the researcher: *“Oh, so this is what it’s like... being looked down on...”*

Incidents in which people looked down on the salesperson profession were not experienced by the informant only once. He explained that during the first six months of working as a salesperson, he learned many of the ups and downs of the profession. However, he tried to persist and continue learning. His supervisors and managers frequently motivated him not to take things personally when encountering potential customers who behaved unfavorably. These successive experiences eventually shaped the informant’s resilience. In the following period, when consumers outright rejected his presence, the informant responded more calmly: *“Some people just straight-up reject me. I’ve barely even approached them and they’re already telling me to go away. But yeah, since I’m used to it, I just enjoy it anyway...”* the informant said while laughing.

Now, we will discuss the informants’ motives for becoming salespersons. A motive can be understood as a stimulus, drive, or source of energy that triggers an action or behavior [25]. A motive is the underlying factor that directs a person's actions toward achieving a particular goal [26]. In this study, the motive refers to the underlying reasons that led the informant to work as a salesperson.

In relation to phenomenology, Alfred Schutz distinguishes human action into two types of motives:

because motives and in-order-to motives. Because motives explain actions as the result of past experiences and habitual patterns. Meanwhile, in-order-to motives refer to the goals or future-oriented purposes that individuals aim to achieve through their actions [27].

The informant explained several reasons for joining the salesperson profession. First, he enjoys talking and building interactions with other people. Second, he is interested in exploring the direct selling profession more deeply, as he had previously worked in this field. In addition, he does not prefer desk-based jobs, as he considers them monotonous and boring, an experience he once had when working as a cashier at a minimarket in Bandung City, West Java.

“Actually, it’s because I like talking to people. And I also had experience in direct selling before, so I wanted to explore it more in this ISP company. I used to work as a cashier at a minimarket. But in that job, it was hard for me to gain broader knowledge. In terms of time, it always ended up being overtime. So, I didn’t really have time to learn other things. My whole day was spent at the store doing the same stuff over and over. Every day there was about 2–3 hours of overtime, and there was no overtime pay. Besides that, I also had this push to start college at that time. But the minimarket where I worked didn’t allow employees to study while working because of the shift system. So, in the end, I decided to resign, enroll in college, and look for a job as a salesperson because the working hours are more flexible.”

The reasons mentioned above: enjoying conversations and interpersonal interaction, having prior experience in direct selling, and disliking desk-based work, can be classified as *because motives* in Schutz’s concept. These three factors form the basis that ultimately led the informant to choose the salesperson profession. A *because motive* refers to past experiences or predispositions that influence an individual’s present actions and decisions.

Regarding the *in-order-to motive*, the informant stated that income is his main goal. The salesperson’s earning scheme serves as a strong attraction for him. Compared to his friends who work in offices from morning to late afternoon for a full month, he does not need to work that long yet is able to earn a higher income than those who work full-time for an entire month.

The informant expressed regret that many Generation Z individuals are not interested in this profession, even though, in his view, the job is legitimate and provides income. The informant said: *“In terms of income, working in direct sales really depends on*

yourself. If you manage to sell a lot, then your income will be high too...”

The informant stated that through his work as a salesperson, he is able to purchase the items he wants, such as: shoes, clothes, etc. In addition, part of his income is allocated to support his parents and to finance his studies. These benefits help ease his concerns when he sees other Generation Z individuals who are not engaged in direct selling.

“I also have those Gen Z sides in me. Sometimes, I find myself thinking, like, it must be nice that other Gen Z friends have comfortable jobs, while I’m working as a salesperson with coworkers who are mostly older. But then I calm myself down by reminding myself that the income as a salesperson is pretty good. I can basically afford the things I want by working in this job.”

Another factor underlying the informant’s decision to pursue this profession is the flexibility of working time and system. He explained that although sales targets are calculated on a monthly basis, he often manages to achieve them before the end of the month. Once the target has been met, he usually spends his days engaging in lighter activities, such as hanging out with friends or spending time with close acquaintances. Supervisors and managers do not object to this arrangement, considering that a salesperson’s work is based on sales targets rather than the routine requirement to be present in the office.

