

An investigation of technological competence for guest service agent trainees in the hotel business

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Accepted 14 April, 2026

ABSTRACT

It seems that different professions require different technological competence to support the efficiency and effectiveness of their work. When visiting companies to evaluate the fourth-year students' internship program, the companies gave feedback that the students lacked IT skills. This lack leads one to investigate a needs analysis of technological competence and use of digital tools for guest service agent (GSA) trainees in five-star hotels. This study was qualitative research. The participants in this study were ten fourth-year students, majoring in English for Business Communication, who joined the internship program as GSA interns for nine months. The sampling method was a snowball technique where an interviewee recommended the next interviewee working in the same field. The participants in this study received training certificates, their lecturers' evaluation, and a letter grade in the internship subject from a Thai public university. The instrument of the study was a semi-structured interview validated by three experts from different universities. The data analysis was thematic. Findings reveal that GSA interns need four themes of their technological competence. There is technological competence of property management systems, hardware and payment systems, AI-Assisted communication, and technological competence to support their interdepartmental coordination. For pedagogical implications, providing one-day concentrated training about these IT skills would reduce their anxiety to be able to work as GSA trainees from their first day. Thus, training in IT and the use of digital tools for the positions of GSA trainees in hotels ensures readiness before participating in their job internship program. As a consequence, the anxiety of GSA trainees in hotels could be reduced, and the effectiveness of their work in the position would increase.

Keywords: Technological competence, guest service agent (GSA) trainees, hotel business, internship program, five-star hotels.

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INTRODUCTION

The digital era has led to a change in everyone's lives. In our routine, cash payment has been replaced by the convenience of digital business transactions. Food can be ordered via application services without going out to eat. This convenience also includes the way customers purchase products and services online for home delivery. Shopping online often involves reading reviews and comments as posted by other customers to support their decision to pay. Accordingly, information technology (IT) and the use of digital tools play an important role in our

lives for the sake of convenience, decision making, and payment, leading to companies' revenue.

Due to high competitiveness, the strategy of paper-based check-in at hotels, as used in the last decade, might not be sufficient for hotel businesses to survive in the present time. Cendra and Sentiawan (2024) indicated that hotel businesses must become active in adopting IT and the use of digital tools to make their services fast and impressive.

Hotel business' revenues will not increase continuously

unless positive relationships are maintained (Halefoğlu, 2026; Kencanawati, 2025). IT and digital tools could encourage companies and customer relationships, especially in businesses with high competition. An example of high competition can be seen in the case of hotels in Thailand, which is a world tourist hub. Excluding other regions, only the southern part of Thailand today has approximately 4,000 hotels (Rachmiatie et al., 2022). With these huge numbers, choosing the most effective marketing strategies required for customers to revisit the same hotel is extremely challenging for hotels.

For example, digital marketing communication in the hotel business also covers email marketing, applying AI to generate the first draft, and website development. Almeida and Ivanov (2024) found that AI has a high potential to help marketers in hotel businesses to brainstorm marketing strategies that are suitable with its brand position in the market. In doing this, the markets work cooperatively with AI to create prompts, including systematic and adequate information for AI to generate information to consider.

Nevertheless, the positions of GSA in hotel businesses are viewed as being important. They need to coordinate to work with their teams, other teams, workers with external companies, and up-to-date technologies. When internship students and new graduates, majoring in language, want to work in these positions in hotel businesses, they confess that they feel nervous about information technology (IT) and the use of digital tools that they need to use as part of their job. Lack of enough learning in classrooms leads to anxiety when starting in the position of GSA trainees in hotel businesses.

In fact, there are a variety of tasks relating to IT and the use of digital tools for the GSA trainees to practice, such as corresponding via business emails in English, using AI tools for language translation, basic marketing campaigns on Facebook and Instagram, and answering their customers via WhatsApp (Parvez et al. 2018). These tasks are considered to be routine tasks for interns to practice in order to grow professionally in this career path. However, language lecturers do not know exactly which IT skills and which digital tools are required for GSA interns in hotel businesses. In addition, IT and digital skills have become part of many jobs, including the hotel business, aviation business, international business, and tourism. Not only are these skills important in everyday life, but they also increase the potential to serve customers as global businesses have become increasingly competitive. It is significant for graduate to be able to apply their IT and digital skills appropriately and ethically. The Ministry of Higher Education in Thailand has realized these issues. It has recently been announced that each new curriculum should add at least six credits to its study programs to support the learners' artificial intelligence (AI) skills when the new curriculum is adjusted. This announcement leads to several issues to

