THE PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM WORKERS IN NUSA DUA, BALI REGARDING THE USE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the perceptions of tourism workers in Nusa Dua, Bali, regarding the importance of using English in the tourism industry. The study aims to explore the workers' perceptions and self-perceptions of English language skills and their relevance to the industry. A descriptive research design with a quantitative approach was utilized, and data were collected through questionnaires. The findings reveal that the participants hold positive self-perceptions and perceptions toward English language skills, strongly agreeing on the importance of English in their work. They recognize the significance of good listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English, as well as a broad vocabulary related to the industry. The study provides insights into the participants' background characteristics, including gender, age, education, departmental affiliation, and working experience. Overall, this research contributes to the understanding of the importance of English proficiency in the tourism industry, informing language training programs and human resource practices. The findings emphasize the participants' awareness of the role of English in effective communication, customer service, and career advancement, highlighting the need for language skills in the industry.

Keywords: perceptions, English language skills, tourism industry

INTRODUCTION

English plays a very important role as the main tool for international communication. The number of people in the world who communicate in English with international speakers is continuously increasing compared to speakers of other languages *(Crystal, 2003)*. This statement is supported by the fact that around 380 million people speak English as an international language, as the facts have proven that English is now global. Most of these people live in countries where English is required for external purposes: to communicate and do business with people in other countries, and to pursue advancement in business fields. In addition, English is used as a means to transfer thoughts and culture and to create good relations between people in other countries. As a result, English has become an international language.

The use of English is very important for workers in the tourism industry. More specifically speaking and listening English is necessary for tourism workers working in the tourism industry as well as spoken communication while reading and writing English is necessary for email communication. When tourism workers were asked to select three functions of English knowledge that were used mainly in their work, the results revealed that among the most relevant functions were providing information, followed by providing services, and offering help for problems *(Prachanant, 2012)*. Then when tourism workers face the communicative needs of their customers, they realize that the best way to meet consumer expectations is the ability to capture the subjective, emotional and physical needs that stimulate successful transactions *(Abarca & Moreno, 2001)*.

From the explanation above, the use of English as a communication tool by tourism workers has a role that cannot be underestimated. What differentiate from the previous research conducted by the researchers above is that this research focuses to the perceptions of the tourism workers regarding of English language skills. Based on this fact, researchers will examine the perceptions of tourism workers, especially in Nusa Dua, Bali, regarding the importance of using English in the tourism industry whose goal is to help tourism workers, or prospective tourism workers, accommodate the use of English which will be useful in the world of work in the tourism industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Explanation of Perception

Perception refers to a person's process of understanding the environment. This involves organizing and interpreting it as a stimulus in psychological experience *(Coren et al., 2004)*. Perception is also defined as the process by which an individual organizes and interprets sensory input to understand the sensations around him. In addition, perception can be seen from the cognitive processes that everyone experiences in understanding information about the environment, such as seeing, hearing, recognizing, tasting, and smelling *(McDonald, 2011)*. Likewise, *(Qiong, 2017)* suggested that perception uses knowledge (stored in memory) to recognize or receive stimuli received by sense organs such as eyes, ears, and eyes, and interpret the nose. In short, perception is the process of interpreting or interpreting information received through the human sensory system. Perceptual processes include sensory recording, pattern recognition, and attention. *(Slameto, 2003)* found that perception is the process of entering messages or information into the human brain by human perception which continuously makes connections with the environment. This relationship is carried out by the five senses, namely the sense of sight, the sense of taste, the sense of smell, and the sense of touch. According to *(Robbins, 2003)*, perception is a process carried out by individuals to organize and interpret sensory perceptions to give meaning to the environment. Perception can be defined as our recognition and interpretation of sensory information. Perception also includes how we respond to information. We can think of perception as the process by which we receive sensory information from our environment and use that information to interact with the environment. Perception allows us to take sensory information and turn it into something meaningful.

