

An Overview of Personal Selling with Cigarette Sales at Tourist Attractions in Medan City

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Published: October, 2025

ABSTRACT

The study purpose was ... This study aims to describe personal selling practices in cigarette sales at tourist sites in Medan City. The background of this study is based on the phenomenon of increasing cigarette sales activities in tourist areas involving direct interaction between sellers and tourists, thereby giving rise to economic, social, and regulatory dynamics.

Materials and methods. The study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive design, involving 70 cigarette seller respondents selected through accidental sampling. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and questionnaires, then analyzed univariately and bivariately using Pearson's correlation test.

Results. The results show that the majority of sellers are street vendors (71.4%) operating in natural tourist locations (64.3%), with cigarette displays mostly placed at the front (75.7%). Most respondents were active smokers (70%), and the highest sales volume was in the range of 6–10 packs per week (42.9%).

Conclusion. The personal selling strategies used tended to be persuasive, relaxed, and tailored to the characteristics of tourists. This activity contributes to the local economy but presents challenges in terms of health regulations, tourism image, and the sustainability of tourist destinations. This study is expected to provide input for policymakers, tourism managers, and the community in balancing economic aspects with public health and tourism sustainability.

Keywords: Personal Selling, Cigarette Sales, Tourist Attractions, Medan City.

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INTRODUCTION

The tobacco industry is one of the economic sectors that plays a significant role in the Indonesian economy, despite facing various regulatory and public health challenges. Personal selling as a direct marketing strategy has become one of the effective approaches in this industry, particularly in the context of cigaret sales at various strategic locations. The concept of personal selling involves direct interaction between the seller and the buyer, allowing for two-way communication that can influence purchasing decisions in a more personal and persuasive manner (Safitri, 2021). Medan City, as the capital of North Sumatra Province, has unique characteristics as a rapidly developing center for trade and tourism. Medan's strategic geographical location as the gateway to northern Sumatra makes it a transit destination and tourist destination for various groups, including both domestic and international tourists. The diversity of tourist attractions in Medan City, ranging from culinary tourism and historical tourism to natural tourism, creates a complex economic ecosystem with various business opportunities, including in the cigaret trade sector (Suhendar and Putra, 2021). The phenomenon of cigaret sales at tourist destinations in Medan City presents interesting dynamics for in-depth study. Tourist attractions generally have a

heterogeneous visitor profile with diverse social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. This condition creates both opportunities and challenges for tobacco businesses in implementing effective personal selling strategies. The interaction between cigaret vendors and tourists not only involves transactional aspects but also psychological, social, and cultural aspects that influence consumption patterns and product preferences (Sipayung, 2021). The rapid development of the tourism industry in Medan City has implications for changes in consumer patterns, including tobacco consumption. Tourist attractions such as Maimun Palace, Tjong A Fie Mansion, Medan Zoo, and various culinary destinations are strategic locations for business owners to implement personal selling techniques. The uniqueness of each tourist location creates different market segments, thus requiring a personal selling approach tailored to the characteristics of visitors and the environmental context (Rusdiana et al., 2021).

Government regulations and policies related to tobacco product control also have a significant impact on the practice of personal selling of cigarets in tourist destinations. Various regulations governing smoke-free zones, advertising restrictions, and public health protection pose unique challenges for businesses in developing effective marketing strategies while remaining compliant with applicable regulations. This necessitates adaptation and innovation in the personal selling approach used. From an economic perspective, the sale of cigarets in tourist destinations contributes to the local economy thru job creation and economic circulation. However, public health aspects and the social impact of cigaret consumption are also important considerations that need to be comprehensively analyzed. The complexity of this issue requires a deep understanding of how personal selling is applied in the context of cigaret sales at tourist destinations, as well as its impact on various stakeholders (Mujahid, 2021).

