

From Communication to Customer Relationships: Customer Relation Officer Practices in Educational Services

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Abstract

Competition in the educational services sector requires tutoring institutions to move beyond academic provision alone and to cultivate sustained relationships with customers. Within this context, the Customer Relation Officer (CRO) occupies a strategic position in managing customer communication. This study examines the communication strategy employed by the CRO in building customer loyalty at CV IBSI EDUTAMA. A qualitative case study approach was used, with data gathered through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving 33 informants: 13 internal actors engaged in the company's service and communication functions, and 20 customers comprising parents and students. Data were analyzed through organization, reduction, thematic categorization, presentation, interpretation, and conclusion drawing, with credibility strengthened through source and technique triangulation. The findings show that the CRO's communication strategy relies on multichannel communication through WhatsApp, Instagram, and face-to-face interaction, and rests on three core elements: hospitality, clarity, and problem solving. Hospitality is expressed through friendliness, attentiveness, and a consultative approach; clarity through accurate and consistent information supported by coordination with the academic team; and problem solving through responsive handling of complaints followed by structured follow-up. Interviews further indicate that customer loyalty is reflected in trust (90%), renewed use of services (100%), willingness to recommend (85%), and commitment to the relationship (100%). These results demonstrate that CRO communication functions not merely as an information channel but as an instrument of relationship management that sustains long-term customer loyalty, thereby extending customer-relations communication research to the context of tutoring services characterized by continuous interactions among educational institutions, parents, and students.

Keywords: communication strategy, customer relation officer (cro), customer loyalty, interpersonal communication, educational services

Introduction

The growth of the educational services industry has placed the relationship between institutions and customers among the central factors in sustaining organizational continuity. In the context of private tutoring, customers evaluate not only the quality of the learning program but also the overall experience of interacting with the institution: how easily information can be obtained, how quickly they are served, how attentively their needs are treated, and how effectively problems are resolved. These conditions have shifted customer relations from a purely supportive activity into a core organizational strategy for creating trust and loyalty. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) conceptually positions communication, commitment, and service quality as essential components of customer relationship building, and prior studies in service industries have shown that stronger CRM implementation is

consistently associated with higher customer satisfaction and loyalty. Such findings indicate that customer relationship management is a strategic concern that service organizations cannot afford to overlook when seeking to retain their customers.

In practice, the success of customer relationship management is largely determined by the quality of communication between the organization and its customers. Communication serves to convey information, understand needs, manage expectations, respond to inquiries, resolve complaints, and build interpersonal closeness. Mubarokah (2024) shows that the communication strategy of customer relations in the banking sector needs to emphasize transparency, clarity of information, responsiveness, accessibility, personalization, and the management of customer expectations; the relationship manager is responsible not only for offering products but also for ensuring that customer needs are understood and met, while empathy, sincerity, and honesty in communication further strengthen the customer relationship. These findings are relevant to the tutoring-institution context, where communication with parents is ongoing rather than transactional spanning the delivery of program information, consultation on student needs, updates on learning progress, and the handling of complaints and service follow-up.

Effective communication strategy is also inseparable from the practice of relationship marketing, in which customer relationships must be cultivated through a continuous process rather than being confined to the moment of transaction. A study of PT Pantero Selaras Agung indicates that relationship marketing is carried out through understanding customer needs, maintaining intensive communication, responding to problems, sustaining commitment, and holding direct meetings; well-maintained relationships subsequently generate repeat purchases, positive word of mouth, and referrals (Lukman & Ririn, 2024). This suggests that loyalty does not arise merely from a customer's acquisition of a product or service but develops through a consistently positive relational experience. In tutoring institutions, this pattern can be realized through personal communication with parents, timely delivery of information, post-service follow-up, and the CRO's capacity to respond to customer needs and problems making the intensity and quality of CRO communication an essential part of building long-term relationships with parents.

Customer loyalty in service organizations is also linked to a company's ability to deliver service that matches customer expectations. Utomo (2017) provides empirical evidence that service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty: among 95 respondents, the direct effect of service quality on loyalty ($t = 7.260$, coefficient = 0.601, Adjusted $R^2 = 35.5\%$) exceeded its indirect effect through satisfaction (coefficient = 0.519, with service quality on satisfaction at $t = 9.679$ and satisfaction on loyalty at $t = 10.417$). This strengthens the argument that the service experience perceived by customers occupies an important position in shaping loyalty. In tutoring institutions, this service is not limited to academic delivery but also encompasses the administrative service and communication provided by the CRO to parents.

Beyond service quality, the systematic management of customer information and communication is an important part of CRM strategy. Hidayah (2026) shows that CRM can be implemented through three dimensions: Operational CRM, Analytical CRM, and Collaborative CRM in which Operational CRM concerns responsive service, assistance, and follow-up; Analytical CRM concerns data management and understanding of customer characteristics; and Collaborative CRM concerns the use of multiple communication channels such as WhatsApp, telephone, email, and direct communication. The integration of these three

dimensions enables a company to understand customer needs while sustaining the relationship over time (Hidayah, 2026). This framework is directly relevant to CRO activity in tutoring institutions, where the CRO interacts directly with parents, has access to customer information, performs follow-up, and serves as the link between customers and the academic division meaning that CRO communication strategy can be understood as a process that combines service, information management, interpersonal communication, and internal coordination.