The Role of Using English in Tourism

English has become an international language, spoken, learned and understood even though it is not the native language for some countries. English plays a major role in many sectors, including tourism. Tourism and languages should promote knowledge of the tourism industry in general, and for the overall tourism product in a destination. In the service sector, tourism plays an important role. According to *(Thitthongkam & Walsh, 2010)* language is a system of spoken or written symbols that can communicate ideas, emotions, and experiences. *(Bobanovic & Grzinic, 2011)* states that to guarantee the quality of hospitality services it is necessary to find a common language between supply and demand sides. Understanding the role of language, stakeholders can improve coordination skills. Language is a resource that includes daily practice and almost all other aspects of human life. Furthermore, according to *(Thitthongkam & Walsh, 2010)*, it is assumed that ignoring the important role of language can lead to loss of resources or result in limitations to tourism development due to lack of communication. The role of language is defined as a factor related to tourism organization management. According to a study on the role of language in tourism organizational management, researchers pointed out various key dimensions of language in tourism *(Thitthongkam & Walsh, 2010)*:

A. To increase customer satisfaction
B. improve and maintain the language competence of the tourism community;
C. to motivate international tourists
D. to promote a better understanding of demand and culture; And
E. to create effective internal and external communications.

English has become an academic subject in the hospitality training programs of most universities and industrial sectors to achieve English proficiency for work and fulfill job responsibilities, particularly in the tourism industry.

Empirical Review

There have been many previous studies, for example *(Dombi, 2011), (Jenkins, 2012)*, *and (Nagy, 2016)* have emphasized the role of English as a lingua franca, researchers consider it very appropriate to start exploring the use of English in the tourism industry. Despite this language difference, tourism employees must equip themselves with good language skills, namely English communication skills because language is considered a bridge that connects them with tourists *(Douglas & ED, 2013)*. For example, tourism workers need to improve their English to provide excellent service to international tourists *(Chanthatira & Suwanarak, 2017).* Although there are various backgrounds in the mother tongue of international tourists, English is widely used in the tourism domain. For example, tour guides in Southeast Asian countries, namely Malaysia and Indonesia, communicate in English when carrying out their duties such as greeting tourists, explaining things and places, asking questions, conveying and explaining information, reminding, and giving instructions and warnings (*Ekayati & Saniaty, 2018)*. In addition, *(Khuong, 2015)* stated that English is very necessary in Vietnam to provide tourism services to international tourists. His study also shows that tourism program students in Vietnam also attend English training for tourism. In his study, *(Prachanant, 2012)* described the need for the use of English among tourism employees in Thailand, especially to convey information, provide services, and offer assistance. In another Southeast Asian country - Cambodia, (Morrow, 2015) revealed that English is used by international tourists who speak that language as their first language or as an international language that supports the use of English required by Cambodian tourism employees.

METHOD
Research Design

The methodology used by the researcher involved questionnaires and literature review. This section begins with population and sample used, data collection, instruments, and data analysis.

Population and Sample

Respondents in this study included 60 tourism workers in Nusa Dua, Bali. Nusa Dua, Bali is chosen as the research site because of the many international chain hotels in the area thus English will be a compulsory skill that the workers must have. The sampling design used by the researchers was nonprobability sampling, with no binding probability that each population member would be selected as the sample subject. The sampling technique in this study uses a targeted sampling technique that divides the sample into specific types of people who can provide the information the researcher needs and those who meet the specified criteria set by the researchers *(Sakaran & Bogie, 2016).*

Data Collection

Data was collected through observation and interviews. Observations are carried out at the place where the phenomenon is needed by the researcher. Observation also allows researchers to obtain direct information about certain phenomena, rather than stories from other people's interpretations. During the observation, the researcher observed the activities of visiting tourists as well as the workers behaviours. Through these observations and interviews, the researcher collects data that is to analyse the point of this research

