



Integrating Tourism Marketing into ESP: Teachers' Perspectives from a Vocational Education Context

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ABSTRACT

This study examines teachers' perceptions of integrating tourism marketing concepts into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction at SMKN 1 Gerung, a vocational high school that offers a Tourism Destination major. As the tourism industry increasingly demands graduates with strong English proficiency and marketing communication skills, ESP programs are expected to provide learning experiences that reflect real professional practices. Teachers' perceptions are crucial in this process because their beliefs, pedagogical knowledge, and instructional decisions directly influence the implementation and success of curriculum integration. Adopting a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected from 8 ESP teachers through semi-structured interviews, supported by document analysis and classroom observations to ensure methodological triangulation. Qualitative analysis revealed that teachers generally hold positive views toward integrating tourism marketing, as they believe it can improve students' language proficiency, increase their motivation, and strengthen their ability to communicate effectively in workplace-related contexts. However, several challenges were identified, including limited availability of authentic and up-to-date teaching materials, insufficient professional development in tourism marketing, and weak collaboration between the school and tourism industry stakeholders. These challenges hinder teachers' ability to design industry-relevant ESP lessons. The study highlights the need for curriculum updates, the development of authentic tourism marketing resources, and structured professional development programs. Overall, the findings offer important insights into improving curriculum design, teacher professional development and school-industry collaboration to enhance the quality, relevance, and industry alignment of ESP instruction in tourism-focused vocational education settings.

Introduction

Tourism is one of the entertainment activities that can develop the ability of language, such as English. By developing the tourism sector, the existence of a country, especially for education, it can assist in student progress (Saragih et al., 2022). How the tourism able to support students ability in English because in West Lombok, there are vocational high

schools exactly SMKN 1 Gerung has a major Tourism Destination. The major learn part of Tourism Destination for instance management hotel operations, making travel packages, tourism marketing, foreign languages, event planning and various other aspects related to the travel and tourism industry (Silalahi, 2021). Therefore, many students are interested in taking a field of study and learn it. They are certain that it will facilitate expanding the speaking capability. In particular, tourism promotion or tourism marketing is better to expand the ability to speak(Nababan et al., 2025).

Tourism marketing has become an essential skill for students preparing for careers in the tourism and hospitality industry(Putra et al., 2022). As global competition in tourism increases, mastery of English especially English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is necessary for effective destination promotion, customer communication and digital-based marketing. Integrating tourism marketing concepts into ESP classes provides opportunities for students to develop language proficiency while acquiring practical communication skills relevant to real industry needs(Milán & Huszti, 2024). Through tasks such as designing promotional materials, analyzing real marketing campaigns and simulating interactions with international tourists, students can develop practical communication skills that align with current professional demands(Devkota et al., 2023). This approach ensures that learners are better equipped to enter the workforce with both strong linguistic competence and a solid understanding of contemporary tourism marketing trends.

Teachers play a crucial role in determining how well this integration is implemented. Their beliefs, knowledge and attitudes toward tourism marketing influence the selection of teaching strategies, materials, and assessment methods used in the classroom(Tenieshvili, 2023). When teachers possess positive perceptions and sufficient understanding of tourism marketing, they are more likely to design learning experiences that are relevant, engaging, and aligned with industry expectations(Borg, 2009). Conversely, limited familiarity or negative attitudes may hinder the effective adoption of such content in ESP instruction. Understanding teachers' perceptions is therefore essential for evaluating the feasibility, relevance, and overall effectiveness of incorporating tourism marketing into ESP(Ghazala, 2025). By examining these perceptions, educators and institutions can identify potential challenges, provide targeted training, and develop instructional frameworks that support successful integration and maximize learning outcomes for students.

Despite the significance of integrating tourism marketing into ESP instruction, limited research has examined how ESP teachers perceive the inclusion of tourism marketing within language education(Tuyen & Tien, 2021). While many studies highlight the importance of ESP in preparing students for industry-specific communication, far fewer investigate teachers' perspectives on incorporating marketing content, even though teachers are central to curriculum implementation. This lack of research creates a gap in understanding how educators interpret the relevance, practicality, and pedagogical implications of merging linguistic and marketing competencies in the classroom. Teachers' perceptions are theoretically significant because, within the framework of teacher cognition theory, teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and prior experiences function as mediating factors between curriculum design and classroom practice (Rahman & Mehar Singh, 2023). Even well-designed ESP curricula may not be implemented as intended if teachers perceive interdisciplinary content such as tourism marketing as irrelevant, beyond their expertise, or misaligned with language learning goals. Therefore, examining teachers' perceptions provides critical insight into how and why ESP curriculum integration succeeds or fails at the instructional level.