Other research on CRM strategy similarly shows that customer loyalty is formed through communication carried out consistently and oriented toward long-term relationships. Ramdhani (2025) finds that CRM strategy can be built through mutuality, proactive relationship management, trust, commitment, satisfaction, and transparent and responsive communication, with fast-response complaint handling and direct communication forming part of the effort to sustain customer relationships. Rizky (2023) further shows that CRM implementation through the elements of people, process, and technology supports repeat purchases and customer referrals, and that the use of customer databases and digital channels allows companies to deliver service and offers better suited to customer needs. Together, these findings indicate that loyalty results from a combination of the quality of human interaction, the service process, and the use of technology in managing customer relationships.

Although a number of studies have examined CRM, relationship marketing, service quality, and customer-relations communication strategy in building loyalty, most of this research has focused on the banking sector, technology goods and service providers, occupational health and safety services, coffee shops, beauty clinics, and computer services. Mubarakah (2024), for instance, focuses on customer-relations communication within a relationship-manager division for investment products; Hidayah (2026) examines CRM in an occupational-safety service company; and Lukman and Ririn (2024) discuss relationship marketing in a technology goods and service provider.

These studies offer valuable insight into the importance of communication and customer relations, but limited empirical attention has been given to how Customer Relation Officers manage communication and loyalty within tutoring institutions. More importantly, educational services involve a relational structure that differs from many conventional service settings because communication is not limited to a dyadic interaction between the organization and the customer. It frequently involves a three-party relationship among the institution, parents, and students, in which the CRO must simultaneously manage parental expectations, student needs, and internal academic information. Communication also continues throughout the learning process through updates on academic progress, schedule changes, consultation, and follow-up, while complaints may involve emotionally sensitive issues related to student performance, learning difficulties, or parental expectations. These characteristics make customer-relations communication in tutoring services conceptually distinctive, as loyalty is shaped through continuous relational coordination rather than through a single transactional encounter. A study that specifically examines how a CRO carries out its communication function in building and sustaining customer loyalty within a tutoring institution is therefore needed.

Given these conditions, CV IBSI EDUTAMA provides a relevant context for examining the CRO's communication strategy in building customer loyalty. The CRO occupies a strategic position as the party who interacts directly with customers, conveys information, understands customer needs, conducts consultations, provides follow-up, receives and handles complaints, and maintains the relationship with parents. This study adopts a qualitative case-

study approach to obtain an in-depth understanding of CRO communication practice within the real organizational context of CV IBSI EDUTAMA, drawing on the experiences and perspectives of the CRO, the academic team, the CRO team leader, parents, and students regarding the forms of communication used, the service process, communication barriers, problem-resolution strategies, and manifestations of customer loyalty.

Conceptually, this study positions Customer Relationship Management (CRM) as the overarching framework for understanding how customer relationships are systematically managed, while interpersonal communication provides the analytical basis for interpreting hospitality and clarity in CRO–customer interactions, and relationship marketing explains how continuous communication, follow-up, commitment, and problem resolution contribute to the maintenance of long-term customer relationships. This conceptual structure allows the study to examine CRO communication not as an isolated communication activity, but as an integrated relational process connecting interpersonal interaction, service management, and relationship continuity. This approach is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of how the CRO's communication strategy is applied in building long-term customer relationships.

The study contributes to customer-relations and service-management literature by identifying how hospitality, information clarity, collaborative problem solving, and multichannel communication operate together as a relational communication mechanism within educational services, particularly in managing continuous interactions among institutions, parents, and students. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the communication strategy of the Customer Relation Officer (CRO) in building customer loyalty at CV IBSI EDUTAMA and to identify the forms of communication that support the creation of trust, satisfaction, retention, and sustainable customer relationships.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case-study method. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research is not directed toward statistically measuring the relationship between variables, but toward obtaining an in-depth understanding of the CRO's communication strategy in building and sustaining customer loyalty at CV IBSI EDUTAMA. The research focuses on the communication process as it unfolds within a real service context, including how the CRO conveys information, understands customer needs, delivers service, handles complaints, performs follow-up, and builds long-term relationships with customers. The case-study method was selected because the research centers on a single organization CV IBSI EDUTAMA as its unit of analysis. A case study allows the researcher to examine a phenomenon in depth while accounting for organizational context and the experiences of the parties involved, consistent with prior qualitative research on CRM and customer-relations strategy in specific organizational settings (Hidayah, 2026; Rizky, 2023). The case examined in this study is the CRO's communication strategy for building customer loyalty, understood as a process encompassing interpersonal communication, customer service, information delivery, complaint handling, use of communication media, internal coordination, and customer follow-up. The case-study approach therefore enables a comprehensive picture of CRO communication practice, drawn not from a single party's account but from the perspectives of all parties involved in the service process.

Research Location and Context

The study was conducted at CV IBSI EDUTAMA, an institution operating in the field of educational services and private tutoring. This site was selected for its relevance to the research focus namely, the presence of a CRO function that interacts directly with customers. In a tutoring institution, the customer relationship differs from a short-term transactional relationship, since customers are likely to use the service continuously and to interact with the institution throughout the learning period. The CRO holds a strategic position in building this relationship, serving as the direct point of contact with parents and as a link between customers and the company's internal divisions. CRO communication activities include providing program information, consulting on student needs, serving parents, following up on service delivery, handling complaints, and coordinating with the academic team; these activities form the primary context observed and analyzed in this study.

