

REPORT

FRENCH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE WORKPLACE

There were a total of one hundred and twenty-one responses, ninety-seven of which were complete. More than eighty percent of the respondents were female, and more than half the respondents were from the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups. Of the ninety-seven respondents, thirteen indicated that French was (one of) their mother tongue/s. Responses to “what is your job title” yielded eighty-eight different categories, so the National Occupational Classification of Trinidad and Tobago (2013) was used to further classify the jobs into just seven categories. About sixty-five percent of the respondents belonged to the professional occupation group. In terms of education, more than fifty percent of the respondents had completed a bachelor’s degree, and about forty percent, a master’s degree.

More than eighty-five percent of the respondents indicated that having French language skills was valuable in their careers (great value = 59.6; some value = 25.8), while only 62 percent indicated that it was valuable in the workplace (great value = 25.8; some value = 36.1). French language skills are valued in the workplace through both written and verbal recognition from superiors (75.7%), short-term travel opportunities (65.3%) and overseas assignments (51.1%). Almost fifty percent of the respondents said that they had used their French languages skills frequently in the workplace in the previous twelve months. They were used mainly to respond to correspondence received in French (78%) and to carry out administrative duties (62.3%). Occupational group was the only statistically significant indicator of the value of language skills in the respondents’ careers ($r = 0.266$, $p < 0.01$).

About eighty-eight percent of the respondents said that knowledge of Francophone culture was valued in their career (great value = 60, some value = 27.5). The value of knowledge of Francophone culture is reported in the same way as French language skills: written and verbal recognition from superiors (80.4%), short-term travel opportunities (66.7%) and overseas assignments (46.7%). Respondents indicated that knowledge of Francophone culture was important because it enhances effective communication. Education ($r = -0.312$, $p < 0.01$) and occupational group ($r = 0.286$, $p < 0.05$) were the only two significant indicators of the value of knowledge of Francophone culture.

Eighty-one percent of the respondents indicated that they planned to develop their French language skills and knowledge of Francophone culture in the coming five years, mainly by communicating with French speakers (60.8%) and spending holidays in a French-speaking country or territory (47.4%).

