Universidade do Minho
Escola de Economia, Gestão e Ciência Política

Joana Filipa Sá Rodrigues

The digital transformation of human resource management: leveraging digital tools to extend the reach of training programs

April 2026

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UMinho | 2026

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Internship Report
Master in Business Management

Conducted under the supervision of:
Professora Doutora Carolina Feliciana Sá Cunha Machado

April 2026

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Acknowledgements

The development of this study brought significant challenges, and managing the stress and adversities that arose throughout this process was made far easier by the support of those who are very dear to me. You were capable of keeping me calm when obstacles seemed overwhelming and brought a smile to my face when I felt deeply exhausted. To all of you, I offer my deepest and most heartfelt thanks for your support and encouragement.

I would like to begin by thanking my parents, Fátima and Rui, for always granting me the freedom to choose my own academic path. Thank you for never hindering my decisions, allowing me to grow even through the difficult ones, and above all, for giving me the space to explore my passions and professional aspirations.

To my brother, João, who is the most significant person in my journey over these last five academic years. Thank you for the support and the conversations, not only when things went wrong, but especially for those moments when I arrived home excited and you received me with open arms, listening carefully to everything I had to share. Together we have grown so much, and I would not choose anyone else to share this experience with. You have been, and will always be, my role model and the first person I turn to when I need guidance or simply need to feel welcomed and seen.

I would also like to thank my extended family for the love and support given to me during the writing of this research. Furthermore, I must deeply thank my friends, who have consistently stood by my side through every challenge and hiccup. You made my academic life full of joy, and I will never forget the moments we shared. Mariana and Rita, I must dedicate a special word to you; without your patience and kind words, I would not have been able to overcome all the hurdles I faced along the way. Meeting you both is one of the most rewarding parts of this experience. I am incredibly fortunate to call you my friends and to have shared this chapter with you.

To Lidiane and Cristiana, I offer my sincere thanks, not only for sharing your knowledge during my internship but also for your constant kindness and words of encouragement throughout this entire process.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Carolina Machado, who was always available and attentive to my concerns, supporting this investigation with genuine enthusiasm and attention to every detail.

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Resumo Executivo

The digital transformation of human resource management: leveraging digital tools to extend the reach of training programs

O presente relatório documenta o estágio e o projeto de investigação realizados no Departamento de Recursos Humanos da Aura Hospitality & Leisure. O estudo explora as implicações organizacionais e humanas da digitalização da formação, uma transição estratégica que visa centralizar as iniciativas educativas e aumentar a eficiência administrativa numa força de trabalho geograficamente dispersa e heterogénea.

Apesar da otimização logística alcançada através das plataformas digitais, foi identificada uma lacuna digital significativa entre a gestão corporativa e a linha operacional. Utilizando uma metodologia qualitativa, composta por análise documental e dezoito entrevistas semiestruturadas processadas via NVivo, a investigação revela que a adoção tecnológica é profundamente moldada pelos fluxos de trabalho físicos e profissionais dos colaboradores. Foram identificados três fenómenos críticos: a Descompressão Social, o Paradoxo do Multitasking e o Desajuste Fisiológico.

O estágio entregou valor operacional tangível através de duas contribuições fundamentais: o desenvolvimento de um *Training Tracker* em Excel para centralizar e analisar dados de formação relativos a 2025 (2025 *Training Tracker*), e a formulação do Plano de Formação Interna para 2026, que alinha as estratégias futuras com as necessidades de *upskilling* e *reskilling* impulsionadas pelos colaboradores. Para mitigar as barreiras identificadas, o relatório propõe uma transição para modelos de *Blended Learning* e o estabelecimento de "Learning Corners", que consistem em espaços físicos dedicados, concebidos para proteger o tempo de formação de interrupções operacionais. Para que a transformação digital seja sustentável, esta deve ir além da mera disponibilização de conteúdos e abraçar uma abordagem sociotécnica que integre as ferramentas tecnológicas com os requisitos físicos e sociais específicos do setor da hotelaria. Esta direção transforma a infraestrutura digital num ativo estratégico para o desenvolvimento de talento, garantindo que a tecnologia atue como um motor de excelência e não como uma barreira ao compromisso.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: abordagem sociotécnica, *blended learning*, digitalização da formação, lacuna digital, recursos humanos na hotelaria.

Executive Summary

The digital transformation of human resource management: leveraging digital tools to extend the reach of training programs

This report documents the internship and research project conducted within Aura Hospitality & Leisure's Human Resources Department. The study explores the organizational and human implications of training digitalization, a strategic transition aimed at centralizing educational initiatives and enhancing administrative efficiency across a geographically dispersed and heterogeneous workforce.

Despite the logistical optimization achieved through digital platforms, the research identifies a significant digital divide between corporate management and the operational frontline. Utilizing a qualitative methodology, comprising documentary analysis and eighteen semi-structured interviews processed via NVivo, the investigation reveals that technological adoption is deeply shaped by the workforce's physical and professional workflows. Three critical phenomena were identified: Social Decompression, the Multitasking Paradox, and the Physiological Mismatch.

The internship delivered tangible operational value through two core contributions: the development of an Excel-based Training Tracker to centralize and analyse training data related to 2025 (2025 Training Tracker), and the formulation of the 2026 Internal Training Plan, which aligns future strategies with employee-driven upskilling and reskilling needs. To mitigate the identified barriers, the report proposes a transition toward Blended Learning models and the establishment of "Learning Corners", which consist of dedicated physical spaces designed to protect training time from operational interruptions. For digital transformation to be sustainable, it must move beyond mere content provision and embrace a socio-technical approach that integrates technological tools with the specific physical and social requirements of the hospitality sector. This direction turns digital infrastructure into a strategic asset for talent development, ensuring technology acts as a driver of excellence rather than a barrier to engagement.

KEYWORDS: blended learning, digital divide, digitalization of training, hospitality human resources, socio-technical approach.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Contextualization of the theme

The contemporary fast-paced business environment is forcing companies to undergo significant changes across all functions of their operations, as the introduction of technology in the global economy is deeply shifting the way businesses operate, interact, and stay competitive (Gadzali et al., 2023; Sangaji et al., 2022). Organizations are facing ongoing challenges in fostering a productive and engaged attitude toward digital transformation while simultaneously maintaining a competitive advantage (Ahmed et al., 2024). Therefore, the general implementation of digital tools is nowadays a critical factor of organizational success (Sabuhari et al., 2020, referred by Ahmed et al., 2024), representing a paradigm shift that transcends mere technology adoption to encompass a fundamental change in organizational culture and operational structures.

As digitalization improves human capital's quality (Kilinç et al., 2025), the evolution toward a digitalized work setting underscores the need for organizations to align their digital strategy with their human capital needs (Ahmed et al., 2024). Consequently, when companies accord this transition the appropriate importance, they successfully appreciate substantial gains, such as improved productivity and employee competence derived from real-time information access, collaboration platforms, and innovative analytical tools (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016, referred by Ahmed et al., 2024). Moreover, digital enablement equips employees with strategic technological skills and knowledge, enhancing their overall efficiency and effectiveness (Bond et al., 2020). Considering this evidence, organizations must embrace digitalization to remain efficient and relevant. Otherwise, they risk being replaced by competitors within the industry (Amany, 2025).

In this context, Human Resources Management (HRM) departments play a vital role in leveraging an enterprise's cultural and global strategy to facilitate digital transformation. Digital technologies have significantly changed work styles and the way employees perceive their development and contribution to the company's efficiency (Schwab, 2016, referred by Amany, 2025). As human capital has become the most strategic resource, digitalization directly affects upskilling and development (Zaborovskaia et al., 2020; Kholod et al., 2021). Therefore, organizations should strategically incorporate digitalization into their HRM, as this function is

essential in helping leaders move towards a digital mindset (Amany, 2025; DiRomualdo et al., 2018, referred by Amany, 2025).

The successful application of digital platforms requires top management's commitment through the provision of resources, support, and control (Dreković et al., 2023). HRM is uniquely positioned to establish this new mindset, shaping a company's culture, enhancing employee engagement, and facilitating strategic workforce planning (Gadzali et al., 2023). As HRM managers adapt to major changes in talent management and performance (Zakaria et al., 2025), the importance of delivering high-quality HR services is increasingly recognized as a driver of employee satisfaction and organizational effectiveness (Alzadjali et al., 2023). Overall, integrating digital technologies allows HR to streamline processes and drive efficiency through data-driven decisions (Tran, 2023), provided there is an appropriate assessment of organizational needs and a culture of openness (Bondarouk et al., 2017, referred by Tran, 2023).

However, the technological transformation of HRM also poses significant challenges. While the associated benefits include positive impacts on operational and financial performance (Dreković et al., 2023; Zakaria et al., 2025), HR managers must also navigate issues, such as resistance to change, the need to upskill staff, and the complexity of new employment forms (Sureshkrishna & Das, 2019, referred by Amany, 2025; Chaudhuri et al., 2023). Additional concerns include data privacy, cybersecurity, and the risk of biased decision-making (Aprillia et al. 2024), necessitating a deeper understanding of the potential risks with digital transformation (Dreković et al., 2023).

Ultimately, this redefined business landscape emphasizes the importance of modern training and development structures. Digitalization in this domain enables the evolution of training into learning through gamified modules, virtual classrooms, and digital platforms (Tran, 2023; Zakaria et al., 2025). These tools foster lifelong learning and job satisfaction, which in turn strengthen the brand's relationship with its employees (Kilinç et al., 2025; Fuller et al., 2014, referred by Ahmed et al., 2024). A workplace that supports continuous learning allows employees to adopt a growth mindset and acquire the skills needed to adapt to changing job requirements (Zakaria et al.,2025; Ahmed et al., 2024). By prioritizing staff growth through digital systems that provide effective feedback and tracking, organizations can ensure a qualified, innovative, and competitive workforce capable of navigating the complexities of the digital age (Tran, 2023; Kilinç et al., 2025).

1.2. Study Relevance

In the contemporary business landscape, the integration of technological mechanisms has fundamentally reshaped how organizations manage and cultivate their human capital, placing upskilling and reskilling processes at the forefront of corporate strategies (Irmatova et al., 2025; Kilinç et al., 2025). For a group characterized by significant geographic dispersion and a heterogeneous workforce, such as Aura Hospitality & Leisure, the transition from traditional face-to-face instruction to digital learning environments is far more than a strategic imperative. Considering the group's presence in multiple locations across Portugal, the study's relevance is amplified by the logistical complexity of ensuring aligned training standards across physically distant units. This research is rooted in the examination of the friction between theoretical digital transformation and the practical, daily realities of the service sector industry, where shift-based constraints and varying levels of digital competence often challenge the adoption of technological platforms (Čirčová et al., 2025; Zervas & Stiakakis, 2025). By analyzing these complex dynamics, this study aims to provide a strategic framework that sustains organizational efficiency while prioritizing the specific requirements for substantive knowledge consolidation.

A vital contribution of this investigation lies in identifying how digital tools can ensure that learning content reaches all employees equitably, regardless of their specific business unit or geographic location. Online training has become an indispensable component of modern corporate strategy, providing the flexibility and accessibility needed to increase the volume of educational initiatives (Amany, 2025; Čirčová et al., 2025). Furthermore, integrating digital training directly enhances employee well-being by eliminating travel-related stress and logistics, enabling a more harmonious balance between daily tasks and professional growth (Wesche & Handke, 2024; Zakaria et al., 2025). Paradoxically, while the mandatory use of these platforms may initially cause discomfort, particularly among older generations or those with lower digital literacy, it often serves as an indirect upskill. This forced contact empowers employees to master tools that were previously inaccessible, thereby increasing their overall professional confidence and digital agility (Indroputri & Sanjaya, 2024; Irmatova et al., 2025).

However, the relevance of this research also stems from its focus on the potential loss of informal interaction and cultural integration. Traditional training is often characterized by "coffee-

break" moments that foster social cohesion. Therefore, HRM departments must employ innovation to maintain this social fabric in a virtual setting (Wesche & Handke, 2024; Tran, 2023). Simultaneously, the study evaluates whether digital training ensures the same level of long-term knowledge retention as traditional models, addressing concerns such as online fatigue and diminished attention spans (Suravi, 2024). By testing the autonomy of post-training resource access through digital repositories, the research highlights how technology can foster a culture of continuous learning that enhances the organization's overall performance (Alzadjali et al., 2023; Atanasova, 2025).

Ultimately, by addressing diverse employee considerations, from the preferences for hybrid models to the mitigation of technical friction, this study moves beyond a "one-size-fits-all" approach. It seeks to define a tailored strategy that respects the distinct contexts of Aura Hospitality & Leisure's dispersed units while maximizing the strategic benefits of technological transformation. The significance of this research lies in its capacity to transform empirical observations into a sustainable strategic roadmap, demonstrating how a multisector organization can leverage digital tools to foster equitable professional development without sacrificing the social cohesion and well-being essential to the service sector.

1.3. Strategic Rationale for the Research Topic and Host Organization

Following recent literature, the contemporary business landscape is increasingly defined by rapid evolution and its inherent instability, which has resulted in augmented reliability on Human Resource Management (HRM) digitalization to sustain strategic organizational goals and become a fundamental pillar for organizational resilience. According to Chytilová et al. (2025), digital transformation is an essential mechanism to ensure the sustainable competitiveness of economies and institutions worldwide. Consequently, these technological changes need to be perceived as strategic imperatives and not merely administrative upgrades.

To successfully navigate these fundamental shifts, this highly impactful and transformational phenomenon has become essential for effective HR management. It has changed how departments operate across all aspects of management, from recruitment to talent development (Čirčová et al., 2025). Human resource management is currently one of the most critical challenges for organizations, as it requires extremely qualified personnel at all levels to smoothly adapt to the increasing technological demands (Kuong Rodríguez & Arana Barbier, 2024). As the global

economy undergoes rapid, often unstable transformations, the integration of digital tools into training strategies has become indispensable for redefining educational approaches, making them more flexible, interactive, and personalized (Kilinç et al., 2025; Čirčová et al., 2025).

This study seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical digital adoption and the empirical realities of the service-sector, where the human element is paramount yet often under-researched, by investigating how technological advancements can optimize corporate training initiatives. Tightening the analytical lens from broad digitalization trends to the specific operational frameworks of service-sector institutions, will allow the research to provide the necessary exploration of how digital tools can be coordinated with organizational goals to enhance professional development.

To gain a comprehensive and empirical understanding of this transition, Aura Hospitality & Leisure[1] has been selected as the primary case study and the company where I developed my curricular internship. The core reason for choosing to be an intern at Aura Hospitality & Leisure was the opportunity to engage with a diverse workforce and a well-structured management strategy, given its multi-sectoral presence across leisure, sports, construction, and real estate. The current diversity offers a unique opportunity to assess HRM practices across diverse business environments, involving a heterogenous staff with distinct socio-demographic and economic backgrounds. Moreover, privileged access to the organization will allow for internal data collection and ethnographic observation that would otherwise be inaccessible. It will provide a detailed understanding of the institution's internal dynamics, both from individual experience, and employee and management assessment.

A multifaceted context, such as the one provided by Aura Hospitality & Leisure is particularly valuable when analysing the digital divide, where discrepancies in digital skills and literacy become even more evident during the implementation of new training initiatives (Zervas & Stiakakis, 2025; Irmatova et al., 2025). For instance, the research will attempt to explore how digital training initiatives may encounter different barriers when implemented for blue-collar workers compared to service-oriented staff. These socio-demographic nuances are critical, as varying degrees of comfort with digital devices across a diverse workforce present both an operational challenge and a unique research opportunity. The examination of these frictions offers a sophisticated view of how

[1] To maintain strict confidentiality, the host organization will be referred to by the pseudonym "Aura Hospitality & Leisure" throughout this study.

employee diversity influences the success or failure of technological adoption, moving beyond simple metrics to understand the human experience of digital transformation.

Furthermore, this study intends to evaluate the entire training process at Aura Hospitality & Leisure, from its design and development to final delivery, and the resources utilized to efficiently drive digitalization in the HRM department. Leveraging digital tools such as e-learning platforms and personalized learning systems enables organizations to foster a continuous learning environment, where continuous development is embedded in their organizational culture (Alzadjali et al., 2023; Čirčová et al., 2025). The adoption of digital HRM practices has become a critical priority to ensure high levels of productivity and success for all business sectors. Nurturing a learning mindset has a significant impact on equipping employees with the necessary skills to handle the digital era and its influential specificities, while simultaneously improving HR service quality, employee satisfaction, and overall organizational performance (Alzadjali et al., 2023; Kuong Rodríguez & Arana Barbier, 2024).

This research aims to assess how digital interventions moderate the relationship between human factor management and company productivity, emphasizing the tangible benefits and intrinsic challenges of transforming the behaviour and nature of a complex, multi-sector workforce in a volatile global market (Kuong Rodríguez & Arana Barbier, 2024). Training and development will therefore be the main focus of this study, as it becomes increasingly necessary to ensure knowledge is widely shared and retained throughout the entire organization. Given the need for rigorous academic assessment, the narrative will analyse the inherent risks, such as technological resistance and socio-economic alienation, alongside the undeniable benefits of increased efficiency and reach. The success of digitalization in an unstable economy depends not only on the tools themselves, but also on a profound comprehension of the diverse human and sectoral realities which they are designed for.

1.4. Internship and Research Objectives

The present study is directly linked to evaluating how digitalization can optimize training and development processes, from the initial phase of planning and assessing workforce needs to the effective implementation of training initiatives and the continuous collection of employee feedback to improve the company's strategy. The instrumental opportunity of applying this research to a multi-sector organization as Aura Hospitality & Leisure will allow for a diversified and complete

contact with multiple social and economic environments, which are responsible for diverse practical implications that must be considered during technological adoption. In this sense, the central purpose of this investigation is to ensure organizational resilience and long-term success, operating under the premise that technology is an essential mechanism to sustain competitiveness and overall performance, moving beyond the misconception of it being a secondary administrative tool (Chytilová et al., 2025; Kilinç et al., 2025).

To achieve this, the research aims to determine how digital tools can transform the HR function from a traditional administrative role into a strategic partner that fosters a robust learning culture (Alzadjali et al., 2023; Tran, 2023). Consequently, a primary focus will be placed on the shift from traditional training sessions to continuous learning ecosystems, enabling an evaluation of how digital interventions moderate the relationship between human capital management and individual productivity (Kuong Rodríguez & Arana Barbier, 2024). This process begins with the identification and mapping of current digital training practices to determine the organization's position on the digital maturity spectrum[2]. This assessment requires a clear distinction between the mere operational application of technological tools and their full strategic integration into the core business strategy (Čirčová et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the research aims to diagnose the impact of digital learning ecosystems and collaborative platforms in performing fundamental HRM responsibilities through more effective and strategic methods (Kalavakolanu & Prasad, 2023). By analysing these transformational processes, the study seeks to understand how the digitalization of upskilling initiatives can reduce logistical constraints and optimize resource allocation, allowing HR employees to focus on more relevant, value-added developmental activities. Central to this analysis is the evaluation of employee and manager perceptions regarding the integration of digital training tools into their daily routines. Through these assessments, the investigation will explore not only the concerns arising from increased technological use, such as digital fatigue and the loss of human interaction, but also how staff members are navigating new formats of skill development and online knowledge acquisition to enhance their professional autonomy.

[2] Digital Maturity - the primary indicator of an organization's capacity to generate strategic value through technological integration (BCG, n.d.).

Given that technological transformation is a socio-technological process implying a fundamental cultural change (Čirčová et al., 2025; Atanasova, 2025), this study seeks to perceive how personalized online platforms influence employee satisfaction and engagement (Alzadjali et al., 2023). Crucially, this investigation will address potential perceptual gaps between organizational tiers, investigating if lower-level employees feel as supported as top executives believe them to be (Irmatova et al., 2025). By identifying these discrepancies, the research will determine the barriers and facilitators, such as digital literacy, resistance to change, and socio-economic backgrounds, that influence the success of training digitalization (Zervas & Stiakakis, 2025). Ultimately, the main intention is to propose strategic recommendations for a digital training framework that bridges skill gaps and promotes digital equity, ensuring that technological adoption at Aura Hospitality & Leisure is surrounded by inclusion rather than exclusion.

1.5. Report Structure

This report is systematically organized into eight interrelated chapters, designed to provide a progressive and rigorous analysis of training digitalization within Aura Hospitality & Leisure. The structure follows a logical trajectory that transitions from the conceptual and theoretical foundations to empirical diagnosis, strategic intervention, and professional reflection.

The investigation begins with Chapter 1 (Introduction), which establishes the foundational backdrop of the study by contextualizing the digital paradigm shift within the contemporary business landscape. This chapter details the strategic rationale for selecting Aura Hospitality & Leisure as a multi-sectoral case study and defines the core internship and research objectives aimed at enhancing organizational resilience. To provide the necessary institutional grounding, Chapter 2 (Organizational Context) offers an in-depth characterization of the host organization, providing a strategic overview of its multifaceted operations and internal HR policies. By analysing the company's structure and its current human capital management framework, this chapter establishes the institutional environment in which the research was conducted.

The scientific core of the report is initiated in Chapter 3 (Research Framework), which problematizes the object of study by focusing on the operational and cultural friction generated by the transition to digital learning ecosystems. It formulates the four primary Research Questions that guide the inquiry. This is followed by Chapter 4 (Literature Review), which constructs the theoretical

framework by synthesizing current academic discourse on the multidimensional nature of digitalization, the revolution of HRM practices through analytics, and the specific evolution of e-learning and data-driven development.

The transition to the empirical phase is documented in Chapter 5 (Methodology), which justifies the qualitative research design and the choice of a single case study. It describes the data triangulation strategy involving documentary analysis and eighteen semi-structured interviews, processed through Bardin's Content Analysis framework with NVivo software. The findings are then unveiled in Chapter 6 (Analysis of Results), which presents a cross-sectional diagnosis of the organization's digital maturity. By mapping empirical evidence to the Research Questions, this chapter identifies key phenomena, such as "Social Decompression", the "Multitasking Paradox", and the "Physiological Mismatch".

In Chapter 7 (Discussion and Strategic Recommendations), these findings are critically interpreted against the established literature to evaluate the tension between strategic optimization and individual employee experience. This analysis culminates in a consultancy-based framework of strategic recommendations, including the implementation of Micro-Learning and Blended Learning models. Finally, Chapter 8 (Conclusion) synthetizes the core results and highlights the practical contributions made to Aura Hospitality & Leisure, specifically the development of the 2025 Training Tracker and the 2026 Internal Training Plan. By following this structure approach, the report ensures that the practical outcomes of the internship are deeply anchored in a scientific methodology, providing a balanced contribution to both the organization's strategic development and the broader academic understanding of digital human resource management.

2. Organizational Context

2.1. Organizational Overview of Aura Hospitality & Leisure

The following organizational overview is based on the official institutional data provided by Aura Hospitality & Leisure (n.d.) on its corporate website. This characterization reflects the group's strategic positioning, mission, and operational structure as presented to its stakeholders.

Aura Hospitality & Leisure (n.d.) is a Portuguese business group based in Porto with more than twenty years of experience and has established itself as a national benchmark in several business sectors, including hospitality, catering, sport, and real estate. Since the beginning, the company has adopted a clear philosophy to provide excellent services that meet or exceed the expectations of clients, partners, and employees, while also generating economic, social, and cultural value for the communities or regions in which it operates. Using innovation, ethics, and sustainability as guiding tour values, Aura Hospitality & Leisure strives to embed the value of constant improvement as a differentiating factor and an agent of transformation in the Portuguese market (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.).

Hospitality is one of the group's main pillars, developed under the Aura Hotels brand, which comprises two distinct lines. Aura Essence Hotels[3], four-star properties located in central urban areas, are designed for modern day travellers requiring comfortable, well-designed contemporary accommodation, as well as proximity to relevant cultural experiences. Conversely, the Aura Signature Hotels[4] brand is the group's premium line, comprising five-star properties defined by sophistication, refinement, and exclusivity (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.). With significant investment intent, Aura Hospitality & Leisure has invested heavily in the Portuguese tourism sector, significantly increasing capacity to continue establishing Portugal as an excellent destination, while highlighting and marketing national hospitality and cultural heritage. Their effort and strong desire to become a remarkable brand in this sector led to the opening of five hotels across the country. The brand seeks to continually increase its impact on the tourism industry by inaugurating additional accommodation and leisure infrastructure, working every day to achieve its strategic goal of expanding its reach and recognition.

