

## ARTICLE

# English Language Confidence and Self-Presentation: Assessing Employability Appeal to Hiring Managers in the Tourism Industry

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## ABSTRACT

The English language enables clear communication between service providers and international travelers from different linguistic backgrounds. Its widespread use enhances guest satisfaction, facilitates cross-cultural understanding, and supports the global competitiveness of tourism destinations. This exploratory study examined the perceptions of tourism hiring managers about English language confidence and self-presentation in relation to employability in the industry. Hiring managers (n = 25) were purposively sampled to be interviewed. Hiring managers perceived fluent English speakers as socially adaptable, and capable of adjusting communication styles to suit clients of different cultural backgrounds, which encourages inclusive and respectful interactions. Confident English speakers were also considered more effective in persuading clients, addressing inquiries, and closing sales, all of which are vital for guest satisfaction and business outcomes. In addition, those who communicated clearly in English were better at managing guest complaints, showing empathy, and solving problems independently. Applicants who appeared confident, spoke fluently, and carried themselves professionally made stronger first impressions and were seen as more competent. Their manner of speaking reflected their skills, preparedness, and alignment with the service standards expected in the tourism industry. Consequently, institutions must prepare students to meet these evolving expectations as hiring managers increasingly prioritize communication

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competence and professional demeanor. Enhancing English fluency not only improves individual job prospects but also supports the broader goal of providing high-quality, culturally responsive tourism services. Professionals who can present themselves confidently and communicate effectively across cultures will be essential for maintaining service excellence and strengthening organizational reputations.

**Keywords:** Employability; English Language; Language Confidence; Tourism Industry

## 1. Introduction

In the context of a globally interconnected society, proficiency in English communication has become a fundamental asset across various professional sectors, most notably within the tourism industry<sup>[1, 2]</sup>. As tourism thrives on intercultural exchange and multilingual interaction, English functions as a critical medium that facilitates effective engagement between professionals and international clientele<sup>[3]</sup>.

The growing emphasis on linguistic competence emphasizes the necessity of building confidence in English communication among tourism professionals. Thus, this has several implications for both recruitment practices and the employability of job seekers. Machado et al.<sup>[4]</sup> affirm that advanced English proficiency not only enhances service quality but also contributes significantly to career advancement within the tourism field.

Equally important are self-presentation skills, which refer to an individual's ability to articulate their personal and professional identity effectively, both verbally and non-verbally<sup>[5, 6]</sup>. Due to the regular and direct engagement of tourism professionals with a wide range of stakeholders, it is essential to develop strong self-presentation skills, like cultural awareness, effective interpersonal communication, and composure<sup>[7]</sup>. The relationship between self-presentation and English language confidence has emerged as a crucial determinant of employability, influencing how candidates are perceived by hiring managers. With growing concerns over workforce retention and recruitment in the tourism sector, the ability to assess and develop these attributes has become increasingly essential<sup>[8]</sup>.

This paper explored the perceptions of hiring managers about confident English speakers who seek employment in the tourism industry. As globalization intensifies, employers increasingly demand that graduates be capable of effective cross-cultural communication, which requires not only technical language proficiency but also the confidence to engage in oral exchanges across diverse cultural contexts<sup>[9, 10]</sup>. How-

ever, numerous studies have found that graduates, particularly in Southeast Asia, often struggle with oral English communication, especially during job interviews which in turn significantly diminishes their employment prospects<sup>[11–13]</sup>.

In the Philippines, low English communication performance among students has been attributed to limited exposure to contextualized English environments and reduced learner engagement, contributing to a persistent gap in oral and written communication skills<sup>[14–16]</sup>. As tourism professionals frequently interact with people from different cultures and nationalities, confidence in English and effective self-presentation are necessary<sup>[17, 18]</sup>. Studies show that these attributes not only influence interview outcomes and guest satisfaction but also contribute to career advancement and organizational success<sup>[19, 20]</sup>. Therefore, this research is vital in informing educational institutions, tourism stakeholders, and policymakers about the need for integrated, industry-specific language and communication training that prepares future professionals for the complex and competitive global tourism economy.