discuss. Firstly, which subjects should these credits be distributed to, as we are living in a society where AI is everywhere? Secondly, each profession uses different AI tools and functions to accomplish its work. General training of AI tools might not lead to accomplishment when the students get to work in their own field. However, it would be better if we knew what kind of AI, IT, and digital tools a certain position would need in order to accomplish its work. This would not waste time and money on teaching them pedagogically. While previous studies showed the importance of digital and IT skills for the intern students in general, this study filled in the gap by specifically focusing on GSA trainees in hotel businesses, leading to readiness for their internship programs. They have become ready to work since the first day of their internship program.

Objective of the study

To investigate a needs analysis of technological competence, including information technology (IT) and the use of digital tools required by GSA trainees in hotel businesses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Needs analysis

Needs analysis is a theoretical concept in English for specific purposes (ESP) (Anthony, 2018; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). A needs analysis study brings the results of want, need, and lack, to support English language learners (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987), leading to the improvement of their English language studies. Not only is a needs analysis used to analyze language skills that are important to certain professions, but it can also show necessary tasks that a certain position requires to carry out in their work (Anthony, 2018; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). A needs analysis was used to examine the perceptions of target groups in order to achieve insightful information. The perceptions of the target groups could be measured by different perspectives, such as agreements, satisfaction, and frequencies (Anthony 2018). The researchers developed statements covering what they needed to know to ask their target group. After that, each statement that had been validated to comply with the objectives of the study was evaluated by measurable instruments, such as a five-point Likert scale. However, it could also be applied with a qualitative study, such as an interview, to gain insightful information.

Internship program

An internship program is defined as a job practicum

where students apply to a position in the workplace that they would like to join after graduation. They practice working as if an employee in a certain position for a period of time before being evaluated. Dhevabanchachai and Wattanacharoensil (2017) reported that intern students in the field of hospitality gained professional service-minded skills. They learned to be flexible and to deal with different types of people. Moreover, they improved in terms of time management to gain the characteristics of being punctual. These skills shaped them to have positive attitudes in the hospitality workplace. However, as a lecturer who had experience going into the GSA trainees' workplaces, the interns were negatively evaluated on their IT skills and use of digital tools. It is important for universities to prepare basic IT knowledge for students to be able to succeed as GSA trainees at hotels.

IT and digital tools to support hotel staff

Asking Chat GPT to support one's communication is a very new idea, and no one can confirm if it is effective or not. Almeida and Stanislav (2024) doubted this effectiveness, so they investigated whether ChatGPT could develop effective marketing strategies for hotel marketers or not. They began by developing prompts to ask AI to develop their first draft writing to correspond with their customers. The results of the study showed that ChatGPT could provide relevant content when asked by the GSA. ChatGPT could be used as an effective assistant. Not only can the GSA trainees use Chat GPT to develop their writing, but also for hotel marketers, ChatGPT talked about pricing strategies and how the hotel could increase its revenue. Through these cases, Almeida and Stanislav (2024) showed that ChatGPT could be employed as an assistant for hotel personnel.

Hotel businesses increasingly use integral social media platforms, such as Facebook (FB) and Instagram (IG), to promote their business. This has created brand awareness, especially among younger clients. The advantage of using these social media platforms is that both content and photos can be posted simultaneously. Moreover, it allows companies to make consistent posts of their videos (Kencanawati, 2025; Cendra and Sentiawan, 2024). The company website is the central media of any business. The hotel's website can be the place to present room types, room rates, booking options, and customer currency, which are not posted on IG and Fb. It is important to keep the information on the website correct and up to date (Kencanawati, 2025). There are a variety of strategies that hotel businesses apply in their digital marketing, such as commodity strategies, sale strategies, and communication strategies (Banyeva, 2023). For example, one hotel business offered innovative strategies, such as contactless service, a

wireless mobile device for staff, and integrated guest applications. Another aspect was competitive advantages. Hyatt offers competitive advantages to their customers via their service, the best cuisine, spa, and concierge services. This is how luxurious hotels present themselves on social media platforms (Banyeva, 2023). Banyeva (2023) reported the top five social media platforms as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, IG, and WeChat. For example, Hilton used IG as a channel to deliver news to their guests.

