

# Communication Skills and its Impact on Customer Satisfaction in Inland Resorts in Santo Tomas, Davao Del Norte

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## ABSTRACT

Customer satisfaction refers to the overall level of fulfillment experienced by guests when their expectations are met or exceeded through effective staff communication and quality service delivery. This research study determined the impact of communication skills on customer satisfaction between customers at inland resorts in Santo Tomas, Davao del Norte. This study examined the relationship between various communication indicators including writing, oral, listening, digital, and nonverbal communication skills and their specific impact on customers' overall satisfaction during their stay at inland resorts. This research identified the communication indicators that had become important for boosting customer satisfaction. A quantitative-descriptive correlational design was used to gather data from 383 guests selected through stratified sampling. Data were collected using a modified questionnaire analyzing the perception of staff communication and satisfaction through performance, threshold, and excitement attributes. To examine the correlations between variables, statistical tools such as the mean and standard deviation were used. Findings revealed that employees' communication skills significantly improve guest satisfaction. Oral and written communication have the strongest influence in building trust, understanding guest needs, and enhancing overall experiences. The study highlights the importance of clear and consistent communication in encouraging return visits. The research study indicates that enhancing staff communication competence is important for achieving an excellent level of satisfaction with customers in the tourism industry. It recommends ongoing staff training to strengthen digital and interpersonal communication, thereby improving resort attractiveness and customer relationships.

**Keywords** - Communication Skills, Customer Satisfaction, Inland Resorts, and Communication Competence

## INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction at inland resorts often declined when employees failed to communicate effectively with customers based on the study of Depierraz (2024). One main problem was that staff often received little communication training, which can lead to misunderstandings and make guests' experiences less enjoyable. Additionally, as stated by Čuić et al., (2023) effective communication and soft skills were important for improving customer satisfaction and service quality. Another issue was handling customer complaints, since many employees lacked emotional intelligence and listening skills. As explained by Mazhar et al., (2022) to keep customers satisfied during challenging interactions, staff had to demonstrate empathy and clarity. Poor communication between employees and guests can lead to lower satisfaction and unhappy customers.

As stated by Kim and Kim (2022), knowing customer satisfaction was important since it determined returning guests, recommendations from others, and income for resort businesses. Additionally, Pantaruk et al., (2025) stated that analyzing customer happiness enabled management to prioritize training such as communication and interpersonal skills training where it will have the most impact on the quality of service and customer satisfaction. Based on Phan and Quoc (2024), customer satisfaction represented visitors' overall perceptions of the level of services provided, making it a useful metric for discovering staff communication or processing issues. Beyond that, Hussain et al. (2023) believed that analyzing customer happiness became essential for

tourist sectors since fulfilled visitors were significantly more likely to return as committed customers who return, lowering purchasing costs and providing an enduring competitive edge in a dynamic market.

Primarily, Asthiti et al. (2024) stated that communication skills were vital for customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry, as they significantly impacted how effectively employees shared information, resolved problems, and fostered positive relationships with guests. Employees with strong speaking, writing, listening, and nonverbal skills could communicate more effectively, resolved issues promptly, and created positive guest experiences. Additionally, as stated by Quitariano et al., (2024) customer satisfaction depended on meeting basic, expected, and delight factors, and how resort employees communicated can directly affect these areas, either raising or lowering satisfaction.

According to Candra (2023), there is insufficient evidence concerning how the verbal, non-verbal, and digital communication skills of frontline resort employees affect customer satisfaction and loyalty, especially in inland tourism areas. Additionally, as described by Pablo et al., (2025) this gap was important to address in places like Santo Tomas, Davao del Norte, where tourism was becoming a key source of jobs, business opportunities, and economic recovery after the pandemic. This study was important because it could help inland resorts enhance service quality and staff skills by identifying which communication skills were most essential for guest satisfaction. The results will help resort managers, local leaders, and training groups develop more effective programs to enhance communication and service. The study also supported the goals of regional growth, sustainable tourism, and building local talent, which were important for Davao del Norte's economic plans.