Research Subjects and Informants

Research subjects consisted of parties directly and indirectly involved in customer service and communication activities. Informants were selected purposively based on their involvement in the phenomenon under study, rather than as generic sources of company information, but because they held experience and knowledge relevant to the CRO's communication strategy and the process of loyalty formation. Participant adequacy in this qualitative study was determined by the relevance and coverage of key stakeholder perspectives rather than by statistical representativeness. The selection was designed to include all principal groups directly involved in the communication and customer-relationship process, namely the CRO Team Leader, CRO staff, academic staff, parents, and students. This composition was considered adequate because it provided information from both the service-provider and customer sides, allowing the researchers to compare perspectives across organizational roles and customer experiences. Accordingly, participant adequacy was based on purposive coverage of information-rich stakeholders and the diversity of perspectives required to address the research focus, rather than on a predetermined quantitative sample-size requirement. The study involved 33 respondents: 13 internal (external-facing service) respondents 1 CRO Team Leader (Private), 6 members of the CRO Private team, 3 members of the CRO Class team, and 3 members of the academic team and 20 customer respondents, comprising 10 parents and 10 students.

Table 1. Composition of Research Informants

Informant Group	Position / Status	Number
Institutional (service-side)	CRO Team Leader – Private	1
Institutional (service-side)	CRO Team – Private	6
Institutional (service-side)	CRO Team – Class	3
Institutional (service-side)	Academic Team	3
Subtotal, institutional		13
Customer-side	Parents	10

Informant Group	Position / Status	Number
Customer-side	Students	10
Subtotal, customer-side		20
Total		33

Source: Primary Data (2026)

This composition allowed the study to capture diverse perspectives. The Team Leader provided information on communication policy and direction, CRO staff provided accounts of day-to-day communication practice, the academic team offered a perspective on service coordination and student progress, and parents and students provided the customer-side perspective. This diversity of viewpoints is important because a communication strategy cannot be assessed solely by what the CRO does, but also by how that communication is received and experienced by customers.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. These three techniques were combined to obtain comprehensive information on the company's service and communication activities, consistent with prior CRM research that has used interviews, observation, and documentation to examine customer-relationship practice directly (Hidayah, 2026).

Observation focused on the CRO's service and communication activities in the workplace, including how the CRO communicates with customers, conveys program information, responds to inquiries, handles complaints, follows up with customers, uses communication media, and coordinates with the academic team, in order to capture communication practice as it occurs in real situations.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the selected informants to explore their experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of CRO communication. Interviews with the Team Leader focused on policy, direction, evaluation, and communication strategy; interviews with CRO staff focused on their experience delivering communication, service, follow-up, and complaint handling; interviews with the academic team focused on coordination with the CRO; and interviews with parents and students focused on how customers receive communication, evaluate service, perceive the institution's attentiveness, and interpret their relationship with CV IBSI EDUTAMA. Interviews were semi-structured, allowing the researcher to follow a question guide while probing further based on informants' responses a technique also used by Lukman and Ririn (2024) to explore interpersonal communication practice, customer needs, problem handling, and relationship maintenance in relationship marketing.

Documentation served as supporting data to reinforce the results of observation and interviews. Documentation included communication materials, program information, service records, communication media, and activity documentation relevant to CRO activity; it was not analyzed separately, but used to provide context and to verify the consistency of information obtained from other sources.

Research Focus

The research focus is directed at the CRO's communication strategy in building customer loyalty, elaborated into several key aspects based on the literature: information delivery, interpersonal communication, service responsiveness, complaint handling, customer follow-up, use of communication media, internal coordination, and efforts to sustain long-term relationships. This focus draws on Mubarakah (2024), who emphasizes transparency, responsiveness, personalization, and expectation management as core to customer-relations communication; Hidayah (2026), who emphasizes responsive service, data management, and multichannel communication within CRM; and Lukman and Ririn (2024), who highlight the importance of intensive communication, understanding of needs, commitment, and problem handling in building customer relationships.

With respect to the loyalty variable, a customer relationship built through consistent communication and responsive service can be reflected in the customer's willingness to reuse the service, to sustain the relationship with the company, to recommend the company to others, and to remain with the institution rather than switch to a competitor. The loyalty focus of this study is therefore directed at trust, commitment, repeat use of service, recommendation, and the tendency of customers to sustain their relationship with CV IBSI EDUTAMA.

Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed qualitatively through a systematic process, from the point data collection began through to the drawing of conclusions. Data from interviews, observation, and documentation were first organized according to source and research focus. The researcher then reduced the data by selecting information relevant to the CRO's communication strategy and to customer loyalty.

The data were subsequently grouped by theme. Statements concerning how information is delivered, how inquiries are answered, how complaints are handled, how follow-up is conducted, how communication media are used, how coordination with the academic team occurs, and how customers experience the service were grouped into relevant categories. Categorization proceeded inductively while remaining anchored to the concepts used in the literature review, such as interpersonal communication, CRM, relationship marketing, service quality, and customer loyalty.