In employing IT and digital tools, hotel businesses should consider cost and usefulness. Sharma (2020) explored the popular digital marketing tools in smaller hotel businesses. The study applies the concepts of interpretivism in examining small travel agencies in applying different social media platforms. The criteria for selecting smaller agencies were that the companies had fewer than 20 employees (Sharma, 2020). The results revealed that the popular digital marketing tools used in smaller agencies were websites, emails, SMS, and social media platforms, such as WhatsApp. Although emails are the most often used for digital marketing communication in smaller agencies, it does not mean that it is the most effective tool. Some customers quickly move the emails to the trash bin once they are seen. However, IG is the most effective digital marketing tool for smaller hotel businesses. This is because IG is an affordable social media platform for smaller businesses. The cost is lower in comparison with website development and maintenance.

Bovsh, Rasulova and Hopkalo (2021) observed the usefulness of digital marketing in hotel businesses. Digital marketing is defined as interacting with customers through two-way communication and its relatedness of different digital marketing platforms to promote companies' products and services. There are various digital marketing tools, such as SEO, geolocation, and social media platforms. Google Ads are also classified as useful to hotel digital marketers as a search tool to inform customers about hotel locations and contact information. Younger tourists whose age is lower than 30 tend to prefer IG. The functions of digital marketing are analysis, planning, organization, motivation, and control. The function of motivation in digital marketing includes content marketing, behavioral messaging, web personalization, and loyalty programs. Different people who are involved in digital marketing in hotel businesses use different platforms of digital marketing. For example, hotel customers use websites, social networks, mobile applications, and digital payment platforms. On the other hand, public organizations use artificial intelligence, analytics, metasearch analytics, and integrated information systems. Specifically, different departments in hotels use different digital marketing tools, too. Overall, previous research studies showed that hotel businesses must employ a variety of IT and digital tools, such as

websites, emails, and social media platforms, to communicate with their customers. However, they have not told us how frequently each type of digital marketing is used by the hotels and their customers.

Employability and IT skills

Employability skills are necessary skills applicable to certain jobs. Alshammar et al. (2025) employed a qualitative research study to seek the relationships between employability and IT skills. The participants were 325 from Saudi Arabian higher education institutions. Data were collected using five-point Likert scales, while the data analysis was PLS-SEM, used to measure the relationships between two variables. The results showed that there was a significant positive relationship between students' IT skills and graduates' employability, where the *p*-value was reported at 0.000**. This could be interpreted as the employers expected to hire the graduates who have IT skills relating to their positions. In addition, Ahmad et al. (2017) investigated Malaysian students' perceptions of IT knowledge as employability skills. They engaged 841 senior university students to evaluate their employability skills, including their IT skills. Interestingly, Malaysian fourth-year students perceived that they had a good command of their IT skills. They perceived that they had a wide range of basic IT skills, where the mean score was 4.24, which was interpreted to be very high (Ahmad et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the participants perceived that they were willing to learn new IT skills where they worked. Patacsil and Tabulating (2017) addressed that IT was a soft skill that should be enhanced for the sake of employability. The students must know standard software applications to perform their jobs effectively. Not only do they understand IT better, but they can also use the technology, tools, and instruments in their discipline more effectively. This soft skill gained from their internship program is explained in the concept of experiential learning. Avleeva et al. (2025) found that the intern students in the field of hospitality had developed in their soft skills of technology after joining their internship program in the field.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher in the current study participated in ethical research training and gained an ethical certificate to conduct research with human beings. The ethical code of this research study is RSUERB2026-007, issued on 9 January 2026. While most previous studies focused on characteristics and required language skills for GSA trainees in hotel businesses (Almeida and Ivanov, 2024; Banyeva, 2023; Bovsh, 2021; Cendra and Sentiawan, 2024; Halefoğlu, 2026; Sharma et al., 2020), the design

of this research study was a qualitative method in order to investigate a needs analysis of IT skills and use of digital tools in this position. This point was taken into consideration because lecturers of English for specific purposes should help students master their IT skills as GSA interns in hotels.