In catering, Aura Hospitality & Leisure (n.d.) views gastronomy as part of hospitality, offering unique culinary concepts with strong identities. Each restaurant represents its location through a combination of local culinary traditions and innovation, elevating the brand's differentiation. This approach transforms meals into cultural and sensory experiences, strengthening the link between

[3,4] Consistent with the branding of the host organization, the names of the two hotel lines have also been replaced by pseudonyms to ensure total confidentiality throughout this research.

gastronomy, hospitality, and local identity. Their five-star hotels are equipped with exceptionally well-positioned restaurants that ensure the service quality required in a luxurious, exquisite atmosphere. This commitment to excellence allowed Aura Hospitality & Leisure to partner with one of the country's most acclaimed chefs, who now serves as the Executive Chef of one of the company's restaurants.

The organization has also invested in promoting padel, a sport experiencing rapid growth in Portugal and internationally. The group builds multi-functional quality facilities to ensure players of all levels have appropriate access while also aiming to raise standards for practice in the country by democratizing access to the sport and broadening healthy lifestyles and local sports communities, positioning itself as a promoter of social well-being (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.). Their infrastructure is distinguished by its inherent quality, which notably prioritizes excellence across all services and offerings.

In real estate, Aura Hospitality & Leisure builds residential developments that allow for elegance, comfort, and integrated sustainable urbanism. Their properties were designed for those seeking quality housing in three strategic locations, and for investors who appreciate both high levels of sustainable functionality and contemporary architecture, construction methods, and sustainable solutions. The company offers an extensive catalogue of typologies, ranging from T1 to T3+1 residential accommodations (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.).

The group's activities revolve around a clear mission: to deliver the highest levels of service excellence, exceed expectations, and provide value to all stakeholders (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.). Its vision is to become a national reference for all sectors of activity, which continually reinforces quality and innovation (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.). To ensure constant progression and evolution, a set of clear values was established to guide the business strategy. Aura Hospitality & Leisure has given a great amount of consideration to its resilience to ensure the constant mindset of becoming one of the most recognizable industries in its operational reality. Along those lines, excellence is also very present, prioritizing a unique and memorable service and experience for all clients. The ethical concern gains substantial recognition with the brand's ambition to respect the social environment in which it is integrated. Finally, in a world heavily affected by dramatic climate change, sustainability is brought to the forefront to promote eco-friendly practices across all business sectors (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.).

The governance structure of Aura Hospitality & Leisure has a solid commitment to People, Strategy, and Innovation (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.). Human Capital is viewed as the organization's most precious asset, as demonstrated by ongoing investments in continuous training, internal development, and communications. The group's leaders maintain that a motivating, innovative, and healthy work environment is essential to project success and employee well-being.

Aligned with global trends such as sustainability, social responsibility, and digitalization, Aura Hospitality & Leisure ensures its projects address current needs while anticipating future challenges (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.). This mentality enables the organization to develop a structured, effective strategy that leverages its economic impact to achieve extremely successful levels of recognition, influence, and productivity.

Ultimately, Aura Hospitality & Leisure does not consider itself a conventional business group, but as a diversified ecosystem of services in hospitality, gastronomy, sports, and real estate, focused on creating experiences and value for the future (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.). Its leadership is characterized by the constant concern of moving beyond traditional concepts and to take advantage of the transformational and modern resources that are always arising (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.).

2.2. Organizational Framework and HR Policy

Considering the digitalization of HRM processes, specifically the use of digital tools in training initiatives, as the core object of this research, it is vital to understand Aura Hospitality & Leisure's current organizational structure. Besides further understanding the company's main departments and dynamics, it is also interesting to consider the surrounding HR policy. The more explicit these variables are, the more intuitive it will be to assess the current patterns of technology use and their effect on the organization's overall productivity and employee satisfaction.

Characterized as a multi-sector institution with modern and excellence standards, Aura Hospitality & Leisure has been burdened with the obligation to constantly adapt its organizational structure as it progresses and develops in response to exigent economic markets. Based on direct

participant observation and the analysis of the group's Internal Organizational Chart (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.), it is clear that the organization relies on a well-designed and established set of departments across its various business infrastructures. Aura Hospitality & Leisure maintains its corporate headquarters in Porto, where HRM, Marketing, Accounting, Administration, and IT functions are located and where day-to-day activities are conducted. These departments are responsible for all business domains and their requirements, serving as a focal point for the firm's prosperity.

Each department mentioned above is represented by its respective head, who is accountable for the establishing and assigning functions and tasks to their direct subordinates. This allows Aura Hospitality & Leisure to facilitate communication and to distribute responsibilities among several managers, assuring a consistent and productive working environment. Furthermore, an organizational structure that allows individuals easy access to their superiors provides space for growth, and time and cost savings, as productivity levels can be leveraged by avoiding wasted time waiting for a higher approval when operational decisions must be made. Nevertheless, all subdivisions are also supervised by a member of the administration, who establishes communication and success metrics with the corresponding head (Internal Management Guidelines; Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.). This management process reduces the risk of errors and disagreements arising from poor interpretation or miscommunication. Information and work instructions are conveyed and distributed in a simplified manner, increasing employee satisfaction and motivation.

However, Aura Hospitality & Leisure was obligated to implement additional forms of management representation due to its nationwide business dispersion. Therefore, the company's Hotels are sustained by managers who supervise and guide the direct activities of staff members across guest-facing and back-of-house roles, including Housekeeping, Dining, Front Office, and Technical Maintenance. To ensure an efficient system, these domains are also staffed with operational professionals who ensure the services provided are of excellent quality and executed with the required rigor and attention to detail, in accordance with the Internal Operational Standards (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.). Aura Hospitality & Leisure prioritizes client satisfaction and the acquisition of high-profile reviews, enabling the business to retain clients and continually expand its reach to new and prestigious customers. The same strategy is applied to the brand's padel

complex, which is currently led by a strategic manager responsible for delivering results and guiding the club's employee functions.

In a diversified context like that at Aura Hospitality & Leisure, it is vital to implement a reliable HR policy that can manage the challenges and adversities that may arise. The firm strives to ensure a working environment that values continuous improvement as a differentiator to meet or exceed its clients' and partners' expectations. Its HRM processes are fundamental to achieving this level of excellence and growth, as human capital is the main driver of success in the service sector.

Recruitment and Talent Acquisition is one of the main pillars for attracting top-tier talent who will represent Aura Hospitality & Leisure across its multifaceted business infrastructure. As established in the Internal HR Policy (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.), the brand's selection criteria play a significant role in ensuring a staff that aligns with its rigorous, luxurious mindset. Therefore, HR managers seek to hire candidates who not only have the technical skills needed for the development of their future activities but also demonstrate a considerate level of emotional intelligence, capable of successfully navigating this environment without sudden constraints. Nowadays, the interview process has undergone some changes, with technology being prioritized, using digital platforms to communicate with promising candidates.

Nonetheless, a well-established Recruitment and Talent Acquisition strategy is not sufficient to guarantee continuous quality in the delivery and execution of the brand's services. Training and development are essential to further equip employees with up-to-date knowledge and skills. The upskilling and reskilling processes of Aura Hospitality & Leisure are an integral part of its core strategy to constantly scale its presence and productivity. As identified through participant observation and the review of Internal Training Procedures (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.), the adoption of digital tools has enabled the sustainable and simultaneous reach of employees dispersed across various geographic locations. Consequently, the firm is able to save time and costs, while also promoting a comfortable environment, where knowledge can be shared between workers from different facilities, who previously did not have the opportunity to communicate as frequently. Traditional training initiatives are still used when HR managers consider that there is a necessity for in-person training, due to factors such as digital illiteracy or simply because the subject of training is of extreme importance. Aura Hospitality & Leisure is improving its training strategies

day by day, leveraging the surrounding technology that is shaping every aspect of the business landscape.

Performance Management and Compensation and Rewards are also relevant to keep a motivated and skilled workforce. Given the diverse range of job functions and the fact that they all require different approaches, measuring KPIs and providing ongoing feedback must be among the top priorities for Aura Hospitality & Leisure, a process guided by the Performance Evaluation Manual (Aura Hospitality & Leisure, n.d.). Hence, HR managers make a strong effort to cultivate a streamlined flow of information across all hierarchical levels. Through a concise evaluation of the human capital at their disposal, they become more aware of the actions needed to maintain a strategic workforce. Besides establishing assessment methods, it is crucial to retain employees and mitigate the risk of employee turnover to competitors. The company strives to meet expectations through the offer of compensation rewards, such as work-life balance initiatives, a positive work environment, competitive salaries, and increasing responsibilities and associated growth within their operations.

Aura Hospitality & Leisure assumes an organizational culture where diversity and inclusion is mandatory, ensuring that all employees feel comfortable to fearlessly express themselves, while also respecting the individualities of their colleagues. Sustainability and environmental best practices also underpin the organization's core vision and strategy, motivating its workforce to engage in sustainable activities and incorporate eco-friendly practices into their daily tasks. The Portuguese business group is extremely determined to be seen as a driving force of constant differentiation and innovation in the tourism and leisure sector. The valorisation of human capital and its potential to leverage the brand's name is the chosen approach to keep revolutionizing the market and increase economic and success returns.

3. Research Framework: Problem and Objectives

3.1. Problem Statement

The strategic shift toward digitalization within Aura Hospitality & Leisure is a response to the contemporary need for operational agility and the modernization of HRM practices. However, the transition from traditional, face-to-face training models to a digital ecosystem has revealed a

complex set of internal challenges. The core problem of this research lies in the operational and cultural friction generated by this transition within a highly heterogeneous and multi-sector workforce, where the effectiveness of digital tools is often hindered by the diverse nature of the organization's human capital.

Aura Hospitality & Leisure operates across distinct business pillars, including hospitality, sports, construction, and real estate, which results in a workforce characterized by a significant digital divide. During the ethnographic observation phase of this internship, it became evident that while corporate and administrative functions demonstrate high levels of digital readiness, front-line staff often encounter substantial barriers to technology adoption. This disparity creates a risk of asymmetrical development, where the digitalization of upskilling initiatives may unintentionally isolate employees with lower digital literacy or limited access to technological resources, thus undermining the company's goal of unified excellence.

The challenge is further intensified by the high-pressure operational pace of the hospitality industry, where training often competes with immediate service demands. The transition to digital platforms requires not only a shift in how content is consumed but also a fundamental reorganization of learning time within the workday. Without a dedicated physical space or protected time for digital training, operational staff often struggle to find the appropriate environment for deep learning. This lack of structural support contributes significantly to the perceptual gap between management's expectations for digital autonomy and the workforce's actual engagement levels.

Furthermore, the implementation of digital platforms has introduced a unique tension within a service-oriented culture. In an industry fundamentally built on human touch and interpersonal engagement, the total or partial replacement of physical training environments with digital settings is often perceived as an erosion of social cohesion. This human-digital tension manifests as a sense of digital fatigue and a loss of informal knowledge sharing that was feasible in traditional sessions. For HRM, the challenge is not merely content delivery but to ensure that the digital avenue can sustain high levels of motivation and brand identity required in the leisure and hospitality sectors.

Ultimately, the central problem driving this study is the urgent need to diagnose how Aura Hospitality & Leisure can bridge these gaps to foster a sustainable and inclusive learning culture. This research seeks to identify the specific barriers, such as technical illiteracy, socio-economic alienation, and psychological resistance, as well as facilitators, including information persistence and logistical flexibility, that determine the success of the transition to digital initiatives. By

addressing these frictions, this investigation aims to provide a strategic roadmap that ensures technological adoption at Aura Hospitality & Leisure translates into digital equity and enhanced individual performance, rather than social or professional exclusion.

3.2. Research Questions

The integration of digital technologies within Aura Hospitality & Leisure's training strategy represents a strategic imperative to maintain resilience and exert a meaningful impact within a fast-paced economic market (Chytilová et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the successful adoption of digital tools and platforms depends upon a profound and detailed comprehension of the diverse backgrounds and potential digital inequalities inherent in a heterogeneous workforce (Zervas & Stiakis, 2025). This investigation evaluates how digital training can optimize upskilling and professional development processes while promoting an inclusive and continuous learning environment (Alzadjali et al., 2023; Irmatova et al., 2025). In this sense, it is essential to analyse the impact of the shift toward digital training initiatives on knowledge retention and technical competence, specifically regarding how employees apply information gathered from digital tools to their daily activities compared to results from traditional in-person sessions (Irmatova et al., 2025; Klinker & Weel, 2024, as referred in Irmatova et al., 2025). Furthermore, examining efficiency and productivity gains, such as time and cost savings achieved by transitioning to digital learning ecosystems, will clarify the strategic direction of the company's development programs (Kilinç et al., 2025). This leads to the first research question:

RQ1: How does the transition from traditional training modules to digital learning ecosystems optimize upskilling and reskilling processes within Aura Hospitality & Leisure?

Simultaneously, it is crucial to assess the primary barriers and facilitators in the adoption of digital tools within a workforce as heterogeneous as that of Aura Hospitality & Leisure. Diverse levels of digital literacy and varying professional backgrounds can significantly affect the individual learning effectiveness of digital training initiatives, as lower digital confidence often causes employees to struggle with adopting new digital workflows (Irmatova et al., 2025; Zervas & Stiakakis, 2025). Acknowledging these challenges is vital to refining Aura Hospitality & Leisure's approach to staff with diverse requirements, particularly when comparing blue-collar workers with administrative staff (Indroputri & Sanjaya, 2024). Moreover, demographic aspects such as age and educational backgrounds impact comfort levels with digital training platforms, making it vital for

HR professionals to consider these nuances during the design phase to avoid digital exclusion or professional alienation (Zervas & Stiakakis, 2025; Wesche & Handke, 2024, as referred in Zervas & Stiakakis, 2025). Based on these considerations, the second research question is formulated as:

RQ2: What are the primary barriers and facilitators in the adoption of digital tools among employees with varying levels of digital literacy and diverse backgrounds?

The assessment of employee perceptions and experiences remains the most effective strategy for achieving impactful results, as prioritizing their voices enables more effective technology adoption and reduces the risk of disconnection (Atanasova, 2025; Zervas & Stiakakis, 2025). While the digitalization of training enables personalized and self-paced learning experiences, that can significantly improve motivation and engagement (Alzadjali et al., 2023; Čirčová et al., 2025), it is also essential to consider potential negative perceptions. Many workers may feel insecure about the technological transformations in their work conditions, fearing that these tools will lead to their substitution and that their human potential will no longer represent a strategic strength (Kalavakolanu & Prasad, 2023; Vlahovic et al., 2025). Therefore, the HRM department must strive to transform this insecurity into a sense of empowerment, demonstrating that digital tools are merely mechanisms to facilitate growth (Wang et al., 2025). This objective leads to the third research question:

RQ3: How does the introduction of digital learning initiatives and interactive tools influence employee motivation, engagement, and satisfaction regarding their professional development?

Finally, this research evaluates the relationship between the digitalization of training and the individual performance of the workforce, as investments in human capital have been shown to sustain skills that lead to improved operational results (Kuong Rodríguez & Arana Barbier, 2024). Understanding if digital training translates into a perceived increase in professional efficiency is a key component for Aura Hospitality & Leisure, given its ambition to differentiate itself in the Portuguese and international leisure and tourism sectors. The analysis of real-time feedback and data-driven assessment tools will provide a deeper understanding of the benefits of digital implementation at the individual level, ensuring that the training offers remain adaptive to individual needs (Kilinç et al., 2025; Tran, 2023). Assessing this strategic impact allows for the development of a roadmap that aligns training initiatives with long-term organizational resilience and market

competitiveness (Vadithe & Kesari, 2025; Vlahovic et al., 2025). Consequently, the fourth and final research question is:

RQ4: To what extent do employees perceive digital training as a factor that enhances their individual performance and professional efficiency within their specific roles?

The analysis of these research questions and the achievement of the outlined objectives will provide a comprehensive understanding of Aura Hospitality & Leisure's digital transformation of its training strategy. By considering both the theoretical digital adoption and the lived experiences of a heterogeneous workforce, this study aims to move beyond simple performance metrics to capture the true human impact of technological change. The results obtained from this investigation will serve as the basis for a sustainable strategic roadmap, ensuring that future training initiatives are not only technologically advanced, but also inclusive and employee-centered. The alignment between human capital necessities and digital innovation will be the driving force behind Aura Hospitality & Leisure's long-term productivity and economic growth, resulting in a highly differentiated position in a fast-paced market.

4. Literature Review

4.1. The Technological Paradigm Shift

In the contemporary global market, companies are undergoing a substantial technological transformation, with digitalization becoming a central concern for maintaining competitiveness and sustainable economic growth (Petkovski et al., 2022; Szanyi-Gyenes & Almási, 2023). It is evident that the digital transformation of HRM is not a static event, consisting of an evolutionary journey. Digitalization serves as a primary driver for refining both operations and offerings, thereby enhancing customer value, workforce efficiency, and financial health (Zhou et al., 2021). The modern business landscape, which used to be defined by traditional boundaries, is now characterized by an organization's ability to implement digital ecosystems into its core identity. However, acknowledging this transformation is not sufficient to guarantee a company's success, it is vital for them to be aligned with the expected speed of adoption.

According to Indroputri and Sanjaya (2024), there is an urgent and growing need for organizations to adapt to this new reality, as digital transformation drives constant changes in every aspect of business operations. Digitalization is, therefore, an ongoing process capable of redefining

the creation and delivery of value, dictating the enterprise's productivity and its ability to differentiate.

At the executive level, Chapano et al. (2022) argue that digital strategies significantly affect the achievement of corporate goals. Technology has transitioned from a supporting function to a primary driver of strategic success, demanding a fundamental shift in how human capital is perceived.

Van den Heuvel et al. (2022) expand upon this theme by positing that changes in the way of work involve not only technological transformation but also a strategic action-and-reaction plan to address the changing dynamics of the global workforce. Digitalization is a multifaceted phenomenon that involves growth, a strategic tool for meeting corporate goals, and a human-centric response to an evolving global labour market.

4.2. Defining Digitalization: A Multidimensional Perspective

To better understand the digitalization process and its impact on the current labour market, it is crucial to establish a clear definition. However, several authors approach this concept through differing lenses and perspectives, revealing its novelty in the organizational context.

Saarikko et al. (2020) defined digitalization as the socio-technical process of leveraging digitalized products or systems to develop new organizational procedures, business models, or commercial offerings. This perspective recognizes that technology must be integrated into social and professional systems to be effective. In contrast, with a focus on tangible economic outputs and the power of information, Clerck (2017) defends digitalization as the strategic integration of technology and data to transform traditional processes into a digital-first business environment that generates new value. Gobble (2018) aligns with this view, stating that digital technologies and information can create great value in new formats. These definitions highlight a clear shift from viewing digital tools as support instruments to seeing them as the engine of value creation in the modern economy.

Further definitions are provided by researchers such as Hagberg et al. (2016), who advocate that digitalization is the most significant transformation in the current business landscape, encompassing multiple elements of the corporate world and everyday life. This adoption suggests that the nature of economic transactions is being reinvented. This theory is supported by

Goduscheit and Faullant (2018) and Cappa et al. (2021), who confirm that digitalization refers to the systematic collection and analysis of information to unlock new value and fuel innovative practices.

The academic discourse also contains more grounded and critical views. Perez (2015) downplays this transformative narrative, stating it is merely the pervasive synergy of digital innovations across the economy and society. This serves as a reminder that these changes are the result of gradual technological investments and not a sudden rupture. Similarly, Srai and Lorentz (2019) offer a straightforward definition: digitalization as the use of digital technologies.

While perspectives vary, there is a consensus that digitalization leads to socioeconomic change through new business opportunities, industry transformations, and the emergence of a new socioeconomic reality (Gradillas & Thomas, 2023).

4.3. Organizational Benefits and the Human Factor of Digitalization

Beyond theoretical definitions, the practical application of digitalization offers several strategic advantages that can highly contribute to a business's upscaling, effectively bridging the gap between technological investment and operational excellence.

Gregori and Holzmann (2020) and Juríčková et al. (2020) concluded that adapting to this phenomenon supports a sustainable strategy and environment by optimising processes, reducing consumption, and minimising negative environmental impacts. The integration of sustainability indicates that, in addition to its impact on profits, digitalization is also a fundamental mechanism for resource management. Furthermore, digital transformation has a strong influence on employee motivation, as it facilitates performance improvements and professional recognition (Čirčová et al., 2025). These findings suggest that digital tools can create a transparent environment in which individual merit is more frequently recognized and rewarded.

Digitalization significantly moderates the relationship between human factor management and company productivity (Kuong Rodríguez & Arana Barbier, 2024), enabling organizations to introduce performance-monitoring technology to track work performance and results (Li, 2018). This modernized analysis enables managers to make more informed and objective decisions about their staff.

These findings underscore the need to analyse the impact of digital transformation within a specific organizational pillar: Human Resources Management (HRM). As digitalization permeates the corporate structure, it becomes the primary catalyst for reshaping how organizations interact with their people, which is their most valuable asset. This evolution implies the need for a sophisticated management approach that ensures technology serves not only to monitor the workforce but also to empower them. In this context, Industry 5.0 marks a transition to a people-first philosophy, ensuring that technology remains a tool for empowerment rather than replacement of human contribution within the industrial landscape (Caratù et al., 2025). Digital technologies contribute to higher levels of employee contentment (Zakaria et al., 2025), fostering a more harmonious and productive work environment.

4.4. The Revolution of HRM Practices

It has been proven that HRM practices have a beneficial effect on career success and career development (Indroputri & Sanjaya, 2024) and can improve a business's economic and social strategy. Consequently, the HRM department is not indifferent to digital transformation, having to navigate a constantly changing environment and fulfil the demand to revolutionize its practices (Indroputri & Sanjaya, 2024). This transformation is fundamentally changing how HRM departments operate, impacting all aspects of people management (Kucharcikova et al., 2024). This shift indicates that the HRM function is now a dynamic agent of change.

HRM is being revolutionized by digital technologies in almost all its functions, including recruitment, talent management, performance reviews, training, and employee engagement (Zakaria et al., 2025). A consistent topic in recent literature regarding this revolution is the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI)[5] in HRM processes and day-to-day activities. AI-driven recruitment platforms, HRM analytics tools, and e-learning management systems enhance HRM capabilities, enabling strategic workforce planning and efficient talent management (Ameen et al., 2024). Recent research indicates that the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)[6] in HRM opens new possibilities for both employees and managers (Chytilová et al., 2025).

[5] AI - Artificial Intelligence. Computer systems that can perform complex tasks normally done by human-reasoning, decision-making and creating (NASA, n.d.).

[6] ICT - Information and Communication Technology. Covers all technical means used to handle information and aid communication (Eurostat, n.d.).

Kalvakolanu and Prasad (2023) defend that implementing digital technologies into HRM can boost overall productivity of an organization, a theory supported by Čirčová et al. (2025), who emphasize that the digitalization of HRM processes, especially in areas such as employee evaluation and development, plays a critical role in increasing productivity and competitiveness.

Accordingly, the synergy between human talent and digital tools is the new benchmark for excellence. The true value of modern HRM lies in the intersection of data and intelligence; specifically, the synergy between HRM analytics and AI creates a strategic advantage by optimizing workforce management and enhancing HRM practices (Garg et al., 2021). Moreover, the contribution of digital strategies to achieve corporate goals is high (Chapano et al., 2022), with digital technology in HRM serving as a vital performance management tool (Zhao et al., 2024). Zhou et al. (2021) state that firm performance depends on HRM digitalization, system maturity, and strategic engagement. Adopting specific digital HRM tools can enhance both staff and organizational productivity while simultaneously fostering a culture of sustainable and ethical HRM practices (Haque & Nishat, 2022).

The implementation of digital tools has a strong effect on several aspects of HRM from information restocking and training and new skill development to automation, innovation, artificial intelligence, digitalization, e-contracting, and the internet of things (Sima et al., 2020). Assuming that HRM practices and technology are complementary resources for reaching higher results (Caratù et al., 2025), this transformative endeavour necessitates a comprehensive revaluation and reshaping of HRM processes, networks, and methodologies to improve the organisation's strategic outcomes (Gilch & Sieweke, 2021). This holistic view is further supported by Kuong Rodríguez and Arana Barbier (2024), who add that the accelerated pace of technological evolution and the immediate demand for organizational agility necessitate a comprehensive integration of digital solutions across the entire HRM value chain.