The grouped data were then presented in narrative form to identify patterns of relationship among themes for example, comparing accounts of responsive communication with parents' experience of service quality, comparing accounts of follow-up with customer experience after using the service, and comparing accounts of complaint handling with customer perceptions of the company's attentiveness. This process was aimed at identifying the pattern of CRO communication strategy that contributes to the formation of long-term relationships.

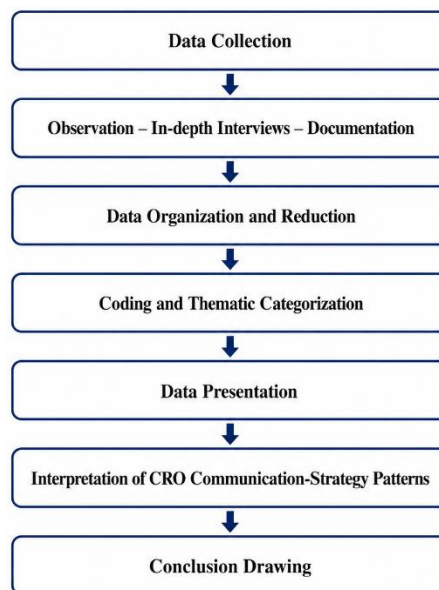


Figure 1. Data Analysis Flow
Source: Primary Data (2026)

This process of analysis enabled the researcher not only to describe the forms of CRO communication but also to interpret how that communication is perceived by customers and how it relates to loyalty an approach consistent with the character of qualitative CRM research, which seeks to understand the customer-relationship process through informants' experience rather than through statistical measurement alone.

Data Validity

Data validity was established through source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation involved comparing information obtained from the CRO Team Leader, CRO staff, the academic team, parents, and students to assess the consistency of information on communication strategy and service delivery.

Technique triangulation involved comparing interview results with observation and documentation. For example, CRO accounts of the customer follow-up process were compared against observed communication activity and available documentation, and accounts of complaint handling were compared against parents' experience as service recipients.

Triangulation was essential because communication strategy is a phenomenon that involves the perspectives of both communicator and recipient. Mubarakah (2024) shows that the effectiveness of customer-relations communication depends on how information is conveyed and how customer needs are understood, while Hidayah (2026) shows that customer-relationship management involves multiple parties and channels. Cross-checking across sources and techniques was therefore used to strengthen the credibility of the study's interpretations.

Results and Discussion

Overview of the CRO's Communication Strategy

The findings show that the CRO's communication strategy at CV IBSI EDUTAMA is carried out through a combination of digital and direct communication, using WhatsApp,

Instagram, and face-to-face interaction, with media selection adapted to the purpose and nature of each customer need. WhatsApp is the most dominant medium in CRO interaction with parents and students because it is regarded as fast, easy, and capable of supporting real-time communication. Through WhatsApp, the CRO conveys program information, learning schedules, and student progress, follows up with prospective customers, and receives inquiries and complaints.

"Communication with parents or students is most often carried out through WhatsApp because information can be delivered more quickly and easily. Information about schedules, new programs, and student progress is generally conveyed through this medium first." (Anindia, CRO Private, primary-data interview, 15 June 2026)

This finding indicates that the CRO's media use is functional the medium is selected according to service needs and the speed with which information must be delivered. Instagram, in turn, is used as a medium oriented more toward introducing programs and shaping the perception of prospective customers.

"Instagram is used to introduce IBSI's programs, student activities, and various information that can attract new prospective customers. Instagram functions not only as a promotional medium but also helps build parents' trust." (Ega, CRO Class, primary-data interview, 24 June 2026)

There is therefore a functional distinction between the two channels: WhatsApp is used predominantly for direct communication and customer service, while Instagram is used for public communication, program introduction, and institutional image-building. Face-to-face communication is retained for situations requiring deeper consultation, giving the CRO room to understand customer needs more personally and to provide more comprehensive explanations.

"This is consistent with the experience of Mrs. Fauziah, a parent in the Private program, who stated that communication with the CRO is more often conducted through WhatsApp because information can be given quickly, while more specific needs are addressed through direct explanation." (Mrs. Fauziah, primary-data interview, 29 June 2026)

Table 2. Media and Functions of CRO Communication at CV IBSI EDUTAMA

Communication Medium	Main Function	Form of Communication Activity
WhatsApp	Service and direct communication	Program information, schedules, student progress, follow-up, inquiries, and complaints
Instagram	Promotion and public communication	Program introduction, student activities, and institutional information

Communication Medium	Main Function	Form of Communication Activity
Face-to-face	Consultation and personal communication	Consultation on customer needs and more in-depth explanation

Source: Primary Data (2026)

This table shows that the CRO's communication strategy does not rely on a single medium; the use of several channels allows communication to be adapted to the character of each customer need. This finding is consistent with Hidayah (2026), who shows that Collaborative CRM is carried out through continuous communication across multiple channels, while Operational CRM is realized through responsive service and customer assistance. The use of WhatsApp, Instagram, and direct communication at CV IBSI EDUTAMA can therefore be understood as a form of multichannel deployment aimed at sustaining the customer relationship.