This study extends prior ESP research, which has predominantly focused on curriculum design, learner needs, or learning outcomes, by foregrounding teachers as active curriculum interpreters rather than passive implementers. While earlier studies largely emphasize the effectiveness of tourism-related ESP tasks at the tertiary level, this study challenges the assumption that such integration is uniformly understood and readily adopted by teachers across educational contexts. By exploring ESP teachers' perceptions in a vocational high school setting, the study contributes new empirical evidence from an under-researched context and highlights the role of teacher cognition in shaping interdisciplinary ESP implementation.

Investigating teachers' perceptions is important because their attitudes and beliefs often shape instructional decisions. Teachers who view tourism marketing as highly relevant may be more motivated to adopt innovative methods, select authentic materials, and encourage students to engage in task-based learning activities that mirror real industry situations. On the other hand, teachers who perceive tourism marketing as outside their expertise may feel unprepared or reluctant to integrate it effectively. These differences in perception can significantly influence the consistency and quality of ESP instruction across institutions.

Furthermore, examining teachers' perceptions can uncover potential challenges that may limit the successful implementation of tourism marketing within ESP courses. Some teachers may struggle with a lack of appropriate teaching materials that combine language learning with marketing concepts. Others may feel they lack adequate professional development or training in tourism marketing, making them uncertain about how to design lessons that balance linguistic goals with marketing competencies. Limited collaboration between educational institutions and tourism industry stakeholders may also contribute to gaps in knowledge, outdated content, or insufficient exposure to current marketing trends and practices.

Understanding these challenges is essential for improving curriculum development and supporting teachers in their instructional roles. By identifying specific barriers—including resource shortages, limited institutional support, or gaps in teacher expertise—educational planners can provide targeted solutions. These might include curriculum revisions, the development of integrated teaching materials, or partnerships with tourism practitioners who can offer insights into current marketing strategies. Addressing these issues can empower teachers to implement tourism marketing content more confidently and effectively within ESP classes(Jayswal et al., 2021).

While the integration of tourism marketing into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction is widely advocated in vocational and professional education, existing research has predominantly conceptualized integration as a matter of curriculum content or instructional technique. Such perspectives tend to overlook a critical theoretical dimension emphasized in teacher cognition theory—namely, that curricula are not implemented mechanically but are interpreted, mediated, and enacted through teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and professional identities (Nehru & Supriyono, 2025). Consequently, the effectiveness of interdisciplinary ESP curricula depends not only on curricular design but also on how teachers cognitively frame the relevance, legitimacy, and pedagogical value of non-linguistic content such as tourism marketing.

This reveals a theoretical gap in the research. Although prior studies have examined learner needs, task effectiveness, and industry relevance, relatively little attention has been paid to how teachers conceptualize interdisciplinary integration within ESP from a cognitive and epistemological perspective. In particular, existing research seldom addresses whether

ESP teachers perceive tourism marketing as compatible with language pedagogy, how they negotiate disciplinary boundaries, or how their beliefs shape instructional decision-making. As a result, current ESP curriculum models remain under-theorized in terms of teacher agency and cognition in interdisciplinary contexts. Addressing this gap, the present study draws on teacher cognition theory to explore ESP teachers' perceptions of integrating tourism marketing into language instruction in a vocational education setting. Rather than treating integration as a technical or procedural issue, this study conceptualizes it as a cognitively mediated curricular practice, shaped by teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and perceived professional roles. By examining how teachers interpret, value, and enact tourism marketing within ESP instruction, the study aims to generate theoretically grounded insights that inform curriculum development, teacher professional learning, and interdisciplinary program design. Ultimately, the findings are expected to contribute to the advancement of a more responsive and industry-relevant ESP curriculum that aligns curricular intentions with teachers' cognitive realities and the communicative demands of the global tourism sector(Kim et al., 2024).

Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, which aims to explore a phenomenon in depth and in its natural context. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is appropriate for understanding participants' perspectives, beliefs, and experiences. A descriptive design was selected because, as stated by(Guest et al., 2025), descriptive qualitative studies are suitable for providing a detailed and straight forward description of a phenomenon in this case, teachers' perceptions of integrating tourism marketing into ESP instruction.

