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Knowledge Creation Process: Evidence from the Accommodation Industry

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Abstract:

This paper clarifies the role of knowledge creation process (KCP) among academic studies. It shortly introduces the development of the knowledge management (KM) concepts. The empirical part consists of a search for and analysing of academic articles using a meta-analysis that consider KCP, the arm of KM, in the accommodation industry. According to the results, significant appraisal of the KCP activities among higher star rating and larger accommodation businesses are taking place due to the knowledge employees can contribute potentially to improving the business performance. This paper is recommending that scholars study the KCP activities in comparison with their competitors for the larger accommodation business and if superior performance is generated. For the small and medium accommodation businesses, the emphasis is the owners-managers' perceptions since they are the main decision-makers, and due to infancy of the small and medium enterprise (SME) application in KCP.

Keywords: Knowledge Creation Process (KCP), hotel, accommodation industry

1. Introduction

There is a universal consensus that KM is characterized as one of the more crucial competitive edge aspect for organisations (Drucker, 1993; Ferran-Urdaneta, 1999; Quinn, 1992; Stewart, 1997; Toffler, 1990). The growing acceptance that KM can result in sustainable competitive edge in the 21st century has also seen larger organisations becoming more aware of the value of knowledge in enhancing organisational competitiveness and efficiency. This growing trend for their trepidation with KM is the creativity (Nonaka & Nishiguchi, 2000; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) and innovation (Hargadon, 1998; von Krogh, et al., 2000) that organizations can generate with knowledge and by applying it. Other positive results include harmonising the organisational competencies in a manner that drives the enhancement of the whole performance in both public and private commercial as well as in the not-for-profit divisions (Pitt & Clarke, 1999).

From the discussion above, KM is vital to the survival of organisations. However, KM is challenging as requires great outputs of resources. This has attracted much interest among the business stakeholders in KM and it has uses in a very wide scope of activities in creating, exchanging, and improving intellectual assets within an organisation. Despite KM's significance, there is no universal definition of KM and what it actually means (Haggie & Kingston, 2003).

Choi (2000) agrees the incomprehensible task to describing KM. Van Ewyk (2000) describes KM as a deliberate strategy of attaining the right knowledge and channeling to the right people at the correct time. Through such facilitation among the organisational members to take further actions, KM processes can help to enhance business performance. Seemann et al. (1999) have defined KM being a conscious intention of procedures, tools, and structures with the plan to improve, increase, renew, and share the adoption of knowledge from any of the three aspects – human, social, as well as structural pertaining to intellectual resources. Martinez (1998, p. 89) describes KM as a form of motivating individuals to transfer their knowledge by building conducive environment conditions and systems for seizing, organizing, and distributing knowledge all over the organisation. Wiig (1997) goes on to explain by directing towards KM objectives, it is an acknowledgment of the significant worth of an organisation's knowledge assets as well as how an organisation can act rationally so as to protect practicability and organisational success.

2. Development of KCP Concept

In another paradigm, Nonaka (1994) believes exploration of brand new opportunities through entrepreneurial orientation and culture with the support of strategic resource management and changes have enable firms to exploit growth prospects and explore entrepreneurial opportunities. The author adds the socialisation, externalisation, combination, and internalisation (SECI) model can

better describe the exploitation factors under KCP. KCP associates with the popular resource-based view (RBV) of the organisation. The RBV supports the notion that organisations have to look for and exploit unique resources (Ireland et al., 2003) such as knowledge-relating resources (Grant, 1996, Winter; Hunt, 1995; Hunt & Morgan, 1996; Kyrgidou & Hughes, 2010; Teece, 1998) dependent on capable staff and managers who possess good qualification (Barney, 1991; Bhardwaj et al., 2007), industry expertise, and skills. These resources are a vital influence on an organisation's performance level and their progress in developing a sustainable competitive edge (Alvarez & Barney, 2002; Wernerfelt, 1984). Various preceding researches have proven the importance of KCP in successful organisations (Chia, 2003; Gold et al., 2001; Kogut & Zander, 2003; Matusik & Hill, 1998; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) because knowledge displays permanency, uniqueness, and diversity (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1996, Winter; Hunt & Arnett, 2006; Zack, 1999). Organisational actions that link knowledge in new and distinguishing manner are said to offer more value-add product offerings to their customers and have been proven to generate better organisational performance (Hunt & Morgan, 1997; Lee & Choi, 2003; Nonaka & Konno, 1998).