## 2. Literature Review

English language education has assumed a central role in the national language policies of many countries due to its contribution to individuals' career advancement in both domestic and global labor markets<sup>[21]</sup>. Numerous international studies have emphasized that globalization has significantly increased the demand for graduates to possess strong communication skills that enable effective interaction with individuals from diverse cultural, linguistic, and national backgrounds<sup>[9]</sup>. As a result, proficiency in international language communication has emerged as a critical factor influencing individuals' career opportunities and professional advancement.

In Europe, strong English proficiency is highly valued in job applications. A study in the Czech Republic found that employers across key sectors expected candidates to demonstrate effective oral and written English, confidence in

presentations and negotiations, and the ability to engage in informal communication. However, 73.9% of employers reported that graduates lacked sufficient English vocabulary for professional business contexts<sup>[10]</sup>. Difficulties of Malaysian new graduates in effectively expressing themselves in English have created substantial barriers for them during job interviews, potentially limiting their chances of securing desired employment opportunities<sup>[12]</sup>. This concern is further supported by several national studies on employability and language proficiency, which highlight that limited English skills hinder graduates' ability to engage constructively in interview settings<sup>[11, 13]</sup>.

In the Philippines, mastering foreign languages, particularly English, remained a persistent challenge for many students. Filipino college students face serious challenges in written communication tasks like essay writing, and oral communication, particularly their reluctance to speak clearly in English<sup>[14, 15]</sup>.

Sintadewi, Artini, and Febryan<sup>[16]</sup> observed that students frequently perceived English as a difficult subject, which reduced their interest in language classes and negatively impacted their academic performance. This lack of engagement and low achievement made it especially difficult for learners to attain advanced levels of proficiency because it limits their ability to participate in international tourism and global business activities<sup>[22]</sup>.

Considering the extent of the tourism industry, English is becoming the primary medium of communication, it enables effective communication among international travelers, tour operators, hotel staff, and other service personnel. In the tourism sector, English fluency has been associated with improved communication effectiveness, which directly influences customer satisfaction and enriches the overall travel experience<sup>[23]</sup>. As such, enhancing English language proficiency is essential not only for individual career readiness but also for supporting competitiveness in the global tourism economy.

In the context of globalization, English is becoming the dominant international language utilized across various sectors, including economics, education, politics, culture, and tourism<sup>[24, 25]</sup>. In the tourism industry, language proficiency, particularly in English, is widely recognized as a fundamental element of success<sup>[26]</sup>, as it enables effective interaction

across diverse cultural and linguistic groups<sup>[27]</sup>. Tourism professionals frequently interact with individuals from different geographical, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, making proficiency in the language necessary. English serves as a global communicative bridge, enabling seamless exchanges between tourism personnel and international visitors<sup>[28, 29]</sup>.

The significance of English language confidence and self-presentation skills has become increasingly evident in tourism employment, especially amid globalization<sup>[17, 30]</sup>. Research indicates that English fluency enhances job satisfaction, career advancement, and employability in the tourism sector<sup>[31, 32]</sup>. Employers favor candidates who communicate effectively in English, as it improves guest interactions and satisfaction while facilitating cross-cultural understanding<sup>[18]</sup>. Accordingly, educational institutions are urged to integrate industry-specific English language instruction to prepare students for global tourism demands<sup>[33, 34]</sup>.

Equally important are self-presentation skills, which influence recruitment outcomes through effective communication of one's personality, qualifications, and professionalism<sup>[19, 35]</sup>. Elements such as attire, body language, and clarity in verbal expression are critical during interviews and client interactions. Integrated training programs that develop both English proficiency and self-presentation are necessary, as language confidence enhances one's ability to convey competence and build rapport<sup>[20, 36]</sup>. As the tourism industry evolves, the demand for professionals who can communicate globally and present themselves effectively will continue to grow<sup>[37, 38]</sup>.