Data collection

The population in this study was Thai undergraduate students who enrolled to study in the program of English for business communication (EBC) at a Thai public university in the southern part of Thailand. The whole population was 420 students. Since this study was qualitative research, it did not require a huge number of samples to be interviewed. The sample in this study was 10 participants collected by the snowball sampling method. There were male and female GSA trainees. The reason why 10 participants were adequate in this study was the reason for saturation. After interviewing 10 participants who joined the internship program in the same position, there was no occurrence of new patterns. No new tools emerged after the 9th interview. The answers given have become repetitive. Thus, saturation was the criterion to explain the number of participants in this study (Creswell and Creswell, 2022; Saldaña, 2025).

In this process, the first one was an intern student who was evaluated by the researcher. Then the first interviewee gave the name of the next interviewee. This process ran until the tenth interviewee. This sampling allowed the researcher to gain insight into specific information that the researcher needed to answer the research question (PaJo, 2018). The number was adequate to be used as the sample in the pilot study (PaJo, 2018). They joined internship programs in the position of GSA trainees. The hotels that they joined include 2 Marriott Hotels, 1 Anantara Resort and Hotel, 1 Andaz, 1 Rosewood, 1 Centara Hotel, 1 Intercontinental Hotel, 1 Veranda Resort Phuket Autograph Collection, 1 Avistra Grand Phuket, and 1 W Koh Samui. These hotels were selected as an inclusion criterion for participating in the internship program in hotel businesses in Thailand. The second inclusion criterion was that they had joined the program as guest service agents (GSA) for nine months. They finally got the certificate of training as GSA from the hotels they had joined for the internship, and a letter grade in their transcript for the subject of the internship.

Research instrument

The instrument in this study was a semi-structured interview.

They were asked the following questions:

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Which hotels did you join as GSA interns in your internship program?
3. What Information Technology (IT) did you need to use when you worked as a GSA Trainee?
4. Name the IT and explain how you used them in the workplace.
5. What digital communication tools did you use when you worked as GSA Trainees?
6. Name digital communication tools and explain how you used them in the workplace.
7. How long did you spend time to learn how to use these IT and digital tools?

To avoid language barriers, the interviews in this study were conducted in Thai as the mother tongue of the interviewer and interviewees.

Data analysis

After interviewing, the data analysis in this study followed thematic analysis (Clarke and Braun, 2017). There were five steps for thematic analysis for the researcher to follow. The first step was to gain familiarity with transcribed data. The researcher listened several times for a deep understanding of the participants' information. The second step was to code the information according to the asked questions, sequentially. While the third step was searching for themes, the fourth step was to review themes. These two steps were carried out in conjunction with each other to ensure the themes were precise, but not repetitive. The final step was to name each theme correctly and appropriately. This methodology led to the results of the study.

RESULTS

Presented here are the qualitative results of the study concerning IT soft skills that are necessary for GSA interns to be able to work from the first day of their internship programs. To gain readability and analytical depth, findings were grouped into four themes that are important IT and digital communication knowledge for GSA interns. The first one is property management systems. The second theme is hardware and payment Systems. The third one is AI-Assisted Communication. The fourth one is IT knowledge to support Interdepartmental Coordination.

Theme 1: Property management systems and guest experience platforms

Oracle Opera PMS5

This is an in-house application. GSA Trainees used

Oracle Opera PM5 as the platform to check in and check out, including updating information. They also checked their guests' personal information and guests' requests as recorded in the system. In routine jobs, information that was used the next day was recalled.

Okkami

Okkami is an application frequently used in the field of hospitality, such as hotels.

Theme 2: Hardware and payment systems

Electronic data capture

It is an electronic tool for payment containing a variety of functions such as deposit deduction and preauthorization. It contains different functions for charging agents and for charging customers directly.

Passport scanners

A passport scanner is a digital machine to scan the first page of a passport, and it links with Oracle Opera PMS5 in order to receive the guests' information. This allows the front desk to work quickly and minimize mistakes in spelling.

Theme 3: AI-assisted communication

Artificial intelligence for translation, rephrasing and grammar check

AI was used for various functions. One of them was to search for tourist destinations that guests would like to visit. Many guests incidentally heard of an interesting place on their trips that they would like to visit. They asked GSA trainees how to get there. The trainees needed to consult AI if the place was unfamiliar, to propose the right directions for their guests. Some participants used AI to help them paraphrase messages and complete grammar checks before information was sent to the guests.

