

The Influence of English Communication Competence and Learning Motivation on Employability Skills with Learning Engagement as a Mediating Variable

Arifin

Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Pamulang. Jl. Surya Kencana No.1, Pamulang Barat, Kec. Pamulang, Kota Tangerang Selatan, Banten 15417
Email: dosen01199@unpam.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

English Communication Competence, Learning Motivation, Learning Engagement, Employability Skills, PLS-SEM.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effects of English Communication Competence and Learning Motivation on Employability Skills, with Learning Engagement serving as a mediating variable among Tax Accounting students at Universitas Pamulang. A quantitative research approach was employed using a survey method. Data were collected from 50 undergraduate students through a structured questionnaire measured on a seven-point Likert scale. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0. The results indicate that English Communication Competence has a positive and significant effect on Employability Skills, while Learning Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Learning Engagement. However, English Communication Competence does not significantly affect Learning Engagement, Learning Engagement does not significantly affect Employability Skills, and Learning Motivation does not significantly affect Employability Skills. Furthermore, the mediation analysis reveals that Learning Engagement does not mediate the relationship between English Communication Competence and Employability Skills, nor the relationship between Learning Motivation and Employability Skills. These findings highlight that English communication competence is the primary determinant of students' employability skills, whereas learning motivation mainly contributes to increased learning engagement without directly enhancing employability. The study suggests that higher education institutions should strengthen English communication competence through workplace-oriented learning to better prepare graduates for the demands of the global labor market.

Email:

dosen01199@unpam.ac.id

Copyright © 2026 Jurnal Ju- SoSAK. All rights reserved is Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- Non Commercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0)

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized labor market, graduate employability has become one of the primary indicators of higher education quality. According to Zainuddin et al. (2019), employers increasingly expect graduates to possess not only academic knowledge but also English language proficiency, confidence, communication skills, and professional attitudes that enable them to adapt successfully in the workplace. Similarly, Thomas et al. (2016) emphasized that English communication skills are fundamental for workplace readiness

because they facilitate effective interaction, collaboration, and professional performance across different organizational settings.

The concept of employability has evolved beyond technical expertise into a multidimensional construct involving knowledge, transferable skills, personal attributes, and career identity. Nghia et al. (2023) explained that employability consists of several forms of graduate capital, including human capital, social capital, cultural capital, psychological capital, and career identity, all of which contribute to graduates' competitiveness in the labor market. This perspective suggests that universities should develop not only disciplinary knowledge but also communication competence and lifelong learning capabilities.

Among the competencies required by employers, English communication competence has become increasingly important because English functions as the primary language of international business and professional communication. Al-Tamimi (2025) reported that English communication competence positively supports career advancement, job performance, networking opportunities, and professional development. Likewise, Bhattacharyy and NtowOfei (2018) found that employers value graduates who demonstrate communicative competence, initiative, time management, teamwork, and confidence as indicators of work readiness and sustainable employability.

Learning motivation also plays an essential role in improving students' academic and professional competencies. According to Trang (2026), motivated students tend to participate more actively in English learning activities, which subsequently enhances learning engagement. Furthermore, Dai et al. (2025) demonstrated that motivation significantly influences English-speaking competency through increased student engagement in digital learning environments. These findings indicate that motivation serves as a driving force that encourages students to continuously develop their communication abilities.

Another important factor is learning engagement, which reflects students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive participation during the learning process. Yalei and Sukumaran (2025) found that student engagement partially mediates the relationship between smart learning and English language proficiency. Similarly, Islam et al. (2025) concluded that active learning approaches, particularly blended learning, significantly improve communication skills, teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and other employability skills required in the contemporary workplace.

Recent studies have also highlighted that English language education should integrate employability-oriented competencies into classroom practices. Arifuddin et al. (2025) argued that language learning should simultaneously develop communication, critical thinking, teamwork, adaptability, and other life skills to improve graduates' employability. Likewise, Gupta et al. (2024) emphasized that integrating English language teaching with life skills education provides students with greater readiness to face workplace challenges.