However, the advancement of English proficiency in the Philippines has been relatively limited, as the language is taught as a foreign language and is not commonly used in everyday societal interactions, resulting in low oral communication performance. This linguistic limitation presents a significant barrier for tourism practitioners in effectively promoting destinations and providing foreign tourists with accurate and engaging information about historical and cultural sites<sup>[34]</sup>. As sustainable tourism development heavily relies on strategic management<sup>[39]</sup>, there is a growing need for competent human resources who not only possess marketing and guiding skills but also demonstrate strong English proficiency to ensure effective communication and service delivery in a global tourism environment.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

This study explored how English language confidence and self-presentation impacted the employability appeal of tourism professionals in an exploratory qualitative approach. Qualitative research is appropriate for this type of investigation as it offers a detailed exploration of complicated concepts and themes associated with the tourism industry and employability<sup>[40]</sup>. Specifically, exploratory is essential in investigating novel phenomena and generating understanding about understudied topics<sup>[1, 7, 41]</sup>. This approach commonly employs systematic and purposive strategies to detect in-depth patterns enabling a structured examination of sociocultural and psychological constructs<sup>[42, 43]</sup>. While its methodological rigor has been critiqued by some scholars, current academic discourse emphasizes its value in enriching the understanding of research concerns and facilitating the organized collection of qualitative data<sup>[44, 45]</sup>. One of its principal strengths lies in its flexibility, which permits adjustments aligned with emerging data<sup>[46]</sup>. This paper answered one critical question in recruiting employees for an organization: how do English language confidence and self-presentation influence the employability of a Filipino job seeker? This knowledge can inform recruitment practices, training programs, and policy development aimed at enhancing employability and workplace integration.

#### 3.2. Population and Sampling

Exploratory research typically employs selectively identified, small-scale participant groups to facilitate a comprehensive analysis of key variables and their interrelations<sup>[47–49]</sup>. Rather than aiming for statistical generalization, this approach prioritizes the in-depth understanding of a phenomenon based on the perspectives of a targeted population<sup>[50, 51]</sup>. A widely adopted method is purposive sampling<sup>[7]</sup>, wherein participants are intentionally selected through a systematic identification process<sup>[52, 53]</sup>. This method ensured gathering rich and relevant data in trying to understand the influence of language confidence and presentation on employability in tourism. For this investigation,

an online purposive sampling technique was utilized<sup>[54]</sup>, using Google Forms to administer open-ended questions and gather initial responses. Five sampling characteristics were established to ensure relevance and data quality: (1) the respondent must be a hiring manager employed in a tourism-related institution; (2) must have a minimum of five years of professional experience in recruitment or human resource functions; (3) currently engaged in staff hiring or talent acquisition activities; (4) based in the Philippines; and (5) willingness to participate in a one-on-one interview. Out of 76 who responded to the sampling phase, only 25 were chosen to be interviewed.

#### 3.3. Instrument

The method used is semi-structured interviews to collect data. This can be helpful because the people being interviewed get a lot of room for open questions that help participants express experiences, opinions, goals, and issues concerning English language confidence and self-presentation in the tourism industry<sup>[55]</sup>. This flexibility ensured that the flow of the conversation was natural, encouraging participants to give more elaborate and subtle answers that could not be obtained in stiffer interview settings<sup>[56]</sup>. The interview questions set out in **Table 1** were structured to meet the objectives of the study and to obtain more in-depth information.

#### 3.4. Data Gathering Procedure

All participants received a letter of consent prior to entering the study, detailing the objectives and scope of the research. Interviews were conducted through face-to-face interactions based on a semi-structured interview guide. Participants received clear instructions at the outset of each session on what the interview process would involve, and they were always free to ask questions about the process. The audio-recorded interviews were subsequently transcribed verbatim. After checking the transcription for errors, participants were asked if they wanted to add anything or clarify anything that they feel is necessary. During the research, the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were strictly maintained to create trust and openness<sup>[57]</sup>.