Despite the perceived complexity, the newness of this process, and the fact that some companies do not face it with the severity they should, HRM employees are rising to the challenge of renovating both the workforce and the manner in which work is conducted, and the HRM processes in general (Kalvakolanu & Prasad 2023). This proactive attitude demonstrates that human adaptability remains the ultimate driver of progress, turning digital disruption into a strategic advantage. Leveraging digital innovation streamlines Human Resource Management practices, enhancing employee performance and robust competitive standing (Zakaria et al., 2025).

The digitalization of HR facilitates this shift in company direction by fundamentally elevating performance levels. In this context, Kalvakolanu and Prasad (2023) identify several key improvements resulting from digital innovation: the implementation of intelligent employment practices through AI tools; the streamlining of screening and interview processes; and the creation of positive impressions during the onboarding[7] phase. AI tools specifically transform routine HRM responsibilities, such as planning job posts, optimizing communication with candidates, and creating tailored onboarding materials (Wang et al., 2025). Optimizing these activities provides a measurable return on investment, as most companies report that introducing AI into their operations reduces recruitment and training costs while increasing management transparency and employee satisfaction (Wang et al., 2025).

Furthermore, these technologies enable the prediction of unethical behaviour and encourage continuous learning in the workplace, which directly correlates to higher productivity and job satisfaction. Ultimately, these benefits extend beyond simple efficiency as they represent a holistic optimization of HRM by reducing costs, improving working conditions, and centralizing personnel information into a single and cohesive digital ecosystem. Accordingly, by providing clearer communication and development pathways, AI fosters a more stable corporate environment. AI technologies also improve the ability to adapt to changing conditions and enhance enterprises' flexibility (Wang et al., 2025), which is a critical foundation amid constant disruption in the current global market.

This modernization serves as the foundation for a more resilient organizational structure. Digital transformation enables the creation of a "workforce of the future", increasing efficiency and agility to meet the evolving needs of the business landscape (Kalvakolanu & Prasad, 2023). Overall, AI-driven HR systems empower firms to stay agile amidst internal and external changes. Recognizing that the quality of human capital is the ultimate competitive differentiator, the appropriate selection of employees helps organizations grow and generate better productivity, quality, and profitability (Chadwick & Li, 2018). While speed and currency are vital, the value of this agility lies in its ability to ensure quality and fairness in decision-making. By automating workflows and enhancing information flow, these tools help mitigate human error and bias, driving objective outcomes

[7] Onboarding – The process in which new employees gain the knowledge and skills they need to become effective members of an organization (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.).

(Antoniuk et al., 2025). This implies that AI is more than a tool for efficiency; it is a mechanism that substantially helps maintain integrity and meritocracy.

Information Technology (IT)[8] tools help recruit and retain top talent while minimizing costs and maintaining high productivity (Kuong Rodríguez & Arana Barbier, 2024). This process is facilitated by online platforms, social media, and data-driven insights (Zakaria et al., 2025), underscoring the importance of integrating diverse digital channels to reach talented candidates. In relation to the specified topic, Indroputri and Sanjaya (2024), confirm that digitally investing in HRM reduces turnover rates and improves employee attitudes, which is a direct result of the clarity provided by new data systems. In line with the goal of maintaining staff excellence, digital transformation enables organizations to introduce performance-monitoring technology to track employees' work performance and the results achieved (Li, 2018).

Therefore, HRM transformation enables organizations to seamlessly incorporate digital talent acquisition technologies and processes into HRM practices (Chwiłkowska Kubala et al., 2023). This seamless integration helps maintain operational success, as Raheem and Ibrahim (2022) confirm, creating more agile and tech-savvy HR functions. Additionally, digital tools not only streamline internal operations but also reduce waste and enhance the firm's reputation for socially responsible management (Čirčová et al., 2025).

Ultimately, digitalization translates into the repositioning of the HRM function within the corporate hierarchy. By simplifying important HRM functions such as performance management, training, development, employee engagement, and data analytics (Agarwal, 2023; Pillai & Sivathanu, 2020), HRM moves beyond an administrative role to become a strategic enabler (Zervas & Stiakakis, 2025). These investments enable the effective use of HR analytics, leading to improved talent management, workforce planning, and organizational performance, both in terms of productivity and efficiency (Garg et al., 2021; Jani et al., 2023). However, shifting HRM from an administrative function to a strategic enabler is rarely a seamless evolution, as it requires navigating a landscape of human and technical resistance.

Despite the strategic promise of these digital tools, the newness and sudden arrival of this transformation present significant implementation challenges. HRM managers must first confront

[8] IT – Information Technology. The science and activity of using computers and other electronic equipment to store and send information (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.).

the psychological impact of change, as the rise of new technologies often triggers fears regarding job security (Kalvakolanu & Prasad, 2023). It is the department's obligation to reassure workers of their value and to adopt a human-centric approach to mitigate the internal friction that often arises during technological adoption. Resistance to change, often driven by fear of replacement or an inability to meet shifting management expectations, remains a major concern (Metz, 2021). Beyond individual anxieties, this transition can deepen existing divides. The reproduction of existing social inequalities is also a significant constraint, affecting both productivity and the perceived sense of fairness and inclusion in the workplace (Zervas & Stiakakis, 2025).

This inequality is often reflected in digital exclusion, where employees with higher digital and social capital are better positioned to leverage digital platforms, while those with fewer digital skills may experience slower professional progression within the organization (Van Dijk, 2021; Zervas & Stiakakis, 2025). Consequently, the role of internal guidance becomes paramount, and a lack of leadership support can hinder adaptation and security. Sourcing the right talent and having a good understanding of customers also remain at stake during the transformation process (Kalvakolanu & Prasad, 2023).

Furthermore, the ability to master a transformational strategy is dictated by the organization's existing scale. Implementation readiness also varies by company size. Large companies face major challenges due to complex organizational structures and high costs associated with the adoption of new technologies, while small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)[9] have higher adaptability and flexibility (Antoniuk et al., 2025). Other barriers to investment include the need to acquire new skills and internal competencies, as well as the risk of technological obsolescence (Büchi et al., 2020). This implies that digitalization requires continuous reinvestment and upskilling.

To mitigate these risks, organizations should implement technology-driven frameworks to enhance HR efficiency, promote employee engagement, and maintain a competitive position within a shifting economic environment (Zakaria et al., 2025). A successful digital HRM department is one that balances high-tech tools with high-touch human support to ensure that every segment of the workforce is being recognized.

4.5. Digital Transformation in Training and Development

[9] SMEs – Small and medium-sized enterprises (European Commission, n.d.).

Training and employee development are fundamental areas of the Human Resources department undergoing transformation, particularly through the adoption of digital technologies. Kuong Rodríguez and Arana Barbier (2024) define training as the delivery of useful skills and knowledge to perform practical work in a qualified manner, and as a continuous effort to improve employees' skills and performance. Investment in training increases productivity in both social and economic practices (Kuong Rodríguez & Arana Barbier, 2024). Learning and development provide a competitive advantage and prepare employees to navigate constant changes in their work environment (Kuong Rodríguez & Arana Barbier, 2024).

Continued learning should be at the core of an organization's strategy, as it significantly affects individual organizational outcomes (Mehner et al., 2024) and is considered part of the company's development strategy (Chytilová et al., 2025). This strategic focus is increasingly vital as demographic changes occur. With Gen Z[10] entering the labour market, training has gained prominence, as this generation highly values continuous learning and skill development, driving them to be more competitive and to align with various career development opportunities when companies make efforts to meet their needs (Indroputri & Sanjaya, 2024). Reflecting this trend, a survey developed by Chytilová et al. (2025) concluded that companies are adapting their training initiatives to employee needs.

The adoption of online or digitalized training is useful for companies seeking to invest in their staff to improve their productivity and potential. Plis and Schislyaeva (2021) noted that as companies recognize the importance of developing human capital, e-learning is emerging as a preferred tool for delivering new knowledge and skills. Tailoring training and support programs to align with each employee's requirements enhances engagement and productivity (Antoniuk et al., 2025). By focusing on this evidence, digital training has improved growth speed and training effects (Wang et al., 2025), empowering individual performance and driving collective organizational growth and productivity (Kuong Rodríguez and Arana Barbier, 2024). Looking toward the future of the labour market, the literature underscores a significant shift in how organizations maintain resilience amid constant disruption. Organizations aim to modernize recruitment and training with

[10] Gen Z – Generation Z.

smart tools to remain resilient in a shifting labour market, tackling the challenge of fast-paced skill obsolescence while satisfying employee needs for individualized growth opportunities (Tewari & Pant, 2020). The balance between organizational survival and individual fulfillment is what defines the next era of industrial evolution.

Despite the initial costs of HRM training, organizations should customize digital learning, as this alignment is expected to drive significant improvements both in performance and efficiency (Chytilová et al., 2025). The return on this investment is often seen in the cultural shift it inspires. Personalized learning platforms report higher levels of employee contentment, allowing them to acquire new skills, experiment with digital tools, and adopt a growth mindset (Zakaria et al., 2025). The embracement of digital innovation and a culture of continuous learning allow businesses to thrive in the evolving digital landscape (Zakaria et al., 2025). Antoniuk et al. (2025) verified that SMEs highly value personalized learning, whereas larger corporations are increasingly pressured to realign their strategies to accommodate this trend. In their study on employees in the latter stages of their careers, Kortmann et al. (2023) found a positive correlation between increasing occupational digitalization and the motivation to participate in further training. This effectiveness is further supported by Batita et al. (2023), who concluded that skill-based online training improves industry-required skills, underscoring the effectiveness of digitalized training initiatives.

Although some organizations still rely on basic tools, full investment in personalized online learning, through access to courses tailored to employees' specific needs, is recommended to increase the impact of task execution (Čirčová et al., 2025). Personalised learning and real-time support also increase employee engagement (Antoniuk et al., 2025). As reported by Wang et al. (2025), even employees who previously lacked the drive for self-directed learning showed a greater willingness to dedicate time when the suggested material aligned with their personal development goals.

Personalized employee learning, supporting continuous education, reskilling and upskilling employees, and coaching and mentoring programs are highly ranked practices in employee training and development that ensure employee growth in the context of digital transformation (Čirčová et al., 2025). Integrating digital training tools also promotes sustainable development both for the specific business and to the broader economic and social environment; by offering flexibility and real-time learning, digitalization streamlines educational processes and minimizes the necessity for in-person sessions. This transition lowers resource consumption and significantly reduces the

organization's environmental footprint (Čirčová et al., 2025). Looking forward, as technical and capital constraints diminish, organizations are expected to further scale digital initiatives, driving operational excellence and sharpening their competitive edge within the global marketplace (Čirčová et al., 2025).

4.5.1. E-learning and Data-Driven Insights

E-learning[11] is a commonly used term in debates about digitalization in training. Modern e-learning systems have become multifaceted, blending learner interaction and motivation with rigorous testing and sophisticated content to facilitate comprehensive professional development (Indroputri & Sanjaya, 2024).

Organizations leverage virtual environments and gamification to modernize education, thereby increasing engagement and supporting the ongoing development of their workforce (Zakaria et al., 2025). As stated by Vadithe and Kesari (2025), e-learning management entails the systematic administration of digital learning initiatives to streamline the creation, delivery, and evaluation of educational materials. These systems empower organizations to track key performance metrics, including completion rates, fulfilment timelines, and appraisal results (Verma et al., 2024). Moving beyond simple participation tracking, integrated analytics enable firms to gain a deeper understanding of their staff engagement with content, allowing them to pinpoint specific areas for instructional improvement (Verma et al., 2024). Garg et al., (2021) highlight that the intersection of digital learning management and HR analytics provides firms with the necessary framework to architect targeted development interventions, finely adjusted to address the diverse needs and predispositions of the organizational talent.

This analytical depth serves as a catalyst for a more agile and scalable corporate structure. The adoption of digital learning platforms modernizes HRM processes, significantly enhancing the accessibility and scalability of professional development (Vadithe & Kesari, 2025). As e-learning integrates into core HRM operations, it acts as an incentive for transformation, fostering continuous skill development and organizational agility (Raheem & Ibrahim, 2022; Weerarathna et al., 2023). Ultimately, by leveraging these digital resources, organizations secure a competitive advantage by cultivating of a highly adaptable workforce (Vadithe & Kesari, 2025). The implementation of e-

[11] E-learning – encompasses a broad range of knowledge transferred through digital technologies (Eurostat, n.d.).

learning initiatives often triggers a broader HRM transformation, which subsequently paves the way for the adoption and practical application of HRM analytics (Vrontis et al., 2022). Furthermore, the integration of e-learning with HRM analytics enables organizations to evaluate the impact of training programs, identify talent shortages, and ensure that developmental efforts are synchronized with broader corporate objectives (Mccartney & Fu, 2021). Evidence demonstrates that embedding e-learning data into HRM analytics enables an HRM transformation that empowers organizations to quantify training outcomes and adopt a data-driven approach to workforce planning (Garg et al., 2021).

This new attitude fosters a learning-centred culture, resulting in continuous development within the organization (Wang et al., 2025). Additionally, e-learning platforms provide a foundation for AI integration, allowing for a more responsive learning environment. As noted by Rodgers et al. (2023), this includes adaptive pathways and immediate feedback mechanisms that significantly improve training outcomes. The integration of AI enhances the ability to develop a highly skilled, adaptable workforce (Dutta et al., 2023). AI tools allow HRM departments to stay ahead of labour market shifts by predicting future skill requirements and launching targeted reskilling programs. This technology also serves as a career mentor for employees, identifying competitive skill gaps and allowing HRM advisors to offer guidance on professional growth and internal mobility (Caratù et al., 2025).

The shift toward AI-driven employee development systems enhances the agility of training programs while simultaneously sharpening the organization's competitive edge through superior talent growth (Wang et al., 2025). This system also shortens the recruitment and training cycle and improves transparency in management and employee satisfaction, thereby enabling the achievement of the organization’s strategic goals (Wang et al., 2025; Antoniuk et al., 2025). AI solutions enhance impartial decision-making and organizational flexibility, enabling firms to maintain a high degree of responsiveness regardless of the business landscape in which they operate (Antoniuk et al., 2025). The use of digital platforms is intrinsically linked to how training impact is measured. By embracing online training, entrepreneurs perceive greater instructional efficiency than with traditional methods (Chytilová et al., 2025).

However, it is vital to distinguish between operational efficiency and immediate financial returns. The digitalization of training has not been a direct driver of financial growth. Instead, improved economic outcomes are more closely linked to the strategic use of internal data and the

efficiencies gained through digital document sharing (Chytilová et al., 2025). Ultimately, implementing digital training initiatives drives higher productivity and satisfaction while simultaneously mitigating workplace stress and employee turnover (Kalvakolanu & Prasad, 2023). Businesses that prioritize digital literacy, cultivate an innovative mindset, and offer robust employee support frameworks are significantly better equipped to harness the full advantages of digital HRM (Zakaria et al., 2025).

Current literature reveals a profound shift in basic assumptions, as the digitalization of HRM has transcended its origins as a support function to become a strategic priority for organizational strategy (Caratù et al., 2025; Zakaria et al., 2025). By linking the precision of AI-driven analytics with a human-centric focus on continuous development, firms are no longer merely reacting to market disruptions but are proactively cultivating the resilience necessary for sustained competitive advantage (Chytilová et al., 2025).

The future of the global labour market will be defined by those organizations capable of balancing high-tech efficiency with a persistent commitment to employee growth and development, thereby increasing productivity and motivation rates (Kuong Rodríguez & Arana Barbier, 2024). Research indicates that digitalization moderates the relationship between human capital management and overall organizational productivity, underscoring that technology enhances human potential (Kuong Rodríguez & Arana Barbier, 2024).

The prevailing academic discourse establishes that while digital tools provide the essential framework for efficiency, the ultimate driver of success remains the strategic integration of these technologies into the social and professional fabric of the workforce (Čirčová et al., 2025). Consequently, digital evolution must be managed as a pathway toward shared and sustainable success, requiring a learning culture that prioritizes digital equity and inclusion to empower all employees to thrive (Indroputri & Sanjaya, 2024).

5. Methodology

This chapter aims to detail the methodology and research design adopted for this study. Following the theoretical framework presented in the previous chapters, it is crucial to describe the practical steps taken to analyse the impact of digitalization on training initiatives within Aura Hospitality & Leisure.

The methodological procedures applied in this investigation were selected based on the central objectives previously documented: to gain a deeper understanding of employees' and managers' perceptions regarding digital transformation, and to evaluate the effectiveness of online training within the heterogeneous hospitality context of Aura Hospitality & Leisure. Consequently, adopting an approach that prioritizes in-depth analysis and proximity to the organizational reality was essential. This approach enabled a concise yet detailed exploration of the variables critical to evaluating the effectiveness of a digital training strategy. Given the organization's diverse and unique context, it was imperative to develop a strategy that enabled contact across several business units, each with specific needs and realities, while reaching a diverse range of employees with varying demographic backgrounds and professional roles.

In this regard, the methodology is designed as a single case study of Aura Hospitality & Leisure, supported by a qualitative approach. Professionals from various business units were interviewed using semi-structured scripts tailored to their hierarchical positions within the company. These interviews captured the complexity of the individual experiences of 18 participants regarding their engagement with digital tools and platforms during training activities.

The following sections detail data collection techniques, the sample's characterization, and the content analysis process that served as the basis for the discussion of results. This process is primarily supported by the findings of the semi-structured interviews, which provided a comprehensive overview of the workforce's perspectives on digital training. Ultimately, engaging with employees from different business sectors and socio-economic backgrounds yielded valuable and diverse insights, ensuring the consideration of multiple factors that influence the perception and implementation of digital training initiatives.

Furthermore, this research acknowledges my dual role as both an intern and an observer. My active integration within the Human Resources Management department at Aura Hospitality & Leisure enabled me to adopt a participant-observation approach, providing privileged access to the organization's daily operations, internal culture, and current challenges. Conducting an internship within the company fostered a culture of trust with the interviewees, enabling a more nuanced and grounded interpretation of the collected data.

It is essential to emphasize that the study was conducted in accordance with strict ethical guidelines. All participants were fully informed about the nature and objectives of this research, and their participation was entirely voluntary, as evidenced by their signing of Informed Consent forms (Appendix 1). To protect employees' privacy and the organization's strategic interests, all data has been anonymized and treated with the maximum confidentiality, ensuring that individual responses cannot be traced back to specific participants.

5.1. Study Type

The present research is a qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory single case study focusing on Aura Hospitality & Leisure and its overarching training strategy, with a specific emphasis on the introduction of digitalization within this process. Considering that the primary goal of this study is to analyse the implementation of digital training initiatives within this diversified business and its subsequent impact on employee satisfaction and engagement, it is essential to consider the participants' personal perspectives on the efficacy of this digital transformation.

The rationale for selecting a single case study design lies in the representative nature of the organization (Yin, 2014). As a multiservice group encompassing hotel units, sports projects, and centralized corporate services, Aura Hospitality & Leisure reflects the complexity of the modern hospitality industry. It serves as an ideal representative case to observe how digital transformation permeates different business units, each with distinct operational realities, under a single organizational culture. Furthermore, given the relative novelty of digital training strategies in the hospitality sector and the lack of existing research on how multiservice companies navigate digital training transitions, this study is inherently exploratory. It does not aim to test pre-defined hypotheses but rather to generate insights that can serve as a foundation for future human resource strategies.

To achieve a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the employees' primary concerns, preferences, and challenges, a qualitative analysis was considered most appropriate. This choice facilitates a human-centric, personal, and tangible exploration of the subject matter, acknowledging what can be described as the axiological dimension of organizational change. By focusing on the individuals' values and perceptions, the study captures the main factors that ultimately determine

the success of technological implementation. This qualitative design allows the workforce to fully engage in the dialogue through interviews, yielding richer, more granular, and more complete answers than a standardized general questionnaire distributed to a mass audience for quantitative analysis. This depth of information is vital for uncovering the unique organizational dynamics that numbers alone cannot capture.

According to Yin (2014), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident. This methodology is particularly well-suited to this research, as it enables an in-depth investigation into how digitalization reshapes training within the specific, multifaceted context of Aura Hospitality & Leisure.

Additionally, the qualitative approach was adopted to capture the subjective meanings and social complexities inherent in the digital transition. As noted by Creswell (2014), qualitative research is fundamental when the researcher seeks to understand participants' perspectives and the specific settings in which they experience the phenomenon under study. By prioritizing the voices of the 18 interviewed employees, this study moves beyond statistical outputs to uncover the underlying attitudes, barriers, and facilitators of digital learning. Rather than focusing on numerical data, this research seeks to interpret the deeper meanings that both employees and managers attribute to the technological shift within their professional environment (Creswell, 2014).

Finally, the systematic interpretation of the collected data follows the principles of Content Analysis as established by Bardin (1977). This framework ensures that qualitative findings are organized into meaningful categories through a rigorous three-stage process: pre-analysis, material exploration, and result treatment. This methodological rigor provides a scientifically grounded and transparent basis for the subsequent discussion of results, ensuring that the conclusions regarding digital training initiatives are directly rooted in the empirical evidence gathered during the development of this study.

5.2. Data Collection Techniques

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, this study employs a rigorous data triangulation strategy. As defined by Yin (2014), methodological triangulation involves the use of multiple sources of evidence to converge on the same finding, thereby reducing potential bias and

increasing the robustness of the conclusions (Yin, 2014). Within the context of this research, triangulation is not merely a validation tool, but a fundamental strategy designed to capture the multifaceted reality of Aura Hospitality & Leisure. By intersecting different data streams, this study moves beyond a one-dimensional perspective, ensuring that the final analysis is not solely dependent on the subjective views of a single group or the static information found in corporate files.

Specifically, this study employs Between-method Triangulation, which involves the integration of distinct methodological vehicles, namely documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews, to investigate the same phenomenon: training digitalization. This process facilitates a comparative analysis between the formal digital strategies outlined in the company's internal documents and the actual experiences and perceptions reported by the participants during the interview process.

As Creswell (2014) suggests, triangulation serves to neutralize the inherent limitations of any single method. For instance, while documentary analysis provides a stable and objective record of training frequencies and platform implementations, it often fails to capture the emotional or operational barriers to learning. Conversely, interviews provide deep, qualitative insights into employee engagement but may be subject to personal bias or retrospective memory lapses. By cross-referencing these two sources, it is possible to identify patterns of consistency, such as when an HR policy for e-learning is echoed by staff as a significant benefit, or pinpoint areas of divergence, including technical difficulties that remain absent from official reports but are prominently highlighted by frontline workers.

Ultimately, this rigorous approach enhances the study's internal validity. It provides a comprehensive view of Aura Hospitality & Leisure's training ecosystem, ensuring that the conclusions drawn regarding the group's digital transition are grounded in a detailed, empirical, and multi-perspective analysis.

5.2.1. Documentary Analysis

The first phase of research involved a systematic documentary analysis of internal records provided by Aura Hospitality & Leisure. According to Bardin (1977), documentary research is a fundamental technique in qualitative studies, as it provides a stable, objective, and non-reactive source of information that facilitates the contextualization of the phenomenon under study. In this

investigation, the documents detailed below served as a factual baseline to understand the formal training strategy before exploring the workforce's subjective perceptions through the interview process.

During my time at Aura Hospitality & Leisure, I was granted privileged access to a wide range of internal materials within the Human Resources Management Department. These were carefully categorized and analysed to map the group's overarching training strategy. My role within the organization was particularly significant to this process, enabling me to engage deeply with and evaluate the company's training strategy. As the principal facilitator of training initiatives, I was responsible for organizing and managing the comprehensive data sets required for both current and historical training activities.

This position provided a unique vantage point to evaluate Aura Hospitality & Leisure's strategic evolution. I was afforded the opportunity not only to explore past methodologies, but also to actively monitor and document the transition toward a more digitalized training strategy. Being embedded in the department enabled for real-time observation of shifts in institutional discourse, the selection of digital tools, and the administrative adjustments required to support a virtual learning environment. Consequently, this documentary phase provided a robust structural foundation, ensuring that the subsequent qualitative analysis was informed by a deep understanding of the firm's operational and strategic shifts.

By systematically analysing strategic training plans from past initiatives, it was possible to discern the underlying pedagogical objectives and organizational intentions that drove the implementation of each activity. Given that Aura Hospitality & Leisure is a multiservice company, the documentary review revealed that a primary institutional concern lies in establishing training initiatives capable of aggregating high-quality knowledge and materials specifically tailored to the diverse functional needs of each role. This investigation confirmed that every job position requires distinct competencies, acknowledging that a one-size-fits-all training model may not be applicable to all career paths within the group. Simultaneously, the documents demonstrated that when designing general training initiatives, the organization intentionally structured them to serve multiple professional functions simultaneously, ensuring the transversal relevance of content across different departments.