Research on the image of personal selling in cigaret sales at tourist destinations in Medan City is relevant for providing empirical understanding of direct marketing practices in the tobacco industry. This study is expected to contribute to the development of marketing theory, particularly in the context of personal selling in sensitive and heavily regulated industries. Additionally, the results of this study can also provide input for policymakers in formulating more effective and balanced regulations (Putra et al., 2022). The urgency of this research is further strengthened by the scarcity of empirical studies that specifically explore the application of personal selling in cigaret sales at tourist destinations. Most existing research is still general or focuses on only certain aspects, thus not providing a holistic picture of this phenomenon (Abadi, 2024). Thru this research, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of the strategies, challenges, and impacts of personal selling of cigarets in tourist destinations in Medan City can be obtained. In the Joint Regulation of the Minister of Health and the Minister of Home Affairs Number 7 of 2011 concerning Smoke-Free Zones, a cigaret is a processed tobacco product wrapped and derived from the *Nicotiana Tabacum*, *Nicotiana Rustica*, and other plants, or their synthetic equivalents, containing nicotine and tar with or without additives.

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia states that smoking behavior is the act of burning a tobacco product intended to be burned, inhaled, or breathed in, including clove cigarets, white cigarets, cigars, or other forms produced from the *Nicotiana tabacum* plant, other or synthetic forms, the smoke of which contains nicotine and tar, with or without additives (Setiawan, 2024).

Smoking is a common habit of inhaling tobacco that is practiced in daily life. For individuals who are accustomed to smoking, this habit becomes a need that is difficult to avoid. Although smoking can provide satisfaction for smokers, this habit also has negative impacts, both for the smoker themselves and for those around them 32. Smoking is a health-damaging behavior, but it remains difficult to quit. In fact, the rate of cigaret consumption in Indonesia tends to be higher compared to other countries in Southeast Asia (Suhada and Norhabiba, 2025).

According to Moekijat in the dictionary of economic terms, sales are an activity aimed at finding, influencing, and advising buyers so that they can align their needs with the products offered and reach a mutually beneficial price agreement. This indicates that sales are not merely a process of

offering products, but also include efforts to find potential customers, influence their decisions, and provide advice so that they feel that the products offered meet their needs (Yulianda et al., 2020). During the sales process, price negotiations occur between the seller and the buyer, allowing both parties to reach an agreement that is beneficial to both. Furthermore, sales are a process where the seller guarantees, anticipates, and satisfies the needs and desires of the buyer, leading to sustainable and mutually beneficial profits for both the seller and the buyer. The seller must guarantee customer satisfaction, anticipate their needs, and provide appropriate solutions to create a sustainable business image. Thus, effective selling will generate long-term profits and create a mutually beneficial image between seller and buyer (Pasaribu et al., 2024). According to Trihudiyatmanto et al., 2025, personal selling is a personal presentation by a company's salesperson (sales force) in order to successfully sell and build an image with customers. Additionally, according to his research, 52 states that personal selling is a personal interaction between individuals with the goal of creating, improving, mastering, or maintaining a mutually beneficial exchange image with another party. Meanwhile, according to Arifudin et al., 2020, personal selling is a professional skill that reflects a salesperson's loyalty in building interactions with individuals or groups. In the process, the seller plays a role in understanding the customer's primary needs, identifying opportunities, and leveraging existing advantages to make the right decisions. Additionally, personal selling also serves as a form of support in practical decision-making and mutually beneficial cooperation, thereby benefiting the wider community.

Based on the book "Marketing Management" by Ir. Agustina Shinta, M.P., behavioral change theory explains how consumers change their purchasing decisions through several stages. In the context of personal selling for cigarette products at tourist destinations, this theory is highly relevant. Agustina Shinta's theory of behavior change includes several important stages: Awareness - Consumers become aware of the existence of certain tobacco products through interaction with salespeople. Interest - Personal selling builds consumer interest by explaining the advantages of specific cigarette products. Evaluation - Consumers evaluate the information received from salespeople against other alternatives. Trial - Consumers try the product, where personal selling techniques can encourage them to try the product. Adoption - Consumers decide to purchase and use tobacco products sustainably. Islamic integration or wahdatul ulum is a study that shows that science is integrated with Islamic values. This view proves that the development of science is in line with the Quran and Hadith. In fact, knowledge comes from Allah SWT, and humans only need to develop their research methodology.