This finding also resembles that of Putri and Riswandi (2025), who show that WhatsApp is used as a direct communication medium to provide service information, conduct follow-up, and act on customer complaints and feedback, and that personal communication and reminders from a Customer Relationship Officer help sustain long-term customer relationships. Digital media, in other words, is effective not simply because of its technological character, but because it is used to consistently perform the function of customer relationship management.

Hospitality as a Strategy for Building Customer Closeness

The findings show that hospitality friendliness in communication is one of the CRO's primary strategies at CV IBSI EDUTAMA. This friendliness is expressed not only through polite language but also through attentiveness to student needs, willingness to listen to parents, and a consultative approach to service.

"The CRO does not merely provide program information but tries to understand the student's condition and the parent's needs. Communication is directed toward consultation so that the customer feels attended to." (Nadya, CRO Team Leader (Private), primary-data interview, 6 July 2026)

This finding points to a shift in communication orientation from mere selling toward consultative communication: the CRO does not simply present what the company offers, but first seeks to understand what the customer needs.

"What makes her comfortable is when the CRO not only offers a program but also listens to her child's needs and gives suitable suggestions." (Safety Nadira, Parent (Private), primary-data interview, 10 July 2026)

From the customer's perspective, friendliness becomes meaningful when it is expressed through the CRO's capacity to listen and respond relevantly to needs. Hospitality in this study

therefore cannot be reduced to verbal friendliness alone, but encompasses attentiveness, empathy, willingness to listen, and orientation toward customer needs.

This finding aligns with DeVito's concept of interpersonal communication, as applied by Lukman and Ririn (2024), in which effective interpersonal communication encompasses openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality elements that make interaction more pleasant and support the formation of customer relationships.

This alignment demonstrates that the CRO's hospitality serves a strategic function in building a positive communication experience. When parents feel heard and receive advice suited to their needs, communication is no longer perceived merely as a promotional activity; it becomes a form of service that strengthens closeness between customer and institution a finding that also supports Mubarokah (2024), who shows that customer-relations communication needs to be responsive, accessible, personal, and oriented toward customer needs.

Hospitality can thus be positioned as an initial strategy for building trust: customers who feel valued have greater room to voice needs, questions, and complaints to the CRO. Based on the available data, however, this study cannot conclude quantitatively how strongly hospitality alone contributes to loyalty; the relationship is understood qualitatively, through the experiences and perceptions of informants.

Clarity as the Basis of Customer Trust

The next finding shows that clarity the clarity of information is an important element of CRO communication strategy. The information provided covers learning programs, class schedules, class systems, student progress, and additional services. Ensuring this clarity is not solely the CRO's individual responsibility but is supported by coordination between the CRO and the academic team.

"Before information is given to parents, the CRO usually coordinates with the academic team so that the information conveyed matches actual conditions and does not create misunderstanding." (Windia, Academic Team, primary-data interview, 13 July 2026)

This finding shows that clarity has both an internal and an external dimension: internally, clarity of information is built through interdepartmental coordination; externally, that information is then conveyed to customers in accessible language.

The importance of this coordination shows that the quality of customer communication depends not only on the CRO's speaking or writing ability, but also on the accuracy of information available within the organization. The CRO functions as the link between customers and internal divisions; erroneous information can therefore undermine customer trust, whereas consistent information strengthens the perception of institutional professionalism.

"The information given by the CRO is fairly clear, particularly regarding schedules and the child's learning progress. Changes in information are also conveyed directly to the customer." (Aditya Bimantara, Parent (Private), primary-data interview, 15 July 2026)

From the customer's perspective, clarity is evident in the CRO's ability to convey information that is relevant, easy to understand, and promptly updated when changes occur. This result corresponds with Mubarokah (2024), who positions transparency as a core element of customer-relations communication strategy: information that is clear, accurate, and accessible helps customers understand the service and strengthens their trust in the organization, while rapid response to customer questions and concerns further strengthens the relationship by making customers feel attended to. In the context of CV IBSI EDUTAMA, clarity is especially important because tutoring services involve dynamic information schedules, programs, student progress, and learning coordination meaning CRO communication must ensure that the information parents receive is not only fast but also accurate and consistent.

Problem Solving as a Form of Service Responsiveness

The next communication strategy is problem solving the CRO's capacity to help customers resolve problems arising during service delivery. Based on the interviews, problems faced by customers may relate to learning schedules, student needs, communication with tutors, or service evaluation.

"When a problem arises from a parent or student, the CRO does not make decisions independently but coordinates with the academic team or tutor so that the solution offered fits the actual condition of the problem." (Asna, CRO Private, primary-data interview, 13 July 2026)

This finding shows that problem solving within CRO activity is a collaborative process, in which the CRO functions as the link between the customer and the internal unit that holds the relevant authority or more specific information.

"The CRO becomes the link between the customer and the academic division, so that customer input or obstacles can be followed up promptly." (Sandy, Academic Team, primary-data interview, 13 July 2026)

Based on these two statements, problem solving can be understood through three main stages: receiving the problem from the customer, conducting internal coordination, and providing follow-up to the customer.

This flow shows that CRO communication is bidirectional: customers do not merely receive information from the company but can raise needs, questions, and complaints that are then processed by the organization. This finding is consistent with Hidayah (2026), who shows that Operational CRM is realized through responsive service and customer assistance, while long-term relationships are strengthened through sustained communication.