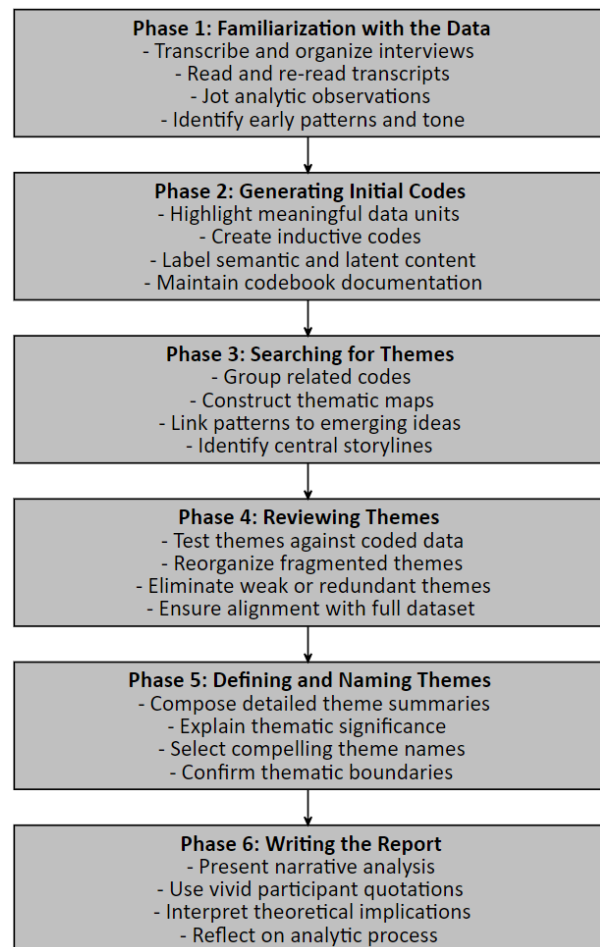
**Table 1.** Interview Questions.

Objectives	Interview Questions
Determine the effects of the English language confidence to the employability of a tourism professional.	1. What are the effects of English Language confidence to the employability of a tourism professional? Enumerate and elaborate each effect.
	2. What aspect of this confidence in the English Language increases their employability? Explain each aspect.
	3. How can you consider if a tourism professional has an employable quality because of his or her confidence in the English language?
Determine the appeal of self-presentation with the command of English language to the hiring managers for tourism professionals.	4. When can you say if a tourism professional has an appealing self-presentation with the command of the English language? Elaborate through specific instances.
	5. How does the command of the English Language help the tourism professional in her self-presentation during a hiring process? Elaborate further.
	6. Why do hiring managers of the tourism industry give importance to self-presentation with a command of the English Language? Explain further.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis was employed to examine qualitative narratives from individual interviews, with the objective of identifying recurring themes and interpretive patterns that encapsulate participants' experiences. Thematic analysis, being a qualitative approach, involves systematic organization, categorization, and interpretation of textual data, offering a balance between structure and analytical flexibility to extract insights grounded in participants' own accounts<sup>[58–60]</sup>. Due to its adaptability, this method is particularly well-suited for exploratory inquiries<sup>[61]</sup>, as it permits the emergence of themes from the data itself rather than constraining analysis within predetermined theoretical constructs<sup>[62]</sup>.

As depicted in **Figure 1**, the six-phase model introduced by Braun and Clarke<sup>[63]</sup> was adopted, with processes such as data familiarization, initial coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and final report production. Reflexivity was an important principle of data analysis, requiring the researchers to engage in critical self-reflection concerning their role in interpreting the data<sup>[64]</sup>, while considering personal assumptions not as impediments, but as valuable tools for enhancing analytical depth<sup>[65]</sup>. In addition, an inductive method was utilized to mitigate researcher bias and ensure that the identified themes were closely aligned with the participants' perspectives, which is expected to improve the trustworthiness and rigor of the findings<sup>[66, 67]</sup>. This enabled a deeper interrogation of implicit meanings and conceptual dimensions, extending beyond superficial classification.



**Figure 1.** Workflow of data analysis process.

### 3.6. Results

Objective 1. Determine the effects of the English language confidence to the employability of a tourism professional.

### Theme 1: Sensitivity to Social Differences

English language confidence served as a tool for adaptability in socially diverse environments. Hiring managers perceived that candidates who communicated fluently in English were more responsive to the needs of culturally varied clients. Their flexibility in language use allowed them to shift tones, vocabulary, or interaction styles according to the cultural background of their guests.