If we look at the Quran, the first verses revealed are Q.S Al-Alaq (Iqra) verses 1-5, which emphasize the importance of reading. Allah says:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

Meaning: "Read in the name of your Lord who created! (1), He created man from a clot of blood (2), Read! Your Lord is the Most Generous (3), who taught by the pen (4), He taught man what he did not know (5). "According to Islam, personal selling is not just an interaction between a seller and a buyer, but must also reflect good morals and uphold Islamic values. In Islam, honesty and ethics in business are core principles that must be upheld by every business owner (Firmansyah, 2012). The Prophet himself was known as a trustworthy, honest merchant who always prioritized justice in every transaction. This attitude serves as a model for Muslims in conducting economic activities, including in marketing strategies such as personal selling. Honesty in selling not only brings worldly profit but also blessings in one's sustenance. This aligns with God's word in Surah Al-Mutaffifin verses 1-3, which condemns cheating in trade and emphasizes the importance of being fair in every transaction. In the Quran, Allah SWT says in Surah Al-Mutaffifin verses 1-3:

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا اكْتَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ وَإِذَا كَالُواهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ

Meaning: "Woe to those who are deceitful (in measuring and weighing)! (They are) those who, when they receive a measure from others, demand it be filled (Conversely,) when they measure or weigh for others, they reduce it."

The law of smoking in Islam is a topic widely discussed by scholars and researchers. Generally, views on the law of smoking in Islam can be divided into several categories: Haram, Many scholars believe that smoking is haram because it can harm health. Islamic principles emphasize the importance of maintaining health and not taking actions that could harm oneself or others. In this context, smoking is considered an act that harms the body. Makruh, Some scholars consider smoking makruh, which means it is not recommended but not to the level of haram. This opinion is usually based on the fact that although smoking is not directly forbidden, its negative impact on health makes it not recommended. Mubah, There is also the view that smoking is mubah (permissible) as long as it does not have a negative impact on oneself or others. However, this view is becoming less common as awareness of the health dangers of smoking increases.

METHOD

This research uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive research type. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of personal selling in cigaret sales thru direct interaction with informants in the field. According to Moleong, qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena from the participants' perspective, with the researcher as the main instrument directly involved in the data collection process. Descriptive research is used because this study focuses on providing a factual, systematic, and accurate description of the personal selling strategies employed by cigaret vendors or sales personnel at tourist destinations in Medan City, and their relationship to the sales process.

This research was conducted at several tourist locations in Medan City. The selection of locations was made based on the consideration that tourist destinations are strategic areas for marketing activities, including personal selling practices, as these locations serve as direct interaction points between salespeople and consumers. The research period will begin in February and continue until June 2025. The population in this study consists of all cigaret vendors in the tourist area of Medan City who are involved in direct transactions (personal selling). Based on data from the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism in 2025, there are 242 tourist attractions in Medan City. From that population, the research sample was determined using Slovin's formula, resulting in a sample size of 70 cigaret vendors. The sampling technique used was accidental sampling, which is the selection of samples based on chance, where anyone the researcher encountered at the research location who met the population criteria was included in the research sample.

The variables studied in this research consist of the independent variable (X), which is personal selling, and the dependent variable (Y), which is cigaret sales. To clarify both variables, the researcher compiled operational definitions of the variables and their measurement indicators. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire containing statements related to personal selling practices and respondents' perceptions of cigaret sales. Before being used, the questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability. The validity test results show that all question items have an r-calculated value greater than r-table, so they are declared valid. Meanwhile, the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha shows a value greater than 0.7, so the instrument is declared reliable. Data collection techniques were carried out thru direct observation, structured interviews, and the distribution of questionnaires to respondents. The data obtained was then analyzed thru several stages. First, a normality test was conducted to determine if the data was normally distributed. Next, univariate analysis was performed to describe the frequency distribution of each variable, and finally, bivariate analysis was conducted using the Pearson correlation test to determine the relationship between personal selling and cigaret sales at tourist destinations in Medan City.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