There seems to be potential contribution from the above discussion related to KCP, thus it will be inspiring to look at the operationalisation of KCP within the accommodation industry. Henceforth, related prior literature in this field from Year 2002 till the present times will be reviewed.

3. Operationalization of KCP within the Accommodation Industry

In the late 1980s to mid1990s, the accommodation industry has focused on developing future managers' competencies through hospitality education to cope better with the hospitality industry challenges as in the case of Hogan's (1989) and Hsu and Gregory's (1995) studies. Hogan's (1989) study findings in a survey of seventy-seven hotel and restaurant organisations in United States of America have found hotel operators consider knowledge in marketing and sales, food and beverage, housekeeping management as well as people skills say, human relations and service are the main criteria when selecting entry-level managers. As for Hsu and Gregory's (1995) study, which is an extraction of conclusions from the thirty-eight hotels in Taipei, Taiwan, human-relations skills are the prime importance in selecting entry-level managers excluding 'ensuring good safety practices of employees and guests throughout the property' and 'thorough understanding of front office operations'.

A few years later, the focus is on knowledge management frameworks that are workable for the hotels in the accommodation industry. There is a publication by Choi and Cho (2000) who have undertaken such approach. The scholars aim to develop a yield management technique to achieve revenue or profit maximisation from hotel room sales by adopting a probabilistic rule-based framework in knowledge. The role of the yield management is to offer hotel managers an option to achieve maximum room revenue through segregating accommodation sales in reference to different customer segments with decision rules in place or in view of the changing market dynamism.

Table 1 displays the prior literature in the hotel industry of seventeen studies that has been embracing the KCP concept from Year 2002 till present times. Varying terms are being used which includes intellectual capital, knowledge capturing, knowledge sharing, organisational learning or the learning organisation, otherwise have used back the original KM term which concurs with Choi's (2000) observation of the incomprehensible task in identifying KM.

No	Author(s)	Approach	Theoretical background	Type	Instrum-entation	Responde-nts/ interviewees	Amount of respon-dents	Unit of Analysis	Industry	Company business*
1	Bouncken (2002)	Knowledge Management for Quality Improvements in Hotel	Categories of knowledge in hotels; Knowledge management systems in hotels; Knowledge strategy in hotels; Illustrations of structures for knowledge management in hotels	N/A	Case-study	Hotel employees in Germany	Popu-lation 6000; N/A resp.	Firm	The Accor Hotel Group (brands like Sofitel, Novotel, Ibis, Formula One) in Germany	B2C
2	Bayraktar o-glu & Kutanis (2003)	Transforming hotels into learning organisations: a new strategy for going global	Organisational learning, the learning organisation	N/A	Case-study (Polat Renaissance) through inter-views	Managers and employees	-	Firm	5-star, 353 room, 584 beds in Istanbul, Turkey	B2C