Regarding this flexibility in working time, the informant explained that he often receives questions from people close to him about his job, as he is frequently seen not going to work. However, this is not because he is lazy, but because he has already met his sales targets. While laughing, the informant explained:

“People often think I’m unemployed. You know, in a month there are about 30 days. Sometimes by the 15th, I’ve already hit my sales target, even more than I’m supposed to. For example, I might have already gotten around 20 customers. At that point, I usually end up doing other things, like hanging out with friends. So... my parents, relatives, and even my girlfriend often ask whether I actually have a job or not, because I don’t really look busy...”

In addition, the informant is currently a Communication Studies student at a university in Bandung City, West Java. From his perspective, working as a salesperson serves as a platform for him to apply the knowledge he gains from his academic studies in a real-world context. He enjoys testing whether the theories and

concepts learned in lectures are applicable in practice. This is reflected in the informant's statement:

"It also aligns with my studies in Communication Science. I wanted to apply what I learn in college about communication in real life. So, I applied for jobs related to communication. I wanted to see whether the theories and knowledge I got in class are really relevant in actual work. That's basically it..."

Every job comes with its own risks and challenges. Workers were required to identify occupational risk factors from a set of categories grouped into six types of exposure: physical, biomechanical, biological, chemical, irregular working hours, and psychosocial risks. Physical risks, for instance, include exposure to vibrations, harsh weather conditions, ultrasound, radiation (both ionizing and non-ionizing), and extreme temperatures [28]. The following section outlines the risks and challenges faced by individuals engaged in direct selling.

Behind all the advantages mentioned above, the salesperson profession in direct selling also comes with several challenges. The informant stated that the most difficult challenge in this profession is dealing with various types of consumer personalities. A salesperson's primary target is achieving a sale (closing). Since the product being marketed does not target a specific segment, the informant has to face a wide range of consumer characteristics: *"The challenge is that as salespeople, we have to deal with all kinds of different personalities. We're expected to stay professional when facing all sorts of customer types..."*

The informant explained that in his role as a salesperson, the type of consumer he prefers is someone who is willing to give him an opportunity to interact. He particularly enjoys consumers who are open to two-way communication involving questions and answers, even if it does not necessarily result in a sale.

On the other hand, the type of consumer he dislikes is one who shows no response at all when approached. Even after being given a brochure, such consumers do not display any expression or reaction. This often leaves the informant feeling confused.

However, regardless of the type of consumer he encounters, the informant always strives to remain professional by prioritizing friendliness, even when he is not in the right mood. He uses a Sundanese term to describe this friendliness, namely "someah." According to him, understanding the various types of customers and how to engage with each effectively is key to building loyalty and satisfaction. One never knows whether a professional attitude in dealing with different consumer characteristics will lead to repeat orders or new sales. In this context, the ability to show empathy plays a very important role [29].

In addition to consumer characteristics, weather conditions are also a challenge in the salesperson profession, particularly during the rainy season. The job requires direct visits to target areas, which are usually carried out on foot. For this reason, clear or sunny weather is preferred by salespeople. When it rains, however, they are unable to carry out door-to-door sales activities.

"Since the work is done in the field, the weather also has an impact. Like during seasons like this, sometimes it rains, sometimes it's hot. When it rains, I can't really do anything, so I stop visiting the area. Usually, the only thing I do is send broadcast messages..."

Besides working in sales, the informant is a part-time student in the evenings. When academic pressure increases, he struggles to balance his studies with his direct selling responsibilities.

"When I'm busy with college assignments, there are times when I feel torn between finishing my school tasks and hitting my work targets. On one hand, if I don't reach my sales target, I won't get the income I want. That's where the pressure comes in for me. But once my assignments are done and I go back to focusing on work, thankfully it doesn't feel like a burden anymore. Because my motivation is simple: if I don't hit the target, I don't get paid. And that's just part of the risk of being a salesperson, so I try to take it easy and enjoy it. I already understand how it works, like how to approach sales. The important thing is just to keep looking for customers."

On a broader scale, the informant identified the main challenge as the large number of similar companies in Indonesia. This results in intense competition in acquiring customers.