The detailed exploration of these strategic plans enabled a rigorous investigation into a wide range of variables critical to understanding the company's learning ecosystem. It was possible to

analyse the frequency of training initiatives, both in terms of their temporal distribution and the recurrence of specific subject matters, as well as to identify the profiles of the employees selected for these actions. The analysis extended to the consistency of the initiatives and the criteria used to select trainers, proving insight into the rationale for choosing certain specialists for specific themes. Additionally, the study of these records yielded precise quantitative data, specifically the total number of training hours, both aggregated and distributed by employee and business unit. Furthermore, accessing this data enabled a thorough examination of attendance rates and, most crucially for this study, the strategic choice between online and traditional formats, clarifying the motives that underpinned the adoption of each modality in line with intended objectives.

Among the internal records analysed, the 2025 Training Tracker holds strategic relevance for this study. This document was selected as the primary factual baseline because it constitutes the organization's most comprehensive formal record of training activities. Centralizing data on training hours, attendance rates, and thematic distribution across different business units within an Excel-based framework enables a rigorous descriptive mapping of Aura Hospitality & Leisure's training strategy. In the context of this qualitative research, the systematic review of this file provides the necessary empirical evidence to contextualize participants' subjective perceptions, ensuring that the analysis of digital adoption is grounded in the actual operational volume of the host organization.

Simultaneously, considering the company's efforts to transition toward a digitalized training strategy, I analysed HR training policies that provided insights into Aura Hospitality & Leisure's vision for e-learning and the selection criteria for digital tools. Given the gradual introduction of these platforms, the group currently uses free and openly available online tools such as Google Meet, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams[12]. HR employees also leverage accessible tools such as Kahoot, Blooket[13], Google Forms, and Jotform[14] to create questionnaires and quizzes. These are applied during training to enhance interaction and dynamism, fostering higher employee engagement and connection with the learning material. I concluded that the organization's relative newness to educational technology explains the current absence of paid platforms, which might otherwise improve the efficacy and overall quality of digital training. Nevertheless, it is evident that a

[12] Videoconferencing platforms.

[13] Gamified learning platforms.

[14] Digital data collection platforms.

significant effort is being made in this direction, and the future of online training within Aura Hospitality & Leisure appears highly promising as the firm continues to take daily steps toward optimization.

Internal communication and announcements regarding training initiatives also offered insight into its support mechanisms and the level of guidance offered to employees during this technological transition. I perceived that, generally, managers are responsible for guiding and assisting subordinates who encounter difficulties accessing digital initiatives. Whenever a doubt arose, employees could clarify it with their respective managers, keeping the process to remain as seamless as possible. Therefore, the enterprise's strategy for ensuring a well-structured technological introduction that leaves no one behind is to empower managers with the space, time, and responsibility to address workforce challenges. This distributed responsibility prevents the HR department from becoming submerged in constant operational queries while enabling a more rapid, almost immediate problem solving. This, in turn, leads to improved performance during training, as employees receive timely support that helps them fully engage with the activity.

Finally, existing feedback and performance reports related to previous training initiatives were reviewed to identify any pre-existing organizational challenges or successes. Aura Hospitality & Leisure has established Post-training Satisfaction Questionnaires, delivered to all participants after each session. This allows the HR department to integrate the workforce's opinions and suggestions into the improvement of future strategies. Based on these reports, I concluded that, overall, workers are satisfied with the digital initiatives and their implementation. However, suggestions persist regarding the variety of training themes, with employees requesting topics that more directly impact their daily operational work. Furthermore, while participants generally appreciate trainer performance, they also offer critiques when trainers appear disorganized or unprepared, particularly regarding technical struggles, such as failing to prepare to share videos or PowerPoint presentations without technical difficulties. This feedback has allowed the HR department to ensure that future interventions do not suffer from the same setbacks, maintaining a sustained effort toward improved efficacy and productivity.

The analysis of these documents followed a content exploration approach, serving as a critical diagnostic phase to identify recurring themes related to accessibility, technological adoption, and the broader digitalization of the company's training strategy. This preliminary stage was far from a passive review; it was an essential component of the iterative research design, providing the

empirical raw material to inform and refine the development of the semi-structured interview scripts. By first decoding the official corporate narrative, including the group's aspirational goals and documented procedures, I was better equipped to construct a sophisticated questioning strategy.

This informed approach allowed for the creation of targeted prompts designed to move beyond surface-level answers. It enabled a checks and balances system where the interviews could specifically probe the alignment, or the potential divergence, between the strategic intentions of Aura Hospitality & Leisure and the daily operational reality of its employees. For example, by knowing which digital tools were officially mandated, I could ask precise questions about the actual user experience and the technical barriers encountered on the ground. Consequently, the documentary analysis acted as a navigational map for the field research, ensuring that the qualitative data gathered was not only relevant but also capable of exposing the nuances, frustrations, and successes of the digital transition that might otherwise remain hidden in formal reports.

5.2.2. Semi-structured Interviews

The core empirical data for this investigation were gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted with a diverse sample of 18 participants across various business units within Aura Hospitality & Leisure. This technique was strategically selected for its inherent flexibility, offering a balanced approach between the systematic structure of a predefined thematic guide and the organic openness of a spontaneous professional dialogue. According to Creswell (2014), semi-structured interviews are powerful qualitative tools for uncovering the underlying reasoning behind participant attitudes and behaviours. Unlike rigid, structured surveys, this format facilitated a fluid conversational flow, enabling the exploration of unexpected yet highly relevant insights, such as the specific digital fatigue reported by frontline staff and the unique logistical challenges faced by hotel units compared to the corporate workforce. This adaptability was crucial for capturing the nuances of the human element within the technological transition.

To ensure methodological rigor and ethical compliance, the interview process followed a standardized protocol designed to produce a deep understanding of employee perceptions regarding training, specifically focusing on digital initiatives and the broader transformational process. The preparation phase involved developing of three distinct interview scripts (detailed in

Section 5.3 and available in Appendix 2), which were meticulously tailored to the participants' hierarchical roles and operational realities: operational staff, management, and the HRM department. This tripartite approach ensured that while the core thematic pillars remained consistent for the purpose of methodological triangulation, the specific questions were adjusted to resonate with the professional reality of each interviewee. By employing these specialized scripts, I was able to engage more authentically with the participants' lived experiences, capturing their genuine perceptions of the digital evolution. This included identifying their primary concerns and technical challenges, as well as the specific advantages they believe digital tools have brought to their daily performance and professional development.

The interview setting and atmosphere were intentionally designed to ensure that all participants felt empowered to respond without guilt or fear of judgment, creating a space for genuine opinions and constructive critiques to emerge. Each session prioritized participant comfort and absolute confidentiality, as participants were explicitly informed that their identities would remain anonymous and that no specific data would be traced back to them. This was formalized through the administration of an informed consent and confidentiality agreement, which each participant signed prior to the interview to ensure they were fully aware of the ethical safeguards protecting their professional standing.

Given my role as an intern within the organization, special care was taken to foster an environment of trust. I leveraged the rapport I built with researchers during my time at Aura Hospitality & Leisure to encourage honesty about both the benefits and the frustrations of the digital transition. I believe that because the participants already knew me personally through my daily presence at the company, they felt a greater sense of psychological safety. This familiarity allowed them to speak freely and candidly, significantly reducing social desirability bias. Consequently, they felt less pressure to provide the right answers or to withhold criticism, resulting in a rich and transparent dataset that reflects the true operational reality of Aura Hospitality & Leisure.

Given the substantial volume of the 18 interviews and the extensive depth of information shared by each participant, a strategic approach to data preservation was essential to ensure that every detail was meticulously accounted for during the analytical phase. Consequently, with the explicit and informed consent of all participants, every session was audio-recorded. This was a critical methodological step to safeguard the nuances of the discourse and to facilitate a verbatim transcription process, ensuring that the subsequent analysis remained strictly faithful to the original

accounts. By securing these recordings, I eliminated the risk of data loss that often occurs when a researcher relies solely on manual notetaking. This allowed me to remain fully present and engaged throughout each session, practicing active listening rather than being distracted by the mechanical task of documenting every sentence. This presence was vital for the semi-structured format, as it enabled me to identify and pursue emergent themes or spontaneous follow-up questions that added significant value to the research, which is a level of depth that would not have been humanly possible without the support of digital recording.

Furthermore, to ensure the highest level of data quality and participant expression, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in Portuguese, the primary working language within the organization. This linguistic choice was fundamental to fostering comfort and spontaneity, enabling the capture of nuanced organizational insights and specific professional idioms integral to Aura Hospitality & Leisure's daily operations. By conducting the sessions in the language most familiar to the participants' professional environment, it was possible to ensure that linguistic barriers did not hinder the depth of the shared experiences. Consequently, the relevant extracts were translated into English for the corresponding analysis. To maintain the data's integrity and validity, a careful thematic alignment was employed during this process, ensuring that the original meaning, intent, and professional context were strictly preserved throughout the linguistic transition.

These recordings subsequently allowed for the creation of high-fidelity transcriptions, which served as the primary raw material for the content analysis. This rigorous approach to data management ensured that the findings were derived from a complete and concise record of the participants' experiences, providing the empirical density required to support the conclusions of this study. Regarding the session's duration and depth, the interviews were meticulously structured to balance comprehensive data collection with Aura Hospitality & Leisure's operational efficiency. Recognizing that the interviews were conducted during active working hours, special care was taken to ensure that the process was respectful of the participants' professional commitments while remaining sufficiently robust to capture a holistic perception of their thoughts and beliefs.

Consequently, each interview lasted between 20 and 30 minutes, a timeframe that proved optimal for qualitative depth. This duration provided a focused yet relaxed environment, allowing participants to reflect deeply on their specific experiences with digital training platforms, articulate their nuanced preferences regarding training models, and evaluate the perceived impact of these initiatives on their daily performance and professional growth. By maintaining this balance, the

research achieved high informational density without causing significant disruption to the organizations' daily workflow, ensuring that the 18 dialogues resulted in a substantial and high-quality data set.

By prioritizing each employee's individual voice, this qualitative technique enabled the research to transcend the structured corporate narrative established in the documentary phase. While the documents provided the strategic development of the company's digital goals, the interviews captured the human complexity and the subjective experience of technological adoption within a multiservice organizational context. This human-centric approach was essential for identifying the subtle nuances of the digital transition that formal reports often overlook, including emotional resistance, varying levels of digital literacy, and specific socio-technical barriers across business units. By focusing on these personal accounts, the study was able to triangulate the formal organizational objectives with the lived experiences of the workforce. Consequently, the research moved beyond a mere description of policy, providing a rich, multi-layered perspective on how digitalization is perceived, resisted, or embraced by the individuals who are the ultimate end-users of Aura Hospitality & Leisure's training strategy.

5.3. Research Instruments

The primary research instruments developed for this study consisted of specialized semi-structured interview scripts (Appendix 2), designed to align with the dual perspectives of the organization: management's strategic vision and employees' lived operational experience. The use of a thematic script was essential to ensure that, while the conversation remained fluid and adaptable, the researcher maintained a rigorous focus on the investigation's core variables. To ensure consistency across the 18 interviews, the scripts were organized into four fundamental thematic blocks, each targeting a specific dimension of the digitalization process and the resulting organizational shift. A detailed summary of these dimensions, including their specific research objectives and investigated variables, is synthesized in the "Operationalization of the Interview Scripts" table available in Appendix 1.

The initial phase of each interview, defined as Block I: Participant Profile and Professional Background, focused on gathering demographic data and the interviewee's professional trajectory within Aura Hospitality & Leisure. This section was crucial for contextualizing the subsequent responses, allowing for a comparative analysis based on the participant's specific department,

such as Hotels, Padel, or Corporate, their years of tenure, and their prior familiarity with digital technologies. By establishing this baseline, the study could account for digital literacy gaps and determine if the length of service influences an employee's openness to technological change. It further allowed for the identification of department-specific cultures, ensuring that the unique operational demands of a high-pressure hotel environment were distinguished from the more sedentary nature of corporate roles.

Following this contextualization, Block II: The Transition to Digital Training explored the before and after of the company's training strategy. This block sought to identify how participants perceived the shift from traditional face-to-face methods to digital platforms, such as Google Meet, Zoom, and various e-learning tools. Beyond simple usage, this stage investigated the effectiveness of the internal onboarding to these new tools. It specifically focused on the clarity of initial institutional communication, analysing whether employees felt informed or merely instructed, and the perceived logic behind the organizational change. This allowed for the evaluation of the level of strategic alignment, determining if the workforce understood the company's vision for the digital future or if the transition was viewed as a top-down imposition.

The core evaluative component of the instrument was contained in Block III: Perceived Benefits and Barriers. Centered on the practical effectiveness of digital tools, this section encouraged participants to reflect on tangible advantages, such as increased flexibility, the elimination of geographical barriers, and the ability to learn at their own pace. Simultaneously, it provided a safe space to address the specific obstacles encountered during implementation. These barriers included the erosion of social interaction and human touch, technical glitches that disrupted the learning flow, and the emerging phenomenon of digital fatigue from excessive screen time. By exploring these tensions, this block aimed to move beyond binary good or bad assessments, instead capturing the complex reality of how digital tools either empower or hinder an employee's daily performance.

The final prospective stage, Block IV: The Future of Training and the Hybrid Model, asked participants to define their ideal training environment. This block was designed to move from reflection to projection, specifically addressing the institutional appetite for a hybrid approach. It explored the critical distinction between theoretical knowledge and practical hospitality skills, investigating which types of content participants felt were better suited for digital delivery (such as compliance or theory) versus those that still require a physical, hands-on presence (such as guest

service or technical sports instruction). This forward-looking analysis was essential for providing Aura Hospitality & Leisure with actionable insights into a sustainable, long-term training strategy that balances technological progress with the interpersonal nature of the hospitality sector.

To ensure the validity and reliability of these instruments, they were subjected to a preliminary pre-test or pilot interview with a member of the HR department. This stage was vital to confirm that the questions were clear, culturally appropriate for the hospitality context, and capable of generating the thick description required for high-quality qualitative analysis. Following this preliminary phase, minor adjustments were made to the phrasing of technical terms to ensure accessibility across all staff levels, from operational roles to senior management. Consequently, the final instruments provided a robust framework for capturing a multi-layered perspective on the digital evolution at Aura Hospitality & Leisure, ensuring that all the data gathered was both deep and strategically relevant.

5.4. Sample Characterization

The selection of participants for this study followed a non-probability purposive sampling strategy. According to Creswell (2014), this approach is ideal for qualitative research, as it facilitates the selection of individuals with direct experience of the phenomenon under study and can provide in-depth insights into the digitalization of training. By focusing exclusively on a sample of individuals directly impacted by the digital transformation of training initiatives at Aura Hospitality & Leisure, the study can fully comprehend the nuances, flaws, and benefits of the company's strategy. This targeted approach minimizes the margin for interpretative error and ensures the investigation is developed within a structured framework, enhancing its reliability as a tool for further research into the digitalization of HR and training.

The sample consists of 18 professionals currently integrated into Aura Hospitality & Leisure. To ensure a holistic view of the organization, the sample was intentionally diversified across three primary criteria: hierarchical level, business unit, and professional seniority. Beyond professional roles, the inclusion of employees with varied demographic and socio-economic backgrounds, such as differences in age, educational attainment, and social or childhood differences, allows the research to offer a more comprehensive contribution to the field. These diverse factors are critical, as they significantly influence how individuals perceive and adapt to technological change, often dictating the level of facilitation or resistance toward digital training implementation. Consequently,

Aura Hospitality & Leisure's multifaceted staff allowed for a strategically rich assessment of the reality experienced by a complex organization. This diversity is essential for understanding how specific distinctions affect professional development and knowledge retention during the digitalization process. The success of upskilling and reskilling initiatives within such a heterogeneous workforce depends on these variables. Engaging with the group's daily operations has enabled a rigorous appreciation of real-world economic dynamics, moving beyond theoretical abstractions into a practical and concrete organizational context.

The systematic categorization of these 18 participants serves as the analytical framework for the results presented in the following chapters. By correlating the qualitative data with the specific professional profiles and business units identified the study facilitates a nuanced comparison of digital adoption patterns. This organizational layering allows for a deeper exploration of how variables such as digital literacy and hierarchical responsibility converge to shape the overall digital training landscape. Ultimately, this detailed characterization ensures that the subsequent diagnosis of Aura Hospitality & Leisure's training strategy is a rigorous evidence-based assessment grounded in the diverse realities of its workforce.

5.4.1. Hierarchical Distribution

This research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of Aura Hospitality & Leisure's reality by capturing the digital training experiences of both leadership and operational professionals. Furthermore, it incorporates HR personnel's perceptions to understand how they experience the implementation process and how they perceive its impact on the wider workforce. This multi-layered approach is vital for understanding how different hierarchical roles influence the adaptation to digital technologies and the opinions surrounding this phenomenon in a corporate context. To ensure a balanced, unbiased dataset, it was paramount to consider a diverse range of job positions.

To rigorously organize the data and minimize interpretative lapses, the interviewees were divided into three main groups based on their hierarchical standing. It is important to note, however, that the number of participants in each group is not symmetrical. This disparity arises not only because operational divisions naturally outnumber leadership sections but also due to the practical challenges of securing interviews with upper-management professionals within the internship's timeframe. While a strictly balanced sample size across categories is often ideal in theoretical research, this study was constrained by the operational availability of Aura Hospitality

& Leisure. Despite this constraint, the research aims to provide a rigorous and high-quality analysis of the results.

The first segmented group, Management and Coordination, consists of three participants: two Hotel Directors and the Manager of the Padel Club, who also develops a revenue position at the company. These individuals are responsible for ensuring that the implementation of digital tools across the group's daily operations proceeds smoothly, assisting their subordinates in overcoming practical and technical challenges during digital training initiatives. Beyond operational support, these leaders play a crucial role in fostering a climate of confidence and reliability, encouraging their teams to embrace technological change and mitigating negative preconceptions. Additionally, they act as a vital communication bridge, as they continuously analyse employee feedback, providing the Human Resources department with the necessary insights to refine the company's digital strategy and enhance overall organizational performance.

Given this context, these three participants were presented with a dual-layered interview protocol. First, they addressed questions regarding their personal experiences with digital training, a core set of inquiries consistent across all 18 interviews to ensure data comparability. Secondly, they were given the opportunity to provide a managerial analysis of their staff's engagement with digital tools. This included identifying the specific technical barriers their teams face, describing the main causes behind those constraints and the leadership strategies employed to mitigate and manage these disruptions as they arise. Consequently, these interviews served a dual purpose: they captured the leader's individual perspectives on technological integration while also providing a vital indicator of their subordinates' concerns and challenges. This interaction was essential for assessing how digital training initiatives are perceived and managed at the intersection of leadership and operational execution.

The second group interviewed was the Human Resources department, represented by two individuals. As Aura Hospitality & Leisure is a relatively young organization, these two professionals constitute the entire current HR department, and both were interviewed to ensure complete representation of this core function. It is important to highlight the internal hierarchy of this group: one participant holds a high-level strategic role as the Director of Human Resources, managing responsibilities of significant organizational relevance, while the second professional manages the operational execution of HR policies. The interview protocol for this group was specifically tailored

and differed from the other segments, as the primary objective was to assess the architectural view of the digital training strategy. These interviews sought to uncover how the company officially perceives its digitalization roadmap and how the department evaluates the workforce's interaction with digital tools from a management perspective.

However, to ensure data comparability and methodological consistency, every question was meticulously aligned with the themes presented to the other two groups. This thematic synchronicity was essential to maintaining a consistent, cross-sectional analysis, enabling seamless comparison of results and allowing the strategic intent of the HR department to be directly contrasted with the lived experiences of managers and operational staff. By capturing the full spectrum of the HR function, from high-level decision-making to administrative follow-up, the research gains a robust understanding of the institutional drivers behind the digital transformation.

The third and final group, categorized as Operational Staff, comprises frontline employees who serve as the primary end-users of digital training platforms. With a sample of 13 participants, this group represents the largest and most diverse segment of this research. It encompasses a wide spectrum of business functions, including Housekeeping, Food & Beverage, Marketing, IT, Reception, Sales, and Accounting. The inclusion of such a diverse array of roles is one of the most significant methodological advantages of utilizing Aura Hospitality & Leisure as a case study. By engaging with a workforce that operates across different rhythms, from the high-touch immediacy of hotel reception and housekeeping to the more sedentary, digital-native environments of Marketing and IT, this research achieves a comprehensive appreciation of multiservice business reality.

This internal diversity allows for a granular analysis of how digital training is perceived across different operational realities. For instance, it enables the study to contrast how an employee in a physical, labour-intensive role manages digital learning compared to a corporate-office professional. Consequently, this group provides empirical evidence for the company's digitalization strategy, offering authentic insights into daily challenges, accessibility issues, and the practical utility of digital tools in a heterogeneous corporate environment. Their collective voice is essential to move the research beyond a management-centric view, ensuring that the final diagnosis reflects the actual impact of technology on staff's professional development.

5.4.2. Diversity of Business Units

Beyond hierarchical distinctions, the research specifically accounts for Aura Hospitality & Leisure's multiservice nature by segmenting the sample according to its diverse operational contexts. This categorization is vital as the environment in which an employee works, and the specific rhythm of their daily tasks, directly influence their ability to engage with digital training initiatives. To ensure a comprehensive diagnosis, the participants were drawn from three distinct operational spheres: Hospitality Units, Sports and Leisure Projects, and Centralized Services.

The first sphere, Hospitality Units, includes 9 participants from the hotel sector, encompassing a cross-section of departments including Front Office, Food & Beverage, and Housekeeping, as well as representatives from the Direction department. In these environments, face-to-face service is the core of the business, and work is characterized by high physical mobility and high-touch guest interactions. For these employees, digital training often represents a significant shift in routine, as their roles are inherently non-sedentary. Including participants from this sector allows the study to investigate the specific logistical barriers faced by staff who do not have permanent access to a private desk or a computer, and for whom training must be balanced against the immediate, unpredictable demands of guest service. This creates a spatial friction where the physical requirements of the job may clash with the static nature of digital learning.

The second sphere focuses on Sports and Leisure Projects, specifically represented by a participant from the Padel project. This segment provides a unique perspective on training in a sports-management and recreational context, which differs significantly from traditional hotel operations. In this environment, the digitalization of training must align with a more niche, community-focused service model. By including these participants, the research can explore how digital tools are perceived in a specialized unit that balances operational agility with the specific technical skills required for sports facility management, offering a contrast to the more standardized procedures of the hospitality sector.

Finally, the Centralized Services sphere comprises 8 professionals from the corporate headquarters, including departments such as Accounting, Marketing, IT, Sales and HR. These individuals typically operate in desk-based environments and often possess a higher baseline of

digital literacy due to the technology-centric nature of their daily professional tools. Including this group is essential to establishing a baseline for ideal digital adoption. It allows the research to determine whether the barriers to training are purely technical or rooted in the nature of the work itself.

By contrasting these three distinct operational realities, the study moves beyond a monolithic view of the company, offering a granular appreciation of how an individual's job's spatial reality shapes the success of digital transformation. This distinction is critical because it acknowledges that an organization's digital readiness may be determined by the physical boundaries of its work environments. Ultimately, this comparative approach reveals that a single, unified digital strategy may yield different outcomes across these sectors. Through the analysis of these environmental variables, the research provides a more authentic diagnosis of how Aura Hospitality & Leisure can bridge the gap between its diverse business units, ensuring that digital training is not only strategically sound but also operationally accessible regardless of an employee's physical location within the organization.

5.4.3. Demographic and Professional Profile

As this research aims to analyse the primary barriers and facilitators in the adoption of digital tools among employees with diverse backgrounds, it became essential to collect detailed demographic data and professional profiles. This systematic characterization ensures that the research questions are addressed with the most reliable and trustworthy information, allowing for the complete identification of common factors that influence technological integration. By establishing these profiles, the study can move beyond generalized observations to correlate specific individual characteristics with distinct patterns of digital adoption or resistance. This multifaceted approach provides the necessary empirical grounding to understand how a heterogeneous workforce navigates the transition to a digitalized corporate environment.

Regarding the gender distribution of the sample, participants' genders were recorded in accordance with an ethical protocol that required them to disclose this information only if they felt entirely comfortable doing so, ensuring that the data collection process remained non-intrusive and respectful of individual privacy. Following this collection, the sample includes 11 women and 7 men, reflecting the prevailing gender diversity at Aura Hospitality & Leisure. Incorporating gender as a variable is significant for assessing whether different socialization patterns or professional

experiences associated with gender play a role in the reception of new training methodologies or the perceived ease of use of the platforms provided.