3	Engstrom et al. (2003)	Evaluating intellectual capital in the hotel industry	Intellectual capital: human capital, structural capital, and customer capital, ICAP methodology	Qualitative using a benchmarking scale	Exploratory Case-study	Manager and middle managers	Sample 254, 190 resp.	Firm	13 hotels in the Radisson SAS Hotels and Resorts in Norway	B2C
4	Yang (2004a)	Qualitative knowledge capturing and organisational learning: two case studies in Taiwan hotels	Types of knowledge, knowledge capturing, types of learning process, organisational learning, knowledge capturing and learning theories	Qualitative	Case-study approach (Semi-structured interviews)	Managers & rank and file staff from 2 hotels: Employees from one hotel, say Hotel A The other hotel, say Hotel B	11 10	Firm	Two 5-star hotels in Taipei, Taiwan	B2C
5	Yang (2004b)	Job-related-knowledge sharing: comparative case studies	Knowledge, knowledge management, knowledge sharing, a sharing climate, approaches to sharing, motivation programs, feedback from the training, effective communication, and social interactions	Qualitative	Case study approach (Semi-structured interviews)	Managers & rank and file staff from 2 hotels: Employees from one hotel, say Hotel A The other hotel, say Hotel B	14 12	Firm	Two 5-star international managed chain in Taiwan	B2C
6	Yang & Wan (2004)	Advancing organisational effectiveness and knowledge management implementation	Knowledge management, knowledge sharing, organisational memory/knowledge storing; KM development: social interactions, KM technologies, corporate culture	Qualitative	Tape-recording semi-structured interviews)	Full-time top-level managers and rank and file staff	35	Firm	Four 5-star international hotels in Taiwan	B2C
7	Yang (2007)	Knowledge sharing: Investigative appropriate leadership roles and collaborative culture	Knowledge management (KM), Knowledge sharing (KS), a supportive organisational culture, leadership styles (KM & KS: Dependent Variable)	Quantitative	1 st phase: 1. Questionnaire survey, 7-point Likert scale 2. Interviews 2 nd phase:	Lower and middle level managers, and front-line employees One employee is a receptionist, another is a concierge supervisor, and finally,	Sample 300, 117 resp. 3 Sample 1200, 499 resp.	Firm	7 International tourist hotels in Taipei, Taiwan	B2C

					Survey question	room sales account manager Full-time employees			9 International tourist hotels in Taiwan	
8	Sigala & Chalkiti (2007)	Improving performance through tacit knowledge externalisation and utilisation	Definition and types of knowledge, Tacit knowledge: definition and types, tacit knowledge externalisation: definition, performance impact, process and inhibiting /facilitating factors, Tacit knowledge utilization: performance impact of knowledge use in business processes and inhibiting /facilitating factors	Qualitative	Questionnaire by mail following with semi-structured interviews	Managers	Questionnaire by mail: Sample 150 hotels, 18 resp. Semi-structured Inter-views with 2 managers	Firm	4 to 5 star hotels in Greece	B2C
9	Halin & Marnburg (2008)	Knowledge Management in the hospitality industry: A review of empirical research	Knowledge Management, Organisational learning	Conceptual Paper	Database research from strategic and management journal sources	N/A	2365 hits from the data-base searches	Firm	Tourism/tourist destinations / travel industry/ hospitality/ hotel(s) /lodging /hotel industry	B2C
10	Rosmah et al. (2008)	The Typology of Intellectual Capital and Knowledge Management in Malaysian Hotel Industry	Intellectual Capital – Human Capital, Structural Capital, and Relational Capital; Knowledge Management (KM: Dependent Variable)	Qualitative	Case-study approach (interviews)	Human Resource Managers	7	Firm	7 hotels – 2 hotels each for 3, 4, and 5 star rating hotels, & 1 with a 2-star rating	B2C
11	Yang (2008)	Individual attitudes and organisational knowledge sharing	Knowledge Management (KM), Individual and Organisational Learning, Knowledge sharing and individual attitudes, Knowledge storing (KS) (KS: Dependent Variable)	Quantitative	Survey questionnaire, 7-point Likert scale	Lower, middle, and top managers; rank-and-file employees	Sample, 1200,499 resp.	Firm	9 international tourist hotels in Taiwan	B2C
12	Hu et al. (2009)	Hospitality teams: Knowledge sharing and service	Knowledge management (KM) and sharing, service innovation	Quantitative	Pre-study phase: Structured inter-view	5 managers from different international		Firm		B2C