"Now there are more and more internet providers. Even local RT/RW internet networks are popping up. Even though they can be considered illegal, it makes it harder for me to sell our product because their prices are much cheaper. And sometimes, local residents are also difficult to negotiate with because they feel like they're the original people of the area. If that local internet network gets banned, it could even lead to our company's poles being taken down by residents."

Data from the BPS-Statistics Indonesia indicates that in 2024 there were 1,248 internet service provider (ISP) companies in Indonesia [30]. Meanwhile, a KedaiKOPI survey revealed the data on the 10 most

widely used WiFi operators in Indonesia as of May 2025 as follows:

Table 1. Favorite WiFi operators in Indonesia

| WiFi Operator | Percentage of Users |
|---------------|---------------------|
| Indihome | 56,8% |
| MyRepublic | 8,2% |
| Biznet | 8,0% |
| First Media | 5,5% |
| Iconnet | 4,4% |
| XL Home | 4,2% |
| MNC Play | 1,7% |
| CBN | 1,2% |
| Oxygen.id | 0,8% |
| Megavision | 0,6% |

The final stage of phenomenological research involves the researcher seeking to uncover meaning based on the informant’s statements. In phenomenological studies, researchers do not merely collect descriptions of experiences, but also conduct hermeneutic interpretation to identify the meanings that emerge from the informant’s data. This interpretation is an active process in which the researcher seeks to understand the phenomenon as it is experienced by the informant. And the final stage in phenomenological research is the synthesis of meaning and essence, where textual and structural descriptions are integrated intuitively to produce a comprehensive statement regarding the essential nature of the phenomenon under study [31].

The following is an elaboration of the emergent meaning identified in this study based on the structural description provided by the informant:

4.1 Direct Selling as A Promising Source Of Income

- *“In terms of income, working in direct sales really depends on yourself. If you manage to sell a lot, then your income will be high too...”*
- *... But then I calm myself down by reminding myself that the income as a salesperson is pretty good. I can basically afford the things I want by working in this job.”*

During the interviews and observations, the informant stated that through his direct selling work, he is able to meet all of his personal needs. A portion of his income is used to purchase personal items such as clothing, shoes, and others. In addition, he allocates part of his earnings to support his parents and to cover his educational expenses.

It is not uncommon for individuals to choose a salesperson profession with the aim of earning a high income. Unlike other positions within a company, a salesperson engaged in direct selling typically receives

additional components of compensation beyond a basic salary, usually in the form of sales commissions and bonuses.

The level of income in the salesperson profession varies depending on the individual. This profession allows each person to earn as much as possible, depending on how many sales they are able to generate. In direct selling, in addition to a basic salary, salespersons also receive incentives for each successful sale. These incentives become the main priority for a salesperson.

Johnston, Ogilvie, & Marshall (2025) explain that *some firms, regardless of their size or position in their industries, offer their salesperson opportunities to make very large amounts of financial compensation* [32]. This can be understood because a significant portion of a company’s revenue depends on salespeople. As a result, the compensation structure for salespeople is allocated differently compared to other employees.

Based on the informant’s, in the direct selling division where he works, a salesperson is assigned a target of acquiring 15 customers per month. If this target is achieved, in addition to receiving a salary, the salesperson also earns sales commissions and bonuses. This compensation scheme is what makes direct selling an attractive field.

As an illustration, in Indonesia a junior salesperson can earn around IDR 8–15 million per month if they succeed in meeting their sales targets. In industries such as property, B2B, technology, and automotive, earnings can even reach tens of millions of rupiah per month [33]. Considering these facts, it is understandable that the informant perceives direct selling as a promising field in terms of income potential.

4.2 Direct Selling Offers Flexibility In Managing Working Time

- *“...The hours are nice, I get more time with my family, and I’m still making money as well.”*
- *“...So, in the end, I decided to resign, enroll in college, and look for a job as a salesperson because the working hours are more flexible.”*

The informant explained that his reason for switching jobs from a cashier at a minimarket to direct selling was due to time flexibility. Working as a cashier involves a strict scheduling system and relatively long working hours. In contrast, direct selling tends to be more dynamic and flexible.

