

# An Investigation of Employees' Perceptions of the Usability and Importance of Critical Thinking in a Knowledge Management Driven Work Culture: a Case of InterContinental Hanoi Westlake, Vietnam

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## Abstract

In today's knowledge-driven world, critical thinking skills and a knowledge management work environment emerge as a crucial necessity for navigating complexities and maximising organisational effectiveness. However, the impact of critical thinking on the application of knowledge management practices is a subject of ongoing debate in the academic realm, and a definitive answer has yet to emerge. To address this gap, this study was conducted based on employees' perspectives at the InterContinental Hanoi Westlake Hotel in Vietnam, representing a typical Southeast Asian context. Although the hotel has acknowledged the weight of knowledge and has implemented a relatively effective knowledge management procedure, there is a notable lack of initiatives aimed at enhancing employees' critical thinking skills. To accomplish this, a qualitative approach was employed, involving face-to-face interviews with a sample of 10 participants and a semi-structured method. The outcome reveals that raising a knowledge-oriental culture may not yield positive results or could even be detrimental in the absence of critical thinking skills. This study has appreciably contributed not only to the hospitality industry but also to related academic aspects, affirming the ongoing importance of cultivating critical thinking skills, particularly in high-context circumstances such as Vietnam. It recommended a thorough revamp of academic curricula within mandatory education systems to shape generations of critical employees.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background information

There is no denying that, in practical terms, the world is getting smaller. Whether this globalisation is viewed as a potential opportunity or a destructive force that needs to be restrained, it is evident that businesses are confronting various new issues (Brown, 1996). This situation has underlined how crucial it is to put in place a productive knowledge strategy in any organisation, whether it is profit-based or not. Also, hospitality is known to be an industry with an excessive labour turnover rate (Dwesini, 2019).

As a result, an effective process of gathering, preserving, using, and developing knowledge from numerous employee eras is becoming a must for the business as a whole. Under Plessis (2007), knowledge management is a methodical strategy for ensuring sustainable competitive advantage. Although the value of human aspects has been highlighted in knowledge management studies, there is still an absence of examination on how employees' mindsets and actions can be altered to enhance knowledge management practice (Indrašienė et al., 2021). A possible assumption is that critical thinking may be used as a supplementary to accomplish knowledge management goals. As demonstrated by Kelloway and Barling (2000), the concept of critical thinking is the capacity to think analytically,

synthetically and be able to solve issues. The economy has undergone a significant transformation from an industrial economy that prioritises commercial products to a knowledge-based economy where service and expertise are the primary products, and the hospitality industry is no exception. This paper will take a step further to explore how Vietnamese-driven knowledge management practices in the workplace affect employees' critical thinking skills in the case of InterContinental Hanoi Westlake in Vietnam. There exist assertions that Asian countries, including Vietnam, do not promote critical thinking to the same extent as other regions due to their traditional social structure. This paper will dive into how this case study implements a knowledge management approach in the workplace and simultaneously sets sufficient critical thinking skills in place.

### 1.2 *Rationale of the study*

A common concern for scholars interested in the organisational aspect of knowledge management and critical thinking is the knowledge-sharing approach and the decision-making process. Both of these ideas have been thoroughly investigated in scholarly works of literature. Given the aim of this study, several similar studies have been done. Most recently, Alduais et al. (2023) examined the influence of knowledge sharing on the effectiveness of decision-making in private hospitals in Jordan. Also, researchers have indicated delving into how the knowledge management strategy affects how individuals arrive at choices at work (Omotayo, 2015). Besides, Fahim and Ghamari (2011) found the challenges to integrating critical thinking in organisations and their requirements. However, the conceptual connections between these two phenomena and the function of critical thinking capacity in the knowledge management process have yet to be addressed. This research seeks to close this gap by setting the conceptual connections for these.

The outcomes of this research may influence how academics perceive and apply critical thinking and knowledge management theory/systems to educating and training, somewhat collectively instead of separately. A greater understanding of the value of critical thinking in knowledge management may also help shape new approaches for organisational strategy and employee development initiatives. The demand for knowledge management is driven by many critical causes, including the requirement for organisational survival, competitive differentiation, consequences of globalisation, and ageing labour pools (Omotayo, 2015). Consequently, lifelong learning has become necessary, and knowledge management has

gained importance due to the market's rising intensity and rapid pace of innovation. As explained by Desouza (2011), if knowledge fails to be handled with sufficient care, organisations will not be operating at their best, which will lead to the inefficient development and delivery of products and services, which will ultimately lead to dissatisfied customers and the downfall of the company. By acknowledging this, not to mention the improvements in awareness and education highlighted above, the writer believes that this study will alter and improve the way hospitality managers utilise the relationship between knowledge management and critical thinking in business management and development. Notably, in the case of this investigation, Vietnamese managers will better grasp the vital role underlying critical thinking and knowledge management in a high-context culture. This contributes to the hotel's long-term and solid growth, together with a high staff satisfaction rate.

### 1.3 *Aim and objectives*

The aim of this study is to investigate the employees' perceptions of the usability and importance of critical thinking in a knowledge management driven work culture: the case of InterContinental Hanoi Westlake, Vietnam. To achieve this aim, following objectives will be enquired:

- To investigate the impact of the knowledge management approach on influencing employees' workplace decision-making process at InterContinental Hanoi Westlake
- To analyse the implementation of critical thinking training at the InterContinental Hanoi Westlake workplace
- To identify the work performance standards and expectations applied by hotel InterContinental Hanoi Westlake.