Despite the growing body of literature on English communication competence and employability, limited empirical studies have examined how English communication competence and learning motivation influence employability skills through learning engagement among non-English major students, particularly those enrolled in Tax Accounting programs in Indonesian universities. Considering the increasing demand for graduates who are able to communicate effectively in English within the global accounting and taxation profession, further investigation is needed.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of English Communication Competence and Learning Motivation on Employability Skills, with Learning Engagement serving as a mediating variable among Tax Accounting students at Universitas Pamulang by employing the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. This study is expected to contribute to English language education literature and provide practical implications for designing learning strategies that improve students' employability.

Literature Review and Problem Statement

English Communication Competence

English communication competence refers to an individual's ability to communicate effectively using English in academic and professional contexts. According to Al-Tamimi (2025), English communication competence extends beyond grammatical knowledge to include discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, strategic competence, and interpersonal communication skills. In today's global workplace, English communication competence has become a strategic asset that supports career advancement, professional growth, networking, and organizational competitiveness.

Similarly, Thomas et al. (2016) argued that employers expect graduates to demonstrate confidence in oral communication, presentation skills, negotiation abilities, and effective workplace interaction rather than merely possessing high linguistic proficiency. Effective English communication therefore represents one of the essential competencies required for successful transition from higher education to employment.

Learning Motivation

Learning motivation represents the internal and external driving forces that encourage students to participate actively in educational activities and achieve learning goals. Trang (2026) demonstrated that learning motivation significantly predicts students' engagement in English learning and indirectly improves learning outcomes through increased learner participation. Students with stronger motivation are more willing to invest time, effort, and persistence in developing their English communication abilities.

Likewise, Dai et al. (2026) found that motivation functions as one of the strongest psychological predictors of English-speaking competency, particularly in technology-enhanced learning environments. Motivated learners demonstrate greater persistence, confidence, and willingness to engage in communicative learning activities.

Learning Engagement

Learning engagement refers to students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement during the learning process. It reflects the extent to which students actively participate in classroom discussions, collaborative learning, academic activities, and independent learning. According to Yalei and Sukumaran (2025), student engagement significantly mediates the relationship between smart learning environments and English language proficiency. Students who demonstrate higher engagement generally achieve better language performance because they invest greater cognitive effort and emotional commitment throughout the learning process.

Similarly, Islam et al. (2025) reported that active learning approaches such as blended learning encourage greater student engagement, which subsequently enhances communication skills, teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving ability, technological competence, and other employability-related skills.

Employability Skills

Employability skills are transferable competencies that enable graduates to obtain employment, perform effectively, and sustain long-term career development. Nghia et al. (2023) explained that employability is a multidimensional construct consisting of human capital, social capital, cultural capital, psychological capital, and career identity. Consequently, employability encompasses not only technical expertise but also communication, adaptability, teamwork, and lifelong learning competencies.

Furthermore, Bhattacharyy and NtowOfei (2018) emphasized that employers highly value graduates who demonstrate communication ability, initiative, teamwork, responsibility, and time management because these competencies determine workplace readiness and sustainable employability. A recent systematic review conducted by Puji Hartini et al. (2026) also identified communication skills, adaptability, creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-confidence as the dominant determinants of employability skills.

Problem Statement

The growing demand for globally competitive graduates requires higher education institutions to strengthen students' English communication competence alongside employability-related competencies. Previous studies have established that English communication competence is positively associated with workplace readiness and career success (Thomas et al., 2016; Al-Tamimi, 2025), while learning motivation enhances students' engagement in English learning (Trang, 2026; Dai et al., 2026). In addition, learning engagement has been identified as an important mechanism through which instructional approaches improve English proficiency and employability skills (Yalei & Sukumaran, 2025; Islam et al., 2025).

Despite these findings, empirical evidence examining the simultaneous relationships among English Communication Competence, Learning Motivation, Learning Engagement, and Employability Skills remains limited, particularly among non-English major students in Indonesian higher education. Most previous studies have focused on English-major students or workplace employees, leaving insufficient evidence regarding vocational-oriented students such as those enrolled in Tax Accounting programs.

Accordingly, this study addresses this research gap by examining the influence of English Communication Competence and Learning Motivation on Employability Skills, with Learning Engagement serving as a mediating variable among Tax Accounting students at Universitas Pamulang using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. The findings are expected to provide theoretical contributions to English language education and practical implications for curriculum development aimed at improving graduate employability.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among English Communication Competence, Learning Motivation, Learning Engagement, and Employability Skills. The proposed research model was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0, as this technique is appropriate for predictive research models, mediation analysis, and relatively small sample sizes.