In general, employees in Indonesia work for approximately 8 hours per day, typically from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. This may differ if the company applies a shift-based system. However, in most cases, work is carried out within an 8-hour daily time frame.

The policy is actually based on UU No. 13 Tahun 2003 Pasal 77, which stipulates two working schemes per

week. The first scheme is a six-day work week: 7 hours per day or 40 hours per week. The second scheme is a five-day work week: 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week [34].

Working in direct selling has a slightly different concept. Formally, they also have an 8-hour working schedule, except for salespeople with freelance status. However, even though they have a formal 8-hour workday, their main priority is sales targets. This is especially true because the work is carried out outside the office in a highly dynamic environment. It is not uncommon for a salesperson to work until late at night, while on other days they may only work for a few hours, or even not work at all if the sales target has already been achieved.

Salem (2025) explains in his study that the salesperson profession widely applies flexible working hours. Flexible working arrangements, including flexible hours and hybrid work options, significantly influence employees' perceived autonomy and retention intention [35]. Flexible working hours offer many benefits, as stated by *business.com*, namely: flextime can make work fit better into employees' lives, not the other way around. By giving people more control over their schedules, businesses can support better work-life balance, lower stress and greater job satisfaction [36].

The informant stated that flexible working hours allow him to do other things, such as completing his academic assignments. As he is still a young member of Generation Z, he also uses his free time to hang out with friends, family, or his partner.

4.3 Direct Selling As A Practical Space For Applying Communication Skills

- *"Actually, it's because I like talking to people."*
- *"...I wanted to apply what I learn in college about communication in real life."*
- *"...I wanted to see whether the theories and knowledge I got in class are really relevant in actual work..."*

Even though the informant is enrolled in an employee-class program, he demonstrates a highly critical mindset. He is strongly driven to apply the knowledge gained from his studies to his daily work. This is precisely why he chooses to work in direct selling as a salesperson, as the profession is deeply rooted in communication.

In academic terms, direct selling is classified under the domain of marketing communication [37]. However, in practice, it encompasses various other areas of communication, such as interpersonal communication, persuasive communication, negotiation, and more. This is because direct selling activities involve extensive interaction with people, meaning that communication processes are constantly taking place.

The informant has acquired various fields of communication during his studies. At this stage, he feels it is time to test whether this knowledge is applicable in real-world situations. For instance, when dealing with customers, he seeks to simultaneously apply empathy, interpersonal communication, and persuasive communication techniques. He continues to practice and refine his communication skills through direct interactions with customers. He hopes that in the future, after graduating, his communication abilities can be considered well-established and validated through real-life experience. Currently, he is working on his undergraduate thesis as a final academic requirement.

In Indonesian society, it is still commonly found that many unemployed individuals hold a bachelor's degree. The latest data from BPS-Statistics Indonesia as of August 2025 shows that the number of open unemployment among university graduates in Indonesia reached 904,440 people [38]. According to Sri Mulyani (2025), one of the causes of unemployment among university graduates is that many graduates in Indonesia lack the practical and technical skills required by the modern industrial sector [39]. For example, within the field of communication studies, students may understand persuasive communication theoretically, but they are not necessarily able to apply it effectively in real-world contexts.

Therefore, the informant feels that direct selling serves as a platform for him to practice and apply all the communication knowledge he has acquired during his studies. Since he has not yet graduated, he sees this period as an opportunity to develop practical communication skills. He hopes to possess strong practical communication abilities rather than merely theoretical understanding. He also states that the communication knowledge gained during his studies has been highly beneficial in supporting his work.

One of the main benefits of studying while working is the ability to directly apply what has been learned. In class, students are introduced to theoretical concepts, and on the following day they can observe the application of those concepts in real work settings [40]. This integration creates a beneficial learning cycle. Students do not only master theory but also develop into competent practitioners. It helps them cultivate critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and decision-making abilities based on two foundations: academic knowledge and practical experience. This combination is relatively rare and highly valued by many companies.