"I got informed that a guest smoked in his room, which was prohibited. I needed to inform the guest politely. I drafted a message to send, and then I asked AI to rephrase it to be polite. So the guest did not feel that he was ordered." Participant 5.

"I asked Russian guests to speak through the phone, and I asked AI to translate it into English." Participant 10

Copilot

Copilot is assigned to writing short messages to customers, such as birthday wishes, to complete assignments, and to reserve dinners.

Theme 4: Interdepartmental coordination

Shared drive folders in Excel

Shared drive folders were set up by the Department of IT. Some guests' information was shared across different departments in the hotel, such as front office, F&B, and room service. To avoid mistakes, personnel from different departments could recheck information in the shared drive folders.

Emails

trainees expressed that it was not frequent for them to write emails directly to contact their customers. However, they wrote B2B emails to contact other businesses, such as other hotels and ferry companies, as customers asked them to do so.

WhatsApp (Russian, England) and WeChat (Chinese)

Aside from coordination with workers inside the hotel, it is often for GSA interns to communicate with their guests via digital communication tools. WhatsApp was used to communicate with international *customers to share personal and private information*. For example, some customers forgot their belongings, and others smoked in their rooms, which is prohibited. Using WhatsApp helps avoid confrontation and unexpected conflicts and dissatisfaction that might occur.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical contributions

This study has contributed something new to the field of needs analysis in English for specific purposes (ESP) (Anthony, 2018; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987) in terms of technological integration in English for the hotel business.

A study of need analysis focuses on language skills, intercultural competence, and suitable characteristics of a certain job (Anthony, 2018; Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). However, technological competence is now a core component of "needs" in hospitality communication

and other jobs in the field.

IT and technology that are soft skills have been increasingly necessary for higher education, and digital and social media knowledge should be taught in English language classrooms for skills development. For example, several classes in the subject of English for the hotel business should be carried out in computer rooms that have the digital marketing tools of Oracle Opera Cloud PMS set up for them to practice with. Despite offering the elective courses of English for the hotel business in many Thai universities, not having a program for the students to practice is a pedagogical limitation.

Thus, in addition to linguistic knowledge and intercultural competence, lecturers in the field of English for Hotel Business need to have technological competence to support their students' employability. If not, the subject may sound outdated to study.

Related previous studies

The reason the intern students in the field of hospitality experienced anxiety concerning IT and the use of digital tools when working as GSA interns is due to employers' expectations of their IT knowledge. Alshammar et al. (2025) showed the relationships between employability and IT skills among graduate students. In addition, the intern students should be encouraged to have soft skills in IT to increase the productivity of their work (Patacsil and Tabulating, 2017).

Although Avleeva et al. (2025) mentioned that the intern students acquired their soft skills in technology after joining their internship program in the field through their experiential learning, some companies expected that universities should train the students to have IT knowledge before sending them to be an intern. Thus, this is an ongoing, controversial issue regarding who should be the main party to train the students to have IT knowledge and use of digital technology.

Nevertheless, this study showed basic IT and digital tools that are frequently used by GSA interns, such as Oracle Opera PMS, artificial intelligence (AI) for language translation, Copilot, passport scanners, shared drive folders, email, WhatsApp, and electronic data capture. Introducing these tools in classrooms would support the students' IT knowledge and reduce their anxiety about what IT they are required to know for their internship program. The idea of raising awareness of IT knowledge and the use of digital tools could be supported by Ahmad et al. (2017), who investigated Malaysian students' perceptions towards IT knowledge as employability skills. They perceived that they had a wide range of basic IT skills, and they knew which IT tools were necessary for them to use in their workplace.