Problem solving is also connected to the concept of relationship marketing. Lukman and Ririn (2024) show that relationship-marketing strategy encompasses intensive communication, understanding of needs, response to problems, and maintenance of commitment, with success reflected in customers who provide positive information and make repeat purchases. In the context of IBSI EDUTAMA, this form of loyalty is reflected in parents' tendency to continue using the service, extend their program, use the service again, and recommend the institution to others.

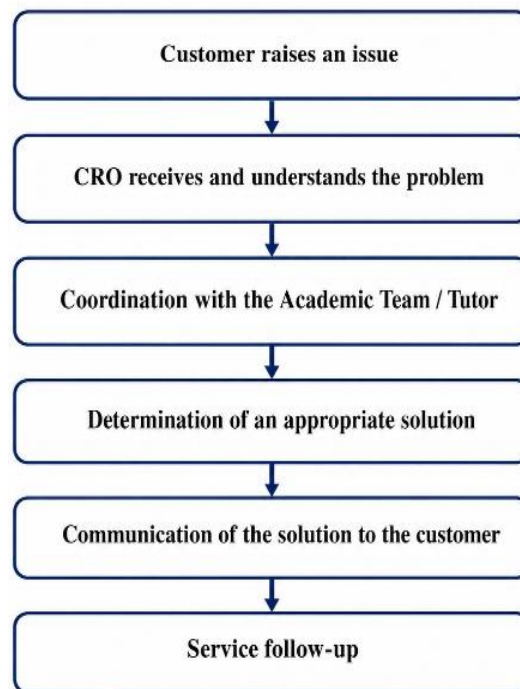


Figure 2. Problem-Solving Flow of the Customer Relation Officer at CV IBSI EDUTAMA
Source: Primary Data (2026)

This is supported by both internal and external respondents. From the internal side, the CRO Team Leader explained:

"We try to maintain communication with parents, not only when offering a program. After a student joins the program, the CRO continues to follow up and ask about progress and further needs. When parents feel our service is suitable, they usually continue the program or use the service again." (Nadya, CRO Team Leader (Private), primary-data interview, 6 July 2026)

This statement is reinforced by an external respondent a parent who stated:

"I feel comfortable with the CRO's service because communication is good, and whenever I have a question I am always helped. Since I am already satisfied with the service and program, I chose to continue and use IBSI's service again." (Safety Nadira, Parent (Private), primary-data interview, 10 July 2026)

Beyond continued use of the service, loyalty is also visible in customers' willingness to recommend IBSI EDUTAMA to others, as expressed by another parent:

"If a friend or relative needs tutoring, I am willing to recommend IBSI because the service and communication have been quite good so far." (Mrs. Dinar Ardi, Parent (Private), primary-data interview, July 2026)

Taken together, these two perspectives show that internal respondents perceive loyalty through their own efforts to sustain relationships and provide follow-up, while external respondents demonstrate loyalty through their decision to continue, reuse, and recommend the service. This indicates that the CRO's communication strategy plays a role in sustaining long-term customer relationships.

Integration of Hospitality, Clarity, and Problem Solving

Taken as a whole, the CRO's communication strategy at CV IBSI EDUTAMA does not rest on a single indicator but on the combination of hospitality, clarity, and problem solving. Each element serves a distinct but complementary function: hospitality creates interpersonal comfort and closeness; clarity ensures customers receive accurate and easily understood information; and problem solving ensures that customer problems receive a response and follow-up.

Table 3. Findings on CV IBSI EDUTAMA's CRO Communication Strategy

Indicator	Form of Strategy	Empirical Evidence	Implication for Customer Relations
Hospitality	Friendly, attentive, understands needs, consultative	CRO seeks to understand the student's condition and the parent's needs	Creates comfort and closeness
Clarity	Clear, accurate, consistent information; internal coordination	CRO coordinates with the academic team before conveying information	Builds trust and reduces misunderstanding
Problem solving	Receives complaints, coordinates, provides solutions, follows up	CRO links the customer with the academic team/tutor	Demonstrates responsiveness and attentiveness
Communication media	WhatsApp, Instagram, face-to-face	WhatsApp dominant; Instagram for program introduction; face-to-face for consultation	Enables communication suited to customer needs

Source: Primary Data (2026)

This pattern indicates a consistent link between communication strategy and customer-relationship management: the CRO functions not only as an information provider but also as the connector between customer needs and the company's internal resources. This reinforces Hidayah (2026), who shows that CRM concerns not only the technical quality of service but also an organization's capacity to manage customer relationships on an ongoing basis, realized through responsive service, needs management, and cross-channel communication.

This finding is also consistent with Mubarokah (2024), who shows that effective customer-relations communication strategy combines transparency, responsive and personal solutions, expectation management, trust, and active communication. Hospitality, clarity, and

problem solving at CV IBSI EDUTAMA can thus be understood as the operational expression of these customer-relations communication principles.

CRO Communication Strategy and the Formation of Customer Loyalty

The findings show that CRO communication contributes to a positive customer experience through communication that is fast, friendly, clear, and responsive. This contribution, however, is understood in this study as a process of loyalty formation rather than a statistically tested causal relationship, given the qualitative approach and the experiential nature of the data collected.