		innovation performance	performance, team culture (KM and sharing: Independent Variable)		Questionnaire, 6-point Likert scale	al tourist hotels Employees	Sample 1260, 621 resp.		35 international tourist hotels, mainly the high-class hotels in Taiwan	
13	Shaw & Williams (2009)	Knowledge transfer and management in tourism organisations: An emerging research agenda	Knowledge and competitive advantage, innovation and knowledge transfer: understanding conduits of knowledge	Conceptual Paper	Prior studies in knowledge-management and knowledge transfer	N/A	N/A	Firm	Tourism and hospitality	B2C
14	Yang (2010)	Antecedents and consequences of knowledge sharing in international tourist hotels	Basic KM concept, Attitude to sharing and attitude to learning, organisational support, leadership roles, knowledge sharing 9KS), organisational learning and effectiveness (KS: Dependent Variable)	Quantitative	Self-administered questionnaire, 7 point Likert scale	Front-line employees, low, middle, and top managers	Sample, 615 resp.	Firm	60 international hotel properties in Taiwan	B2C
15	Kim & Lee (2012)	A modified and extended Triandis model for the enablers–process–outcomes relationship in hotel employees' knowledge sharing	Triandis model (TRIANM) (Knowledge sharing: Dependent Variable)	Quantitative	Questionnaire, 7-point Likert scale	Employees	Sample 400, 327 resp.	Firm	Ten 5 star hotels in Busan, second largest city in Korea	B2C
16	Kim & Lee (2013)	Hospitality employee knowledge-sharing behaviors in the relationship between goal orientations and service innovative behaviour	Goal orientations, knowledge-sharing (KS) behaviours, employee service innovative behaviour (KS: Mediating variable)	Quantitative	Questionnaire, 7-point Likert scale	Employees	Sample 550, resp. 418	Firm	Ten 5 star hotels in Busan, second largest city in Korea	B2C
17	Zeglat & Zigan (2014)	Intellectual capital and its impact on business performance: Evidences from the Jordanian hotel industry	Intellectual capital: human capital, structural capital, relational capital (Independent Variable)	Quantitative	Questionnaire, 5 point Likert scale	Top and executive levels of managers	Sample 212, 116 resp.	Each single hotel (unit), is a single case	Thirty-one 4 to 5 star hotels in Jordan	B2C

Table 1: KCP studies in the accommodation industry from Year 2002 till present

*B2C: Business-to-consumer

Majority that is fifteen out of seventeen studies have been focusing on larger hotels or international-managed hotel chains rather than the small and medium enterprises such as backpackers, hostels, and motels. An exception is seen in Halin and Marnburg's (2008) as

well as Rosmah et al.'s (2008, December) studies which encompass across different tourism sectors and two to five star rating hotels respectively. Four to five star rating traditional hotels are the main respondents as Sigala and Chalikiti (2007) have cited due to the unfamiliarity of the topic per se, has led to the lack of participation among the one to three star hotels.

Five out seventeen earlier studies between Year 2002 to Year 2004 have undertaken the case study approach (Bayraktaroglu & Kutanis, 2003; Bouncken, 2002; Engstrom et al., 2003; Yang, 2004a, b) in one or two specific hotel properties. There has been a move to encompass the study over higher number of hotel properties in the more recent studies in the past decade. Yang and Wan's (2004) study encompasses four hotel properties while Rosmah et al. (2008, December) have covered seven four-to-five star hotels in Malaysia. Yang's (2007) study is undertaken between seven to nine international tourist hotel properties, and Yang's (2008) study is performed among nine international tourist hotel properties in the subsequent year. Hu et al. (2009) has conducted the study among thirty-five international tourist hotels in Taiwan. In the following year, Yang (2010) has published a knowledge sharing study over sixty international hotels in Taiwan. Kim and Lee's (2013) study encompasses ten five-star rating hotels in Busan, the second largest city in Korea. Zeglat and Zigan's (2014) study has covered thirty-one hotels in Amman, Petra, Aqaba, and Dead Sea, in Jordan. There are also several studies that have been conducted primarily in one country-specific location such as in Germany, Greece, Jordan, Korea, Norway, Taiwan, and Turkey.