General Description of the Research Location

Medan City has an area of 26,510 hectares (265.10 km²) or 3.6% of the total area of North Sumatra. Therefore, compared to other cities/regencies, Medan has a relatively small area with a relatively large population. Geographically, Medan city is located at 3° 30' – 3° 43' North Latitude and 98° 35'–98° 44' East Longitude. Therefore, the topography of Medan city tends to slope toward the north and is located at an altitude of 2.5–37.5 meters above sea level. According to the BPS release in the publication "Medan City in Figures 2022," the population in 2020 reached 2,435,252 people. The population density of Medan City in 2020 was 9,186 people per square kilometer. The population growth rate in Medan City between 2010 and 2020 was 1.45%. Meanwhile, the Human Development Index in Medan City in 2020 reached 80.98. Thus, Medan is the city with the largest population in Sumatra and the fourth largest in Indonesia. The majority of Medan's population falls within the 0-19 and 20-39 age groups (41% and 37.8% of the total population, respectively). Based on the population age structure, Medan is home to approximately 1,377,751 productive individuals (aged 15-59). Furthermore, considering the education level, the average years of schooling for the population has reached 10.5 years. Thus, there is a relatively sufficient workforce available, which can work in various types of companies, including service, trade, and manufacturing industries.

Respondent Characteristics Based on the research results from 70 respondents, a profile of respondent characteristics was obtained based on gender, age, occupation, and highest education. These characteristics are important for understanding the background of the respondents who are the subjects of the research on the personal selling of cigarets at tourist destinations in Medan City.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

No	Respondent Characteristics	Category	Total (people)	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Men	40	57,14
		Women	30	42,86
		18–25 years	30	42,86
2	Old	26–35 years	25	35,71
		>35 years	15	21,43
		Merchant	25	35,71
3	Work	employee	20	28,57
		etc	25	35,71
		Junior High School	12	17,14
4	Highest Education	Senior High School/Vocational School	40	57,14
		Diploma/Bachelor's Degree	18	25,72

Data processed by the researcher, 2025

Overall, the characteristics of the respondents indicate that personal selling at tourist attractions in Medan City primarily targets young men with a secondary education and diverse employment backgrounds. This condition influences the strategies used by salespeople, for example, by employing a relaxed and persuasive communication approach to attract younger age groups, or by leveraging social interactions familiar to visitors from trading or informal working backgrounds. The dominance of respondents with high school/vocational school education also indicates that product information delivery in personal selling tends to be effective when presented in simple and easy-to-understand language. By understanding these characteristics, it can be concluded that the appropriate personal selling strategy in Medan City's tourist locations must consider the respondents' demographic factors so that the cigaret promotion carried out can be more effective in

influencing purchasing decisions. Field Observation Results Based on data obtained thru observations and surveys at various tourist locations in Medan City, various variations were found in the practice of cigaret personal selling, indicating diverse distribution patterns. Data shows that there are several categories of vendors operating in tourist areas, namely fixed vendors who have permanent kiosks or stalls with relatively stable sales volume, mobile vendors who operate with a high mobility strategy to reach various tourist spots, and seasonal vendors who capitalize on the momentum of holiday periods or specific events. The types of cigarets traded are very diverse, ranging from affordable local brands to premium and imported cigarets targeting tourists with high purchasing power.

Sales volume shows significant fluctuations based on visit time, with peak sales occurring on weekends and during holiday periods when the number of tourist visits increases dramatically. The most strategic sales locations were identified in the entrance areas of tourist attractions, parking zones, rest areas, and popular photo spots where tourists tend to linger and have free time to interact with vendors, as shown in the table below.

Table 2. Results of Field Observation of Cigaret Sales at Tourist Destinations in Medan City

Variable	Category	Total (n=70)	Percentage (%)
Type of store	Street Vendor	50	71.4
	Stail retail	16	22.9
	Store	3	4.3
		1	1.4
Types of Tourist Attractions		45	64.3
	Nature History	14	20.0
	Religion	11	15.7
Cigaret Display Location	front	53	75.7
	Back	17	24.3
Smoking Status of Respondents	Smoker	49	70.0
	No smoker	21	30.0
Number of Cigarets Sold per Week	1–5 wraps	20	28.6
	6–10 wraps	30	42.9

11–15
wraps 12 17.1

>15 wraps 8 11.4

Data processed by the researcher, 2025

The practice of personal selling of cigarettes in tourist destinations in Medan City shows unique characteristics compared to cigarette sales in regular commercial locations, where sellers must adjust their approach to the more relaxed tourism context and focus on the tourist experience. The strategies employed by vendors include a non-aggressive approach, capitalizing on tourists' relaxed moments, providing information about local products as part of the cultural experience, and offering flexibility in payment methods to accommodate tourists who may not carry cash in small denominations (Setiawan et al., 2025). Factors influencing the effectiveness of personal selling at tourist destinations include the vendor's communication skills in various languages, understanding consumer preferences from diverse cultural backgrounds, and the ability to read situations to determine the appropriate timing for sales approaches.