“Candidates with strong English skills often demonstrate flexibility in accommodating these differences, whether adjusting to a client’s preferred communication style or respecting cultural norms.”

They acknowledged that social adaptability was a key trait influencing employability, especially in guest-facing roles. English language confidence was linked to this adaptability, allowing candidates to adapt their communication for various cultural contexts. Those who were able to adjust their speech or behavior in line with client expectations were seen as more professional and reliable.

“As a hiring manager I value social adaptability as it enables candidates to deliver a more personalized and culturally appropriate guest experience.”

Hiring managers viewed confident English speakers as more likely to engage respectfully and appropriately with foreign guests. Their ability to use the language without hesitation signified not only communication skill but also cultural preparedness. This characteristic was crucial in tourism, where guest interactions demand both linguistic clarity and cross-cultural sensitivity.

“Confidence in English often reflects a level of cultural awareness that is essential in tourism.”

“Clients from different countries, particularly those who may not speak the local language, often feel more comfortable interacting with staff who speak English well.”

Notably, candidates who confidently used English were believed to create more inclusive and accessible experiences for international tourists. Their ability to bridge language gaps reassured clients and enhanced service trust.

### Theme 2: Effectiveness in Sales

Applicants who spoke English fluently were able to communicate benefits clearly and persuade clients with greater credibility. Their command of the language contributed to successful client engagement, which often resulted in completed transactions. This persuasive ability was

considered a valuable asset in tourism, where guest satisfaction and revenue are closely linked. They believed that English fluency was viewed as a factor that significantly enhanced employability by supporting key sales outcomes.

“A confident English speaker can engage clients more convincingly, addressing questions and closing sales with ease.”

“Tourism professionals who are confident in their English skills can communicate more effectively with international clients, answer questions clearly, and provide guidance with ease.”

“They can handle client inquiries independently, which streamlines workflows and helps businesses manage high volumes of customers.”

Likewise, applicants who expressed themselves confidently in English were perceived as more approachable and accommodating. Their ability to create a welcoming atmosphere encouraged guests to initiate conversations and request assistance. This interpersonal dynamic was essential in tourism settings where client comfort influences satisfaction and brand loyalty.

“It’s not just about answering questions but about creating an overall positive experience. A confident English speaker tends to be more approachable, which encourages guests to seek help and feel more at ease.”

“When staff present themselves well and communicate confidently, it reassures customers and builds trust. Visitors expect to interact with people who are not only knowledgeable but also appear confident and approachable.”

Candidates with strong language skills were able to provide clear instructions and culturally sensitive advice, which enriched the tourist experience. Hiring managers viewed this as essential in roles requiring constant interaction with foreign guests. Clear articulation prevented confusion and demonstrated professionalism, both of which are valued in the service industry.

“Tourism professionals with strong English skills can articulate information clearly and precisely, which is essential when clients are seeking detailed directions, travel advice, or information about local customs.”

Generally, tourism staff who presented themselves with composure and spoke fluent English projected authority and competence. Guests were more likely to feel secure and valued when interacting with such professionals. From the

employer's perspective, this trust-building ability directly contributed to service excellence and customer retention. Consequently, confidence in English was seen as a core competency that positively influenced employability in tourism professions.

### Theme 3: Conflict Resolution

Hiring managers viewed complaint resolution as a critical skill that reflected a candidate's emotional intelligence and communication effectiveness. Candidates who responded calmly and clearly in English were seen as capable of de-escalating conflicts professionally. Their ability to manage complaints directly influenced the overall guest experience and organizational reputation.

"A good example is how a candidate responds to a client's complaint."

"With confident speakers, businesses benefit from streamlined problem resolution, which is especially valuable during peak seasons when managers may be occupied with other responsibilities."

Hiring managers associated English language confidence with the ability to express empathy and acknowledgment in ways that reassured upset clients. Candidates who were articulate in English could frame responses that not only solved the issue but also validated the client's experience. This emotional connection was essential in service recovery, often turning a negative experience into a positive one.