The participants consisted of ESP teachers from SMKN 1 Gerung who offer tourism-related programs. The study used purposive sampling, a technique recommended by Patton (2002) for selecting participants who can provide rich, relevant, and diverse information. Criteria included teaching experience in ESP, familiarity with tourism curriculum and involvement in tourism-related instructional activities. The number of participants ranged 8 teachers, following Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) who suggest that qualitative interviews can typically be achieved within this sample size(Nyimbili Phd & Nyimbili, 2024).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used because, according to Merriam & Tisdell (2016), they allow researchers to explore participants' viewpoints while remaining flexible enough for probing deeper insights. The interview guide focused on teachers' understanding of tourism marketing, perceived relevance, instructional practices, challenges, and needs for professional development(Musoeva, 2025).

The researcher first contacted school to obtain permission and identify eligible participants. After informed consent was obtained, interviews were conducted face-to-face or online based on participants' preferences. Each interview lasted 30–60 minutes and was audio-recorded with permission, following the ethical guidelines recommended by Punch (2005). Relevant documents were collected from participants or institutions(Behera & Dey, 2025). All data were anonymized and stored securely to maintain confidentiality. The interview transcripts were coded to identify patterns related to teachers' beliefs, challenges, readiness, and needed support. Document analysis served as triangulation. The steps of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing followed the qualitative analysis framework of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014).

Table 1. Participants of the Research “SMKN 1 Gerung”

Participant Code	Gender	Teaching Experience (Years)	ESP Teaching Experience (Years)	Area of Expertise
T1	Female	8	5	English for Tourism
T2	Male	10	7	Hospitality English
T3	Female	6	4	Tourism Marketing
T4	Female	12	9	ESP & Curriculum Development
T5	Male	7	6	English for Hospitality
T6	Female	5	3	Tourism Communication
T7	Male	15	10	English for Business & Tourism
T8	Female	9	7	Tourism English & Marketing

Findings

This study examined teachers' perceptions of integrating tourism marketing into ESP (English for Specific Purposes) instruction in vocational schools. The findings are organized into three main themes that emerged from the data: teachers' understanding of tourism marketing in ESP, perceived benefits of integration, and challenges faced during implementation. Interview excerpts are included as supporting evidence.

1. Teachers' Understanding of Tourism Marketing in ESP

Most participants demonstrated a general understanding of tourism marketing and recognized its relevance to vocational tourism programs. Teachers reported that tourism marketing involves promoting destinations, creating positive tourist experiences, and increasing visitor engagement all of which require effective communication skills. Several teachers stated that integrating marketing content helps students see how English functions in real tourism workplaces. One participant explained:

“Tourism marketing is not only about selling a place; it’s about communicating the experience. Students need English to do that, so combining marketing with ESP makes sense.” (Teacher 3, Interview)

However, some teachers acknowledged that their understanding of tourism marketing was “basic” or “limited,” especially those without a tourism industry background. Still, they expressed a strong interest in enriching their knowledge to improve classroom instruction. Another teacher noted:

“I know the concept in general, but I need more exposure. I am an English teacher, not a marketing expert, so sometimes I feel unsure.” (Teacher 1, Interview)

2. Perceived Benefits of Integrating Tourism Marketing into ESP

Participants consistently agreed that incorporating tourism marketing into ESP teaching enhances students' professional readiness. Teachers believed the integration improves students' communication skills, vocabulary mastery, and confidence in dealing with real tourism scenarios such as promoting attractions, handling guests, and describing tour packages. A teacher emphasized practical relevance:

"Students become more active because they can practice marketing a destination or a hotel in English. It prepares them for the real work environment." (Teacher 6, Interview)

Additionally, teachers mentioned that tourism marketing provides a meaningful context for language learning. Rather than learning English in isolation, students learn through tasks such as preparing brochures, creating digital promotional content, and developing itineraries. One participant stated:

"When students make a digital brochure or promote a destination, they use English with a purpose. This makes learning more authentic." (Teacher 4, Interview)

3. Challenges Faced by ESP Teachers

Although teachers supported the integration, they identified several key challenges that affect implementation:

a. Limited Teaching Materials

Teachers reported a scarcity of localized, curriculum-aligned materials combining ESP and tourism marketing.

"We don't have specific books or modules for tourism marketing in ESP. I have to collect materials from the internet, and it takes time." (Teacher 2, Interview)

b. Insufficient Training and Professional Development

Many teachers felt unprepared due to the lack of formal training in tourism marketing concepts.