Furthermore, this research supported the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, such as SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by helping tourism workers become more skilled and satisfied, and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by encouraging inclusive and strong tourism growth. By addressing this gap, the study supported both local progress and the global goal of fair, people-focused hospitality.

### **Statement Of The Problem**

The purpose of this study is to establish the significant relationship between the impacts of communication skills on customer satisfaction among guests to inland resorts in Santo Tomas Davao del Norte. Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of communication skills of resort employees, in terms of:
  - 1.1 writing communication skills;
  - 1.2 oral communication skills;
  - 1.3 listening communication skills;
  - 1.4 digital communication skills; and
  - 1.5 non-verbal communication skills?
2. What is the level of customer satisfaction, in terms of:
  - 2.1 threshold attributes;
  - 2.2 performance attributes; and,
  - 2.3 excitement attributes?
3. Is there a significant relationship between employees' communication skills and the level of customer satisfaction in inland resorts in Santo Tomas, Davao del Norte?

## Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was tested using 0.05 level of statistical significance which revealed that there is a significant relationship between communication skills and customer satisfaction in inland resorts in Santo Tomas, Davao del Norte.

## Theoretical Framework

This study anchored its view of communication skills on the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) developed by Giles (2016). Accordingly, this theory suggested that people adjusted their verbal and nonverbal communication to encourage understanding, social approval, and harmony. In hospitality, this flexibility was important because employees interacted with guests from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Furthermore, Asthiti et al. (2024) explained that when employees adjusted their tone, gestures, and speech style to accommodate guests' preferences, it fostered empathy, attentiveness, and comfort. Also, Wahyuningtyas et al. (2023) found that failing to adapt communication could lead to misunderstandings and dissatisfaction. As cited by Lu et al., (2023) CAT showed that being flexible in communication, both verbal and nonverbal, helped build trust, connections, and a better guest experience in hospitality.

On the other hand, this study is grounded in the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), as proposed by Oliver (1980). This theory was employed here to explain customer satisfaction. This theory suggested that satisfaction stemmed from comparing what customers expected before receiving a service with what they actually experienced afterward. If the service met or exceeded expectations, customers were satisfied; if not, they were dissatisfied. Moreover, Zhou et al. (2023) noted that satisfaction in hospitality depended on how well aspects such as responsiveness, empathy, and reliability met expectations. Additionally, Padlee et al. (2023) found that steady service quality increased satisfaction and encouraged guests to return. Thus, Habbache et al. (2024) also demonstrated that effective communication helped confirm expectations, as clear, polite, and empathetic interactions enhanced how guests perceived the service. ECT highlighted that a communication-focused service was essential to aligning guest expectations with actual experiences, which in turn shapes satisfaction and loyalty.

In connection, Social Exchange Theory (SET) explained the connection between communication skills and customer satisfaction by focusing on the give-and-take nature of interactions and the value people perceived in them. Blau (1964) stated that people participated in social exchanges when they believed the benefits outweighed the costs. In hospitality, when staff communicated respectfully, listened attentively, and responded promptly, guests perceived the interaction as valuable Sarande et al., (2022). Poor communication, however, raised the costs by causing frustration or unmet expectations Čuić et al., (2023). Chongkun (2023) also found that positive communication, like showing empathy and sincerity, increased emotional satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, based on Tan et al., (2020) SET demonstrated that good communication was a type of exchange where guests rewarded good service with satisfaction, repeat visits, and positive word-of-mouth, thereby contributing to long-term business success.

## Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrated the conceptual framework showing the relationship between communication skills as the independent variable and customer satisfaction as the dependent variable.

According to Tankovic, et al. (2022) communication skills had five indicators which included written communication, oral communication, listening skills, digital communication, and non-verbal communication, which enabled resort employees to convey information effectively and build positive customer relations.

As stated by Quitariano et al. (2024) customer satisfaction had three indicators which included threshold attributes, performance attributes, and excitement attributes, which determined guests' overall satisfaction based on basic expectations, quality of interaction, and exceptional service experiences.