Furthermore, the age range of the interviewed employees was a critical variable to examine, particularly to determine whether varying levels of digital comfort and potential resistance to technological change derive from generational differences. The participants range in age from 22 to 58, ensuring a wide generational spectrum. This diversity allows for a more profound comprehension of how age-related factors, such as prior familiarity with personal technology or varying learning speeds, influence the adaptation to a digital training strategy. By analysing this wide range, the study can clarify whether technical challenges are rooted in generational gaps or if they represent broader organizational pain points that affect all employees regardless of their age group.

In addition to age and gender, the sample's educational backgrounds were documented to test their potential impact on digital literacy and the consequent adoption of digital tools. The participants represent a wide range of academic backgrounds, including individuals with basic education, high school education, and Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Specifically, the sample includes 1 employee with basic education, 7 with secondary education, 9 with a Bachelor's degree, and 1 with a Master's degree. This educational variety offers an opportunity for a more complex analysis of learning in a digital context. It allows the research to appreciate how different levels of formal schooling may influence an individual's ability to process autonomous e-learning content, follow technical instructions, and navigate complex software interfaces without immediate face-to-face assistance.

The employees were also asked about their specific functions at Aura Hospitality & Leisure to track how different job positions shape distinct perspectives on training. This investigation aims to identify if daily routines and the practical realities of each role significantly dictate an employee's availability and mindset toward training. The sample achieves high functional representation across the group, including 2 hotel directors, 1 manager of a padel complex, 3 housekeeping staff, 2 HR professionals, 3 accounting staff, 2 receptionists, 1 marketing professional, 1 IT specialist, 1 sales representative, and 2 restaurant employees. This broad coverage ensures this research captures the specific nuances of corporate roles, while accounting for the physically demanding operational

reality of the hotel and leisure frontline, where finding time for digital training may present unique logistical barriers.

Finally, the length of service within the company was recorded to compare the perspectives of new joiners with those of long-term employees who witnessed the organization's full transition from purely physical training to digitalized initiatives. The fact that some individuals were immediately confronted with digital training upon joining represents a critical point of comparison with veterans accustomed to traditional face-to-face formats. Long-term employees can establish a detailed contrast between the two formats, offering insights into what might have been lost or gained in the transition. The tenure among participants varies from 8 months to 7 years, providing a wide range of experience levels that reflect both the company's recent growth and its established foundations.

To provide a transparent and structured synthesis of these 18 distinct profiles, a comprehensive participant characterization table was developed and is available in Appendix 3. This table acts as a primary reference tool for the subsequent analysis, systematically mapping each participant's specific function, age, educational attainment, and professional tenure along with their respective business units and job positions. It was designed to provide the reader with the necessary context to interpret the qualitative findings presented in the following chapters. By assigning alphanumeric codes to each profile (E1-E18), this table enables a cross-referencing process where individual testimonials can be traced back to their professional and generational origins. This methodological transparency ensures that as the study progresses toward diagnosing Aura Hospitality & Leisure's digital strategy, every insight is anchored to the specific lived reality and organizational standing of the individual who provided it, thereby reinforcing the overall validity of the research.

5.5. Data Analysis Procedures

The final stage of the methodological process involved systematically treating and interpreting the collected data using Qualitative Content Analysis. This method was selected for its unique ability to handle the complexity of human discourse, enabling the extraction of a large volume of subjective narratives into objective, manageable categories. By moving beyond mere description, this analytical approach facilitates the identification of latent meanings and recurring themes that define the experience of adopting digital tools in training settings at Aura Hospitality & Leisure.

To ensure maximum scientific rigour, transparency, and objectivity, this study strictly followed the three-step linear framework established by Bardin (1977): Pre-analysis, Material Exploration, and Treatment of Results. This structure provided a disciplined roadmap for the investigation, ensuring that every insight derived from the field was supported by a verifiable, replicable process. By adopting this classical yet robust methodology, the research ensures that the transition from raw interview data to strategic organizational conclusions is grounded in a proven academic standard, minimizing interpretative bias and maximizing the reliability of the findings.

The analysis followed a thematic approach, prioritizing the identification of core categories related to digital barriers, leadership influence, and training efficacy. This process involved both manifest content analysis, focusing on the explicit descriptions of the participants' opinions on digital training, and latent content analysis, which sought to uncover the underlying attitudes and cultural resistances toward this technological shift. By balancing these two perspectives, this study achieves a holistic understanding of Aura Hospitality & Leisure's digital landscape, moving from individual perceptions to a collective organizational diagnosis.

5.5.1. Pre-analysis

In this initial phase, it was performed what Bardin (1977) describes as "floating reading", a process of intense immersion aimed at establishing a deep familiarity with the raw data. This stage served as the rigorous foundation for the entire analytical process, involving an exhaustive first contact with the 18 interview transcriptions, totalizing approximately 5 hours and 10 minutes of recorded audio, with an average duration of 18 minutes per participant. Alongside these recordings, the research corpus was formally established by incorporating 92 pages of transcribed text and a comprehensive set of internal corporate documents. These included the 2026 Internal Training Plan and a detailed analytical database in Excel containing all variables related to the training developed in 2025 (2025 Training Tracker), such as the volume and format of training, covering total hours, online versus face-to-face sessions, and specific themes, as well as logistics, trainers, calendars, and business-unit-specific attendance rates. This database also provided strategic evaluation metrics through participation graphics and other key performance indicators. Furthermore, the corpus integrated results from post-training satisfaction questionnaires (detailed in Section 8.4), which captured employees' perceptions regarding the conduct of the sessions.

Rather than jumping directly into coding, this multifaceted pre-analysis allowed for the identification of recurring linguistic markers and the formal establishment of a dataset robust enough to address the research questions. As a direct result of this initial immersion, several first impressions naturally emerged, helping shape the subsequent analytical framework. It was possible to note consistent patterns across three primary dimensions: spatial-logistic barriers, specifically the impact of physical workspace on training accessibility; temporal constraints, characterized by a palpable tension between operational workload and dedicated learning time; and relational dynamics, centered on the pivotal role of middle management in either facilitating or hindering digital adoption and employee engagement. These preliminary observations provided the empirical justification for the creation of specific thematic categories, ensuring that the coding process was grounded in the multifaceted reality of the participants' discourse rather than being limited to a-priori theoretical assumptions.

To ensure this selection was scientifically grounded, the analysis was conducted according to the four fundamental rules of content analysis established by Bardin (1977). First, the rule of Exhaustiveness was applied to ensure that every minute of the audio and every page of the documents was accounted for. Every interview was meticulously transcribed and cross-referenced with field notes to ensure that no relevant testimony, including non-verbal cues or emphasis on specific barriers, was omitted. Second, the criterion of Representativeness was strictly maintained, as the data was verified to ensure it proportionally covered the diverse operational realities of Aura Hospitality & Leisure. This ensured that the insights from the 8 Centralized Services professionals, 9 Hospitality staff, and 1 Sports-management participant were considered in their specific contexts, preventing any single department from disproportionately weighting the final diagnosis. Furthermore, the rule of Homogeneity was respected by ensuring that all selected materials followed the same thematic logic centered on the digital training phenomenon. This consistency allowed for the final stage of Defining Preliminary Indicators, in which the initial research questions were contextualized against the raw data. Through this process, recurring thematic indicators were identified to serve as the bridge between the interviews and the study's core objectives. Finally, the rule of Pertinence ensured that the material included was strictly relevant to the research goals, filtering out data unrelated to the digital transformation process.

To conclude the operationalization of this phase, the transcripts were organized into a structured digital database (NVivo), where they were anonymized using ID codes (E1-E18) to protect participant privacy. This preliminary organization transformed a massive volume of qualitative information into a manageable dataset, ensuring the subsequent coding phase was purposefully aligned with the study's research goals.

5.5.2. Material Exploration

Following the pre-analysis, the research transitioned into the Material Exploration phase, which constitutes the formal coding and categorization of the established corpus. Following Bardin's (1977) framework, this stage involved a systematic and exhaustive treatment of the interview transcriptions and supplementary corporate documents using NVivo. The objective was to transform the raw, unstructured qualitative data into organized thematic units that directly address the research questions regarding digital training optimization (RQ1), barriers and facilitators (RQ2), employee engagement (RQ3), and the perceived impact on individual performance and work efficiency (RQ4).

The coding process followed a mixed approach, combining deductive logic, derived from the initial research objectives, with inductive insights gained during the "floating reading" phase. This allowed for the retention of pre-established theoretical concepts while remaining open to emerging themes, such as the social interaction gap and digital fatigue, which surfaced repeatedly during the exploration. This process resulted in the development of a Theoretical Categorization Framework (Table 1), which served as the analytical anchor for this study. The framework is structured into four primary dimensions: Context and Adaption, Perception of Digital Training, Impact on Performance, and Organizational Culture. Within these dimensions, specific categories and subcategories were defined to capture the nuances of the digital transformation at Aura Hospitality & Leisure.

Table 1: Theoretical Categorization Framework

Analysis Dimension	Categories (Themes)	Subcategories / Indicators
I. Context and Adaptation	Digital Transformation	Routine changes; Tools introduced (Teams, Zoom, e-learning); Initial resistance vs. Acceptance.
II. Perception of Digital Training	Perceived Advantages	Flexibility (time/place); Ease of material access; Learning agility.
	Barriers and Challenges	Digital fatigue; Technical issues; Lack of physical interaction; Time management (workload balance).
III. Impact on Performance	Skills Development	New digital competencies; Practical application at the workstation; Employee autonomy.
	Pedagogical Effectiveness	Session duration adequacy; Content quality; Comparison with in-person models.
IV. Organizational Culture	Corporate Support	Resource/equipment availability; Time provided by the company for training; Management encouragement.
	Future Preferences	Preference for 100% digital, hybrid, or in-person models.

As detailed in Table 1, the categorization framework was designed to bridge the gap between the group's strategic digital shift and the employees' individual experiences, ensuring a multi-level perspective of the phenomenon. The Context and Adaptation dimension (Dimension I) establishes

the baseline for digital transformation at Aura Hospitality & Leisure, mapping the transition from traditional to digital ecosystems (RQ1). Dimensions II and III (Perception and Impact on Performance) constitute the core analytical pillars, as they allow for the identification of specific friction points, such as digital fatigue and literacy barriers (RQ2), while enabling the measurement of perceived efficiency gains in daily routines and individual professional growth (RQ4). Finally, the Organizational Culture dimension (Dimension IV) captures the long-term sustainability of these initiatives. By analysing employee motivation and engagement (RQ3), this dimension focuses on whether the company's support structures align with the employees' expectations for future training modules, such as hybrid learning, thereby providing a strategic roadmap for Aura Hospitality and Leisure's human capital development.

The operationalization of this framework involved identifying Recording Units, primarily thematic sentences and paragraphs, that characterized each indicator. By utilizing NVivo's coding features, it was possible to cross-reference these units across the three business units (Centralized Services, Hospitality, and Sports-management), ensuring that the subsequent interpretation of results accounts for the diverse backgrounds and literacy levels of the participants.

To ensure analytical rigor, the categorization adhered to the criteria of exclusivity and homogeneity, ensuring that each recording unit was assigned to the most conceptually relevant category without overlapping, thereby maintaining the internal consistency of the framework.

This structured approach allowed for the identification of a Digital Duality within the group: while management perceives digitalization as a driver of scalability and strategic control, operational staff identify specific barriers related to service interruptions and digital literacy. To maintain scientific transparency, a detailed Content Analysis Grid mapping these categories to specific interview evidence is provided in Appendix 4. This rigorous process ensured that the final synthesis of data was directly aligned with the primary goals of this study, providing a solid foundation for the interpretation of results in the following chapter.

5.5.3. Treatment of Results, Inference, and Interpretation

The final stage of the methodology represents the critical transition from a descriptive inventory of codes to an analytical and interpretive synthesis. Following the systematic categorization of the corpus in NVivo, I engaged in a reflexive analysis, with the central objective of assigning meaning

to the patterns identified during the material exploration phase. This process began with the inference of latent content, an approach that allowed the study to move beyond the manifest or literal meaning of the participant's discourse to identify underlying patterns and implicit motivations. By analysing the reasons and causes behind the data, it was possible to distinguish, for instance, that the resistance mentioned by some employees was not merely technical in nature, but rather resulted from a structural conflict between the cognitive load of digital learning and the uninterrupted nature of operational service within Aura Hospitality & Leisure.

To consolidate the robustness of the findings, this interpretation was sustained by a thematic triangulation strategy. This procedure involved a direct confrontation between the subjective narratives of the 18 interviewees and the objective data extracted from the documentary analysis. This cross-referencing of data sources allowed for the precise mapping of areas of convergence, where corporate strategy aligns with the employee experience, and, crucially, areas of divergence, where digital initiatives seem to overlook the physical or logistical limitations of the operational workstation. This triangulation provides internal validity for the study, ensuring that the conclusions do not rely on a single, isolated perspective but are grounded in a multifaceted reality.

Finally, the results were reintegrated into the theoretical framework established in the literature review, enabling the transformation of raw data into strategic management insights. This theoretical synthesis was fundamental in determining the extent to which digital transformation at Aura Hospitality & Leisure is acting as a genuine catalyst for individual performance (RQ4) or, conversely, whether it requires a recalibration of pedagogical models to ensure employee engagement (RQ3). By crossing this path from technical description to grounded interpretation, the study ensures the empirical depth necessary to answer the research questions and formulate recommendations that are both scientifically rigorous and operationally applicable. The implementation of this rigorous interpretive framework ensures that the subsequent findings are presented not as isolated narratives, but as a synthesized evidence base that accounts for the complexity of the digital-human interface within the specific organizational context of Aura Hospitality & Leisure.

6. Analysis of Results

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the transition from traditional training modules to digital learning ecosystems within Aura Hospitality & Leisure. The findings articulated herein derive from a robust methodological triangulation of three primary qualitative and

documentary sources: the 2025 Training Tracker (as detailed in Section 5.2.1), which serves as a foundational documentary baseline by providing a descriptive overview of training hours, participant volume, and thematic areas of knowledge development across all business units; continuous participant observation conducted throughout the internship period; and 18 semi-structured interviews rigorously processed and analysed via NVivo software. The findings presented in this chapter result from a systematic categorical analysis of these interview transcripts, with the mapping of verbatim evidence to analytical inferences operationalized through a Content Analysis Grid that serves as the evidentiary base for this study (Appendix 4).

To ensure internal consistency and academic rigour, the following analysis is systematically structured to address the four Research Questions established in Section 3.2. The discussion focuses on the core pillars of organizational training optimization, identifying both adoption barriers and facilitators, as well as evaluating employee motivation and individual performance. By intersecting documentary trends with the participants' lived experiences, this chapter provides a holistic, qualitative, and nuanced perspective on the digital transformation journey within the host organization.

6.1. Cross-Sectional Diagnosis of Digital Training: Operational Efficiency and Resistance Factors

The current training landscape at Aura Hospitality & Leisure reflects an organization successfully navigating the transition to a digital paradigm, though this evolution manifests at varying speeds and intensities across departments. While the corporate leadership has established a clear strategic direction for the dematerialization of learning, the diagnostic phase reveals a dual-speed adoption model.

On one hand, evidence from the interview process indicates that administrative and management-level departments have seamlessly integrated digital ecosystems, leveraging the inherent flexibility of online platforms to optimize both temporal and organizational resources. Conversely, qualitative data gathered from operational staff highlight a more fragmented transition, as they perceive the digital shift as frequently mediated by structural and situational constraints, including limited hardware access and the onset of physical fatigue.

This disparity, further illustrated by the coding density and hierarchical distribution in NVivo, underscores that digitalization at Aura Hospitality & Leisure transcends mere technological implementation. It represents a multifaceted organizational transformation that must reconcile high-level strategic goals with the workforce's diverse functional realities and operational exigencies. To ensure rigorous examination of these dynamics, the following analysis is structured according to the four primary Research Questions guiding this study.

6.1.1. Optimization of Upskilling and Reskilling Processes through Digital Learning Ecosystems

The integration of digital learning has fundamentally restructured the delivery and monitoring of upskilling and reskilling initiatives within Aura Hospitality & Leisure. According to the company's 2025 Training Tracker, the digitalization of these initiatives has significantly optimized organizational reach and administrative efficiency.

Documentary evidence reveals that the organization has successfully centralized training for geographically dispersed units into unified sessional blocks. The implementation of digital tools has empowered HR managers to execute learning activities that reach a substantially higher number of staff simultaneously, effectively bridging the gap between diverse business units regardless of their physical location. Consequently, the firm has increased both the frequency and thematic variety of its annual training calendar. This strategic shift is validated by Participant E3, who notes that *"(...) this shift is positive because it allows for more sessions to take place, meaning that people have expanded access to training initiatives".* Similarly, Participant E7 confirms that the adoption of online platforms has introduced *"(...) a higher variety of themes that we did not have before (...)"*, citing several new areas of knowledge development now available to the workforce.

These findings are strongly corroborated by other participants' perceptions, which highlight the mitigation of logistical constraints and the elimination of physical displacement. This shift has led to a substantial increase in session frequency compared to the site-specific, manual scheduling previously practiced. Participant E1 emphasizes this advantage, noting that digitalization provides *"much better control over the training file of each element (...) making the process more accessible and quicker, and reducing the risk of getting lost in the information"*. This underscores a clear

opportunity for centralized oversight and enhanced data integrity. Furthermore, Participant E18 highlights the newfound scalability: *"If I can conduct the sessions remotely, I can gather two participants from one hotel, three from another, or even five, effectively forming diverse groups for the same session. (...) Information reaches more people simultaneously, and we achieve greater scheduling flexibility (...)".*

The transition has also addressed bureaucratic friction. Participant E16 argues that digitalization enhances administrative agility, contrasting with traditional models: *"I believe that it was a much slower process (...) it would have to go through many more people in a much more bureaucratic way and with less speed".* Participant E14 reinforces this by describing the removal of geographic barriers as a primary facilitator noting the ability to have people in different locations: "*We can have someone in Lisbon and someone in Porto and easily schedule a training initiative for both (...)"*, thereby harmonizing professional development across national units. This sentiment is echoed by Participant E18, who adds that "*(...) online training facilitates the process, especially considering the fact that the company acts in multiple regions."*

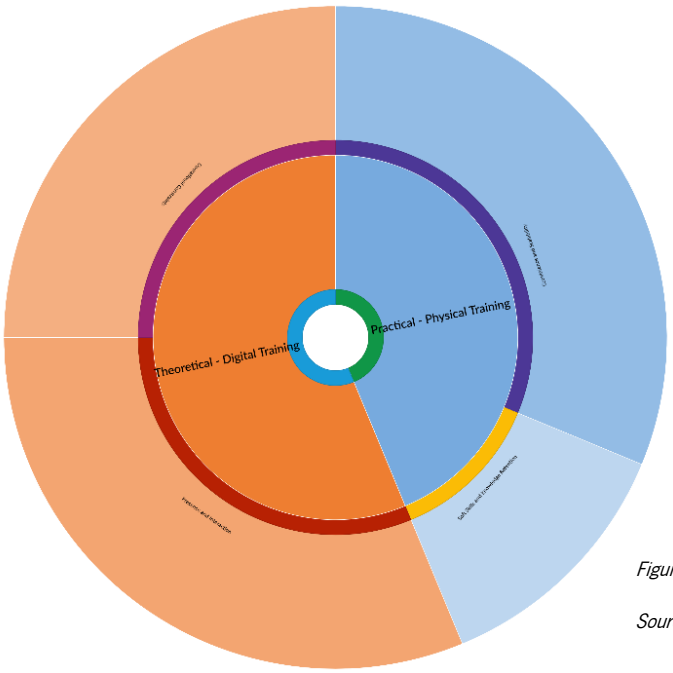
Beyond scalability, convenience and accessibility emerge as determining factors in this optimization. Participant E10 emphasizes that the digital shift enables the HR department to *"capture people even at home",* a narrative supported by the 2025 Training Tracker, which shows higher attendance rates for digital sessions during off-peak hours compared to historical face-to-face records. Participants E4 and E7 sustain this, noting respectively: *"I prefer online training because I have more mobility. I can go home without being late, have other appointments, and still engage in a training initiative."* and *"Sometimes we are at home participating in a training activity, and we don't have to come to the hotel on our day-offs because of training".*

However, the diagnosis also identifies a critical threshold for digital efficacy. Participants suggest that for "hard skills", the digital ecosystem serves primarily as a preparatory or theoretical tool. Participant E2 argues that while the digital format is beneficial, "*(...) for highly specific information where hands-on practice is essential, a hybrid approach would be more effective."* Participant E17 aligns with this, admitting that *"(...) theoretical parts work online; but some practical training, like First Aid, must be done face-to-face".* Participant E9 agrees, noting that online training is efficient *"(...) unless the session is practical. For instance, we had a First Aid class (...) where we used a medical mannequin. In that case, we had to effectively perform actions rather than just absorb information. For those scenarios, it makes more sense to be in person; however,*

when the content is strictly theoretical, the digital format is preferable". To bridge this gap, Participant E3 suggests a blended model where initial sessions are face-to-face to establish foundations, followed by online theoretical modules: *"Because, you see, imagine you had a face-to-face session, even if only at the beginning (...) And then, well, look, the upcoming sessions are going to be more theoretical, so we'll do them online."*

This pedagogical duality between theoretical efficacy and practical limitation is visually synthesized through the Hierarchy Chart generated in NVivo (Figure 1). This visualization reflects the coding density of the qualitative data, where the surface area representing "Theoretical/Digital Training" (comprising sub-codes such as *Convenience and Scalability* and *Knowledge Consolidation)* is significantly more prominent than the area assigned to "Practical/Physical Training" (encompassing *Need for Presence* and *Operational Constraints*).

This visual disproportion provides empirical qualitative evidence that the current digital transition is highly optimized for mass knowledge transfer and organizational reach, validating the discourse of participants such as E2 and E9. The dominance of the "Theoretical" blocks in the chart illustrates that while the digital ecosystem at Aura Hospitality & Leisure successfully facilitates large-scale information dissemination, it simultaneously highlights a "practical gap". Ultimately, the NVivo analysis provides robust evidence that the company's digital strategy currently excels as a powerful facilitator of cognitive knowledge acquisition, while remaining a necessary, yet to be fully integrated, complement to hands-on operational application.



Legend:

■: Practical/Physical Training (*Need for Presence and Interaction* and *Operational Constraints*).

■: Theoretical/Digital Training (*Convenience and Scalability* and *Soft Skills*).

Figure 1:Hierarchy Chart of Coding References: Theoretical vs. Practical Digital Training.

Source: Elaborated by the author using NVivo software.

6.1.2. Barriers and Facilitators in Digital Adoption

The diagnostic phase revealed that digital adoption within Aura Hospitality & Leisure is driven by a complex interplay between the psychological safety of the medium and the stability of the learner's immediate physical environment. This digital dichotomy suggests the successful integration of digital tools is not merely related to a function of technical proficiency, but rather a reflection of how effectively digital learning aligns with the specific professional reality of the user.

6.1.2.1. Barriers

The primary barriers to adoption have shifted away from a simple lack of "hands-on" practice toward a fragmented focus caused by the environmental conditions under which employees access online training.