"There is no special training for us. We learn by ourselves, so sometimes I'm not confident when explaining marketing terms." (Teacher 5, Interview)

c. Limited Collaboration with the Tourism Industry

Participants expressed the need for stronger partnerships between schools and tourism stakeholders to provide real-world insight and resources.

"If we had more collaboration with hotels or travel agencies, we could get real examples and invite practitioners to class." (Teacher 7, Interview)

d. Time Constraints in the Curriculum

Teachers found it challenging to balance language objectives with marketing content due to limited teaching hours.

Discussion

This section should explore the significance of the results of the study. A combined Findings and Discussion section is also appropriate. This section allows you to offer your interpretation and explain the meaning of your results. Emphasize any theoretical or practical consequences of the results.

The findings reveal that teachers at SMKN 1 Gerung generally possess a functional understanding of tourism marketing and acknowledge its relevance to ESP instruction in vocational settings. This supports earlier studies, such as (Radjabov et al., 2025), which found that educators recognize tourism marketing as essential for preparing students for industry-specific communication tasks. However, unlike previous research conducted in university contexts, this study contributes new insights by documenting how high school ESP teachers interpret tourism marketing as both a communication skill and a professional competency. Teachers in this study particularly emphasized communication of experiences rather than simple promotion, adding a new dimension to how tourism marketing is pedagogically understood. Most participants demonstrated a general understanding of tourism marketing and recognized its relevance to vocational tourism programs. Teachers described tourism marketing as involving destination promotion, experience communication, and visitor engagement, all of which require effective English communication skills. This perception reflects teachers' alignment of tourism marketing with their professional role as language educators, as they emphasized communicative aspects rather than technical marketing strategies. As one teacher noted, "Tourism marketing is not only about selling a place; it's about communicating the experience" (Teacher 3). From a teacher cognition perspective, this suggests an emerging expansion of teachers' professional identity, in which they begin to view themselves as facilitators of workplace-oriented communication rather than solely as instructors of general language skills. However, this expanding professional identity is constrained by disciplinary boundaries and institutional conditions. Teachers without a tourism background frequently described their understanding of tourism marketing as "basic" or "limited" and expressed uncertainty about their authority to teach marketing-related content. The statement "I am an English teacher, not a marketing expert" (Teacher 1) illustrates how professional identity shapes teachers' confidence and willingness to engage deeply with interdisciplinary content. This uncertainty is further reinforced by curriculum constraints and institutional policy, including the lack of formally integrated tourism marketing components and limited professional development opportunities. As a result, teachers' perceptions of tourism marketing are not merely individual beliefs but are shaped by systemic factors that define what knowledge is legitimate and supported within ESP instruction.

Teachers also perceived strong benefits from integrating tourism marketing into ESP classes, particularly in improving students' confidence, vocabulary mastery, and readiness for workplace communication. These findings align with (Radita & Yuniar, 2025), who reported increased learner engagement when marketing-based tasks were used in ESP courses. Yet, the present study extends this understanding by demonstrating that such benefits also occur among vocational high school students in a rural Indonesian context—an

area that is rarely discussed in the literature. The integration of tasks such as digital brochure creation and destination promotion illustrates how authentic learning practices can strengthen both linguistic and professional competencies, highlighting the unique value of contextualized ESP instruction. Despite the perceived benefits, teachers reported persistent challenges, including limited teaching materials. This issue has been discussed by Tenieshvili (2023), who noted a global shortage of ESP resources aligned with industry practices. However, this study contributes a new finding: teachers specifically require localized materials that reflect West Lombok's tourism characteristics. This need for locally relevant teaching resources has not been widely addressed in existing ESP-tourism literature, making it a notable gap that future curriculum designers must consider. Participants consistently perceived the integration of tourism marketing into ESP instruction as beneficial for enhancing students' professional readiness, particularly in improving communicative competence, vocabulary mastery, and confidence in handling authentic tourism scenarios such as destination promotion and customer interaction. These perceived benefits reflect teachers' professional identity as ESP practitioners who value practical language use and workplace relevance, positioning tourism marketing as a pedagogically legitimate extension of language teaching rather than a purely business-oriented subject. Teachers emphasized that tasks such as creating brochures, developing itineraries, and producing digital promotional content enable students to use English with clear communicative purposes, making learning more authentic and engaging. However, while teachers recognized these benefits, their ability to implement such integration consistently was shaped by curriculum constraints and institutional policy. In the absence of explicit curricular guidelines and formal institutional support for interdisciplinary learning, the integration of tourism marketing into ESP instruction relied largely on individual teacher initiative, suggesting that positive teacher perceptions must be accompanied by supportive curriculum structures and policies to ensure sustainable and systematic implementation.