The Influence of English Communication Competence and Learning Motivation on Employability Skills with Learning Engagement as a Mediating Variable– Arifin

The study was conducted at the Tax Accounting Study Program, Universitas Pamulang, Indonesia. The respondents consisted of 50 undergraduate students who had completed English courses. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, with the following criteria: (1) active students of the Tax Accounting Study Program, (2) having completed at least one English course, and (3) willing to participate voluntarily in the study.

Table 1. Research Variables and Indicators

Variable	Code	Indicator	Adapted from
English Communication Competence (X1)	ECC1	I can communicate my ideas effectively in English.	Al-Tamimi (2025)
	ECC2	I feel confident speaking English during classroom discussions.	Thomas et al. (2016)
	ECC3	I can understand English used in academic materials.	Al-Tamimi (2025)
	ECC4	I can write simple reports or assignments in English.	Thomas et al. (2016)
	ECC5	I am able to communicate professionally in English when needed.	Zainuddin et al. (2019)
Learning Motivation (X2)	LM1	I am motivated to improve my English skills.	Trang (2026)
	LM2	Learning English is important for my future career.	Dai et al. (2025)
	LM3	I actively seek opportunities to practice English.	Trang (2026)
	LM4	I continue learning English even when it is difficult.	Dai et al. (2025)
	LM5	I enjoy participating in English learning activities.	Trang (2026)
Learning Engagement (M)	LE1	I actively participate during English classes.	Yalei & Sukumaran (2025)
	LE2	I pay attention throughout English learning sessions.	Yalei & Sukumaran (2025)
	LE3	I contribute to group discussions conducted in English.	Islam et al. (2025)
	LE4	I complete English learning tasks seriously.	Yalei & Sukumaran (2025)
	LE5	I am enthusiastic about participating in English learning activities.	Islam et al. (2025)
Employability Skills (Y)	ES1	I am confident that my English skills will improve my job opportunities.	Nghia et al. (2023)

Variable	Code	Indicator	Adapted from
	ES2	I can communicate effectively when working in a team.	Bhattacharyy & NtowOfei (2018)
	ES3	I can solve work-related problems through effective communication.	Puji Hartini et al. (2026)
	ES4	I am prepared to communicate in a professional workplace.	Thomas et al. (2016)
	ES5	I believe my English communication competence increases my employability.	Al-Tamimi (2025)

Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire developed from validated instruments in previous studies. All measurement items were adapted to fit the context of English learning in higher education. The questionnaire consisted of four constructs: English Communication Competence, Learning Motivation, Learning Engagement, and Employability Skills. Responses were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree), where higher scores indicate stronger agreement with each statement.

The collected data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4.0 following the two-stage PLS-SEM procedure. The measurement model (outer model) was evaluated through indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Subsequently, the structural model (inner model) was assessed by examining collinearity (VIF), coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), path coefficients, and mediation effects using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples. Statistical significance was determined at a 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$).

This research complied with ethical research principles. Participation was voluntary, respondents' identities were kept anonymous, and all collected information was used solely for academic research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

A total of 50 undergraduate students from the Tax Accounting Study Program at Universitas Pamulang participated in this study. The respondents were classified based on gender, age, and academic year.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	18	36
	Female	32	64
	Total	50	100
Age	18–20 years	21	42
	21–23 years	25	50
	>23 years	4	8
	Total	50	100

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Academic Year	Second Year	14	28
	Third Year	22	44
	Fourth Year	14	28
	Total	50	100

A total of 50 students participated in this study. Based on gender, 32 respondents (64.0%) were female, while 18 respondents (36.0%) were male, indicating that female students constituted the majority of the sample. Regarding age, 25 respondents (50.0%) were between 21 and 23 years old, followed by 21 respondents (42.0%) aged 18–20 years, and 4 respondents (8.0%) aged over 23 years. This distribution indicates that most respondents were in the typical undergraduate age range.

Regarding academic year, 22 respondents (44.0%) were third-year students, while 14 respondents (28.0%) were second-year students and another 14 respondents (28.0%) were fourth-year students. The distribution suggests that respondents had sufficient exposure to English courses and academic learning experiences relevant to the variables examined in this study.