Through the review of the seventeen studies in Table 1, the accommodation industry still remained distant towards KM and its arm, KCP. This is in spite there is a universal consensus that KM is characterised as one of the more crucial competitive edge aspect for organisations (Drucker, 1993; Ferran-Urdaneta, 1999; Quinn, 1992; Stewart, 1997; Toffler, 1990). It is discovered through Table 1, little effort is done to characterize KCP as a competitive edge resource or to compare with competitor hotels. The studies in Table 1 mostly remained novel and exploratory.

There is a notion by Seubert et al. (2001) who have explained sustainable competitive edge is also dependent on the effective communication of intellectual assets in the form of quick and efficient information exchange, so as to achieve business success in nowadays interconnectivity and global economies. In contrast, within the accommodation industry, it is gathered from Table 1 studies that even larger hotels find it hard to determine what and ways how to capture, store, and disseminate meaningful knowledge in their businesses. There is lack of such KCP processes in both lateral and vertical communication flows among the managers and their reporting staff. This could be a call for the accommodation businesses to harness technology to overcome the challenges above (Buckley & Carter, 2000).

In contrast to the notion that the accommodation industry professionals are mostly unfamiliar with KM and KCP (Sigala & Chalkiti, 2007), the accommodation businesses seemed quite concerned with associating the influence of the KM and KCP processes on different types of performance. Engstrom et al. (2003) have established a higher level of profit yield is gained in Norwegian hotels that possess a high structural and human capital. Sigala and Chalkiti (2007) have determined a higher emphasis on using hard performance measures to evaluate the tacit knowledge externalization processes among hotels in Greece. Yang's (2008) study also suggests that the organizational performance can see improvement if the Taiwanese front-line managers encourage learning and sharing among rank-and-file employees. Hu et al. (2009) established the vital influence of knowledge sharing and team culture among Taiwanese hotels on service innovation performance. In Kim and Lee's (2012) study in Busan, the negative relationship between performance goal orientation and knowledge collecting is weaker than the relationship between performance goal orientation and knowledge donating. In Zeglat and Zigan's (2014) study has established an intellectual capital having a significant and positive influence on the business performance of the Jordanian hotels. The trend above does demonstrate to some extent that hotels are aware of the potential contribution of KM and KCP processes towards improving different types of performance.

In fact, it is understandable that the prior literature has skewed towards studying larger hotels. The middle and top managers' perspective is mostly viewed due to unfamiliarity of the topic and often results in achieving a poor rate of response (Sigala & Chalkiti, 2007). Despite this, there are attempts to look from the employees' perspective by Bouncken (2002), and hence undertaken the research with a large population size of six thousand under Accor hotel group in Germany. Otherwise, the scholars to ensure the reliability and validity of the data also have undertaken their research that looks from the managers' perspective on top of the rank-and-file employees' perspective (Bayraktaroglu & Kutanis, 2003; Yang, 2004a, 2004b, 2007, 2008, 2010; Yang & Wan, 2004). Not surprisingly, there is some attempt to look from the rank-and-file employee's perspective as among themselves, they do share product-knowledge, customer-related knowledge, problem solving approaches, and situations they are facing through 'gossip', or 'buzz' as explained by Bathelt et al. (2004).

It is also has been noticed from Table 1, the notions of KCP are mostly at the intra-firm level and in fact little effort has been directed at KCP between the accommodation businesses. Bouncken's (2002) study comes closer to such consideration, when there is some effort in KCP that is developed between the Accor group hotel properties and its head office in Germany. This has drawn conclusions that the term 'tacit knowledge' is somewhat narrow, and could risk 'hot spots' (Hall & Andriani, 2002) of moving know-how across global networks.