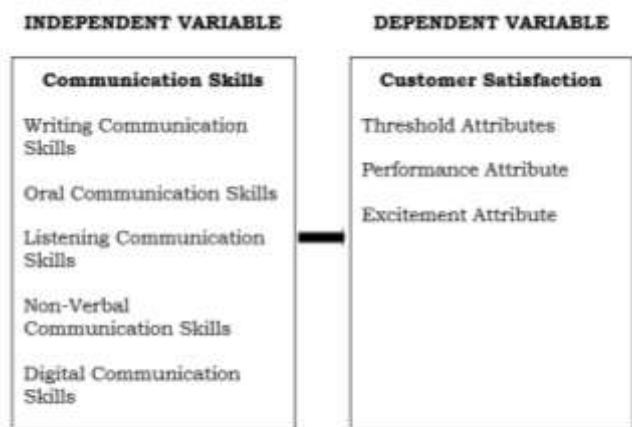


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, specifically a descriptive-correlational survey approach, to examine the impact of communication skills on customer satisfaction within inland resorts in Santo Tomas, Davao del Norte. McCombes (2023) stated that the descriptive-quantitative method enabled researchers to measure variables such as staff communication skills and customer satisfaction levels without altering any independent variables. This design was suitable for both business and tourism contexts, as it offered valuable insights into how interpersonal and digital communication strategies could enhance customer experiences in resort management. According to Bogasan et al. (2025), this design enabled us to understand how communication skills contributed to customer satisfaction in a real-world resort setting, making it appropriate for hospitality and tourism research.

The researcher employed a descriptive approach in the survey, collected data through questionnaires, in-person interviews, and normative surveys. These tools allowed the researcher to gather measurable information on communication skills and customer satisfaction, which could then be analyzed using descriptive statistics. McCombes (2023) mentioned that this method systematically described the characteristics of a population, situation, or phenomenon by providing accurate data without affecting the variables.

### Research Subject

This research focused on the customers and staff employed in inland resorts within Santo Tomas, Davao del Norte, Philippines. These were those who were responsible for guest interaction, communication, and service delivery, which directly influenced customer satisfaction in this area. The study targeted 383 respondents aged 18 to 60 from Santo Tomas, Davao del Norte, using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across nine inland resorts. This age group was considered the economically active segment and was most likely to engage with inland resorts either as customers or guests. The study focused on evaluating how communication skills influenced customer satisfaction in nine inland resorts.

Using the Raosoft sample size calculator (2025), a sample size of 383 was derived based on a population of 80,630, with a 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error, and 50% response distribution. This sample size ensured statistical reliability and generalizability of findings. The stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation from each of the nine inland resorts. According to Hassan (2024) Each resort was treated as a stratum, and participants were randomly selected within each stratum. This method enhanced the representativeness of the sample and reduced sampling bias. According to the study of Bisht (2024) stratified sampling was a sampling method used by researchers to divide a bigger population into

subgroups or strata, which could then be further used to draw samples using a random sampling method. The stratified sampling technique was useful in ensuring that every subgroup within the population was adequately represented in the sample in communication research where diverse customer experiences are important.

### Research Instrument

The researchers used modified and adapted survey questionnaires and employed a five-point likert scale design for both the independent and dependent variables. According to Yusoff et. al (2024) the survey aimed to gather data on respondents’ views, emotions, and experiences regarding their communication skills and satisfaction as customers at inland resorts. These questionnaires collected quantitative data to ascertain the correlation between communication skills and customer satisfaction. Experts in the field tested the questionnaire to ensure it was reliable, accurate, and understandable.

The questionnaire for the independent variable (Communication Skills) was adapted from the study “Measuring the Importance of Communication Skills in Tourism” by Tanković, et al (2022), which included the following indicators: writing communication skills, oral communication skills, listening communication skills, digital communication skills, and non-verbal communication skills. Each item on communication skills was evaluated for respondents’ degree of agreement using a 5-point Likert scale, indicating their perceived importance of specific skills for working in tourism (1 – Strongly Disagree, 5 – Strongly Agree).