Structural Equation Models

The proposed research model was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0. The analysis followed a two-stage approach consisting of the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). The measurement model was assessed to examine the reliability and validity of the constructs, while the structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships among English Communication Competence, Learning Motivation, Learning Engagement, and Employability Skills.

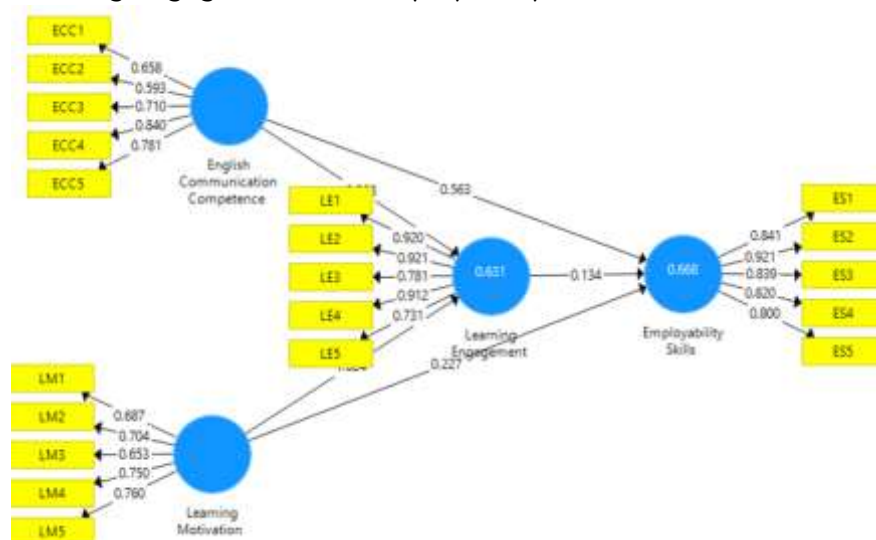


Figure 1. Initial Models

Figure 1 illustrates the initial PLS-SEM model before indicator purification. The model consists of four latent constructs: English Communication Competence, Learning Motivation, Learning Engagement, and Employability Skills, represented by twenty reflective indicators. The initial measurement model shows that several indicators have outer loading values below the recommended threshold of 0.70, particularly ECC1 (0.658), ECC2 (0.593), LM1 (0.687),

LM3 (0.653), and LE5 (0.661). According to the PLS-SEM guidelines, indicators with low outer loadings may reduce construct reliability and convergent validity. Therefore, the measurement model was refined by removing indicators with insufficient loadings while retaining indicators that adequately represented their respective constructs.