Although accommodation services are mostly offered by SMEs, there are still limitations when harnessing the firm's tacit knowledge (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). This is in spite of the smaller size and having more flexibility in running their businesses compared to the larger accommodation operations. Social capital rather than formal mechanisms are in place in SMEs for channelling knowledge transfer within the firms, and one primary reason of such choice is to reduce transit costs (Dallago, 2000). Despite the challenges, fostering knowledge transfer to and between SMEs has been moving up the procedural charts, though could be limited to specific nation(s) or hotel chains. Examples include Boucken's (2002) study that has covered the smaller properties under the Accor hotel group and the study undertaken by Rosmah et al. (2008, December) is conducted on a nation-wide basis in Malaysia.

Referring to Table 1, there is an active contributor to KM hotel literature, Yang. The concern if has used the international hotels before, the research work could, subject to internal threats to validity, such as respondents who mature or becomes familiar with the outcome measures. As the time interval is reasonably short, sometimes within a span of a few months apart, throughout Years 2004 to 2010, participants may remember responses for later testing (Creswell, 2012). Because of the narrow characteristics of the participants whom are primarily from the international-managed hotels in Taiwan, it will be hard to generalize to small and medium accommodation businesses or populate the findings elsewhere. This is a one form of threat to external validity of the scholar's work (Creswell, 2012). Strengths across the scholar's work include a smooth organization of research work from using the case study to identify the important KCP dimensions in the early work before Year 2007 and later progressing to quantitative studies with new additions of international managed hotels as the years advanced, which may result in internal threats to validity that may have arisen, reduced to a minimal and tolerable level.

It seems from Table 1, the qualitative approach that uses the interview method (Engstrom et al., 2003; Rosmah et al., 2008, December; Yang, 2004a, 2004b; Yang & Wan, 2004) are the most popular, though there is some progress in which there are seven studies from Year 2007 that have adopted the quantitative approach (Hu et al., 2009; Kim & Lee, 2012, 2013; Yang, 2007, 2008, 2010; Zeglat & Zigan, 2014). The direction of the studies is normal since at the beginning, it will be vital to explore using qualitative research (Creswell, 2014) on the possible range of KM and KCP variables in specific to the accommodation industry. Later, quantitative research is used to examine the relationship among variables (Creswell, 2014).

The other emphasis is to look at the different KCP variables and its role across the studies in Table 1. KCP mainly assumes the role as independent variable (total nine studies). KCP is the dependent variable for two studies, a mediating variable for one study, and as a moderating variable for another study. The list can be found in Table 2.

No.	Author (s)	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Mediating Variable	Moderating Variable
1	Engstrom et al. (2003)	Intellectual capital (human capital, structural capital, customer capital)	-	-	-
2	Yang (2004a)	Knowledge capturing	-	-	-
3	Yang (2004b)	Knowledge sharing	-	-	-
4	Yang & Wan (2004)	Knowledge sharing	-	-	-
5	Yang (2007)	-	Knowledge sharing	-	-
6	Sigala & Chalkiti (2007)	-	-	-	Knowledge externalisation and Knowledge utilisation
7	Rosmah et al. (2008, December)	Knowledge Management practices (Intellectual Capital)	-	-	-
8	Yang (2008)	-	Organisational knowledge sharing	-	-
9	Hu et al. (2009)	Knowledge sharing	-	-	-
10	Yang J-T. (2010) Have 4 antecedents (attitude to sharing, attitude to learning, organisational support and leadership roles)	Knowledge sharing	-	-	-
11	Kim & Lee (2012) Have 7 antecedents (facilitating conditions, social factors, affect, enjoyment in helping others, knowledge self-efficacy, anticipated usefulness, anticipated reciprocal relationships)	Knowledge sharing behaviour	-	-	-
12	Kim & Lee (2013)	-	-	Knowledge sharing behaviour (knowledge collection and donation)	-
13	Zeglat & Zigan (2014)	Intellectual capital (human capital, structural capital, customer capital)	-	-	-
	Number of studies	9	2	1	1

Table 2: KCP assuming independent / dependent / mediating / moderating variable role

The most popular scale among the seven quantitative studies is the seven-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 7 strong agree) that is used in five studies by Kim and Lee (2012, 2013) as well as Yang (2007, 2008, 2010) studies. There is only one study that uses the six-point Likert-type scale (1= “strongly disagree” or “very dissatisfied”; 6 = “strongly agree” or “very satisfied”) by Hu et al. (2009) while Zeglat and Zigan’s (2014) study adopts the five-point Likert scale.