Instruments

Questionnaires was used as research instruments in this study. The questionnaire was designed based on a review of the literature and the experience of the researcher. Likert scale from 1 to with 5 was used as the method to process the data to find respondents' opinions about

the perception of the importance of using English in the tourism industry. The questionnaire was written in English and the questionnaire set was divided into 3 parts. Part 1 is a question about basic information such as tourism workers' backgrounds, such as Gender, Age, Education, Working Experince, and the departments where they work. Part 2 discusses self perceptions of English, and Part 3 discusses the Perception of the respondents toward english for specific purposes (ESP) in tourism and hospitality industry. According to *(Mangkuatmodjo, 2015)* in determine the score classification can be using the interval formula with Sturgress criteria:

$$I = \frac{HV - LV}{K}$$

Information:

I = Intervals
HV = Highest Value
LV = Lowest Value
K = Number of Class Intervals

From the formula above, the interval scale used in this research is as follows: $I = \frac{5 - 1}{5}$

$$I = 0.8$$

So, the distance (scale) of each class interval of 0.8. From the interval scale then interpreted in average respondent's answer with criteria:

Table 1. Respondents Answer Interval Scale

Intervals	Information
4.20-5.00	Strongly Agree
3.40-4.19	Agree
2.60-3.39	Neutral
1.80-2.59	Disagree
1.00-1.79	Strongly Disagree

Data analysis

This study uses a descriptive research design with a quantitative approach to describe the perceptions of tourism workers about the importance of English in the tourism industry. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25 to give descriptive statistics regarding the perceptions of tourism workers, especially in Nusa Dua, Bali, about the importance of using English in the tourism industry.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
The background description of the respondents.
Table 2. Frequency of Gender

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	41	68.3	68.3	68.3
	Female	19	31.7	31.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

This section describes the frequency of the respondents' gender where the total of the respondents are 60 people with 41 male (68.3%) and 19 female (31.7).

Table 3. Frequency of Age

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 - 22 years old	16	26.7	26.7	26.7
	23 - 27 years old	14	23.3	23.3	50.0
	28 - 32 years old	4	6.7	6.7	56.7
	33 - 37 years old	14	23.3	23.3	80.0
	38 - 42 years old	12	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 describes the age of the respondents. It has 5 groups age, 18 – 22 years old with 16 respondents (26.7%), 23 – 27 years old 14 respondents (23.3%), 28 – 32 years old with 4 respondents (6.7%), 33 – 37 years old with 14 respondents (23.3%), and 38 – 42 years old with 12 respondents (23.3%). It can be clearly seen that the biggest group age is 18 – 22 years old with 16 years old (26.7%), and the smallest group is 28 – 32 years old with 4 respondents (6.7%).

Table 4. Frequency of Education

Education					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Diploma II	3	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Diploma III	3	5.0	5.0	10.0
	Diploma IV	44	73.3	73.3	83.3
	S 1	10	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

The highest frequency of education comes from Diploma IV with 44 respondents (73.3%), S1 (Undergraduate) with 10 respondents (16.7%), and Diploma II alongside Diploma III with 3 respondents (5.0%) respectively.

Table 5. Frequency of Department in Hotel

Department					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Management and Finance Department.	7	11.7	11.7	11.7
	Food & Beverage Hotel Department.	21	35.0	35.0	46.7
	Front Office Hotel Department.	14	23.3	23.3	70.0
	Housekeeping Hotel Department.	3	5.0	5.0	75.0
	Maintenance Hotel Department.	3	5.0	5.0	80.0
	Reservations & Marketing Hotel Department.	9	15.0	15.0	95.0

Human Resource Hotel Department.	3	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

There were 7 departments where the respondents worked at the time this research was conducted. This highest frequency comes from Food and Beverage Department with 21 respondents (35.0%), then followed by Front Office Department with 14 respondents (23.3%), Reservations and Marketing Departments with 9 respondents (15.0%), Management and Finance Departments comes next with 7 respondents (11.7%), and followed by Maintenance Departments and HR Departments with 3 respondents (5.0%) respectively.

Table 6. Frequency of Working Experience

Experience					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 1 year	12	20.0	20.0	20.0
	1 - 3 years	20	33.3	33.3	53.3
	4 - 6 years	14	23.3	23.3	76.7
	7 - 9 years	14	23.3	23.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 describes the working experience of the respondents with the highest frequency comes from group 1 – 3 years with 20 respondents (33.3%), 4 – 6 years and 7 – 9 years with 14 respondents (23.3%) respectively, and 12 respondents (20.0%) below 1 year of working experience.