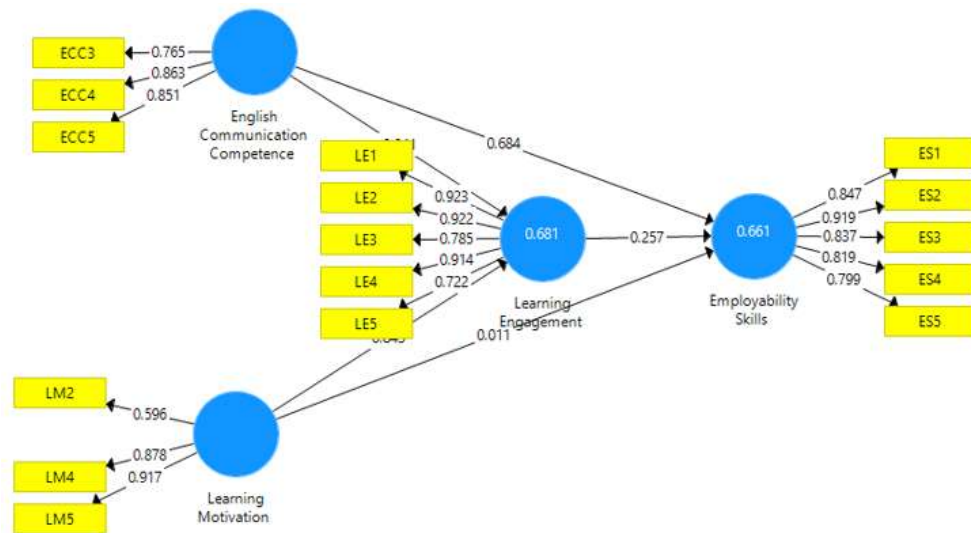


Figure 2. Selection Models

Figure 2 presents the refined measurement model after the indicator selection process. Indicators with outer loading values below the recommended threshold were removed, resulting in a more reliable and valid measurement model. The remaining indicators generally exhibit outer loading values above 0.70, indicating satisfactory indicator reliability and convergent validity. Following the refinement process, the structural model demonstrates improved explanatory power, with Learning Engagement explaining 68.1% of its variance ($R^2 = 0.681$) and Employability Skills explaining 66.1% of its variance ($R^2 = 0.661$). Consequently, the refined model satisfies the preliminary requirements for evaluating the measurement model and provides an appropriate basis for subsequent structural model assessment and hypothesis testing.

Table 3. Cross Loadings

	Employability Skills _	English Communication Competence	Learning Engagement _	Learning Motivation _
EC C3	0.499	0.765	0.258	0.346
EC C4	0.647	0.863	0.216	0.357
EC C5	0.740	0.851	0.333	0.385
ES1	0.847	0.734	0.393	0.358
ES2	0.919	0.627	0.485	0.497
ES3	0.837	0.594	0.280	0.424
ES4	0.819	0.628	0.494	0.463
ES5	0.799	0.666	0.404	0.473
LE1	0.404	0.314	0.923	0.829

	Employability Skills _	English Communication Competence	Learning Engagement _	Learning Motivation _
LE2	0.417	0.249	0.922	0.718
LE3	0.183	0.038	0.785	0.567
LE4	0.331	0.226	0.914	0.787
LE5	0.701	0.505	0.722	0.587
LM 2	0.617	0.680	0.399	0.596
LM 4	0.344	0.231	0.784	0.878
LM 5	0.353	0.227	0.769	0.917

Table 3 presents the cross-loading values used to assess the discriminant validity of the measurement model. Discriminant validity is achieved when each indicator exhibits the highest loading on its respective latent construct compared with its loadings on other constructs.

The results indicate that all indicators satisfy the cross-loading criterion. Indicators of English Communication Competence show the highest loadings on their respective construct, namely ECC3 (0.765), ECC4 (0.863), and ECC5 (0.851), which are substantially higher than their correlations with Employability Skills, Learning Engagement, and Learning Motivation. Similarly, the indicators of Employability Skills demonstrate the highest loadings on their own construct, ranging from 0.799 to 0.919, exceeding their loadings on the remaining latent variables.

For the Learning Engagement construct, the indicators also exhibit the highest loadings on their designated construct, with values ranging from 0.722 to 0.923. Although several indicators, such as LE1 and LE2, display relatively strong correlations with Learning Motivation, their primary loadings remain highest on the Learning Engagement construct, thereby satisfying the discriminant validity requirement.

Likewise, the indicators measuring Learning Motivation present the strongest loadings on their respective construct, namely LM2 (0.596), LM4 (0.878), and LM5 (0.917), compared with their loadings on the other latent variables. Overall, the cross-loading matrix confirms that each indicator is more strongly associated with its intended construct than with other constructs.

Therefore, the results demonstrate adequate discriminant validity, indicating that the four latent constructs—English Communication Competence, Learning Motivation, Learning Engagement, and Employability Skills—are empirically distinct and suitable for further evaluation of the structural model.

Table 4. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho _A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employability Skills _	0.899	0.902	0.926	0.714

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
English Communication Competence	0.772	0.795	0.867	0.685
Learning Engagement _	0.907	0.919	0.932	0.735
Learning Motivation _	0.717	0.748	0.847	0.656

Table 4 presents the results of the construct reliability and validity assessment. All constructs demonstrate satisfactory reliability, as the values of Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, and Composite Reliability exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values range from 0.656 to 0.735, all exceeding the minimum criterion of 0.50. These findings indicate that the measurement model possesses good internal consistency reliability and convergent validity, confirming that all constructs are reliable and valid for subsequent structural model analysis.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Employability Skills _	English Communication Competence	Learning Engagement _	Learning Motivation _
Employability Skills _	0.845			
English Communication Competence	0.773	0.828		
Learning Engagement _	0.491	0.329	0.857	
Learning Motivation _	0.523	0.439	0.825	0.810

Table 5 presents the results of the Fornell–Larcker criterion for assessing discriminant validity. The square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than its correlations with the other constructs. Specifically, the diagonal values are 0.845 for Employability Skills, 0.828 for English Communication Competence, 0.857 for Learning Engagement, and 0.810 for Learning Motivation. These results indicate that all constructs satisfy the Fornell–Larcker criterion, confirming adequate discriminant validity and demonstrating that each construct is empirically distinct from the others.