Scale	Range of Means	Descriptive Equivalent	Interpretation
5	4.20 – 5.00	Very High	Communication skills is always manifested.
4	3.41 – 4.19	High	Communication skills is oftentimes manifested.
3	2.61 – 3.40	Moderate	Communication skills is sometimes manifested.
2	1.81 – 2.60	Low	Communication is rarely manifested.
1	1.00- 1.80	Very Low	Communication is least manifested

The questionnaire for the dependent variable (Customer Satisfaction) was taken from the study “Customers’ Satisfaction: Predictor of Loyalty among Guests of Beach Resorts in Misamis Oriental” by Quitariano et al. (2024), focused on the Threshold Attributes, Performance Attributes, and Excitement Attributes based on the Kano Model of Customer Satisfaction. Each item was evaluated based on respondents' degree of agreement using a 5-point Likert scale, indicating their level of satisfaction with the services. (1- Very Low Satisfied at All, 5 - Very Satisfied).

Scale	Range of Means	Descriptive Equivalent	Interpretation
5	4.20 – 5.00	Very High	Customer satisfaction is always evident.
4	3.41 – 4.19	High	Customer satisfaction is oftentimes evident.
3	2.61 – 3.40	Moderate	Customer satisfaction is sometimes evident.
2	1.81 – 2.60	Low	Customer satisfaction is rarely evident
1	1.00- 1.80	Very Low	Customer satisfaction is least evident.

**Statistical Treatment Of Data**

*Mean.* According to Turner (2020), the mean was one of the standard indices of central tendency since it represented the average level of a collection of scores or answers. In this research study, the mean was used to determine the level of communication skills among front-line employees and the level of customer satisfaction with their experience at inland resorts. This will specifically address research questions 1 and 2.

*Pearson R.* Rovetta (2020) also noted that the Pearson product-moment correlation (*r*) was a statistical method for determining the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two continuous variables. In this research study, Pearson's *r* was used to examine the possibility of a significant connection between employee communication skills and customer satisfaction in inland resorts in Santo Tomas, Davao del Norte.

**RESULTS**

Table 1 showed the level of communication which has an overall mean of 4.28 with a standard deviation of 0.83, indicating a very high level of communication skills. This means that the communication skills are always manifested. Based on all the indicators, writing communication skills obtained the highest mean of 4.30 with a standard deviation of 0.82 with the descriptive level of very high, which means that communication skill is always manifested. The overall highest mean implies that communication skills were consistently and clearly shown by the respondents. This result suggested that effective communication practices were regularly applied in daily interactions, indicating a stable and reliable level of performance across individuals. Moreover, digital communication skills had the lowest mean of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.82, with a descriptive level of very high, which means that digital communication skills were always manifested. Despite being the lowest indicator, the very high mean score implied that respondents consistently demonstrated digital communication skills in their daily duties and interactions, which showed their capacity to successfully use digital platforms for improving communication and providing services. The findings of this research revealed that, while digital communication fell behind other skills, it was always a strong and reliable component of overall communication performance.

**Table 1**

**Level of communication skills**

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Written Communication Skills	4.30	0.82	Very High
2. Oral Communication Skills	4.29	0.82	Very High
3. Listening Communication skills	4.27	0.83	Very High
4. Digital Communication Skills	4.26	0.82	Very High
5. Non-verbal communication Skills	4.28	0.85	Very High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.28</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>Very High</b>

**Level of customer satisfaction**

Table 2 showed the level of customer satisfaction which has an overall mean of 4.37 with a standard deviation of 0.76, which points to a very high level of satisfaction. It means that customer satisfaction is always evident. Based on all indicators, threshold attributes obtained the highest mean of 4.50 with a standard deviation of 0.68 and with the descriptive level of very high. The overall highest mean implies that customer satisfaction was consistently evident, indicating that clients received positive and sufficient service results throughout the study period. The findings showed that customer service techniques effectively exceeded customer needs, leading to consistent and positive impressions among respondents. Moreover, excitement attributes had the lowest mean of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.80, but this was still considered a very high level of descriptiveness. Despite being the lowest indicator, the very high mean score implied that excitement attributes were still consistently experienced by the respondents during their overall service encounters. This finding suggested that customers continued to perceive enjoyable and engaging elements in the service, even when compared

with other satisfaction indicators. In summary, customers were highly satisfied because the service met essential needs, performed well, and offered added value.