The link between service and loyalty is supported by Utomo (2017), who shows that service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.355$), with the direct effect of service quality on loyalty (0.601) exceeding its indirect effect (0.519). Although the context and approach differ, this finding supports the view that the quality of service experience is an important factor in customer retention.

More recent evidence, however, indicates that customer loyalty in educational services is shaped by mechanisms that extend beyond communication quality alone. Latif et al. (2021) found that student loyalty was shaped through an interconnected process involving perceived service quality, satisfaction, and trust, which mediated the relationship between university social responsibility and loyalty. This finding suggests that positive communication may help establish relational trust, but sustained loyalty also depends on customers' broader evaluation of service quality and satisfaction with the institution.

Evidence from the tutoring-service context reinforces this multidimensional explanation. Julianti et al. (2023), in their study of Budi Bakti Tutoring, found that service quality was positively associated with perceived value, student satisfaction, and student loyalty. The result is particularly relevant to the present study because it indicates that customers may remain loyal not simply because communication is friendly or responsive, but because their overall service experience creates sufficient value and satisfaction. Similarly, Karina (2025), examining a tutoring institution in Cibubur, found that both service quality and price were positively related to customer satisfaction and loyalty, directly as well as through customer satisfaction. These findings indicate that price-value considerations can operate alongside relational communication when parents evaluate whether to continue using an educational service.

In the CV IBSI EDUTAMA case, this quality of experience is reflected in how the CRO interacts with customers: hospitality provides a positive interpersonal experience, clarity reduces informational uncertainty, and problem solving assures customers that their concerns receive attention. When these three elements are performed consistently, CRO communication has the potential to strengthen trust and long-term relationships with customers.

Nevertheless, the educational-service context requires recognition that relational communication is only one component of the broader customer experience. Hasnawati et al. (2025) found that both educational staff services and teacher competence contributed to student satisfaction and loyalty in private secondary education, with teacher competence showing a stronger relationship with satisfaction than educational staff services. Student satisfaction also emerged as the strongest direct predictor of loyalty, while competitor intensity strengthened the satisfaction–loyalty relationship. This evidence suggests that hospitality and responsive CRO communication may be insufficient to sustain loyalty when the core educational experience, particularly instructional competence, does not meet customer expectations. In

other words, communication can reinforce loyalty, but it cannot fully substitute for the substantive quality of educational delivery.

A similar pattern appears in non-formal educational services. Niora and Utami (2026), studying English-language courses in Makassar, showed that brand image and service quality positively contributed to student loyalty through student satisfaction. Their findings further indicate that loyalty emerges from the combination of relational experience and broader institutional evaluations rather than from a single customer-contact activity. Accordingly, the present findings should be interpreted as showing that CRO communication through hospitality, clarity, and problem solving represents an important relational mechanism within a wider loyalty system that also includes service quality, instructional competence, perceived value, price considerations, institutional image, satisfaction, and trust.

Hidayah (2026) finds that loyalty in customer relationships can be seen through repeat use of service, willingness to recommend the company, and continuity of the working relationship. In the context of IBSI EDUTAMA, this provides an interpretive basis for understanding loyalty through customers' tendency to sustain their relationship with the institution. Interviews with internal and external respondents show behavior reflecting loyalty across four indicators: trust, repeat use of service, recommendation, and commitment. Although this study does not measure loyalty numerically, the interview results show that most informants gave responses consistent with these loyalty indicators being fulfilled. From the internal perspective, the CRO Team Leader explained that the relationship with customers is sustained through communication and follow-up after service delivery:

"We try to maintain communication with parents, not only when offering a program. After a student joins a program, the CRO continues to follow up to understand progress and the parent's needs. When a parent feels satisfied with our service, they usually continue the program or use the service again."
 (Nadya, CRO Team Leader (Private), primary-data interview, 6 July 2026)

This statement indicates that, from the internal perspective, customer loyalty is reflected in customers' trust and commitment to sustaining their relationship with IBSI EDUTAMA. The CRO's effort to serve, follow up, and understand customer needs forms part of the strategy for retaining customers. This is reinforced by external respondents' parents. One parent stated:

"I feel comfortable with the CRO's service because communication is good, and whenever I have a question I am always helped. Since I am already satisfied with the service and program, I chose to continue and use IBSI's service again."
 (Safety Nadira, Parent (Private), primary-data interview, 10 July 2026)

This statement reflects both trust and repeat use of service: comfort with CRO communication encourages customers to continue using IBSI EDUTAMA's service. The recommendation indicator is likewise evident in another parent's statement:

"If a friend or relative needs tutoring, I am willing to recommend IBSI because the service and communication have been quite good so far." (Mrs. Marisya, Parent (Private), primary-data interview, 16 July 2026)

This willingness to recommend indicates that customers not only sustain their relationship with the institution but also hold a positive evaluation that motivates them to share their experience with others.