Table 6. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Employability Skills _	English Communication Competence	Learning Engagement _	Learning Motivation _
Employability Skills _				
English Communication Competence	0.905			

	Employability Skills _	English Communication Competence	Learning Engagement _	Learning Motivation _
Learning Engagement _	0.523	0.391		
Learning Motivation _	0.684	0.637	1.000	

Table 6 presents the HTMT values used to assess discriminant validity. Most HTMT values are below the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating adequate discriminant validity among the constructs. However, the HTMT value between English Communication Competence and Employability Skills is 0.905, which is slightly above the recommended threshold, suggesting a high correlation between these two constructs. Overall, the measurement model demonstrates acceptable discriminant validity and is suitable for further structural model analysis.

Table 7. R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Employability Skills _	0.661	0.640
Learning Engagement _	0.681	0.668

Table 7 presents the coefficient of determination (R^2) values for the endogenous constructs. The results show that Learning Engagement has an R^2 value of 0.681 (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.668$), indicating that 68.1% of its variance is explained by English Communication Competence and Learning Motivation, while the remaining 31.9% is explained by other variables outside the model. Meanwhile, Employability Skills has an R^2 value of 0.661 (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.640$), indicating that 66.1% of its variance is explained by English Communication Competence, Learning Motivation, and Learning Engagement. These findings indicate that the proposed structural model has moderate to substantial explanatory power.

Table 8. f Square

	Employability Skills _	English Communication Competence	Learning Engagement _	Learning Motivation _
Employability Skills _				
English Communication Competence	1.109		0.004	
Learning Engagement _	0.062			
Learning Motivation _	0.000		1.798	

Table 8 presents the effect size (f^2) of each exogenous construct on the endogenous constructs. The results indicate that English Communication Competence has a large effect on Employability Skills ($f^2 = 1.109$), whereas Learning Engagement has a small effect on Employability Skills ($f^2 = 0.062$). In contrast, Learning Motivation shows no effect on Employability Skills ($f^2 = 0.000$). For Learning Engagement, Learning Motivation has a large

effect ($f^2 = 1.798$), while English Communication Competence has a negligible effect ($f^2 = 0.004$). These findings suggest that English Communication Competence is the primary predictor of Employability Skills, whereas Learning Motivation is the dominant predictor of Learning Engagement.

Table 9. Path Coefficients

Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Values

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Val ues
English Communication Competence -> Employability Skills _	0.684	0.676	0.088	7.790	0.000
English Communication Competence -> Learning Engagement _	-0.041	-0.028	0.097	0.426	0.670
Learning Engagement _ -> Employability Skills _	0.257	0.269	0.135	1.907	0.057
Learning Motivation _ -> Employability Skills _	0.011	0.008	0.167	0.066	0.947
Learning Motivation _ -> Learning Engagement _	0.843	0.840	0.066	12.735	0.000

Table 9 presents the results of hypothesis testing using the path coefficient analysis. The results show that English Communication Competence has a positive and significant effect on Employability Skills ($\beta = 0.684$; $t = 7.790$; $p = 0.000$), indicating that higher English communication competence significantly improves students' employability skills. Therefore, this hypothesis is supported.

In contrast, English Communication Competence does not have a significant effect on Learning Engagement ($\beta = -0.041$; $t = 0.426$; $p = 0.670$), indicating that English communication competence is not a significant predictor of students' learning engagement. Thus, this hypothesis is not supported. Similarly, Learning Engagement does not significantly affect Employability Skills ($\beta = 0.257$; $t = 1.907$; $p = 0.057$), as the p-value exceeds the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, this hypothesis is not supported.

The results further indicate that Learning Motivation has no significant effect on Employability Skills ($\beta = 0.011$; $t = 0.066$; $p = 0.947$). Hence, this hypothesis is not supported. Finally, Learning Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Learning Engagement ($\beta = 0.843$; $t = 12.735$; $p = 0.000$), demonstrating that students with higher learning motivation tend to exhibit stronger learning engagement. Accordingly, this hypothesis is supported.