**Table 2**

*Level of customer satisfaction*

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Threshold Attributes	4.50	0.68	Very High
2. Performance Attributes	4.36	0.79	Very High
3. Excitement Attributes	4.26	0.80	Very High
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.37</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>Very High</b>

**Correlation between Communication Skills and Customer Satisfaction**

Table 3 showed the correlation between communication skills and customer satisfaction. Communication skills had a mean score of 4.28, and customer satisfaction had a mean of 4.37 which points to a very high level of descriptive equivalent. The correlation analysis yielded an overall r-value of 0.758 with a p-value of less than <0.001 which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance. These results led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming a significant relationship between communication skills and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the computed correlation coefficient of 0.758 signified a strong positive correlation meaning that as communication skills improve, customer satisfaction also increases. This indicates that higher levels of effective communication are associated with greater overall satisfaction among customers.

Variables Correlated	Mean	r	p-value	Decision on H <sub>0</sub>	Decision on Relationship
Communication Skills	4.28				
Customer Satisfaction	4.37				
		0.758**	<0.001	Rejected	Significant

**DISCUSSIONS**

**Summary**

**Level of technology adoption of electronic records management system**

The descriptive statistics results on assessing the level of communication skills are stated as very high, which means communication skills are always manifested. This finding showed that customers and employees will continually regard communication skills as highly effective since written, oral, non-verbal, listening, and digital communication are strongly and continuously displayed. The high level of communication skills implies that effective interaction is significant in influencing customer satisfaction and workplace collaboration, which can lead to improved service delivery, stronger relationships, and enhanced organizational performance.

According to research by Merendino et al. (2021), who found that effective communication skills have a strong impact on service quality and customer satisfaction. These skills helped employees share information clearly, respond to customer needs, and build good relationships. This result supported the findings of Čuić Tanković et. al (2023), who observed that strong communication skills verbal, non-verbal, and digital improve customer experiences and boost self-confidence in communication with service-focused industries. This likewise aligns with the findings confirmed the study of Emily & Temitope, (2024) in which as a result of the findings revealed that personal abilities particularly communication, had an essential impact on customer satisfaction in

hospitality businesses, which indicated that stronger communication skills among staff were related with increased customer satisfaction outcomes.

### **Level of customer satisfaction**

The descriptive statistics results on assessing the level of customer satisfaction are stated as very high, which means customer satisfaction is always evident. This finding shows that both management and customers will continually regard customer satisfaction as highly effective since threshold, performance, and excitement attributes are strongly and consistently manifested. The high level of customer satisfaction implies that organizations are not only meeting basic service expectations but are also excelling in delivering quality and innovation. As a result, customer loyalty is strengthened, employee morale is boosted, and the organization gains a competitive edge in sustaining growth and long-term success.

Recent findings revealed that customer satisfaction presented a solid foundation for loyalty from guests and ongoing connection to brands in resorts, according to findings in Amor et al. (2025). This shows that improving guest satisfaction can directly strengthen trust and loyalty. In addition, Nguyen et al. (2020) found that effective employee communication strongly affects customer satisfaction. It improves customers' demands in a timely manner, and the time allocation in service delivery is consistent and predictable. In line with the significance of communication skills in guaranteeing excellent guest experiences, this research revealed that customer satisfaction was essential to help the customer with willingness, quality of service, and guest trust when choosing resorts. Similarly, Kim & Kim (2022) this study affirmed that customer satisfaction was essential for sustaining loyalty and positive guest experiences, aligning with the importance of communication and responsiveness in resort operations.