Self-Perception on English language
Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Self Perceptions on English Language

No	Question	N	Mean	Perception
1	Do you like English?	60	4.42	Strongly Agree
2	Is English important to you?	60	4.65	Strongly Agree
3	Does English have a positive impact on your work?	60	4.55	Strongly Agree
4	Are you able to interact in English?	60	4.33	Strongly Agree
5	Is being able to interact in English, your service income increases?	60	4.32	Strongly Agree
	Valid N (listwise)	60		

Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics of self-perceptions on English language skills among the participants. The table includes the question number, the number of respondents (N), the mean scores, and the corresponding perception levels. In question 1, participants were asked whether they like English. The results show that the participants strongly agree (mean = 4.42) that they have a positive inclination towards the English language. Moving to question 2, participants were asked about the importance of English to them. The findings indicate a strong agreement (mean = 4.65) among the participants that English holds significant

importance in their lives. In question 3, participants were asked about the positive impact of English on their work. The results reveal that the participants strongly agree (mean = 4.55) that English has a positive influence on their professional endeavors. Question 4 assesses the participants' self-perceived ability to interact in English. The findings demonstrate that the participants strongly agree (mean = 4.33) regarding their capability to engage in English conversations. Lastly, question 5 focuses on the perception of whether being able to interact in English leads to an increase in service income. The participants strongly agree (mean = 4.32) that their income in the service industry rises when they possess the ability to communicate effectively in English.

The descriptive statistics indicate that the participants hold a strong agreement and positive self-perception regarding their liking for English, the importance of English to them, and the positive impact of English on their work. Additionally, the participants express confidence in their ability to interact in English, perceiving it as a valuable skill that contributes to increased income in the service industry.

Perceptions Toward English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in Tourism and Hospitality Industry
Table 8. Descriptive Statistics of Perceptions Toward ESP

No	Statement	N	Mean	Perception
1	Good listening skills in English are very important in the hospitality and tourism industry.	60	4.68	Strongly Agree
2	Good speaking skills in English are very important in the hospitality and tourism industry.	60	4.68	Strongly Agree
3	Good reading skills in English are very important in the hospitality and tourism industry.	60	4.52	Strongly Agree
4	Good writing skills in English are very important in the hospitality and tourism industry.	60	4.23	Strongly Agree
5	Knowing a lot of English vocabulary related to the hotel and tourism industry is very important.	60	4.58	Strongly Agree
	Valid N (listwise)	60		

Table 8 provides the descriptive statistics for perceptions toward English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the context of the hospitality and tourism industry. The table presents the statement number, the number of respondents (N), the mean scores, and the corresponding perception levels. Statement 1 reveals that participants strongly agree (mean = 4.68) that good listening skills in English hold significant importance in the hospitality and tourism industry. Similarly, in statement 2, participants also strongly agree (mean = 4.68) that good speaking skills in English are very important in the hospitality and tourism industry. Moving to statement 3, the participants strongly agree (mean = 4.52) that good reading skills in English are highly important within the hospitality and tourism industry. In statement 4, the participants indicate a strong agreement (mean = 4.23) that good writing skills in English play a crucial role in the hospitality and tourism industry. Furthermore, in statement 5, participants strongly agree (mean = 4.58) that having extensive English vocabulary related to the hotel and tourism industry is of great importance.