Table 4. Summary of Interview Results on Customer-Loyalty Indicators

	Loyalty Indicator	Respondents	Percentage	Note
1	Trust	18 of 20	90%	Most respondents show trust in IBSI EDUTAMA's service and communication
2	Repeat use of service	20 of 20	100%	All respondents show a tendency to reuse or continue the service
3	Recommendation	17 of 20	85%	Most respondents are willing to recommend IBSI EDUTAMA to others
4	Commitment	20 of 20	100%	All respondents show a tendency to sustain their relationship with IBSI EDUTAMA

Source: Primary Data (2026)

As the table shows, repeat use of service and commitment produced the highest results 20 of 20 respondents (100%) indicating that all respondents show a tendency to sustain their relationship with IBSI EDUTAMA through continued use of the service. Trust was shown by 18 of 20 respondents (90%), indicating that most customers hold a positive belief in the service, communication, and the CRO's capacity to meet their needs. Recommendation was shown by 17 of 20 respondents (85%); although this figure falls short of the full sample, it indicates that a majority of customers hold a sufficiently positive experience to encourage recommendation to others. All four loyalty indicators, therefore, show a strong tendency, particularly for repeat use of service and commitment. These qualitative findings demonstrate that the CRO's communication strategy through hospitality, clarity, and problem solving contributes to creating a positive experience, building trust, and sustaining long-term customer relationships.

Research Implications

Practically, the findings indicate that CV IBSI EDUTAMA should maintain multichannel communication with clearly differentiated functions. WhatsApp can remain the primary channel for service and direct communication, given that informants regard it as fast and easy; Instagram can be further developed as a medium for building the knowledge and trust of prospective customers through program information and student activities; and face-to-face communication should be retained for consultations requiring deeper understanding.

The findings also point to the importance of standardizing CRO communication. Hospitality, clarity, and problem solving can be developed into indicators for evaluating CRO service for example, hospitality assessed through the ability to listen and understand customer needs, clarity through the accuracy and consistency of information, and problem solving through the speed of coordination and follow-up in resolving problems.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the view that communication is an integral part of Customer Relationship Management and relationship marketing. The findings show that customer relationships are shaped not only by program or service quality, but by the interaction that occurs at every point of contact between the customer and the CRO consistent with Rizky (2023), who shows that CRM involves the elements of people, process, and technology, including service, complaint handling, and the use of digital communication media.

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the data analyzed here derive primarily from interviews with, and observation of, CRO communication activity, and are not accompanied by quantitative data on the level of customer loyalty. Second, the study does not statistically measure the relationship between hospitality, clarity, problem solving, and loyalty. Third, the findings are focused on the context of CV IBSI EDUTAMA and cannot automatically be generalized to all tutoring institutions.

Nevertheless, these limitations do not diminish the contribution of this case study in providing a contextual understanding of how CRO communication unfolds in practice. The study illustrates that customer loyalty can be understood through a concrete process of interaction, in which the CRO engages in friendly communication, provides clear information, responds to needs, coordinates on problems, and sustains the relationship across multiple communication media. CRO communication strategy at CV IBSI EDUTAMA can thus be understood as a relational process connecting the quality of interaction, service experience, trust, and the effort to sustain long-term customer relationships.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the CRO's communication strategy at CV IBSI EDUTAMA through hospitality, clarity, and problem solving plays a role in building customer loyalty. This loyalty is reflected in four indicators: trust, repeat use of service, recommendation, and commitment. Interviews with 20 customer respondents show that trust was demonstrated by 18 respondents (90%), repeat use of service by 20 respondents (100%), recommendation by 17 respondents (85%), and commitment by 20 respondents (100%). These findings show that most customers tend to sustain their relationship with CV IBSI EDUTAMA, with repeat use of service and commitment forming the strongest indicators, since all respondents showed a tendency to continue their relationship with the institution, while trust and recommendation also showed high levels of response. CRO communication strategy therefore functions not merely as a means of delivering information, but as part of the process of building a positive experience, sustaining relationships, and driving customer loyalty at CV IBSI EDUTAMA.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the study of customer communication by conceptualizing CRO communication in tutoring services as a relational coordination mechanism that integrates interpersonal treatment, informational accuracy, problem resolution, and internal coordination in managing customer relationships. Hospitality facilitates positive interpersonal interaction and customer closeness, clarity ensures the accuracy and consistency

of information, while problem solving connects customer concerns with the organizational resources required to resolve them. These elements are reinforced by coordination between the CRO and the academic team, indicating that effective customer communication is not solely an individual interpersonal activity but also an organizational process that connects external customer needs with internal service functions. The findings show that customer-relationship management is determined not only by the quality of the core product or service, but also by the quality of communication occurring at every point of interaction with the customer, thereby positioning the CRO as a relational intermediary who coordinates customer expectations, service information, and internal responses to support the continuity of customer relationships.

Practically, the findings suggest that CV IBSI EDUTAMA should sustain the use of multichannel communication with distinct functions for each medium, strengthen the consistency of information through internal coordination, and adopt hospitality, clarity, and problem solving as indicators for evaluating the quality of CRO communication. Strengthening the CRO's capacity to listen to customer needs, provide accurate information, handle complaints, and conduct follow-up can serve as a strategy for strengthening customer relationships.

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case-study method, and therefore describes the communication process within the context of CV IBSI EDUTAMA in depth without statistically measuring the effect of each communication element on loyalty. Future research could adopt a quantitative approach to test the relationships among hospitality, clarity, problem solving, service quality, trust, and customer loyalty, and could compare CRO communication strategy across several tutoring institutions to build a broader understanding of customer communication strategy in the educational-services sector.

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