"A strong candidate demonstrates that they understand the customer's frustration and emotions. They don't just address the issue they make the customer feel respected and understood."

Furthermore, applicants who were fluent and confident in English possessed a higher degree of autonomy in problem-solving. Hiring managers valued this independence, especially in fast-paced tourism environments where immediate decisions were often necessary. These candidates were able to communicate directly with clients, assess the situation, and provide appropriate solutions without delay. Their confidence reduced operational bottlenecks and contributed to smoother service delivery.

"Confident English speakers can resolve issues on their own without frequently consulting supervisors or colleagues."

Objective 2: Determine the appeal of self-presentation with the command of English language to the hiring man-

agers for tourism professionals.

### Theme 1: First Impression Matters

Hiring managers believed that a candidate's physical appearance, demeanor, and fluency in English created an immediate perception of professionalism. Those who entered the interview with confidence and composure were often considered more likely to succeed in guest-facing roles. Their ability to communicate well in English added to their appeal, showing readiness for international engagement. A well-spoken and polite introduction set a positive tone and helped establish trust.

"Tourism is face-to-face. If someone walks in with a positive presence, speaks well, and looks composed, they already have an edge."

"The way an applicant carries themselves in the first five minutes, especially how they greet and speak in English, already sets the tone. That moment really counts."

"Applicants who speak with fluency and courtesy during the interview often leave a strong impression."

In contrast, applicants who struggled with greetings or language were perceived as less prepared or less capable in customer service roles. Hiring managers questioned whether such applicants could meet the demands of tourism work, which often involves high-pressure, client-facing scenarios.

"When they're nervous and struggle with English, it shows, and I wonder how they will manage guest expectations. Presentation and language go hand in hand."

While these visual elements created the foundation of a professional image, confident English speech was seen as the factor that solidified it. Having visual composure and articulate communication presents a well-rounded professional persona. Candidates who demonstrated this were believed to be more capable of representing the company to international clients.

"We observe how they present even before they speak, the posture, attire, eye contact, and when they speak confidently in English, it completes the professional image."

"A composed and fluent applicant makes me think they can handle real guest interactions, especially with foreign clients. It's what we need in this industry."

Hiring managers linked calmness and clarity in English with the ability to manage actual client encounters, particularly with international guests. Those who appeared relaxed and well-spoken were viewed as competent in handling dif-

ficult or unexpected customer situations. This perception made them more attractive candidates in a field that relies heavily on communication and poise.

#### Theme 2: Reflection of Skills

Hiring managers interpreted clear and fluent self-introductions as evidence of preparation and professionalism. Beyond grammar, the ability to articulate past experiences demonstrated situational awareness and guest-handling skills. Applicants who communicated well in English were perceived as more competent and reliable in guest-facing roles.

“When an applicant speaks English confidently and explains their background clearly, it shows me they’re prepared and skilled...not just in language, but in how they’ll handle guests.”

Confident and articulate English speakers were often assumed to have undergone professional development or practical immersion. Their tone, vocabulary, and overall demeanor conveyed discipline and a grasp of service standards. Hiring managers assessed not just fluency but also how candidates modulated tone and selected vocabulary in real-time interactions. This skill was viewed as critical for handling spontaneous client inquiries and resolving service-related concerns efficiently. These markers served as indirect proof of employability, especially in client-driven fields like tourism.

“How they talk and present themselves shows their communication skills and professionalism. You can tell if they’ve been trained or have real experience.”

“Their use of English, tone, vocabulary, and fluency, often reflects how well they’ll interact with clients and solve problems on the spot.”

Hiring managers perceived articulate candidates as composed, self-driven, and capable of communicating with clarity in diverse situations. These soft skills were considered crucial for maintaining professionalism in a guest-oriented environment. The ability to express oneself smoothly in English was therefore treated as evidence of broader emotional and cognitive competencies.

“The moment they express themselves smoothly in English, I see it as a sign that they’ve developed critical soft skills like clarity, composure, and initiative.”

“Self-presentation isn’t just about looks. It’s how they organize their thoughts, respond to questions, and carry a conversation. That tells me a lot about their job-readiness.”