The descriptive statistics illustrate that across all statements, the participants consistently hold a strong agreement and perception regarding the importance of English language skills and vocabulary in the context of the hospitality and tourism industry. The mean scores consistently indicate a high level of agreement, emphasizing the significance of good listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, as well as a substantial vocabulary, in this industry. The data provided in Tables 2 to 8 presents valuable insights into the background characteristics, perceptions, and self-perceptions of the participants regarding English language skills and their relevance to the hospitality and tourism industry. First, Tables 2 and 3 provide an overview of the respondents' gender and age distribution. The majority of the participants were male (68.3%), and the largest age group was 18-22 years old (26.7%). These findings suggest that the study captured a diverse group of respondents, representing different demographics within the industry. Table 4 highlights the educational background of the participants, with the highest frequency being Diploma IV (73.3%), followed by S1 (Undergraduate) (16.7%). This indicates that the majority of the participants had completed a diploma or undergraduate program, providing a foundation for their knowledge and skills in the hospitality and tourism industry. Table 5 explores the departmental distribution of the participants' current work, indicating that Food and Beverage Department had the highest frequency (35.0%), followed by Front Office (23.3%) and Reservations & Marketing (15.0%). These findings offer insights into the specific areas where the participants are employed, showcasing the diversity of roles within the industry. Table 6 presents the participants' working experience, with the largest group having 1-3 years of experience (33.3%). This suggests that a significant portion of the participants had a moderate level of experience in the hospitality and tourism field. Moving to Tables 7 and 8, they shed light on the participants' self-perceptions and perceptions toward English language skills within the industry. The findings indicate strong agreement among the participants across all statements. Participants strongly agreed that they liked English, perceived it as important, recognized its positive impact on their work, believed they were able to interact effectively in English, and acknowledged that being able to do so increased their service income. These self-perceptions and perceptions reflect the participants' understanding of the significance of English language proficiency in the hospitality and tourism industry.

The self-perceptions and perceptions toward English language skills among participants were overwhelmingly positive. Participants strongly agreed on the importance of English, its positive impact on work, and their ability to interact effectively in English. They also recognized the correlation between English proficiency and increased service income, highlighting the practical significance of language skills in the industry.

Moreover, participants acknowledged the importance of specific English language competencies for hospitality and tourism, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary acquisition. These findings underscore the role of English as a vital tool for communication, customer service, and professional advancement within the industry.

Overall, the study indicates a high level of awareness and recognition among participants regarding the importance of English language proficiency in the hospitality and tourism sector. These insights carry significant implications for language training programs, curriculum development, and human resource practices within the industry. By aligning with the needs and expectations of employees, organizations can better equip their workforce with the requisite language skills to excel in diverse roles and meet the demands of an increasingly globalized industry landscape.

CONCLUSION

The research findings presented in this article provide valuable insights into the perceptions of tourism workers in Nusa Dua, Bali, regarding the importance of using English

in the tourism industry. The study aimed to examine the workers' perceptions and self-perceptions of English language skills and their relevance to the hospitality and tourism industry. The findings indicate that the participants hold positive self-perceptions and perceptions regarding English language skills. They strongly agree that they like English, consider it important, recognize its positive impact on their work, and believe they are able to interact effectively in English. Furthermore, they acknowledge that being proficient in English increases their service income. These perceptions highlight the participants' awareness of the significance of English language proficiency in their professional lives. The study also reveals the participants' strong agreement on the importance of English skills in the hospitality and tourism industry. They recognize the significance of good listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English, as well as a broad vocabulary related to the industry. These findings emphasize the participants' understanding of the role of English in effective communication, customer service, and career advancement within the industry. The research contributes to the field of study by providing empirical evidence of the perceptions and self-perceptions of tourism workers regarding the importance of English in the tourism industry. The findings shed light on the language requirements and competencies needed by workers in the industry, informing language training programs, curriculum development, and human resource practices. The study has a few limitations that affect how we interpret its findings. Firstly, it focused solely on tourism workers in Nusa Dua, Bali, so we can't assume that the results apply to workers in other places or industries. Additionally, the sample size was small, which might not accurately represent all tourism workers in the area. There's also a chance that participants gave answers they thought were socially acceptable, which could bias the results. Since the study only looked at participants' perceptions at one point in time, we can't track how these perceptions might change over time. Furthermore, factors specific to Nusa Dua, Bali, like its unique culture and industry dynamics, might have influenced the results in a way that doesn't apply elsewhere. Lastly, the study didn't explore other factors, like participants' previous English training or exposure to international tourists, which could have affected their views. Considering these limitations helps us understand the study's findings better and suggests areas for further research.

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