Property management systems and guest experience platforms

Oracle Opera Cloud PMS and Okkami are prototypical members of technological competence in hospitality communication. Oracle Opera Cloud PMS is a digital tool for hotel administrative systems. It is an in-house application. It is used in hotel businesses for a variety of functions, including room reservation, housekeeping, and hotel payment with a real-time outlook. The room reservations allow GSA interns to manage checking in and checking out. The program assists GSA interns in working more effectively with real-time updates everywhere inside the hotel. This could be supported by Lukanova (2024), who found that PMS was also used for managing guests' data (i.e., name and credit card numbers) to personalize services such as birthdays and food allergies. It also functioned as a point of sale (POS), which is an integration of restaurant and bar, leading to seamless payment. It can be used in smaller hotels and larger hotels to support their real-time management. However, Lukanova (2024) pointed out that training is required to be able to use PMS. Word formation, such as an acronym, is used in the field of hotel business, as in #NP is equivalent to no deposit. BF2+1 refers to breakfast for two adults and one child. In addition, *Okkami* is an application designed for the field of hospitality; it is commonly used in hotel businesses. It supports the guests with a contactless experience to order food and spa. It offers direct communication, in-room control, and service. For example, the guests can assign the application to turn on the television and air-conditioners inside their rooms. It also works as a digital key.

Hardware and payment systems

Another technological competence for a GSA intern in the hotel business is hardware and payment systems. In terms of passport scanners, a participant said that they learned about the use of passport scanners in five-star hotels. According to Ivanov and Russell (2018), passport scanners are being increasingly used in hotel businesses in many countries, including Thailand. Some names of international tourists are difficult to spell, and it would lead to spelling errors. Passport scanners are used in hotel businesses to avoid these mistakes. Moreover, it makes service at front desks much quicker. Sometimes, a tour group of 100 tourists comes at the same time to check in. They cannot wait to have 100 names written until the job is done to allow them to check in. Thus, passport scanners assist GSA interns in saving time and avoiding written language mistakes. Furthermore, it is necessary for GSA interns to know the system of EDC. Customers staying in luxurious 5-star hotels use their credit cards for payment when using the services in hotels. Since credit

cards and debit cards are different, guest service agent trainees should be trained in how to use them correctly with payment machines.

AI-Assisted communication

The third technological competence for GSA interns is AI-Assisted communication. AI has become an important tool to support GSA trainees in translating a third language. Not every international tourist is highly educated and has studied English as a medium of education before. Some tourists, such as Russian and Japanese people, expect GSA interns to be able to speak their language due to their intercultural orientations. These languages are not commonly studied in Thailand. Using AI for translation is a way to overcome language barriers. As mentioned by Lukanova (2024), AI translators, such as ChatGPT and DeepL are commonly used. It is necessary for GSA interns to select appropriate tools to support their translations to increase the effectiveness of their work. For example, *Deep L* is particularly designed to translate European languages. Shahmerdanova (2025) suggested three issues when using AI for translating language: accuracy and idiomatic expressions, cultural sensitivity, and ethical concern. An idiomatic expression, such as *once in a blue moon*, could lead to a new sense which is not translated word-for-word. Sometimes, AI overstates cultural expressions, leading to bias in translating languages. Ethical concern is about ethical and medical considerations that should be disclosed. Apart from AI tools for translation, *Copilot* is used frequently for GSA interns. They use Copilot as their AI assistant to ask for help and for the information they need. It could be used for writing messages, searching for information on websites, and summarizing information. Shaik (2022) supported this point in that the front desk could use Copilot Pro to increase the effectiveness of their work, such as to reduce billing errors and to increase guest satisfaction by asking Copilot to generate personalized messages. Sometimes, ChatGPT is used for grammar checks. Although this is not a frequent activity, they need to summarize customers' complaints into a report to send to managers each day. This activity is required to be written in English in the form of a summary. ChatGPT is asked to check grammar before the document is sent to managers.

Interdepartmental coordination

Working with others in five-star hotels does not involve only face-to-face communication. Communicating via online platforms such as shared drive folders, email, and WhatsApp is part of their jobs. The IT department of hotels will set up a system on each staff member's laptop to access shared drive folders. It depends on which

department the staff belong to, such as front office, sales, F&B, and housekeeping. They are limited to accessing the folders given, which report information, customer service, and cooperation between different teams in a hotel. Limiting access to the data is due to customers' privacy.