Another major challenge is the lack of professional training in tourism marketing. Prior studies, such as (Karimah et al., 2025), highlighted insufficient digital marketing training among tourism educators. However, the teachers in this research expressed a broader gap not only in digital marketing but in understanding core tourism marketing concepts such as destination branding and customer engagement. This expands the scope of the professional development issue and indicates that ESP teachers require interdisciplinary competencies beyond traditional language teaching skills. Limited collaboration between schools and the tourism industry also emerged as a significant obstacle. Although (Eric et al., 2025) emphasized the importance of industry partnerships in vocational education, the findings of this study reveal that such collaborations remain weak in rural tourism areas. Teachers noted that stronger connections with hotels, tour agencies, and practitioners would help provide real-world examples for classroom use. The study thus contributes updated evidence that school-industry collaboration is still insufficient in many regions, implying an urgent need for systematic partnership frameworks. Curriculum time constraints further hinder integration efforts. While previous studies (2020-2023) acknowledged time limitations in ESP courses, this research shows that the challenge is intensified when

multiple competencies—language, marketing, and digital skills must be taught simultaneously. Teachers expressed difficulty balancing ESP objectives with marketing content due to rigid lesson schedules. This reveals a structural barrier within vocational curricula that requires administrative intervention rather than solely teacher adaptation.

Although teachers expressed strong support for integrating tourism marketing into ESP instruction, they identified several interrelated challenges that constrained effective implementation, reflecting tensions between professional identity, curriculum structure, and institutional policy. The lack of localized and curriculum-aligned teaching materials required teachers to independently source resources, increasing workload and reinforcing perceptions that tourism marketing lies outside their primary role as language educators. Similarly, insufficient professional development in tourism marketing limited teachers' confidence and strengthened disciplinary boundaries, as many felt unprepared to teach content they perceived as beyond their formal expertise. These identity-related challenges were compounded by limited institutional collaboration with tourism industry stakeholders, which restricted teachers' access to authentic materials and real-world practices necessary for vocationally oriented ESP instruction. Additionally, rigid curriculum schedules and limited instructional time made it difficult for teachers to balance linguistic objectives with marketing content, highlighting how curriculum constraints and institutional policies implicitly prioritize language coverage over interdisciplinary integration. Together, these challenges suggest that teachers' perceptions of difficulty are not merely individual limitations but are shaped by systemic conditions that require coordinated curriculum reform, targeted professional development, and institutional support to enable sustainable ESP–tourism marketing integration.

Overall, this study confirms several issues identified in past research but also provides new contributions, especially in highlighting the need for localized materials, interdisciplinary teacher training, and stronger industry collaboration within the specific context of vocational schools in West Lombok. These findings underscore the importance of designing an ESP curriculum that is flexible, context-sensitive, and aligned with contemporary tourism marketing practices. By capturing teachers' perceptions and challenges in detail, the study adds a new perspective to the ESP literature and strengthens understanding of how tourism marketing can be effectively integrated into language instruction.

Conclusion

This study explored ESP teachers' perceptions of integrating tourism marketing concepts into English instruction at SMKN 1 Gerung. The findings show that teachers generally recognize the importance of tourism marketing for improving students' English proficiency and preparing them for communication demands in the tourism industry. They view the integration as beneficial for enhancing learner motivation, enriching language learning activities, and fostering workplace-oriented communication skills. However, several barriers continue to limit effective implementation, including limited authentic teaching materials, inadequate teacher training in tourism marketing, and minimal institutional collaboration with tourism industry partners. These results highlight the need for curriculum adjustments that incorporate relevant tourism marketing content and task-

based activities aligned with real industry practices. Strengthening professional development programs is also essential to equip teachers with both pedagogical and marketing-related competencies. Furthermore, establishing stronger partnerships between the school and local tourism stakeholders can provide teachers with updated insights into industry trends and help generate authentic learning resources. Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of ESP instruction in tourism-focused vocational schools by revealing the central role of teachers' perceptions in shaping curricular innovation. Addressing the identified challenges will support the development of a more responsive, industry-aligned ESP curriculum that better prepares students for professional communication within the tourism sector.

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