Table 10. Specific Indirect Effects

Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Values

	Original Sample (O)	Sampl e Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDE V)	P Val ues
English Communication Competence -> Learning Engagement _ -> Employability Skills _	-0.011	-0.009	0.031	0.347	0.7 29
Learning Motivation _ -> Learning Engagement _ -> Employability Skills _	0.217	0.227	0.118	1.830	0.0 68

Table 10 presents the results of the mediation analysis using the specific indirect effects. The results indicate that Learning Engagement does not significantly mediate the relationship between English Communication Competence and Employability Skills ($\beta = -0.011$; $t = 0.347$; $p = 0.729$). Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the indirect effect is not statistically significant. Therefore, the mediation hypothesis is not supported.

Similarly, Learning Engagement does not significantly mediate the relationship between Learning Motivation and Employability Skills ($\beta = 0.217$; $t = 1.830$; $p = 0.068$). Although the indirect effect is positive, the p-value exceeds the 0.05 significance level, indicating that the mediation effect is not statistically significant. Consequently, this mediation hypothesis is also not supported. Overall, the findings suggest that Learning Engagement does not function as a mediating variable in the relationships between English Communication Competence and Employability Skills or between Learning Motivation and Employability Skills.

Discussions

The findings indicate that English Communication Competence has a positive and significant effect on Employability Skills. This result suggests that students with better English communication competence are more likely to possess stronger employability skills. Effective communication in English enables students to express ideas clearly, collaborate with others, and adapt to professional environments where English is frequently used. These findings support Al-Tamimi (2025), who argued that English communication competence contributes to career readiness and workplace performance. Likewise, Thomas et al. (2016) found that employers highly value graduates who can communicate confidently in English, considering communication competence as one of the essential employability attributes. Therefore, strengthening English communication competence should become an important strategy in preparing Tax Accounting students for the global labor market.

The study also reveals that English Communication Competence does not significantly affect Learning Engagement. This finding indicates that students' communication ability alone does not necessarily increase their participation and involvement in English learning activities. Learning engagement may be influenced by other factors, such as teaching methods, classroom environment, digital learning facilities, or students' psychological characteristics. Consequently, possessing good English communication competence does not automatically encourage students to become more actively engaged in the learning process.

Furthermore, Learning Engagement does not significantly influence Employability Skills. Although engaged students generally participate more actively in classroom activities, the present findings suggest that such engagement does not directly translate into employability skills among Tax Accounting students. One possible explanation is that employability skills are developed through broader experiences, including internships, practical projects, organizational involvement, and workplace exposure, rather than classroom engagement alone.

The results further demonstrate that Learning Motivation has no significant effect on Employability Skills. This implies that students' motivation to learn English is insufficient by itself to improve employability skills. Although motivated students tend to invest greater effort in learning, employability requires additional competencies, including communication, teamwork, leadership, adaptability, and problem-solving abilities that are acquired through practical learning experiences.

On the other hand, Learning Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Learning Engagement. This finding indicates that highly motivated students tend to participate more actively in English learning activities, complete assignments responsibly, and become more involved in classroom discussions. The result is consistent with Trang (2026), who reported that learning motivation significantly enhances student engagement, and with Dai et al. (2025), who emphasized that motivation is a key predictor of active participation in English learning.

Finally, the mediation analysis indicates that Learning Engagement does not mediate the relationship between English Communication Competence and Employability Skills, nor between Learning Motivation and Employability Skills. These findings suggest that learning engagement is not the mechanism through which English communication competence or learning motivation improves employability skills. Instead, English communication competence directly contributes to employability skills, while learning motivation primarily enhances students' engagement in learning without producing a significant indirect effect on employability. Future studies should consider additional mediating variables, such as self-efficacy, career readiness, internship experience, or digital competence, to better explain how English learning contributes to graduate employability.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationships among English Communication Competence, Learning Motivation, Learning Engagement, and Employability Skills among Tax Accounting students at Universitas Pamulang using the PLS-SEM approach. The findings reveal that English Communication Competence has a positive and significant effect on Employability Skills, indicating that students with stronger English communication abilities are better prepared to meet workplace demands and improve their employability.