#### Theme 3: Reflection of Services

Self-presentation, particularly through confident English communication, was perceived as a direct reflection of the organization’s public image. Hiring managers considered these candidates as brand representatives whose appearance and language use could shape guest perceptions. The ability to express oneself fluently and confidently in English was equated with professionalism and hospitality. Such candidates were seen as aligning with the company’s service ethos and client expectations.

“How an applicant presents themselves, especially their confidence in speaking English, reflects the image they will project to our guests. They become the face of our service.”

“We’re in the hospitality industry, so if the applicant appears well-groomed and speaks English with ease, I see that as representing the quality we promise our clients.”

“The way they answer interview questions in English gives a glimpse of how they’ll speak to tourists. It’s more than language; it’s the whole service experience they bring.”

Politeness and professionalism in English communication were interpreted as essential traits in conveying warmth, respect, and competence to guests. Hiring managers understood that guest satisfaction and loyalty were often shaped by front-line staff behavior. Candidates who communicated respectfully in English were therefore considered more capable of upholding the brand’s reputation.

“If they speak politely and professionally, it tells me they can carry our service values. Guests will judge our brand based on their communication.”

Hiring managers equated articulate and composed communication with the ability to operate effectively in both routine and high-pressure environments. The manner in which candidates expressed themselves provided insight into how they would behave in diverse guest interactions. Those who spoke confidently and carried themselves professionally were assumed to reflect and reinforce organizational values.

“Their self-presentation also reflects our standards. If they’re articulate and composed in English, I know they’ll represent our company well in any setting.”

## 4. Discussion

This study observed how English language confidence could influence the employability of tourism professionals.



Hiring managers often link speaking confidence to key professional attributes such as communication competence, customer service readiness, and the ability to represent their brand to international clients.

Confident English speakers were perceived as more adaptable in multicultural settings, capable of resolving client concerns independently, and more likely to leave a strong first impression during interviews. Given its status as the dominant medium of international communication, proficiency in the English language holds critical importance in the tourism industry. It serves as a universal linguistic bridge, enabling effective interaction among tourists, hospitality professionals, and service providers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds<sup>[33]</sup>. This explains why hiring managers believed that confident English speakers are “more approachable, which encourages guests to seek help and feel more at ease.” It allowed tourism professionals to articulate services clearly, demonstrate cultural sensitivity, and contribute to the overall guest experience. These are factors that significantly influence customer satisfaction and organizational reputation<sup>[68]</sup>.

In this industry, English is an element of vocational education being categorized under Vocational English, a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that focuses on language learning designed to industry-specific competencies and professional domains<sup>[69]</sup>. Research in the hospitality sector has highlighted that oral communication skills are among the most essential competencies required of service professionals. This involves such as welcoming guests, describing menu offerings, addressing customer complaints, accommodating special requests, as well as facilitating coordination between kitchen personnel and front-of-house staff<sup>[70, 71]</sup>. Now, hiring managers expect confident English speakers to be more likely to excel in these tasks as their speaking skills “...can engage clients more convincingly, addressing questions and closing sales with ease.” For them, confident English use reflects the applicant’s ability to deal with service demands, interact effectively with diverse clientele, and maintain composure under pressure. Such individuals are perceived as assets who can uphold service standards, adapt to dynamic guest expectations, and represent the professionalism of the establishment.

There are important implications arising from these findings, particularly for tourism education, workforce train-

ing, and industry recruitment practices. In the study of Nas and Ölemez<sup>[72]</sup>, students pursuing studies in the field of tourism exhibit limited interest and motivation in learning the English language. This lack of engagement may hinder their future employability in a globally competitive industry where effective communication is a core requirement. Institutions offering hospitality and tourism programs must prioritize English communication training not only for linguistic accuracy but also for developing confidence, cultural competence, and situational adaptability. In South Africa, for instance, Nudelman<sup>[73]</sup> demonstrated that graduates lacking advanced English language proficiency faced difficulties in securing quality employment. This challenge was largely attributed to the perception among South African employers that strong English skills enable individuals to collaborate effectively within teams and contribute ideas proactively in professional settings<sup>[21]</sup>. Currently, the employability of future tourism professionals increasingly depends on their ability to communicate clearly, present themselves confidently, and respond to diverse client needs across multicultural contexts.