### **Correlation between measures**

This study examined the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The independent variable was the communication skills, while the dependent variable was the customer satisfaction. The correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant association between the variables studied, revealing the strong correlation between increased customer satisfaction and developments in communication skills. The results of this study prove how important good communication is in improving the overall satisfaction of visitors.

The correlation analysis between communication skills and customer satisfaction revealed a strong positive correlation. Furthermore, communication skills and customer satisfaction revealed a significant relationship since the probability value is  $p < 0.001$ , which was lower than the 0.05 level of significance. This finding proves the significant impact that communication skills have in determining how satisfied clients are, revealing that customers are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction when staff communicate in a friendly, compassionate, and effective manner.

Jawabreh et al. (2022) revealed that the communication skills of front desk employees in hotels had an important influence on guest satisfaction, indicating the necessity of interpersonal training to improve customer service. This finding is backed by Wirtz and Lovelock (2022), who pointed out that good employee communication is essential for service delivery. It directly affects customer satisfaction by promoting clearer interactions and better service experiences. Similarly, Asthiti et al. (2024) revealed that efficient digital communication practices in hotels directly increased customer satisfaction, indicating that timeliness and appropriate manner in communication are essential even in online interactions. Furthermore, in research findings, Dzia-Uddin et al. (2024) indicated that hospitality graduates' communication skills.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The results revealed that communication skills have a very high level of written communication skills, which means written communication skills are always manifested. The very high level of written communication skills implies that the resort staff consistently manifest excellent written communication skills, ensuring clarity, professionalism, and adaptability across all formats and audiences, which in turn supports guest satisfaction and effective service delivery. It was also revealed that the customer's satisfaction has a very high level of

threshold attributes, which means that threshold attributes are always evident. The very high level of threshold attributes revealed in the results implies that the inland resort consistently demonstrates strong threshold attributes such as reliable booking, responsive staff, accurate service information, complete amenities, and safety measures which are always evident and ensure guest satisfaction, security, and convenience.

The study's findings concluded a significant relationship between communication skills and customer satisfaction. These results confirmed the theory of the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), as proposed by Oliver (1980). ECT explains that satisfaction arises when customers' expectations of service are met or exceeded, and the significant statistical relationship affirms that effective communication is important in this process. When staff members interact with their customers in a kind, sympathetic, and open way, they contribute to fulfill the requests of reliability and attentiveness, which enhances customer satisfaction.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

After the results and conclusion of the investigation above, several recommendations are provided.

To avoid little communication training, which can lead to misunderstandings and make guests' experiences less enjoyable, the resort should strengthen communication skills in the area of digital interaction by adapting or employing specialized communication software, applications, and automated systems that improve staff ability to interact successfully with customers. Automated messaging platforms, mobile applications, and direct-response systems can ensure that customer queries are addressed quickly, while collaborative tools like email integration, chat systems, and video conferencing applications enhance teamwork and consistency in communication.

The resort should strengthen its rewards and loyalty programs by providing more interesting incentives that go outside necessities in order to increase customer satisfaction. Offering exciting freebies and giveaways will make guests feel more valued. Adding useful features to the program, such raffles entry or discounts in every availability of the services or the amendments can increase customer excitement. The resort could transform regular amenities into unforgettable experiences that boost satisfaction and promote return visits by carefully addressing these areas. Also, can add some fun such as outdoor or indoor activities once every two years to maintain the momentum.

For future researchers, it is recommended to have a clear understanding that links communication skills to customer satisfaction, particularly within the resort industry. Understanding the basics of digital communication, customer experience, and service quality allows for deeper exploration of relationships. Researchers should analyze existing literature to identify gaps, establish measurable indicators of communication success, and understand their impact on guest perspectives and loyalty. Building this knowledge will facilitate effective study designs and enrich both academic discussions and resort management practices.

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