With five-star hotels, Line was used for personal chats. It has limitations when hotel managers assign work to employees via Line. Pictures and files last only seven days before they expire. With this limitation, hotel staff preferred to be assigned their work via emails and CC to their department managers as evidence. Moreover, emails were sent and received via hotel email addresses, such as @marriot.com, which have specific functions when logged in for the new GSA interns to learn. The hotel email addresses are also used to send emails to research speed boat bookings for customers via B2B emails. Furthermore, marketing emails were frequent tasks. GSA interns frequently use emails as a digital marketing tool to correspond with their guests. As supported by Bovsh, Rasulova and Hopkalo (2021), hotel staff need to contact their guests. Emails are a basic digital marketing communication that they could use routinely to correspond with their customers as well as their colleagues internally and externally. GSA interns need to respond to customers' emails with different objectives, such as informing, requesting, handling complaints, and apologizing. In terms of language use, different types of emails require specific language use and communication to achieve successful communication. In addition, while Line is a common channel for general and business communication in Thailand, other Asian countries, such as Singapore and India, prefer to use WhatsApp for business conversations. Before guests visit Thailand or while they are staying, WhatsApp is a digital tool to keep in contact between GSA and customers. GSA trainees send WhatsApp messages to customers to inform them about smoking in rooms. They ask ChatGPT to write it in a softer tone before sending it to customers directly.

Pedagogical implications

It is now known which IT and digital tools are used in the position of GSA intern in hotel businesses. They are Oracle Opera PMS, artificial intelligence (AI) for language translation, Copilot, passport scanners, shared drive folders, email, WhatsApp, and electronic data capture. A lesson should be set as a one-day training of active learning activities for the subject of English for the hotel business via role-play simulations.

Richards and Rodgers (2014) addressed that role-play activities are authentic and active learning activities to encourage collaboration, certain characteristics, language use in context, and enjoyment at the same time. A classroom can be set in the context of a hotel front desk. The senior students who have experience working as GSA trainees can be invited to train the students in how to use Opera PMS. Those students who study other languages, such as Chinese, in the same faculty, can be invited to join this activity as hotel guests. The GSA trainees could try to use AI to translate Chinese into English to practice communicating as if they were non-English speakers. WhatsApp and WeChat applications can be downloaded to use in the context of the hotel business. For example, a Chinese guest texts on WeChat in Chinese to say that they left their belongings in the lobby. AI translation may apply to this activity. A shared file folder can be created where GSA trainees would send information to other trainees who work in the F&B department. They can be informed about guests' allergy information. Role-playing customers can come to GSA trainees and ask them to check available rooms at another hotel in the same chain, so they can continue their trip. Hence, they may need either Copilot or AI to generate a first draft email to check in B2B email writing. This one-day training allows the student to interact with IT and use digital tools. Consequently, not only do they become more confident about IT in their workplaces, but this training support will also make them ready for work from the first day of their internship program.

Table 1. Implications for GSA interns' resumes.

IT and use digital tools	Can do
Oracle Opera PMS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Artificial Intelligence (AI) (Language Translation, Grammar Check, Draft Messages)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Copilot	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Passport Scanners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Shared Drive Folders in Microsoft Excel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
B2B Email	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
WhatsApp and WeChat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Electronic Data Capture (EDC)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Okkami Application	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

CONCLUSION

The current applied theory of need analysis (Anthony, 2018) to investigate IT and digital tools that are necessary for the position of Guest Service Agent Intern in order to answer the following questions. What are Information technology (IT) and digital tools that GSA interns use in hotel businesses?

The answer is that GSA interns must know how to use Oracle Opera PMS5, shared drive folders in Excel, passport scanners, artificial intelligence for translation, rephrasing, and grammar checks, Copilot, email, WhatsApp, and Okkami applications. These are fundamental IT and digital tools to support their job efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, these programs should be taught to the students who would like to join the internship program as GSA interns before they work on their first day. Pedagogically, when it is time for the program to adjust the curriculum, these soft skills should be included in the subject of *English for Front Office* and *English for Hotel Office Work*. Including these lessons in these subjects makes the subject up to date for the 21st-century workforce and for those moving toward work in the 22nd century. Moreover, these lessons will likely comply with the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education in Thailand, where each program should add at least six credits to support the students' AI skills. However, the results of IT and digital skills in this study are only applicable to GSA trainees. Applying the results of the study to other positions in hotel businesses might not apply to the optimum level. For future studies, it is recommended that investigating necessary IT and digital skills in other fields of study, such as English for the aviation business, would contribute something new to the field.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express his gratitude to Associate Professor Suchada Tipmontree, Vice President, Prince of Songkla University, Surat Thani Campus. He would also like to sincerely thank Assistant Professor Dr. Weerasak Kongrithi, Dean, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Management Sciences. They always provide support for becoming a quality researcher in the field.

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