4.4 Direct Selling As A Profession Full Of Challenges

- *"...In one day, I can cover up to three areas at most."*

- *“The challenge is that as salespeople, we have to deal with all kinds of different personalities...”*
- *“Since the work is done in the field, the weather also has an impact...”*
- *“When I’m busy with college assignments, there are times when I feel torn between finishing my school tasks and hitting my work targets...”*
- *“Now there are more and more internet providers...”*

Based on the informant’s, working in direct selling involves several challenges, both physical and non-physical. The physical challenges include stamina and weather conditions. The informant carries out direct selling through a door-to-door approach, walking around residential areas. One day, he sometimes covers up to three housing complexes. Without good physical stamina, it would be difficult to sustain this line of work. Weather conditions also pose a challenge, as door-to-door activities are sometimes conducted under intense and scorching sunlight.

Meanwhile, the non-physical challenges faced by the informant include dealing with diverse customer characteristics, difficulties in managing time when academic assignments are demanding, and competitive pressures due to the presence of many similar competing companies. These challenges must be addressed by the informant as a trade-off for the benefits gained from working as a salesperson.

Several marketing communication scholars have identified a number of challenges commonly encountered in direct selling activities, namely:

- a. Sales often involve frequent rejection, demanding persistence and emotional resilience [16].
- b. Direct selling typically involves significant travel, extended work hours, and considerable physical endurance [41].
- c. Salesperson often face role stress because of competing demands from their work and personal lives [42].
- d. During a sales presentation, salespeople often encounter direct competition when customers evaluate alternative products [41].

Direct selling is not an easy job. Many people consider sales to be one of the most difficult jobs. However, in reality, any job, if done seriously and consistently, will eventually yield results. The informant also stated that he believes that sustenance has already been determined. His responsibility is simply to keep making efforts by consistently carrying out direct selling activities every day. This aligns with Bettger (2009), who stated that selling is the easiest job in the world if you work it hard, but the hardest job in the world if you try to work it easy [43].

Initially, these challenges had a considerable impact on the informant’s mental state. However, over time, he made efforts to adapt to these challenges. As a result, when the researcher asked about these difficulties, the informant responded casually with a laugh, saying, *“Just enjoy it...”*

4.5 Direct Selling Is Often Perceived Negatively Or Underestimated

- *“Oh, so this is what it’s like... being looked down on...”*
- *“Some people just straight-up reject me. I’ve barely even approached them and they’re already telling me to go away...”*
- *“People often think I’m unemployed...”*

Amin et al. (2023) stated that salespeople recognize that many customers hold negative stereotypes about the sales profession. As a result, they may develop defensive attitudes and feel anxious or fearful about being judged by customers based on those perceptions [44]. This situation often affects how salespeople interact with customers during the selling process, leading them to be more cautious in their communication and behavior. Over time, such perceptions can also influence their self-confidence and the way they construct their professional identity in the field of sales.

The informant explained that during his work in direct selling, he frequently encountered unpleasant treatment and attitudes. These ranged from suspicious and unfriendly looks from homeowners to outright rejections expressed in harsh words. He had also been scolded without any clear reason. The informant experienced all of these situations, particularly in the early stages of his work in this field.

According to the informant, such responses may occur because consumers tend to perceive this profession only at a glance. The informant, who conducts direct selling on foot and often appears sweaty, may be equated with itinerant street vendors such as vegetable sellers or food vendors. Moreover, since the informant engages in door-to-door sales, the interaction can give the impression that he is merely asking for something from consumers. However, when viewed more deeply, the informant’s role is actually to provide solutions for consumers who need internet access. In this sense, the relationship is essentially reciprocal: the informant needs consumers, and consumers also need the informant as a salesperson.

In addition, the flexible working hours often lead to perceptions that he does not take his job as seriously as others. Direct selling work is based on achieving sales targets. Once the target has been met, a salesperson is able to take a short break from work routines. This type of system is seen as unusual by some people, particularly

those accustomed to standard office-hour working structures.

In Indonesian society, the profession of salesperson may not be considered an ideal or highly desirable occupation. Salespeople often face various negative stigmas, such as being perceived as overly pushy in persuading consumers to make purchases, lacking ethical standards, and making exaggerated claims about their products [45].