Looking at the prior literature, there are two prominent papers that have attempted to seek the knowledge gaps in the KM and KCP field. There is a comprehensive meta-analysis performed by Hallin and Marnburg (2008) on the empirical studies relating to KM between Years 1997 to 2005. Shaw and Williams (2009) also have published a conceptual paper that explores further on the knowledge mechanisms of transfer within tourism businesses which the study focuses on the innovativeness, competitiveness, and performance elements on top of Cooper’s (2006) study. This present study explores further on KM relative studies after Year 2002. All these seventeen studies in Table 1 have conducted firm-level analysis, and interesting to note that Zeglat and Zigan (2014) have undertaken the approach in which each single hotel (unit) is a single case. Eleven out of seventeen studies in Table 1 do integrate the individual-level rank-and-file employees’ attitude pertaining to knowledge sharing, learning, storing and transfer to some extent within the hotel organisations (Bayraktaroglu & Kutanis, 2003; Bouncken, 2002; Hu et al., 2009; Kim & Lee, 2012, 2013; Yang, 2004a, b, 2007, 2008, 2010; Yang & Wan, 2004).

Eleven out of seventeen studies in Table 1 have used the sample responses from the managers (Bayraktaroglu & Kutanis, 2003; Engstrom et al., 2003; Hu et al., 2009; Rosmah et al., 2008, December; Sigala & Chalkiti, 2007; Yang, 2004a, b, 2007, 2008, 2010; Zeglat & Zigan, 2014). The emphasis on researching staff from the rank-and-file to the managerial level is because from the perspective of RBV, their knowledge is seen as a prospective strategic organisational asset and a basis of sustainable competitive edge for organisations (Peteraf, 1993; Prahalad & Hamel, 1990; Wernerfelt, 1984). Interestingly, despite the importance of staff contribution to KCP, little emphasis has been placed on proper staff recruitment. There is also limited usage of tools to encourage explicit and tacit knowledge, staff training and motivational tools like bonuses across properties, though such initiatives has been seen in Bouncken’s (2002) study within the Accor hotel group in Germany.

For the KCP environment, scholars agree it must be conducive such as transforming the managers’ mentality that is driven to forge an organisational culture (Hu et al., 2009; Yang, 2009, 2010) that promotes both the organisation’s vision and learning process (Bayraktaroglu & Kutanis, 2003). Another condition to consider is the relationship between human capital and structural capital for the accommodation businesses. Interestingly, there has been conflicting outcomes against two studies which has undertaken this research approach. There is a significant relationship found under Engstrom et al.’s (2003) study. However for the other Malaysian study by Bontis et al. (2000), there is not a significant relationship between human capital and structural capital for services industries like the hotels. Hence, this division infers whether the conversion of individual staff knowledge into non-human knowledge for service businesses is possible, still remains a knowledge gap.

Other challenges are possible in KCP. There are hotel employees around who prefer to receive instructions including learning needs (Yang, 2004a). Staff self-discipline and the situations may vary, hence not always resulting in a successful knowledge transfer outcomes (Yang, 2004b). Despite employees are aware that gathering, storing, sharing, and learning knowledge about the job is essential, these practices remained informal. Impediments include on how to replicate tacit knowledge when there is varying staff capabilities, skills, attitude, work environment, and non-supportive management philosophies (Yang & Wan, 2004). Not surprisingly, the hotels are less likely to focus on human capital, particularly the two-to-three star hotels compared to the higher hotel ratings. Hence less investment in intellectual capital development is seen because the two-to-three star hotels view staff cost has to be under control (Rosmah et al., 2008, December).