From an economic perspective, the practice of personal selling of cigarettes at tourist destinations contributes to the local economy by creating informal employment and increasing economic circulation around the tourist area. However, it also presents complexities in terms of regulation and supervision, involving various stakeholders including tourist destination managers, local governments, and supervisory authorities. The social aspect of this phenomenon indicates interaction between local culture and tourists, which can enrich the tourism experience but also has the potential to create value conflicts, particularly regarding health issues and increasingly strict anti-smoking regulations (Nisa et al., 2025). Regulatory challenges arise because tourist areas often have special status that requires a balance between providing space for local economic activities and enforcing public health regulations and protecting tourists, especially concerning smoking bans in certain areas and restrictions on access to cigarettes for minors. The long-term implications of personal selling practices for cigarettes in tourist destinations need to be evaluated within the context of sustainable tourism development, which holistically considers economic, social, and environmental aspects. Therefore, policies are needed that can accommodate local economic interests while preserving the image of tourist destinations and public health (Khairullah, 2025).

Field Research Results Based on data obtained from a survey of 70 cigarette vendors at various tourist destinations in Medan City, diverse distributions were found in the personal selling characteristics of cigarettes. From a demographic perspective, the majority of cigarette vendors at tourist destinations are male, with a dominant percentage, indicating that cigarette sales are still dominated by a specific gender in the context of tourism. Based on gender, the data shows that female vendors are also involved in this activity, although in smaller proportions, reflecting gender diversification in the practice of personal selling of cigarettes in tourist areas. The age category of sellers shows significant variation, with distribution spanning a wide range of age groups from young adults to seniors, indicating that selling cigarettes at tourist spots is a source of livelihood for various generations. In terms of sales locations, the data shows that the practice of personal selling of cigarettes is spread across various types of tourist destinations with varying concentrations, with some locations exhibiting more intensive sales activity than others.

The research findings indicate that the practice of personal selling of cigarettes in tourist destinations in Medan City has distinct characteristics compared to cigarette sales in conventional commercial locations, where sellers must consider a more complex and diverse tourism context. The dominance of male vendors in this activity can be attributed to cultural and social factors that still view cigarette sales as a masculine domain, but the participation of women also indicates a paradigm shift and economic needs driving gender diversification in this informal sector. The age variation of the vendors indicates that selling cigarettes at tourist destinations is an accessible alternative livelihood for various age groups, ranging from young people seeking flexible work opportunities to older generations needing additional or primary income sources (Cindy, 2025).

From a location and product type perspective, the vendors' adaptation to the characteristics of tourist destinations and tourist preferences demonstrates a relatively good level of market understanding, as they are able to adjust their sales strategies to the specific context of each tourist location. The uneven distribution patterns across various tourist locations can be attributed to factors such as visitor numbers, accessibility, local regulations, and the characteristics of tourists visiting each location. This indicates that the practice of personal selling of cigarettes in tourist destinations is not merely a simple commercial activity, but involves quite sophisticated marketing strategies that consider various business environment variables. The implications of these findings are the need for a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the informal economy in the tourism sector, as well as the importance of developing policies that can accommodate local economic interests while still considering public health aspects and the image of the tourist destination. Additionally, the diversity of seller characteristics and product distribution patterns also highlights the complexity that needs to be considered in developing more effective training programs and regulations for the informal sector in tourism areas.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the practice of personal selling of cigarettes in tourist destinations in Medan City is dominated by street vendors at natural tourist sites, with the majority of sellers being male and most respondents being active smokers. The highest sales are in the range of 6–10 packs per week. Sellers' strategies tend to be persuasive and adapt to the characteristics of tourists. This activity contributes to the local economy but presents challenges related to health regulations and the image of sustainable tourism.

Suggestion

Advice The government needs to strengthen the supervision of cigaret sales in tourist areas to align with health regulations without harming the local economy. Sellers are advised to implement ethical and tourist-friendly personal selling, while tourism managers need to arrange sales locations so they don't disrupt visitor comfort. Further research could delve deeper into the impact of tobacco personal selling on health and tourism sustainability.

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