A critical constraint is the instability of infrastructure, where the digital barrier is often defined by external noise and technical failures, such as "internet dead zones" in hotel basements or battery depletion, which cause learners to lose the narrative thread and experience heightened anxiety. The reliability of personal hardware also significantly impacts administrative visibility, as confirmed by Participant E5: *"I remember I couldn't stay for the whole training with my phone battery (...) I ended up using a colleague's phone. Consequently, I was marked as "absent" (...) because I wasn't connected through my own user account."* This limitation is echoed by Participant E15, who adds that *"(...) that there hasn't been a significant introduction of tools that can help us access to online training,"* and Participant E8, who reports that in hotel basements "(...) *we have very little internet access, and sometimes it cuts out while we are connected".* Participant E12 aligns with this, noting that if the internet connection is severed, it definitively affects the learners ability to keep track of the session: *"(...), if the internet goes down (...) it definitely affects you (...) there is a cut in the middle, and you no longer know where you stand when you return."*

Unlike a physical classroom, the digital space is also compromised by environmental distractions, with Participant E14 observing that the absence of the social pressure of eye contact often leads to disengagement: *"The problem here isn't the internet (...) it's the environment you're in (...) someone calls you, sends an email, and the trainer has already moved on".* Similarly, Participant E13 notes that operational pressures make it *"basically impossible"* to remain fully

focused, as urgent tasks often take precedence over the training session: *"It always comes down to the level of urgency. If it is something than can be handled after the training, there is no need to interrupt. However, if it is something urgent there is much more of this tendency to try to solve the problem and I end up doing it and get distracted from the session."* This leads directly to the Multi-tasking Paradox, where the very flexibility that facilitates attendance often acts as a barrier to deep learning. Several participants admitted to the temptation of turning off cameras and microphones to perform simultaneous tasks, with Participant E3 noting that multiple active screens create a psychological distance where training becomes background noise: *"Sometimes during training, we are there at the computer and many other requests arise (...) there is a tendency for us to look away for a bit and even do other things as well, which doesn't happen in face-to-face training (...) here the distraction is specifically to execute other tasks".* Participant E11 adds that *"online training (...) gives us a bit more freedom to be able to listen to what is happening while solving something that doesn't require as much of your attention."*, further proving the prevalence of multitasking behaviour. This erosion of focus is highlighted by Participant E16, who contrasts digital experience with face-to-face sessions where one is truly present: *"(...) in online training, I'm probably not as concentrated because there can be a few more stimuli around me and I tend to execute other tasks. In face-to-face sessions, you are truly there, "body and soul". You are there just for that, (...) you are exclusively focused on it"*. Participant E10 admits to frequently multitasking by having multiple computers active while the camera is off: *"(...) I turn off the camera, the mic... I have one computer on the side, another on the other, and I do other things."*

This environment introduces a form of bureaucratic friction where the ease of access is offset by the ease of distraction and a reduction in formal commitment. Participant E13 highlights how the lack of social surveillance in familiar environments erodes the learner's focus: *"Probably in an external location, there is a different kind of pressure (...) there is greater pressure not to get distracted than perhaps in our own workplace, which is already a familiar place. Since it is online, there isn't as much consideration and preoccupation to show that we are paying attention."* This sentiment is shared by Participant E12, who notes that in-person training carries a sense of obligation to pay attention that is absent in the digital format: *"In person, you feel an obligation – like, you're not going to be on your phone, right? Nor talking to the colleague next to you... Whereas online, obviously, we are listening, but we end up trying to do other things".* Participant E17 reinforces this, noting that the physical presence of a trainer watching the room acts as a necessary deterrent to distraction: *"In a face-to-face session, you really must be attentive because you are*

there, in a room with other people, and the trainer is watching. Now, in the online format, it is a bit different. There are even people who end up doing other things while they are in online training."

Beyond these psychological factors, the final barrier is related to cognitive load and physical fatigue. Data from the 2025 Training Tracker highlights a trend of higher non-completion rates in operational departments, such as Housekeeping and Food & Beverage, compared to back-office roles. For staff engaged in high-mobility physical labour, the shift to static screen viewing is physically exhausting, with Participant E6 emphasizing how the absence of environmental movement leads to a rapid decline in motivation: *"I can't spend a long time sitting down, looking at a phone (...) I am more attentive in a face-to-face setting. (...) I like to see the movement".* Participant E4 explicitly identified "eye strain" and the sedentary nature of digital learning as a primary constraint after a physically demanding shift: "*I have fallen asleep. (...) Imagine I'm here working eight hours on my feet, (...) and suddenly you're online for two hours just listening to someone talking. You fall asleep. Whereas perhaps in a face-to-face session you wouldn't. In person, that possibility doesn't exist. I would never even consider it."* Participant E5 supports this by suggesting that online training must be "*direct, "straight to the bone". (...) because we are already tired from the shift".* This reflects a physiological mismatch between their labour-intensive workdays and the sensory requirements of screen-based learning.

To provide a visual synthesis of these divergent experiences, the Comparison Diagram generated via NVivo (Figure 2) maps the specific relationship between organizational roles and their interaction with the digital learning environment. By contrasting a representative of the operational staff (E5) with a representative of central management (E18), the diagram illustrates that the digital divide is not merely a matter of technical skill, but a reflection of how physical labour and environmental stability dictate the success of digital adoption.

As illustrated in the diagram, there is a clear convergent core regarding the structural benefits of digitalization. Both participants recognize Digital Accessibility and Logistical Flexibility as significant facilitators, proving that the digital infrastructure is effectively deployed across all levels of the organization. However, a critical perceptual gap emerges regarding the practical execution of training.

The operational level, represented by E5, is heavily conditioned by "frontline barriers" such as post-shift fatigue and hardware limitations (e.g., battery life and device sharing). For these employees, the digital format is often perceived as an added cognitive burden after a physically demanding shift, leading to a preference for objective content. Conversely, the management level (E18) prioritizes Geographic Scalability, Cost Optimization, and Legal Compliance. While management focuses on the efficiency of reaching multiple units simultaneously, the operational staff remains preoccupied with the immediate physical and technical conditions required to consume that content.

This visual evidence suggests that for digital training to achieve pedagogical maturity, the organization must bridge this gap by aligning managerial scalability with the physical and ergonomic reality of the operational frontline.

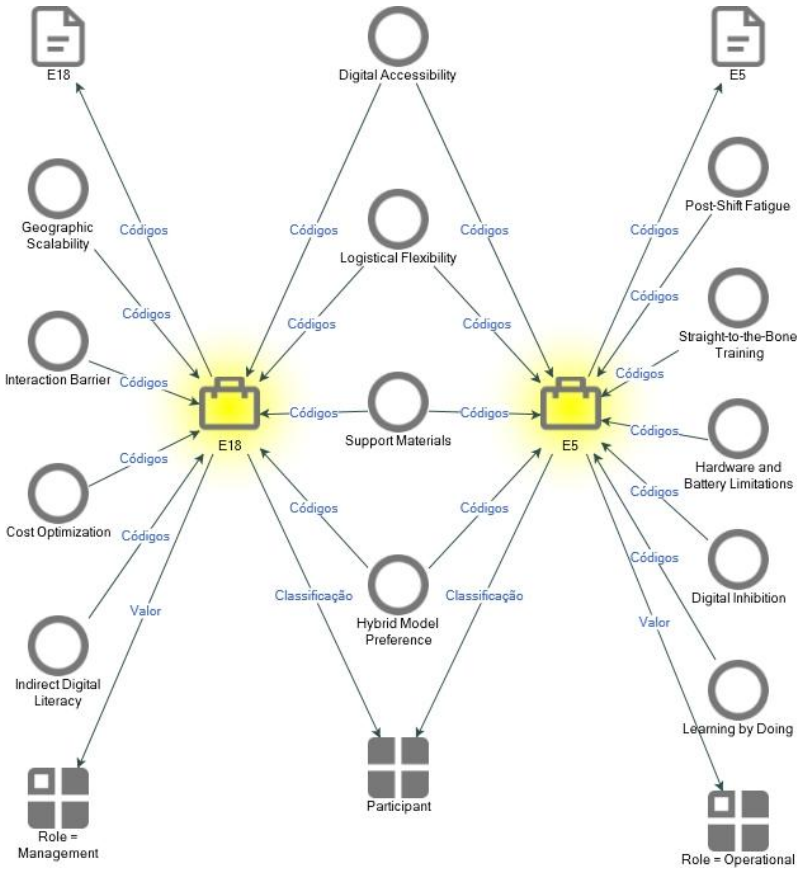


Figure 2: Case Comparison Diagram: Operational (E5) vs. Management (E18) Perspectives on Digital Training.

Source: Elaborated by the author using NVivo software.

6.1.2.2. Facilitators

Beyond the logistical benefits of remote access, the digital shift has introduced profound psychological drivers that encourage engagement, particularly for employees who find traditional, face-to-face environments restrictive.

A significant facilitator identified during the diagnostic phase is Social Decompression, in which the digital interface serves as a vital shield for employees with reserved personalities, mitigating the "fear of ridicule" that often restrains participation in group settings. Multiple participants noted that for those lacking the confidence to expose themselves personally, the digital format facilitates a more inclusive environment. Tools such as the chat function allow for thoughtful inquiry and active silence without the pressure of public speaking, thereby democratizing the learning experience for introverts. Participant E1 emphasizes the chat function as a mechanism for building confidence, noting that *"(...) it makes it easier, especially for people who don't find it as easy to expose themselves in person (...) if it were someone more introverted, it would perhaps be easier to write it in the chat (...)."* This sentiment is shared by Participants E3 and E11, who observe, respectively, that *"(...) the online format can be easier for some people because (...) when it comes to asking questions in front of an audience, not everyone has that willingness"* and that shy individuals *"(...) will probably prefer to only ask questions in an online training session."* Participant E14 reinforces this perspective by stating: *"(...) you can either turn off the camera or, the fact that you aren't face-to-face with the person (...) I think there are people who must feel much more comfortable."*

Furthermore, digital learning fosters a heightened sense of learner autonomy and the capacity for independent, real-time research. For management and back-office roles, the digital environment transforms learning into an active, multi-modal experience, allowing participants to clarify concepts through instantaneous online searches without interrupting the pedagogical flow, which is a level of agency unavailable in a physical classroom. Participant E13 aligns with this view, stating that the digital space is "(...) *a much more practical space to take notes (...)"* and that *"(...) if there is something I might want to research right then and there, I probably have internet access to do so (...) whereas in person, I don't."* Additionally, Participant E14 notes that digital tools facilitate the systematic sharing of materials, providing a permanent reference point that compensates for the natural decay of memory over time: *"(...) you remember the general concepts, but then you have*

a doubt, and you go there to the file and clarify it. Technology has helped in this aspect (...) without a shadow of a doubt." Participant E2 concurs, admitting that the production of accessible material resources is a major advantage of digitalization: *"Producing material resources makes all the difference (...)"*, enabling a level of knowledge retention that was previously unattainable. This autonomy is particularly valued in administrative roles, where centralized digital files provide oversight and retrieval speed that reinforce professional confidence. Participant E1 reveals that this technological transformation has enhanced their daily routine by integrating fragmented workflows into a single, cohesive interface: *"(...) the compilation of different calendars (...) into the same calendar enhances organization."* Participant E10 supports this, mentioning that platforms like Niikiiis (the platform used by the company to manage employees' general information) facilitate personnel management by making it possible to manage distinct timetables and providing a centralized view of employee schedules that would be harder to maintain manually: "*For example, Niikiis makes personnel management a bit easier. It makes it easier in terms of the number of people involved and facilitates scheduling because it makes it possible to conciliate distinct timetables."*

Finally, the concept of knowledge persistence and the utilization of digital artifacts emerged as high-value motivators, with participants describing digital tools as a "knowledge safety net". Unlike verbal instructions, which are ephemeral, the transition to searchable PDFs and recordings allows for "just-in-time" consultation. Participant E2 specifically highlights the psychological security of creating personal backups via screenshots to preserve high-stakes information: *"In these last training sessions, I felt that I retained more than in previous traditional trainings, to be honest. Because as a PowerPoint was being shared, meaning the person is speaking, but at the same time you might even be reading, you can even take a screenshot and save it. In other words, that has happened several times with digital training: when I think to myself this information is important, even if I have nothing to write with, I take a screenshot, I keep it, and it is information that stays with me."*

These findings illustrate that digital tools have transformed training into a persistent professional asset. By providing a psychological comfort for introverts and a digital safety net for information retrieval, technology allows employees to move from passive listening to active knowledge curation. This shift ensures that critical information is not lost to memory or social pressure but remains accessible and actionable for long-term operational success.

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6.1.3. The Influence of Digital Learning Initiatives on Motivation, Engagement, and Satisfaction

The transition to digital learning at Aura Hospitality & Leisure has fundamentally altered the emotional and motivational landscape of professional development. Diagnostic data suggests that while digital tools have successfully bolstered cognitive engagement through strategic gamification, they have simultaneously created a social satisfaction gap and a tension between functional autonomy and transactional obligation.

A primary catalyst for employee motivation within this new ecosystem is the high level of interactivity afforded by digital platforms. The introduction of competitive, real-time assessment tools has transformed training from a passive reception of information into an active pursuit of achievement. Participants identified the integration of platforms such as Kahoot and Blooket (mentioned in section 5.2.1) as significant boosters of satisfaction. Participant E1 explicitly stated that the anticipation of a competitive or evaluative element creates a "psychological peak" that

enhances concentration: *"(...) what I feel makes a huge difference is knowing beforehand whether or not there is a quiz at the end. Because then people will be more focused."* From a Human Resources perspective, Participant E18 reinforces the importance of these mechanisms in increasing interaction levels and creating dynamic initiatives: *"And what we use, besides the platform itself (...) are resources to make training more dynamic by creating a quiz or something similar so that there is a search for that interaction (...) to make it less monotonous."* This sentiment is strongly corroborated by feedback gathered from the Post-Training Satisfaction Questionnaires (mentioned in Section 5.5.1), where data reveals that sessions integrating gamified elements yield higher engagement levels and overall satisfaction rates. As E1 highlights, this instant feedback loop provides a sense of mastery and immediate gratification that traditional, slower-paced methods often lack.

Despite these gains in interactive engagement, the diagnosis identifies a significant decline in social satisfaction, particularly due to the erosion of informal human connections. Participants noted that digitalization has effectively removed the social anchors that historically bolstered the company's culture. In traditional models, coffee breaks and pre-session networking acted as vital conduits for cross-departmental bonding. Participant E16 reinforces this, highlighting that the physical environment is essential for broader professional growth and networking: *"I think that having face-to-face training in other locations is always good in terms of networking and getting to know other spaces (...) in a face-to-face training session, we are always meeting other people who work in the same area as us or who share the same interests."* Participant E3 concurs, noting the absence of human contact: "*Now there's a bit of that human contact missing, isn't there? I think that often (...) that networking with our fellow trainees is also established (...). And also a lot of sharing of experience and information, which you can only achieve in a face-to-face setting."* This shared perspective underscores that networking is viewed as a functional component of professional development. For these participants, the digital format creates a relational void, where the peer-to-peer knowledge exchange inherent in informal side-talk is lost. Participant E1 expands on this by highlighting the paradox of digital isolation within the same physical workspace: *"It would make sense to be face-to-face, because we are in a community. And there we can debate, because we have the same problems, we live the same reality (...) what sometimes happens is that I am in this room doing a training session, and I have another colleague in another room doing it, perhaps doing it together is more efficient, and it also promotes a spirit of community and team."* Even when employees are physically present in the same building, the digital interface can act as a

barrier to the spirit of community mentioned by E1. Participant E18 supports this, noting that physical training serves as a rare bridge between different departments: *"(...) there is another benefit (...) from people's cohabitation. It's different from being in a classroom. Sometimes there are people from different departments who don't have much contact in their daily lives (...) there, inside the classroom, there is an opportunity for much greater integration than in the online format, even more so in an online setting without cameras."*

This shift has resulted in what can be termed the autonomy vs. obligation paradox. Transcripts reveal that motivation is highly contingent on whether the digital format is perceived as an empowering tool for work-life balance or a bureaucratic requirement that ignores operational realities. Motivation peaks when the digital format is seen as a facilitator of temporal autonomy, particularly for employees who value the flexibility of participating from home. Participant E4 states: *"I prefer online because I have more mobility, don't I? I can go home without being late, have other commitments, and still be in training."* Participants E7 and E8 share this sentiment, arguing that online training is better suited for their scheduled days off by removing the logistical burden of commuting: *"Sometimes we are at home on our day off (...) and between having the training at home or having to travel to work on your day off, it is better to have it at home."* Participant E10 reinforces the practical superiority of this ecosystem: "(...) *nowadays it ends ups being more practical to be online. (...) In the face-to-face ones, we had to come here, for example, even on our days off. So online training ends up being better. (...) When it's online, we can have that comfort of staying at home."* For these employees, the digital ecosystem is a tool for autonomy, where fulfilling training obligations does not comprise personal schedules.

Conversely, motivation drops when the digital format feels like a transactional obligation. In uncontrolled environments, employees report being physically "logged in" but mentally absent due to competing operational pressures. Participant E3 admits to this cognitive dissociating: *"Sometimes during training we are there at the computer and many other requests arise. There is a tendency for us to look aside and even be doing other things as well."* This participant further notes that in a high-pressure hospitality environment, training often loses the battle for attention: *"It is all a matter of priorities (...) in the daily operation, things are always happening (...) it's all for the moment."* This transactional feeling is exacerbated by technical friction and perceived pedagogical unpreparedness. Participant E3 identifies that an ill-prepared trainer reinforces the sense that the session is merely a "box-ticking" exercise: *"I think that sometimes there isn't much*

of that care from the trainer (...) I think there wasn't even a minimum of preparation for things to go well." Such technical hurdles, combined with a lack of visual engagement further disassociate the learner. Participant E18 adds that training becomes a passive experience when *"the trainer is literally talking to black squares"* because cameras are off, making it difficult to ensure genuine engagement.

The Word Cloud (Figure 3), generated through a frequency analysis of the "Motivation", "Engagement", and "Barriers" nodes in NVivo, visually crystallizes this organizational paradox. The central prominence of terms such as "person", "face", and "trainer" (highlighted in orange) underscores that, despite the digital shift, the human element remains the primary anchor for professional satisfaction and social belonging. This is balanced by high-frequency terms like "access", "online", and "easier", which reflect the perceived benefits of temporal autonomy and logistical flexibility identified by participants like E4 and E10. However, the "transactional burden" mentioned in the diagnosis is also visible in the periphery through terms such as "uncomfortable", "filmed", and 'difficulty", representing the psychological friction and the loss of the informal "coffee break effect". Ultimately, this cloud illustrates a landscape where the convenience of digital tools is constantly competing with a deep-seated desire for collective, face-to-face interaction.



Figure 3:Word Frequency Cloud regarding the Digital Training Experience: Motivators, Engagement, and Barriers.

Source: Elaborated by the author using NVivo software.

6.1.4. Perceived Impact of Digital Training on Individual Performance and Professional Efficiency

The final stage of the diagnosis evaluated the extent to which employees perceive digital training as a tangible catalyst for professional efficacy. The findings suggest that the digital shift at Aura Hospitality & Leisure has moved beyond mere content consumption to become a functional performance support system, particularly in high-compliance areas and technical workflows.

A significant outcome of this transition is the marked increase in employee self-efficacy regarding complex, high-risk tasks. Diagnostic data indicates that digital modules provide a "low-stakes" environment for mastering "high-stakes" information, allowing employees to build confidence at their own pace. For instance, Participant E10 reported a substantial increase in performance following a digital Cybersecurity course. Previously characterized by uncertainty and anxiety regarding data privacy, E10 noted that the digital format was exceptionally explanatory: *"In the course it was very, very explanatory. How we should proceed, to be careful, and so on."* This clarity enabled a mastery of the subject that translated into more secure and confident front-desk operations, with the participant admitting that prior to this training, there was significant doubt when facing potential digital threats: *"I learned a lot about ignoring emails (...) because sometimes I had a lot of uncertainty about what was true or not."* This is further supported by the ability to revisit materials, which E10 identifies as a key factor in consolidating knowledge: *"It is really important because we have everything available there. It's easier...it's much easier to organize."* By bridging the gap between theoretical risk and practical action, the digital module allowed the employee to overcome the fear of system compromises in an era where, as E10 notes: "*it is very easy to be hacked (...)".*

This growth in individual capability is further enhanced by the habit of creating digital artifacts for post-session consultation. Participants across the organizational hierarchy highlighted that the ability to store and consult screenshots or PDFs acts as a critical secondary memory, reducing the cognitive effort associated with manual information retrieval. Participant E2 emphasizes how the dual nature of digital training (visual and auditory) facilitates immediate archiving: *"In these last training sessions, I felt in that I retained more (...) when I think to myself this information is important, even if I have nothing to write with, I take a screenshot, I keep it, and it is information that stays with me."* This on-demand accessibility is a recurring theme. Participant E13 notes that

having facilitated access to these materials allows employees to proactively seek further information without obstacles: *"Nowadays, I can also look for more about what has already been taught with no obstacles."* Similarly, Participant E9 contrasts the current digital availability with the past, where they often relied on basic help systems while working night shifts alone: *"Previously (...) when I was working the night shift and was completely alone in the hotel (...) it was just me, the internet, and the basic help system (...).Now we have everything available there. It is much more facilitated."* These resources function as essential "cheat sheets" for procedures used only occasionally but remain accessible whenever a doubt arises.

The transition to digital artifacts also extends to physical-digital hybrids and collaborative sharing. Participant E6 demonstrates the portability of this knowledge, explaining that they keep copies of all materials in their locker, on their computer, and even consult them during commutes: *"I have them in my folder, I have them on the computer (....) in the beginning, I would consult them on the metro."* Furthermore, Participant E11 highlights the collective benefit of this digital ecosystem, noting that materials are systematically shared and stored on the company's network: *"(...) whenever one of us undergoes any type of training, regardless of the topic, we share all the material. (...) everything they provide, we save it on the network."*

Ultimately, these testimonies suggest that the digital transition has a direct and positive impact on the perceived individual performance and professional efficiency. By transforming ephemeral training moments into a permanent, searchable knowledge base, employees feel more empowered and self-sufficient, ensuring that professional standards are maintained during high-pressure operational moments.

These qualitative reports of improved performance are supported by the organizational 2025 Training Tracker. While the tracker primarily monitors compliance, its data reveals a clear "efficacy trend" when analysed alongside departmental stability. Records show that departments such as Front Office and Accounting represent the highest rates of digital module completion. In the accounting department, where precision is paramount, Participant E11 emphasizes the real impact on work quality: *"(...) this has real impacts on our work and how things are done. (...) So, we always want to have our work as up to date as possible, in case there is an inspection or an audit, as we also have all companies audited. Everything is always correct, according to legal procedures."* The digital centralization mentioned by Participant E1 ensures that all staff operate from the same updated protocols, eliminating the version-control errors common in legacy paper-based systems

and enhancing overall departmental data integrity.

As illustrated in Figure 4, a Matrix Coding Query conducted in NVivo reveals a clear specialized distribution of these performance gains across different professional roles. A primary observation is the concentration of Self-Efficacy and Technical Mastery among operational staff, particularly within the reception (E10), where digital training serves as a fundamental pillar for confidence in high-stakes tasks like Cybersecurity. In contrast, the data shows a distinct shift when analysing back-office and management roles; for E1 and E11, the perceived impact is more heavily weighted toward Error Reduction and Professional Rigour. This visual evidence confirms that while digitalization enhances efficiency across the entire organizational hierarchy, the nature of that efficiency is bifurcated: operational roles gain the "practical empowerment" to execute tasks without fear, whereas specialized roles leverage the digital ecosystem to ensure "systemic integrity" and legal compliance.

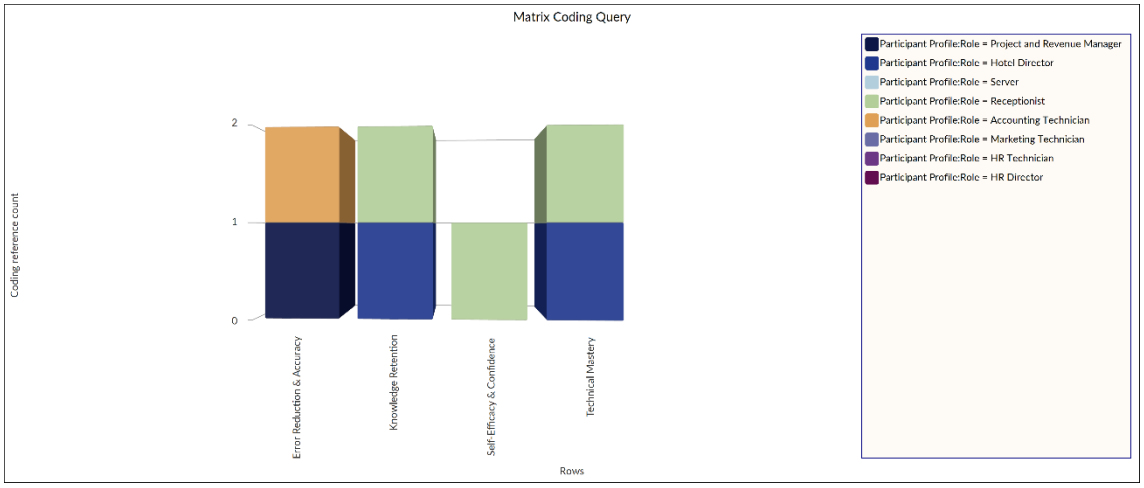


Figure 4:Matrix Coding Query – Perceived Performance Gains by Professional Role.

Source: Elaborated by the author using NVivo software.