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

In summary, research methods used in the studies reveal that the research in KCP is more intense in the higher star rating and international-managed accommodation businesses. Despite a slow kick-off with qualitative studies dominating mainly the studies before Year 2007, more quantitative methods have been used since then. This is because the phenomenon has seen more keen interest over the past fifteen years, and in such phenomena, the aim is to examine the relationships of KCP and/or other independent variables on dependent variables (Creswell, 2014) such as business performance. The data analysing has been performed across a wide-spread combination of KCP dimensions due to the incomprehensible task what on items should be researched upon (Choi, 2000). However, as often mentioned, large organisations differ from small firms. In contrast, there is still room to grow under KCP studies for the small and medium accommodation ventures. The analyses of quantitative studies are still lagging behind that has been found in this paper hence a call for more scholars to explore KCP in this SME field.

There are different collective set of KCP dimensions that have been applied and are able to establish that KCP is a critical factor in influencing in different manners on the business performance. Not surprising to see the KCP efforts must pay-off, thus the accommodation businesses seemed quite concern with associating the influence of the KM and KCP processes on different types of performance. Scholars seemed divided to use hard performance measures (Engstrom et al., 2003; Sigala & Chalkiti, 2007) or soft performance measures like service innovation performance (Hu et al., 2009). Thus the association of KCP dimensions with business performance will still be an emphasis, though future considerations will be whether to measure the hard or soft performance measures and even both should apply to large, medium, and small accommodation businesses. Hence, it will be a timely call of this present study to identify if SME owners-managers do practise KCP and if there is linkage with the performance of their small and medium accommodation businesses. It will be a form of descriptive studies in which majority of the prior studies have also utilised the same approach to capture the KCP activities, mainly the Likert point scale undertaken within the accommodation businesses.

Not surprisingly, it is found that there are a higher number of prior studies in Table 1 that have focused on studying from the employees' perspectives but more so the perspectives of the middle and top managers. KM is challenging as requires great outputs of resources. This has attracted much interest among the business stakeholders in KM since employees can be involved in one way or the other in creating, exchanging, and improving intellectual assets within an organisation (Bayraktaroglu & Kutanis, 2003; Bouncken, 2002; Engstrom et al., 2003; Hu et al., 2009; Kim & Lee, 2012, 2013; Rosmah et al., 2008, December; Sigala & Chalkiti, 2007; Yang, 2004a, b, 2007, 2008, 2010; Yang & Wan, 2004; Zeglat & Zigan, 2014).

Moving forward, in spite there seems to be a universal consensus among the larger hotels that KM is characterised as one of the more crucial competitive edge aspect for organisations (Drucker, 1993; Ferran-Urdaneta, 1999; Quinn, 1992; Stewart, 1997; Toffler, 1990), it is discovered through Table 1, little effort is done to characterise KCP as a competitive edge resource or to compare with competitor hotels. Hence, future studies can set in this direction for the larger accommodation businesses and determine if this association leads to superior performance.

Meanwhile, more needs to be contemplated to identify the specific KCP variables for the small and medium accommodation ventures since the literature still remains novel and exploratory. These accommodation businesses are primarily run by the owners-managers (Hill, 2001). This paper highlights research gaps in entrepreneurial studies, and hopefully inspires scholars in small and medium entrepreneurial field to investigate KCP from their perspectives. It will make sense to determine the significance of KCP activities through the view of the owners-managers before exploring further in comparing with their business competitors. With these in mind, this present study becomes as an important basis for studying entrepreneurial issues in more detail among SMEs in the accommodation industry and level of reliance of the SME owners-managers' perception to initiate the KCP activities within their businesses. This is on the contrary of measuring typically the employees' behaviour parameters because employees are the organisations' face and the notion that organisational success is dependent on employees' abilities (Sachdeva, 2015).

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