Conversely, English Communication Competence does not significantly affect Learning Engagement, while Learning Engagement does not significantly influence Employability Skills. In addition, Learning Motivation does not have a significant direct effect on Employability Skills, although it has a positive and significant effect on Learning Engagement, suggesting that motivated students are more actively involved in the learning process.

The mediation analysis further demonstrates that Learning Engagement does not mediate the relationship between English Communication Competence and Employability Skills, nor the relationship between Learning Motivation and Employability Skills. Therefore, Learning Engagement does not function as an intermediary mechanism in improving students' employability skills within the proposed research model.

These findings imply that universities should prioritize the development of students' English communication competence through practical and workplace-oriented learning activities, as it is the most influential factor in enhancing employability skills. Future studies are encouraged to include larger samples and additional variables, such as self-efficacy, career readiness, internship experience, or digital competence, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing graduate employability.

REFERENSI

- Al-Tamimi, Y. A. (2025). English Communicative Competence in Saudi Workplace: Overcoming Barriers and Leveraging Opportunities. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 12(1), 58-82.
- Arifuddin, N., Wiranegara, D. A., Ma'arif, A. S., Junaidi, M. R., & Bakhiet, B. M. (2025). Integrating Life Skills in Arabic Language Education: Enhancing Bilingual University Graduates' Employability and Competencies. *Jurnal Al Bayan: Jurnal Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Arab*, 17(1), 276-293.
- Bhattacharyy, E., & NtowOfei, T. (2018). Managers' Perception Of Graduates Communicative Competence For Sustainable Employability And Work Readiness. *European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 40.
- Dai, X., Wang, Y., Yu, J., Qiu, B., Wang, R., & Na, M. (2025). Motivation and engagement as pathways: how AI-augmented online assessment shapes English-speaking competency in vocational EFL classrooms. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 16, 1730953.
- Gupta, D. B., Bhatt, V., Mathur, S., Badge, J., & Sharma, A. (2024). Role of ELT and Life Skills in Developing Employability Skills through Integrating Self Determination and Experiential Learning. *Austrian Journal of Statistics*, 53(5), 53-73.
- Hananingsih, A. (2026). Project-Based Learning in Higher Vocational Education: Bridging English Communication and Digital Marketing Competencies. *Journal of Literature Language and Academic Studies*, 5(1), 16-35.
- Islam, M. S., Sarker, M. F. H., Afrin, T., Islam, M. K., & Tamal, M. A. (2025). Effectiveness of blended learning in facilitating employability skills among tertiary-level students: A proposed model. *Sage Open*, 15(4), 21582440251379373.
- Nghia, T. L. H., Anh, N. P., & Kien, L. T. (2023). English language skills and employability: a theoretical framework. In *English language education for graduate employability in Vietnam* (pp. 71-93). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
- Phan, V. T. T., Nguyen, L. D. T., & Nguyen, K. D. (2022). Twenty-First Century Essential Employability Skills for English as a Foreign Language Undergraduates in a Context of the Mekong Delta. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 11(2), 1089-1102.
- Puji Hartini, Q. A., Wiyanto, W., Sudarmin, S., & Sumarni, W. (2026). Factors that influence the employability skills of vocational school students: A systematic review. *F1000Research*, 14, 586.

- Thomas, A., Piquette, C., & McMaster, D. (2016). English communication skills for employability: the perspectives of employers in Bahrain. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*, 13(1), 36-52.
- Ting, S. H., Marzuki, E., Chuah, K. M., Misieng, J., & Jerome, C. (2017). Employers' views on the importance of English proficiency and communication skill for employability in Malaysia. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(2), 315-327.
- Trang, N. H. (2026). Agency and Motivation Mediation in Necessity-Engagement in EFL Learning Among Vietnamese Undergraduates. *Sage Open*, 16(1), 21582440261423257.
- Yalei, C., & Sukumaran, S. (2025). Smart learning and English proficiency in vocational education: The mediating effects of engagement and language anxiety. *Perinatal Journal*, 33(1), 257-266.
- Zainuddin, S. Z. B., Pillai, S., Dumanig, F. P., & Phillip, A. (2019). English language and graduate employability. *Education+ Training*, 61(1), 79-93.