6.1.5. Synthesis of Findings: From Operational Efficiency to the Social Gap

The diagnosis of current training practices at Aura Hospitality & Leisure reveals a sophisticated yet bifurcated digital landscape. On one hand, the transition to digital formats has successfully democratized access to information and enhanced operational precision, as corroborated by thehigh compliance rates documented in the 2025 Training Tracker. The implementation of this "digital safety net" has effectively mitigated cognitive load for many, fostering a newfound sense of

individual self-efficacy and professional autonomy, particularly in administrative and high-compliance roles.

On the other hand, the diagnosis exposes a critical vulnerability: the risk of training being perceived as a transactional obligation rather than a transformational learning experience. This is most evident in the social satisfaction gap identified throughout the transcripts, where the erosion of informal networking has weakened the sense of organizational belonging. For operational departments, this challenge is further compounded by a physiological and environmental mismatch. For these employees, physical fatigue and environmental instability act as significant barriers to deep learning, frequently reducing digital participation to a passive presence that fails to translate into genuine cognitive engagement.

Consequently, while the current infrastructure has mastered the logistical delivery of training, effectively solving geographical and scheduling constraints, diagnostic data suggests that the organization is currently at a pedagogical crossroads. Moving toward the next phase of digital maturity requires transcending mere content dissemination. It demands a strategic shift toward environmental control and active pedagogical engagement, ensuring that digital training is not only accessible but also physically and psychologically sustainable for a diverse workforce. Reconciling the technical efficiency of the digital medium with the fundamental human need for social interaction and practical application remains the primary challenge. The empirical evidence supporting this transition, detailed by dimension and research question, is systematically mapped in the Content Analysis Grid (Appendix 4). This granular mapping of social engagement gaps and operational constraints serves as the structural foundation for the strategic recommendations developed in Section 7.2, ensuring that the proposed future of the digital ecosystem is built upon the lived experiences and identified needs of the workforce.

7. Discussion and Strategic Recommendations

This chapter constitutes the interpretive core of the study, moving beyond the descriptive data presented in Chapter 6 to critically analyse digital transformation within Aura Hospitality & Leisure. By triangulating documentary evidence, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews with established academic theories, this section identifies the socio-technical drivers and psychological barriers that define the organization's current digital maturity. This discussion seeks

to bridge the gap between theoretical digital adoption and the lived experiences of a heterogeneous workforce, as outlined in the initial research framework.

7.1. Discussion of Results: Individual Perceptions vs Organizational Factors

The following discussion is structured to address the inherent tension between organizational efficiency and individual experience, exploring how digital tools have reshaped Aura Hospitality & Leisure's learning culture.

7.1.1. Strategic Optimization and the Paradox of Social Reach

The transition to a digital learning ecosystem at Aura Hospitality & Leisure has fundamentally optimized administrative efficiency and expanded geographical reach (RQ1). Documentary evidence from the 2025 Training Tracker confirms that the organization successfully centralized training for dispersed units, significantly increasing both the frequency and thematic diversity of training sessions. This optimization aligns with the perspectives of Vadithe and Kesari (2025) and Zhou et al. (2021), who posit that digital platforms serve as catalysts for scalability, accessibility, and workforce efficiency in modern organizations. As noted by Participant E1, this shift enables superior governance over employee training records, effectively mitigating the bureaucratic friction identified in traditional, slower models.

However, this strategic optimization has triggered a paradox regarding social engagement (RQ3). While literature suggests that digital tools can enhance HR service quality, the reality at Aura Hospitality & Leisure reveals a significant relational gap. The erosion of informal "coffee-break" moments and networking, highlighted by Participants E3 and E16, corroborates the concerns of Wesche and Handke (2024) and Tran (2023) regarding the potential loss of social cohesion in virtual settings. The phenomenon of "black squares" (muted cameras), described by Participant E18 as *"talking to black squares"*, serves as a manifest indicator of diminished social presence. This scenario confirms the cultural friction identified in the Problem Statement (Section 3.1), where the digitalization of training initiatives unintentionally isolates employees and risks eroding the social fabric essential to the group's service-oriented culture.

7.1.2. The Digital Divide: Demographic Nuances and Physiological Mismatch

The diagnosis of adoption barriers (RQ2) suggests that resistance at Aura Hospitality & Leisure is not merely a product of technical proficiency, but a complex intersection of demographic backgrounds and environmental stability. The sample, ranging from 22 to 58 years old with educational backgrounds spanning from basic education to Master's degrees, provides a rich landscape for analysis. For instance, while higher educational attainment (e.g., Participant E11) often correlates with greater digital autonomy, lower schooling levels (e.g., Participant E6) frequently lead to a distinct preference for face-to-face settings.

Furthermore, the resistance observed among operational staff, primarily in Housekeeping and Food & Beverage (E5 and E6), appears to be driven by a physiological mismatch rather than simple age or literacy gaps. For staff in high-touch roles, the transition from eight hours of physical labour to a static, screen-based session results in critical cognitive exhaustion. Participant E4 (41 years old) explicitly identifies "eye strain" and the sedentary nature of digital learning as primary constraints, admitting to falling asleep during sessions, a possibility that they noted *"would never even be considered"* in person. This finding algins with Saarikko et al. (2020), who define digitalization as a social-technical process where technology must be harmonized with the user's professional and physical context. This evidence supports the operational friction described in the Problem Statement, where the high-pressure pace of hospitality competes with deep learning needs, creating a divide where operational staff struggle to find the appropriate environment and cognitive energy for digital training.

7.1.3. Inclusion through Social Decompression and Autonomy

Paradoxically, the digital interface has acted as a significant facilitator of inclusion for specific employee profiles (RQ2). The concept of Social Decompression, where screens act as shields, has democratized participation for introverted individuals (as mentioned by E1, E3, E11, and E14) by reducing the fear of ridicule associated with public speaking. Participants noted that tools like the chat function allow for thoughtful inquiry and "active silence" without the pressure of an immediate audience. This supports the findings of Indroputri and Sanjaya (2024) and Irmatova et al. (2025), suggesting that digital tools can empower those who might otherwise be marginalized in face-

to-face settings. By reducing the social cost of participation, Aura Hospitality & Leisure is successfully converting initial technological discomfort into a source of professional confidence and digital agility.

7.1.4. Professional Efficiency and the "Digital Safety Net"

Regarding individual performance (RQ4), the results indicate that Aura Hospitality & Leisure has transitioned from a memory-based knowledge-retention model to a search-based autonomy model. The spontaneous emergence of a "Digital Safety Net," in which employees use screenshots and shared network files as secondary storage, has directly enhanced self-efficacy in high-stakes tasks. Participant E10's experience with Cybersecurity training is a prime example: revisiting explanatory materials and screenshots reduced operational anxiety and improved precision at the front desk.

This shift toward digital artifacts as readily available resources validates the findings of Kilinç et al. (2025) and Wang et al. (2025), who argue that digitalization improves the quality of human capital by providing real-time access to information. By transforming ephemeral training moments into permanent, searchable assets (E2, E13), Aura Hospitality & Leisure is fostering a culture of continuous learning. This synergy between human talent and digital tools represents the benchmark for excellence described by Caratù et al. (2025) in the context of Industry 5.0, where technology empowers rather than replaces human contribution. The perceived increase in individual efficiency through these support resources confirms that digital training can indeed translate into operational success when employees are provided with tools that enhance their professional autonomy.

7.1.5. Synthesis: Organizational Resilience at a Pedagogical Crossroads

The discussion reveals that Aura Hospitality & Leisure has reached a critical pedagogical inflection point. According to Chytilová et al. (2025), digital transformation is an essential mechanism for ensuring the sustainable competitiveness and resilience of institutions. While the current infrastructure has mastered logistical delivery and centralized oversight, diagnostic data suggest that organizational resilience may be at risk if the social satisfaction gap and operational fatigue are not addressed.

7.1.6. Synthesis: Organizational Resilience at a Pedagogical Crossroads

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The findings confirm the academic discourse that digitalization effectively moderates the relationship between human capital management and productivity, but its ultimate success depends on how seamlessly technology is integrated into the social and professional fabric of the workforce. To transition from operational efficacy to genuine organizational resilience, Aura Hospitality & Leisure must move beyond mere content dissemination toward environmental control and active pedagogical engagement. The identified flaws, such as digital fatigue (RQ2) and the loss of networking (RQ3), serve as the foundational structural basis for the strategic recommendations in Section 7.2.

7.2. Strategic Recommendations

Based on the diagnostic findings regarding operational friction and the critical discussion of employee perceptions, this section outlines a set of strategic recommendations for Aura Hospitality & Leisure's training strategy. These proposals serve as a consultancy framework to bridge gaps in engagement, infrastructure, and pedagogical efficacy identified throughout the research, ensuring that the organization's digital transformation translates into long-term organizational resilience and sustainable competitiveness.

1. Implementation of a Blended Learning Framework

The company should pivot from a purely digital model toward a Blended Learning approach that prioritizes face-to-face interaction for technical and hospitality-specific skills. This measure directly addresses the tactile gap identified by participants regarding manual precision, as well as the networking loss reported by staff who feel the erosion of social cohesion. As suggested by

Wesche and Handke (2024) and Tran (2023), while digital tools offer strategic reach and scalability, the social fabric and cultural integration of an organization require physical cohabitation and informal interaction to remain effective. Consequently, it is recommended that high-touch skills, such as guest service protocols, first aid, or technical maintenance, reincorporate physical workshops to ensure sensory validation and spontaneous experience sharing. This hybrid model solves the cultural friction identified in the problem statement by balancing administrative efficiency with the human-centric nature of the hospitality sector.

2. Transition to Micro-learning for Operational Staff

To mitigate the physiological mismatch and cognitive exhaustion identified among frontline employees, Aura Hospitality & Leisure should replace long online sessions with a Micro-learning strategy. The research confirms that employees in physically demanding roles, such as Housekeeping and Food & Beverage, experience severe fatigue when forced to engage in static screen-based sessions after long shifts. According to Saarikko et al. (2020), technology is only effective when harmonized with the user's specific professional and biological context. Therefore, the organization should develop high-impact modules (5 to 15 minutes) that are concise, direct, and focused on single learning outcomes. These modules should be mobile-friendly, allowing staff with lower digital literacy or those without a dedicated desk to engage with content during off-peak periods, thereby reducing the high non-completion rates observed in operational departments.

3. Digital Humanization: Protocols for Active Engagement

Aura Hospitality & Leisure must establish interaction protocols to combat the relational void observed during virtual training. The loss of non-verbal cues and the tendency for employees to treat digital training as a transactional obligation undermines brand identity. To ensure that digitalization does not lead to social isolation, the HRM department should implement "camera-on" protocols for specific collaborative segments and continue to integrate real-time gamification tools (e.g. Kahoot and Blooket), which create the psychological "engagement peaks" previously mentioned. Furthermore, creating "Virtual Coffee Rooms" for informal conversation prior to sessions can help foster the community spirit and team debate that participants currently miss. This approach transforms the digital avenue from a passive requirement into an empowering growth mechanism, as advocated by Wang et al. (2025).

4. Establishment of Dedicated “Learning Corners”

To address infrastructure barriers and environmental friction, Aura Hospitality & Leisure should establish dedicated, quiet physical training spaces (“Learning Corners”) within each business unit. The diagnosis highlighted that “internet dead zones” in basements and immediate service interruptions at the front desk are primary barriers to deep learning. Bridging this digital divide requires ensuring equitable access to stable hardware and a protected environment, a strategy supported by Zervas and Stiakakis (2025) to prevent professional alienation. By providing these spaces equipped with functional hardware and noise-canceling headphones, the company signals that it protects the employee’s dedicated learning time from operational demands. This structural support directly addresses the operational friction that currently pits training against immediate guest needs.

5. Leveraging the Digital Safety Net: Knowledge Repository

Aura Hospitality & Leisure should formalize the ad hoc use of digital artifacts into an organized, centralized Knowledge Repository for practical, immediate consultation. Participants across the hierarchy highlighted that search-based autonomy, enabled by screenshots and shared files, is a critical facilitator of professional efficiency and self-efficacy. This shift from memory-based retention to the use of persistent digital artifacts fosters a growth mindset and ensures information persistence (Kilinç et al., 2025). The HRM department should transform employee-created screenshots and notes into official “Digital Reference Guides” stored on accessible platforms like Niikiis. This ensures that critical knowledge is not lost to memory decay but remains an actionable asset that enhances individual performance and maintains organizational standards during high-pressure moments.

These recommendations are designed to transition Aura Hospitality & Leisure from a phase of mere technological implementation to a state of mature, employee-centered digital integration. By addressing the tactile gap through a blended learning framework and mitigating the physiological mismatch via micro-learning, the organization can ensure that its training strategy respects the unique operational rhythms of the service sector. The formalization of the “digital safety net” and the creation of dedicated "Learning Corners" aim to resolve the environmental and infrastructural friction that currently hinders deep learning for frontline staff, thereby promoting Digital Equity across all business units. By restoring the social anchors of learning, the group will be better

equipped to maintain its high-touch service standards while leveraging high-tech efficiency, ensuring that digital transformation remains a primary engine for organizational resilience.

8. Conclusion

This final chapter synthesizes the core findings on digitalization training within Aura Hospitality & Leisure, providing a cohesive overview of the digital transformation journey. It moves beyond a simple summary by critically evaluating the extent to which the initial research objectives were met, ensuring a clear link between the proposed goals and the final outcomes. This section also details the practical and theoretical contributions derived from the internship, highlighting how these insights bridge the gap between academic frameworks and real-world hospitality operations. It simultaneously offers a comprehensive and nuanced reflective account of the professional growth achieved during this period, documenting the evolution of key competencies and the strategic mindset developed through this immersive professional experience.

8.1. Synthesis of Main Results

This research concludes that the transition to digital learning ecosystems within Aura Hospitality & Leisure has successfully optimized the organization's strategic reach and administrative efficiency. By implementing integrated online platforms, the Portuguese group has effectively centralized training for its geographically dispersed units, successfully bridging the logistical gap in its business infrastructure. This shift has not only increased the frequency and thematic diversity of educational initiatives but has also empowered HRM with superior governance over training records. This enhanced oversight facilitates a more structured organizational framework, enabling a clearer understanding of historical achievements and future developmental requirements.

However, the study identifies a significant dual-speed adoption model. While corporate and management levels have seamlessly integrated digital workflows to optimize temporal and organizational resources, the operational frontline faces substantial structural and situational barriers. This disparity reveals that the digital divide is not merely a matter of technical proficiency but is dictated by the physical boundaries and professional rhythms inherent to the workforce's daily operations.

A primary finding regarding RQ2 is the identified physiological mismatch affecting staff in high-intensity manual roles. For these employees, transitioning from extended periods of physical labour to sedentary online sessions results in cognitive and physical exhaustion. The research documented instances of participants falling asleep during sessions, a phenomenon virtually impossible in a face-to-face setting. This supports the socio-technical view of digitalization, suggesting that for technology to be truly effective, it must be harmonized with the user's specific physical and professional context.

Regarding professional autonomy (RQ4), the research highlights a profound paradigm shift from memory-based learning to search-based autonomy. The spontaneous emergence of what can be termed a Digital Safety Net has directly enhanced individual self-efficacy and professional agility. By transforming transient training materials into permanent digital artifacts, technology allows employees to move from passive listening to active knowledge curation. This validates established theories that describe digital tools as catalysts for a growth mindset and long-term information persistence.

Conversely, the study identified a significant relational void triggered by the erosion of socialization. The loss of informal networking, which is vital for cross-departmental bonding, has led to a noticeable decline in social satisfaction. Paradoxically, this digital shield has facilitated social decompression for introverted profiles, reducing the "fear of ridicule" and democratizing participation through non-exposing tools, such as the chat function.

Finally, the diagnosis reveals that while Aura Hospitality & Leisure has mastered logistical delivery, it currently stands at a threshold of digital maturity. The organization must now transition from mere content distribution toward a strategy centered on environmental control and active engagement. Resolving the inherent conflict between immediate operational demands and protected training time is essential to ensure that digital transformation fosters digital equity and organizational resilience, rather than inadvertently leading to social or professional exclusion.

8.2. Internship Contributions

The internship at Aura Hospitality & Leisure facilitated a symbiotic relationship between academic inquiry and organizational practice. By embedding the research within the HR department, it was possible to deliver immediate operational value to the company while

simultaneously expanding the academic understanding of digital transformation within the service sector.

The internship provided Aura Hospitality & Leisure with tangible tools designed to modernize its talent management strategy and enhance its administrative maturity. Most notably, the development of a comprehensive Excel-based Training Tracker (2025 Training Tracker) allowed the group to organize and centralize training data from 2025. This tool transcends mere record-keeping, enabling strategic analysis of participation rates and training hours across all business units and providing leadership with a clear view of the value generated by human capital development. This structured approach demonstrated a sense of care and organizational stability, demonstrating the company's commitment to the professional development of its workforce.

Additionally, the formulation of the 2026 Internal Training Plan represented a pivotal contribution. Informed by direct questionnaires on employee upskilling needs (Post-training Satisfaction Questionnaires), this plan ensured that the future strategy is not a top-down imposition but is instead precisely aligned with the staff's actual requirements and motivations. By accounting for demographic factors, such as age and literacy levels, alongside training preferences, the plan effectively bridges the gap between organizational objectives and individual growth. Furthermore, the introduction of interactive mechanisms, such as gamified quizzes, and the proposal of Micro-learning and Blended Learning models, offer Aura Hospitality & Leisure a sustainable roadmap to mitigate digital fatigue. These initiatives demonstrate that a digital training strategy yields measurable impacts on professional development and perceived individual performance.

In parallel, this investigation significantly contributes to the field of Digital Human Resource Management (DHRM) by applying a social-technical lens to the service sector, a field where human touch remains the primary driver of value. While existing literature often focuses on the corporate benefits of technology, this study moves beyond simple performance metrics to explore how demographic and functional diversity dictate the success or failure of technological adoption. By investigating a multiservice group with a heterogeneous workforce, the research offers a sophisticated perspective on the digital divide, demonstrating that digital readiness is not merely a matter of technical skill but is deeply tethered to an employee's physical and professional context.

This research provides an empirical foundation for understanding the human experience of digital transformation by identifying specific, under-researched phenomena. Central to these

findings is the concept of Social Decompression, which reveals how the digital interface acts as a protective shield for introverted profiles. By reducing the fear of public speaking, technology paradoxically democratizes participation and stimulates engagement in ways that traditional face-to-face settings often fail to achieve.

In contrast, the investigation documents a critical tension defined as the Multitasking Paradox, where the inherent flexibility of digital platforms frequently results in a detrimental fragmentation of focus. Within high-pressure hospitality environments, this leads to a scenario where employees treat training as background noise while simultaneously attending to immediate service demands, highlighting a profound conflict between logistical accessibility and deep cognitive engagement.

Perhaps the most critical contribution, however, is the analysis of the Physiological Mismatch, which examines how the rigorous, physical nature of hospitality labour fundamentally clashes with the sedentary, cognitive requirements of screen-based learning. This misalignment generates exhaustion levels that effectively block knowledge retention, allowing this research to shift the academic discourse from abstract theories of digital adoption to the practical, lived realities experienced within a volatile global market.

8.3. Limitations and Future Proposals

Despite the methodological rigour and the depth of the 18 semi-structured interviews conducted, this research acknowledges certain boundaries essential for a transparent and nuanced interpretation of the findings. Recognizing these constraints is a fundamental step in establishing the study's true contribution to the field of digital training and organizational development. Rather than presenting data as an absolute or universal truth, this investigation should be viewed as a foundational baseline for future improvements, providing a realistic roadmap for both academic discourse and practical organizational application.

The primary limitation resides in the temporal nature of the academic internship within the Human Resources Management department of Aura Hospitality & Leisure. Spanning approximately three months of direct engagement, the investigation represents a cross-sectional snapshot in time rather than a longitudinal study. This fixed timeframe precluded the observation of long-term progression or the measurement of knowledge retention and behavioural shifts six to twelve months post-training. Consequently, it remains difficult to determine whether the identified challenges

persist, have been mitigated by the organization, or have been replaced by new constraints. To address this, a highly intensive data collection phase was prioritized, ensuring that the diverse perspectives gathered across various business units, from hotel operations to sports projects, provided a horizontal triangulation of data that compensates for the lack of longitudinal depth.

Additionally, there was an inherent risk of participant bias, specifically social desirability bias driven by a potential fear of professional consequences. In an organizational setting, employees may hesitate to share negative perceptions regarding company policies due to concerns over job security or friction with supervisors. Despite my integration as an intern, some participants may have initially perceived the interviews as formal corporate evaluations, leading to a heightened state of self-consciousness. To safeguard against this, strict ethical protocols were followed, and each participant signed a formal informed consent document guaranteeing absolute anonymity and confidentiality. By fostering a climate of trust in a neutral environment, I encouraged candid dialogue regarding operational barriers, though it remains important to acknowledge that some level of bias may still have persisted in specific cases.

Furthermore, the context-specific generalizability of the findings must be carefully considered. As a single case study focused on Aura Hospitality & Leisure, the results are deeply rooted in a unique organizational culture and a multisector structure. While the use of thick description and a diverse sample enhance the study's transferability, the results may not be directly generalizable to all hospitality organizations with different demographic profiles or divergent strategic objectives. Nevertheless, this study identifies universal pain points, such as the persistent conflict between operational duties and training time, serving as a valuable benchmark for other multiservice organizations navigating similar digital transitions.

The qualitative nature of this research also introduces an inherent element of researcher subjectivity. The dual role of academic researcher and HR intern provided privileged insider access but required a continuous and conscious effort to avoid interpretive bias. To ensure the confirmability of the findings, a multi-layered validation strategy was employed, using systematic coding to allow themes to emerge organically. Furthermore, data triangulation was utilized by cross-referencing interview insights with internal HR documents and official company policies, ensuring that the final conclusions remained firmly grounded in the participants' authentic experiences.

To build on the foundations established in this research, several avenues for future inquiry are suggested to advance toward higher levels of instructional maturity. Future research should

prioritize longitudinal designs to monitor the evolution of digital maturity over an extended period, allowing for a definitive assessment of whether the transition toward digital artifacts translates into sustained professional efficiency. To bridge the tactile gap identified by frontline staff in roles requiring manual precision, it is recommended that the organization explores the integration of immersive technologies, such as Virtual Reality (VR) or Augmented Reality (AR), which could provide the sensory validation and hands-on simulation that current static digital modules lack. Furthermore, addressing environmental friction remains a priority for long-term organizational resilience, with future initiatives focusing on establishing dedicated "Learning Corners" to ensure that training no longer competes with immediate service demands. Finally, the organization should continue to refine its pedagogical framework by transitioning toward Micro-learning and Blended Learning models, which are instrumental in decreasing digital fatigue and increasing intrinsic motivation during the learning process.

8.4. Personal Reflection on the Internship Experience

The internship at Aura Hospitality & Leisure represented a definitive milestone in my professional evolution, marking my transition from an academic environment to the complexities of Human Resource Management. By assuming diverse responsibilities, ranging from back-office administrative coordination to the direct facilitation of training sessions, such as delivering basic French language instruction, I developed a comprehensive, 360-degree vision of the organizational learning ecosystem. Navigating logistical unforeseen events and communicating across various hierarchical levels fostered essential competencies in resilience, adaptability, and emotional intelligence.

I believe that being "on the ground" and maintaining direct contact with the daily challenges faced by operational staff added a unique layer of authenticity to my research. This immersive experience ensured that my strategic recommendations are not only theoretically robust but also operationally viable to the hospitality industry's reality. Consequently, I conclude this internship with heightened confidence in my capacity to serve as an agent of change within dynamic, technology-driven organizational environments. To fully contextualize this professional journey, the following sections detail the specific activities that served as the empirical foundation for this research:

1. Administrative Coordination and Stakeholder Management

My primary responsibility involved serving as the central point of contact for unit managers, recommending specific training modules and ensuring their alignment with the HR department's strategic rationale. This role required managing formal email correspondence with stakeholders, particularly hotel managers, to communicate learning schedules and trainer assignments. I also facilitated the initial nomination of participants, ensuring that developmental needs were addressed without disrupting the regular functioning of the business units. Following each initiative, I managed the distribution of evaluation questionnaires to capture employee feedback and identify opportunities for optimization (Post-training Satisfaction Questionnaires).