When examining the types of jobs preferred by Generation Z, almost none are related to the sales field. A survey conducted by ZipRecruiter, Glassdoor, and Forbes highlights several occupations considered most popular and promising among Gen Z, including sports content creator, graphic design, social media, data science, technology, and healthcare [46]. Hamid et al. (2022) explain that despite offering clear prospects for high earnings, many graduates hesitate to pursue a sales career, mainly due to negative stereotypes and concerns about job security [47].

Specifically, Generation Z tends to be less interested in sales-related jobs for the following reasons [48]:

- a. High Uncertainty & Constant Pressure
- b. Hard Work in an Unstructured Environment
- c. Mobility Constraints & Frequent Relocations
- d. Ethical Stigma & Misconceptions
- e. Gender Gap in Sales: A Major Concern
- f. No Clear Career Growth Path
- g. Work-Life Balance & Mental Health Challenges

In addition to the factors mentioned above, on a global scale, the shift in transaction patterns from conventional to digital has also transformed consumer behavior. In the digital era, consumers tend to be reluctant to accept direct sales offers. They prefer to make their own purchasing decisions based on information available on the internet. This is especially true for Gen Z, who are accustomed to conducting transactions not through direct interaction, but via digital devices and online platforms.

This fact has made direct selling strategies less popular. Direct selling is considered outdated by some parties, particularly digital marketing practitioners. It is often seen as irrelevant to Generation Z and more suitable for their parents' generation. A 2025 article in *Radar Bojonegoro* reported an HR practitioner's view that sales professions, especially direct sales, are among the most avoided by Gen Z, as they are perceived as incompatible with expectations of workplace comfort and involve high pressure from direct interpersonal interaction [49].

In this digital era, new professions have also emerged that primarily operate in the online space. Many of them even claim to be able to generate substantial income simply by using a gadget and internet access, without having to go out and physically offer products to consumers. This shift is further supported by the rise of

delivery services, which have become a common feature in digital transactions.

5 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be understood that direct selling is not merely a transactional activity, but also a meaningful field of work shaped by the lived experiences of salespersons. In many cases, informants perceive this field as financially promising, especially because it offers income opportunities that are relatively flexible compared to conventional jobs. At the same time, the flexibility of working time allows them to manage personal and professional responsibilities more independently.

Beyond its economic and practical benefits, direct selling is also understood as a space for applying and developing communication skills in real-life contexts. Informants describe their work as an ongoing process of learning how to approach different types of customers, adapt communication styles, and build persuasive interactions. However, these experiences are inseparable from the challenges embedded in the profession. Salespersons frequently encounter rejection, pressure to meet targets, and emotionally demanding situations, all of which require resilience and adaptive strategies. These challenges, while difficult, also contribute to shaping their professional identity and competence.

Meanwhile, the study highlights a social paradox surrounding direct selling. Despite its potential demands, the profession is often perceived negatively or underestimated by society. This perception creates a tension between how salespersons value their work and how it is viewed by others. Nevertheless, informant continue to find meaning in their roles, suggesting that direct selling is not only about selling products, but also about navigating social judgments, building self-worth, and constructing personal significance through everyday work experiences.

Based on the findings, companies engaged in direct selling are encouraged to strengthen their support systems for salespersons by providing continuous training that not only focuses on product knowledge and sales techniques but also on communication skills, emotional resilience, and strategies for handling rejection in field practice. In addition, organizations are advised to develop structured mentoring and psychological support mechanisms, such as coaching sessions or peer support groups, to help salespersons cope with work-related stress and maintain motivation. Companies should also consider improving the public image of direct selling through ethical marketing practices and transparent communication to reduce negative societal perceptions, while ensuring that performance targets are realistic and accompanied by fair incentive systems. Although direct selling offers flexibility, clear guidelines are also needed

to maintain a healthy work-life balance and ensure sustainable productivity among salespersons.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the number of informants is relatively limited, so the findings may not fully represent the broader population of direct selling practitioners across different regions or industries. Second, this research emphasizes subjective lived experiences, meaning the results are interpretative in nature and cannot be generalized statistically. Third, the study does not specifically differentiate between various types of direct selling companies or product categories, which may influence the experiences of salespersons in different ways. Lastly, the data were collected within a specific period, so potential changes in organizational practices or market conditions after the research timeframe may not be captured in the findings.

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