Some of the important components of English language learning in tourism were cultural sensitivity, responsiveness, clarity of expression, and adaptability in diverse communicative contexts<sup>[21]</sup>. Employers seek candidates who can communicate clearly, respond promptly, and adapt appropriately to different client needs, as these skills directly impact customer satisfaction and the overall reputation of the organization.

For example, to develop cultural sensitivity, language instruction should incorporate real-world case studies, simulations, and role-playing activities that expose learners to different cultural norms, values, and communication styles<sup>[74, 75]</sup>. Responsiveness can be strengthened by engaging students in interactive speaking exercises that require quick thinking and situational problem-solving, such as mock customer inquiries, complaint handling, and time-sensitive decision-making scenarios<sup>[76, 77]</sup>. Clarity of expression can be developed through targeted vocabulary building, practice with common tourism-related phrases, and structured speaking drills that prioritize pronunciation, tone, and message delivery<sup>[78]</sup>.

From an educational perspective, aligning curricular outcomes with industry expectations is key to developing a workforce that meets the demands of the global tourism market. Garil<sup>[79]</sup> emphasizes that employers prioritize com-

petencies such as effective communication, cross-cultural interaction, and customer engagement. Gribble et al.<sup>[80]</sup> further advocate for educational institutions to design training programs that address these needs, thereby enhancing graduate readiness and employability. Focused interventions aimed at improving both English proficiency and self-presentation can empower tourism graduates to navigate job interviews and customer interactions with greater confidence and competence<sup>[81, 82]</sup>.

English language confidence could influence the employability of tourism professionals, as hiring managers associated it with strong communication skills, customer service competence, and brand representation. Confident English speakers were viewed as adaptable, culturally sensitive, and capable of handling service interactions independently. As English serves as the global lingua franca in tourism, proficiency in the language supports essential functions such as guest interaction, complaint resolution, and cross-departmental coordination. Despite its importance, many tourism students lack motivation to learn English, potentially limiting their job prospects. Thus, institutions must integrate industry-specific English instruction that fosters fluency, cultural awareness, responsiveness, and clear expression. These skills are vital for navigating multicultural service environments and are increasingly prioritized by employers seeking globally competent staff.

## 5. Conclusion

This study analyzed the perceptions of tourism hiring personnel about confident English speakers seeking employment. The findings revealed that English language confidence influenced the employability of tourism professionals. Hiring managers perceived confident English speakers as more adaptable in multicultural settings, capable of delivering culturally appropriate service and handling diverse guest expectations. These individuals were seen as better equipped to resolve client concerns, manage customer interactions, and respond independently in high-pressure situations. Their language fluency was also closely linked to strong sales performance, professionalism, and clarity in service delivery. Essentially, a strong first impression, supported by fluent and polite speech, created a perception of readiness for client-facing responsibilities.

There were limitations that needed to be considered in interpreting the findings of this study. First, the relatively small sample size limited the generalizability of the results to the broader tourism and hospitality industry. Since the study primarily utilized purposive sampling of hiring managers within specific tourism institutions, the perspectives gathered may not fully represent the diversity of practices and expectations across regions or sectors. Second, the use of qualitative methods, while effective for capturing in-depth narrative data, relied on subjective interpretations of participant narratives, which may introduce researcher bias despite efforts at reflexivity and rigor. The study focused on concepts such as English language confidence, self-presentation, and employability, which, although clearly defined, could vary in meaning across different cultural and organizational contexts. Lastly, future research may benefit from a mixed-methods design with a larger and more representative sample to validate and extend these findings across different tourism environments.

## Author Contributions

All authors contributed equally to the conception, design, data collection, analysis, and writing of this study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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## Institutional Review Board Statement

Ethical review and approval were waived for this study due to external assessment and evaluation by the journal's editorial boards.

## Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

## Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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