On training delivery days, I conducted rigorous follow-ups with managers to ensure staff readiness and oversaw the distribution of digital meeting links and final timetables. During the sessions, I provided operational support to trainers and resolved any technical or logistical issues in real time. In parallel, I maintained meticulous attendance records for subsequent statistical analysis and issued certificates of participation. Managing the increased stress levels associated with last-minute adjustments became a cornerstone of my professional growth, allowing me to refine my problem-solving skills in turbulent environments.

2. Bridging Internal Needs and External Providers

Whenever third-party training providers were engaged, I served as the primary liaison. I coordinated schedules for both staff and instructors, evaluated trainer qualifications, and assessed whether external proposals remained consistent with our strategic direction. This often involved negotiating session hours to ensure employees had sufficient time to reach established learning goals, subsequently reporting these findings to my supervisor to support leadership decision-making.

3. Enhancing Digital Engagement and Creativity

To increase employee engagement during online sessions, I was tasked with developing interactive tools to make digital learning more captivating. I proposed and implemented high-impact mechanisms, including competitive online quizzes (e.g., Kahoot and Blooket) and interactive presentation decks. When sessions were led by internal trainers, I took the lead in designing these activities and the related accompanying reference manuals. This creative autonomy allowed me to

innovate within the training department, implementing diverse approaches that resonated with a modern workforce.

4. Pedagogical Immersion: Traditional vs. Digital Formats

Although most initiatives were digital, I participated in a traditional face-to-face session for staff lacking digital literacy. Witnessing this reality was a significant advantage, as it demonstrated the necessity of organizational flexibility to meet the heterogeneous needs of a workforce. I supported both trainers and employees with registration and logistical hurdles, which further sharpened my soft skills. Furthermore, my manager encouraged me to lead a training initiative myself, teaching basic French skills to housekeeping and maintenance teams. This firsthand experience enabled me to anticipate trainers' needs and refine my formal institutional communication.

5. Data Consolidation and Strategic Planning

I was responsible for modernizing administrative procedures by organizing 2025 training data into a sophisticated Excel-based tracking system (2025 Training Tracker). This iterative process enabled a strategic HR approach by allowing analysis of participation rates, trainer profiles, and total training hours. To ensure the success of the 2026 strategy, I designed questionnaires to assess upskilling needs (Post-training Satisfaction Questionnaires) and synthetized the results into a structured Training Plan (2026 Internal Training Plan). This document highlighted critical variables, such as the impact of demographics on training preferences, and included a strategic calendar aligned with organizational goals.

6. Holistic Perspective and Professional Growth

Participating as a trainee in initiatives such as first-aid and HR policy sessions provided me with a comprehensive perspective on the learning experience. Having occupied the roles of coordinator, trainer, and participant, I gained the nuanced vision necessary to conduct this research with deep analytical rigour. Finally, a brief exposure to the recruitment function, where I contacted candidates and observed interviews, deepened my understanding of the strategic impact of the hiring process on the overall talent lifecycle.

The activities detailed above directly translated into a measurable improvement in my professional performance. By engaging with multiple facets of training, I developed a holistic view of the field, equipping me to approach this investigation with a heightened sense of professional security. This evolution ensures that every critical element of this study is informed by real-world

constraints, making the final outcomes both theoretically sound and practically relevant to the industry's current and future needs.

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10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Informed Consent Form

This appendix presents the Informed Consent Form utilized during the primary data collection phase of this study. To ensure adherence to ethical research standards, each participant was provided with this document prior to the interview process. The form outlines the study's objectives regarding the digitalization of training at Aura Hospitality & Leisure[15], guarantees participant anonymity, and confirms the voluntary nature of their contribution. For the purposes of this report, the document has been translated into English to ensure linguistic consistency. However, the original version was delivered and signed by the participants in Portuguese to ensure full comprehension of the terms.

Informed Consent Form

This document formalizes your participation in the research project regarding the digitalization of training strategies within Aura Hospitality & Leisure[16], conducted as part of an Internship Report for the completion of a Master's degree in Business and Management. By agreeing to participate, you acknowledge that the purpose of this interview is to gather your professional perspective and personal experience regarding the implementation of digital tools in daily operations, as well as the impact of technological transformation on the activities and training strategies for the group's employees.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, meaning you are free to interrupt the interview at any time or refuse to answer specific questions without any form of penalty or prejudice. All data collected—including demographic information such as age, educational background, and details regarding your current role—will be handled with strict anonymity and confidentiality. The analysis

[15] The pseudonym "Aura Hospitality & Leisure" is used throughout this report to ensure confidentiality, though the original documentation provided to participants identified the organization by its legal name.

of this information will be conducted exclusively within the academic context of this study, ensuring your identity remains protected throughout all stages of data processing.

To ensure accuracy in data collection and to facilitate subsequent transcription and analysis, we request your authorization to record the session. It is reiterated that the data will be analyzed for academic purposes only. Should any further reflections arise after the conversation, you may contact the researcher through the provided channels. By signing this document, you confirm that you have been duly informed about the nature of the study and consent to the use of your responses for the scientific purposes described herein.

Participant's Signature

_____ ____ /____ /2026

Researcher's Signature

_____ ____ /____ /2026

Appendix 2: Operationalization of the Interview Scripts

This appendix details the structural logic and thematic categorization of the research instruments employed during the qualitative phase of this study. The following framework illustrates the operationalization of the interview process, mapping specific inquiry blocks to their corresponding research objectives and the core variables under investigation. By aligning the thematic flow with the overarching goals of this investigation, this table ensures methodological transparency and demonstrates how the front-line perspectives and managerial insights were systematically captured to address the digital transition within the organization.

Table 2: Operationalization of the Interview Scripts

Thematic Block	Research Objective	Key Variables Investigated
Block I: Participant Profile	To contextualize qualitative data based on organizational tenure and department affiliation.	Digital literacy, prior technological exposure, and sub-departmental culture.
Block II: Digital Transition	To evaluate the shift from traditional face-to-face training to digital training initiatives.	Institutional communication efficacy, perceived rationale for change, and onboarding quality.
Block III: Benefits & Barriers	To assess the operational impact and practical limitations of digital tools.	Learning flexibility, asynchronous vs. synchronous engagement, digital fatigue, technical glitches, and loss of human touch.
Block IV: Future Training Configurations	To project a sustainable long-term pedagogical strategy for the group.	Receptivity to hybrid models and the suitability of digital vs. physical environments for skill acquisition.

Appendix 3: Interview Scripts

The following sections detail the semi-structured interview scripts employed during the qualitative data collection phase of this research. These instruments were strategically designed to examine the evolution of training strategies across the organization's diverse functional areas. While the organization's formal identity was referenced throughout the data collection process, the subsequent guides utilize the previously established pseudonym to uphold the confidentiality protocols established for this study. All participants were fully apprised of the academic nature of the research, ensuring that their contributions remain strictly anonymous in adherence to the

ethical standards and methodological rigour of this investigation. The original Portuguese instruments were translated into English to ensure linguistic consistency.

Appendix 3.1: Leadership and Management Level

The following interview script was designed to evaluate the managerial perspective on digital transformation. It explores how department heads and unit managers perceive the operational efficiency of online training. The data gathered through this script provided the basis for analysing middle-management receptivity and leadership considerations.

Opening

Good morning/Good afternoon, how are you? I would like to thank you for participating in this interview and for being available to contribute to the success of this research project. As you know, I am developing my Internship Report to complete my Master's in Management and Business. The theme of this study is the digitalization of Human Resources Management and training strategies within Aura Hospitality & Leisure.

The objective of this conversation is to gather your perspective on the implementation of digital tools in your department's daily operations and the impact of technological transformation on the activities of other employees. Your data will be treated anonymously and confidentially; therefore, I invite you to sign this document which confirms your consent. If you agree, I would like to record the session to facilitate the subsequent transcription. Shall we begin?

Questions

1. To start our conversation, I would like to collect some demographic data. Could you tell me your age and educational background? Additionally, what is your current role, how long have you been with the company, and how long have you held this position?
2. Could you briefly describe the main activities you perform in your role?
3. What kind of changes have been observed between how training was conducted previously and how it is managed now through digital processes?
4. How would you describe your motivation to start an online training session compared to a face-to-face one?

5. How do you compare your ability to concentrate between face-to-face and online training? Do you notice significant differences in your focus and engagement?
6. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of digital training compared to face-to-face, regarding the quality of content and your ability to retain and consolidate information in the long term?
7. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of digital training compared to face-to-face, regarding the quality of content and your ability to retain and consolidate information in the long term?
8. Are you able to easily apply the content learned through digital platforms to your daily work?
9. During an online training session, have you ever felt that external factors (such as internet connection quality, equipment limitations, or lack of time and proper conditions during your shift) hindered your performance or made it difficult to use digital tools?
10. Do you experience any barriers or difficulties in accessing online training due to a lack of familiarity with digital tools?
11. Following the previous two questions, as a team manager, have any barriers been reported to you by your staff? If so, which ones? What are the main causes, and what strategies do you apply to address them?
12. How do you manage interruptions (emails, messages, colleagues) while attending online training at your workstation?
13. Do you miss the informal exchange of experiences (breaks, coffee, side conversations) that occurs during face-to-face training?
14. Is the fact that you do not have to travel to a specific location for training viewed by you as a benefit in terms of well-being and productivity?
15. How do you evaluate the ease of consulting support materials whenever a doubt arises in your daily work?
16. Do you feel that the digital environment facilitates participation and makes it more comfortable to ask questions?

17. Do you consider the duration of online sessions to be appropriate, or do you feel that digital fatigue sets in faster than in face-to-face sessions?
18. Can you identify any specific skill you acquired through digital platforms that you are already applying in your current position?
19. Does the company guarantee the necessary time and conditions for you to conduct training with quality, or do you feel you have to fit it between other tasks?
20. Do you feel that participating in online training has helped you become more agile in using collaborative tools (Teams, Zoom, e-learning platforms)?
21. If you could choose the ideal training model for your profile, would you opt for a 100% digital, face-to-face, or a hybrid (mixed) model?

Closing

I would like to conclude by thanking you for your availability and the transparency in your answers. Your contribution is fundamental to understanding the real effectiveness of digital training. Before we finish, is there any aspect or suggestion on this topic that we have not yet discussed and that you consider relevant to mention? I remind you that all data collected will be treated strictly anonymously and analysed only within the scope of this study. If any additional reflections arise after our conversation, please feel free to contact me.

Appendix 3.2: Human Resources Department

This instrument was developed to capture the strategic and administrative perspective of the Human Resources Department regarding the digitalization of training. The questions aim is to assess the transition from traditional to digital models, the tools employed, and the perceived organizational impact. This script served as the primary data collection tool for the interviews conducted with HR employees.

Opening

Good morning/Good afternoon, how are you? I would like to thank you for participating in this interview and for being available to contribute to the success of this research project. As you know, I am developing my Internship Report to complete my Master's in Management and Business. The

theme of this study is the digitalization of Human Resources Management and training strategies within Aura Hospitality & Leisure.

The objective of this conversation is to gather your perspective on the implementation of digital tools in your department's daily operations and the impact of technological transformation on the activities of other employees. Your data will be treated anonymously and confidentially; therefore, I invite you to sign this document which confirms your consent. If you agree, I would like to record the session to facilitate the subsequent transcription. Shall we begin?

Questions

1. To start our conversation, I would like to collect some demographic data. Could you tell me your age and educational background? Additionally, what is your current role, how long have you been with the company, and how long have you held this position?
2. Could you briefly describe the main activities you perform in your role?
3. What kind of transformations or changes have been observed in the digitalization process introduced in this area?
4. In what way does digital technology facilitate the training process?
5. Regarding the conduct of training sessions, what digital tools are used (such as platforms for online meetings or content learning)? How do these tools change the dynamic between the trainer and the trainee?
6. What technological resources are made available to employees so they can perform training actions autonomously?
7. Is there any kind of resistance from management or employees regarding online training? If so, can you provide examples?
8. How do you evaluate the general receptivity of employees to digital training? Do you feel their motivation is equivalent to what they demonstrate in a face-to-face format?
9. Do you believe that online training ensures the same consolidation of knowledge as the face-to-face model?
10. What type of technical difficulties (such as lack of time during shifts or difficulty accessing these platforms) do employees most frequently report to your department?

11. How does the department try to mitigate the lack of informal interaction (the moments of break and socializing) that employees usually value in the face-to-face format?
12. Do you feel that the reaction to the digitalization of training varies depending on the role the employee performs in the company?
13. Besides the role itself, how do factors such as age, education, and digital literacy influence employees' adoption of these platforms? Do you feel these factors are responsible for revealing difficulties in using digital tools?
14. Considering the geographical dispersion of the group's units, how do digital tools facilitate the scale of training, ensuring that content reaches all employees equitably?
15. Do you believe that, with the use of digital training, the elimination of travel has a real impact on the employee's well-being and productivity?
16. How has it been trying to fit online training into working hours? What are its main benefits and obstacles?
17. How do you evaluate the autonomy of employees in consulting support materials after the training?
18. In your opinion, has the digital environment encouraged an increase in employee participation during training sessions?
19. During the planning process of digital initiatives, is there an increased concern regarding the duration of sessions to avoid digital fatigue, or did that concern with the workload already exist in the face-to-face regime?
20. Do you feel that the mandatory use of platforms like Google Meet or Zoom has increased the agility and digital literacy of employees?
21. Considering the group's culture and the needs of the different units, what do you consider to be the ideal training model for the company: a 100% digital, face-to-face, or a hybrid model? Why?

Closing

I would like to conclude by thanking you for your availability and the transparency in your answers. Your contribution is fundamental to understanding the real effectiveness of digital training.

Before we finish, is there any aspect or suggestion on this topic that we have not yet discussed and that you consider relevant to mention? I remind you that all data collected will be treated strictly anonymously and analysed only within the scope of this study. If any additional reflections arise after our conversation, please feel free to contact me.

Appendix 3.3: Operational Staff

This interview guide targeted employees directly involved in hospitality and sports operations, such as Housekeeping, Reception, and Restaurant staff. The questions were framed to identify front-line realities, including technical difficulties, physical-digital friction, and the practical application of digital knowledge in a high-intensity service environment.

Opening

Good morning/Good afternoon, how are you? I would like to thank you for participating in this interview and for being available to contribute to the success of this research project. As you know, I am developing my Internship Report to complete my Master's in Management and Business. The theme of this study is the digitalization of Human Resources Management and training strategies within Aura Hospitality & Leisure.

The objective of this conversation is to gather your perspective on the implementation of digital tools in your department's daily operations and the impact of technological transformation on the activities of other employees. Your data will be treated anonymously and confidentially; therefore, I invite you to sign this document which confirms your consent. If you agree, I would like to record the session to facilitate the subsequent transcription. Shall we begin?

Questions

1. To start our conversation, I would like to collect some demographic data. Could you tell me your age and educational background? Additionally, what is your current role, how long have you been with the company, and how long have you held this position?
2. Could you briefly describe the main activities you perform in your role?
3. What kind of changes have been observed between how training was conducted previously and how it is managed now through digital processes?

4. How would you describe your motivation to start an online training session compared to a face-to-face one?
5. How do you compare your ability to concentrate between face-to-face and online training? Do you notice significant differences in your focus and engagement?
6. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of digital training compared to face-to-face, regarding the quality of content and your ability to retain and consolidate information in the long term?
7. Are you able to easily apply the content learned through digital platforms to your daily work?
8. During an online training session, have you ever felt that external factors (such as internet connection quality, equipment limitations, or lack of time and proper conditions during your shift) hindered your performance or made it difficult to use digital tools?
9. Do you experience any barriers or difficulties in accessing online training due to a lack of familiarity with digital tools?
10. How do you manage interruptions (emails, messages, colleagues) while attending online training at your workstation?
11. Do you miss the informal exchange of experiences (breaks, coffee, side conversations) that occurs during face-to-face training?
12. Is the fact that you do not have to travel to a specific location for training viewed by you as a benefit in terms of well-being and productivity?
13. How do you evaluate the ease of consulting support materials whenever a doubt arises in your daily work?
14. Do you feel that the digital environment facilitates participation and makes it more comfortable to ask questions?
15. Do you consider the duration of online sessions to be appropriate, or do you feel that digital fatigue sets in faster than in face-to-face sessions?
16. Can you identify any specific skill you acquired through digital platforms that you are already applying in your current position?

17. Does the company guarantee the necessary time and conditions for you to conduct training with quality, or do you feel you have to fit it between other tasks?
18. Do you feel that participating in online training has helped you become more agile in using collaborative tools (Teams, Zoom, e-learning platforms)?
19. If you could choose the ideal training model for your profile, would you opt for a 100% digital, face-to-face, or a hybrid (mixed) model?

Closing

I would like to conclude by thanking you for your availability and the transparency in your answers. Your contribution is fundamental to understanding the real effectiveness of digital training. Before we finish, is there any aspect or suggestion on this topic that we have not yet discussed and that you consider relevant to mention? I remind you that all data collected will be treated strictly anonymously and analysed only within the scope of this study. If any additional reflections arise after our conversation, please feel free to contact me.

Appendix 4: Demographic and Professional Profile

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the digital transition within the organization, a diverse sample of 18 participants was selected for the qualitative phase of this study. The following table provides a detailed characterization of the interviewees, categorized by their professional roles, academic background, and organizational tenure. This cross-section of the workforce, ranging from front-line operational staff to corporate leadership, allows for a multi-layered analysis of how digitalization affects various departments, while considering how factors such as age and digital literacy influence the adoption of new training methods. The use of identifiers (E1 through E18) ensures participant anonymity while maintaining the traceability of the insights discussed in the analysis.

Table 3: Demographic and Professional Profile

ID	Job Title / Role	Age	Gender	Educational Background	Organizational Tenure	Department / Business Unit
E1	Project & Revenue Manager	35	Male	Bachelor's Degree	2.5 Years	Management / Padel Project
E2	Hotel Director	29	Female	Bachelor's Degree	7 Years	Direction / Hotel
E3	Hotel Director	56	Male	Bachelor's Degree	1 Year and 10 Months	Direction / Hotel
E4	Server	41	Female	Secondary Education	2 Years	Food & Beverage / Hotel
E5	Server	40	Male	Secondary Education	6 Months	Food & Beverage / Hotel
E6	Housekeeping Staff	58	Female	Basic Education	7 Years	Housekeeping / Hotel

E7	Housekeeping Staff	25	Female	Secondary Education	2.5 Years	Housekeeping / Hotel
E8	Housekeeping Staff	34	Female	Secondary Education	2 Years	Housekeeping / Hotel
E9	Receptionist	26	Male	Secondary Education	2.5 Years	Front Office / Hotel
E10	Receptionist	23	Female	Secondary Education	2 Years	Front Office / Hotel
E11	Accounting Technician	29	Female	Master's Degree	3 Years	Accounting / Central Services
E12	Accounting Technician	25	Female	Bachelor's Degree	8 Months	Accounting / Central Services
E13	Accounting Technician	25	Female	Bachelor's Degree	3 Years	Accounting / Central Services
E14	Marketing Technician	30	Male	Bachelor's Degree	2 Years	Marketing / Central Services

E15	IT Technician	33	Male	Secondary Education	1.5 Years	IT / Central Services
E16	Sales Technician	27	Male	Bachelor's Degree	8 Months	Sales / Central Services
E17	HR Technician	22	Female	Bachelor's Degree	9 Months	HR / Central Services
E18	HR Director	46	Female	Bachelor's Degree	4 Years	HR / Central Services

Appendix 5: Content Analysis Grid – Empirical Evidence Mapping

This grid represents the operationalization of the Material Exploration phase described in Section 5.5.2. It maps the four primary dimensions of the study, namely Context, Perception, Impact, and Culture, to verbatim evidence extracted from the 18 interview transcripts. To facilitate data triangulation, participants are identified using alphanumeric codes (E1-E18), which correspond directly to the Demographic and Professional Profile presented in Appendix 3. This allows for the association of individual profiles and backgrounds with their respective statements. The "Real Evidence" column provides direct citations, while the "Analytical Inference" column demonstrates the transition from manifest content to latent meaning, following Bardin's (1977) framework of categorical analysis. This grid serves as the evidentiary base for the findings and thematic discussions presented in Chapter 6.

Table 4: Content Analysis Grid – Empirical Evidence Mapping

Dimension	Participant (Source Code)	Category (Theme)	Real Evidence (Verbatim Citation)	Analytical Inference
RQ1: Strategic and Operational Optimization	E1	Strategic Scalability	*"Digitalization is preponderant for any company that wants to grow (...) it is much better for there to be control over the training file of each element."*	Digitalization acts as a centralized governance tool for maintaining quality standards during rapid corporate expansion.
	E14	Logistical Agility	*"We can have someone in Lisbon and someone in Porto and easily schedule a training initiative for both (...) it's cheaper for the company."*	Optimization is achieved through the elimination of spatial-temporal barriers, maximizing organizational resource efficiency.
	E16	Commercial Speed	*"I believe it was a much slower process (...) it*	Digital tools shorten the administrative cycle of training, improving

Dimension	Participant (Source Code)	Category (Theme)	Real Evidence (Verbatim Citation)	Analytical Inference
			would have to go through many more people in a much more bureaucratic way and with less speed."	organizational responsiveness.
RQ2: Critical Barriers and Adoption Constraints	E5	Operational Friction	*"I am here eight hours working on my feet, back and forth, and suddenly you stay two hours online listening to the person talking... you fall asleep."*	High-intensity manual roles experience cognitive exhaustion when transitioning to static digital learning.
	E10	Service Primacy	*"When I had online training [at the front desk], customers appeared, so I*	The guest-first priority in hospitality creates a structural barrier to the deep focus required for synchronous online learning.

			lost focus... it's more about that."	
	E15	Infrastructure Gaps	*"The software is ready, but the hardware is not (...) there are limitations in equipment or a colleague distracting you."*	Digital strategy is currently bottlenecked by the physical hardware and environmental distractions at the operational front-line.
	E14	Attention Span	*"Four hours online is too much (...) after two hours it is already a very long period to remain fully concentrated."*	Digital concentration thresholds are lower than face-to-face, requiring micro-learning formats.
RQ3: Employee Engagement and Social Dynamics	E1	Pedagogical Flow	*"What I feel makes a big difference is knowing beforehand if there is a quiz at the end because we will be more concentrated."*	Engagement is persuaded through immediate accountability tools to replace the social presence of a trainer.

	E6	The Tactile Gap	*"For practical things like cleaning a specific area or handling a product, it is better face-to-face."*	High manual precision roles require physical sensory validation that digital simulations cannot currently replace.
	E18	Social Dynamics	*"In online initiatives many people don't turn on their cameras (...) the trainer is literally talking to black squares. I think that changes it negatively."*	The loss of non-verbal cues in digital environments creates a participation void that hinders emotional engagement.
	E3	Networking Loss	*“I prefer face-to-face training because it establishes networking with other fellow trainees. There is a lot of sharing of experience and information that can only be*	Digitalization risks eroding informal interaction, consequently preventing spontaneous knowledge exchange and weakening organizational cohesion.

	E6	The Tactile Gap	*"For practical things like cleaning a specific area or handling a product, it is better face-to-face."*	High manual precision roles require physical sensory validation that digital simulations cannot currently replace.
	E18	Social Dynamics	*"In online initiatives many people don't turn on their cameras (...) the trainer is literally talking to black squares. I think that changes it negatively."*	The loss of non-verbal cues in digital environments creates a participation void that hinders emotional engagement.
	E3	Networking Loss	*“I prefer face-to-face training because it establishes networking with other fellow trainees. There is a lot of sharing of experience and information that can only be*	Digitalization risks eroding informal interaction, consequently preventing spontaneous knowledge exchange and weakening organizational cohesion.

			achieved in person."	
	E18	Psychological Safety	*"During online initiatives they feel more comfortable asking questions because they can't see the people and it's not as exposing, they don't feel so put on the spot."*	Digital platforms reduce the social cost of admitting ignorance, encouraging participation.
RQ4: Individual Performance and Professional Efficiency	E14 and E2	Operational Autonomy	*"If a doubt arises you go to the file. That is mega important (...) it's a plus-value [to have access to the material]."*	The transition from memory-based knowledge retention to search-based autonomy increases frontline problem-solving speed.
	E2	Information Persistence	*"As a PowerPoint was shared you take a screenshot, you save it and it is information that stays."*	Digital artifacts (screenshots) function as a permanent, searchable external memory for daily operational tasks.

	E10	Back-Office Efficiency	*"I learned a lot about cybersecurity (...) I had a lot of uncertainty about what was true or not [in emails], and the course was very explanatory."*	Targeted digital training directly reduces organizational risk by clarifying complex technical procedures.