## **Chapter 2 Literature review**

### 2.1 *Knowledge management*

From the point of view of El-Farr and Hosseingholizadeh (2019), the perspective on knowledge as an asset and knowledge management as a process has garnered significant focus, emphasising strategic Human Resources management as key elements in gaining a competitive edge in the marketplace. The management and framework of knowledge-based assets are becoming significant challenges for enterprises in the 21st century and one of the most crucial sources of sustainable competitive edge in the market today (Desouza et al., 2018). In a contemporary knowledge-based economy, it is no longer feasible to differentiate oneself from

the competitor set by relying on traditional tangible labour, land, and capital resources. This holds true for every sector of the economy, including the hospitality industry. Epistemologists and sociologists have produced a number of definitions and classifications for 'knowledge management' from a variety of angles, but there has yet to be a consensus. What follows is an overview of the construct and the 'knowledge' itself.

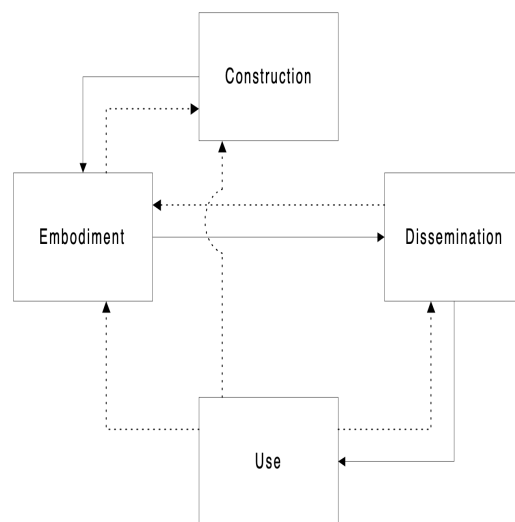
In 2011, Baloh, Desouza, and Paquette all positive that without having the knowledge to manage, there would be no knowledge management. While 'knowledge' is a familiar term used in most papers in the past, the concept of it has remained surprisingly simplistic among researchers. Per Cardoso (2003, p.135), organisational knowledge consists of a "complex, dynamic and multidimensional combination of elements of a cognitive, emotional and behavioural order, an asset that is personally and socially constructed, and whose orientation towards action makes it a determinant for organisational functioning". Davenport and Prusak (1998) also provided a more thorough definition of knowledge in the paper 'Working Knowledge: How Organisations Manage What They Know'. On their authority, knowledge is derived from information through the four C words (comparison, consequences, connections, and conversation).

From the very start, knowledge management is considered an approach that can be implemented in a company internally to guarantee that correct knowledge hits the correct people at the right time and that they can share and utilise that information to enhance organisational performance (O'Dell and Greyson, 1998). Furthermore, based on Epetimehin and Ekundayo (2011), knowledge management initiatives help organisations share insightful organisational knowledge, reduce waste of effort, avoid the need to reinvent the wheel, cut down on employee training time, retain intellectual capital as a result of employee turnover, and adapting to evolving surroundings and markets. The intellectual organisation's creativity and uniqueness started to enhance at this point. Pursuant to Plessis (2007), knowledge management is a methodical strategy for ensuring sustainable strategic competitive advantage. This declaration has also been supported and improved by Omotayo (2015) as she framed that besides knowledge, knowledge management contains three other significant components that work together to produce a solid knowledge management strategy - people, processes and technology.

For the first component, it is fair to say that people are the core of knowledge management from the very beginning to the very end. In other words, knowledge principally is generated by

people, and people are necessary for knowledge to be present. In this aspect, knowledge sharing or knowledge transfer is becoming an increasingly attractive subject of study for scholars (Hislop, 2003). Knowledge sharing entails the exchange of information, expertise, and ideas among individuals or teams (Wang and Ruhe, 2007). To guarantee that all pertinent information is shared and taken into account, sharing is a complicated process that calls for trust, openness, and good communication. Moreover, although certain research has focused on the impact of knowledge exchange on decision-making, a limited number have examined this aspect specifically from the employees' standpoint (Alduais et al., 2023).

Secondly, processes are characterised as logical and mechanical objects that guide how work is carried out in businesses (Baloh et al., 2011). In particular, the knowledge management process is believed to have a sequential pattern of construction, embodiment, dissemination, and use, as depicted in Figure 1 (Demarest, 1997).



**Figure 1.** The Knowledge Management Process (Demarest, 1997)

In this approach, construction involves creating or organising knowledge, for example, diagnosing different customer problems. After we have the knowledge as the content, an embodiment is like a container, most often referring to documents. Dissemination is the processes and technical systems that make the embodied knowledge accessible to individuals in the firm for practical use in performing tasks for customers, suppliers, business partners, and the firm itself. The last stage, use, is the ultimate goal for every knowledge management system and corresponds to applying relevant knowledge to generate commercial value.

Technology is the final element in knowledge management (Omotayo, 2015). Technology support, in line with Lee and Choi (2003) and Roberts (2000), is the availability of information and communication technology to promote knowledge storage, rapid gathering, retrieval, and sharing. Ultimately, technology does not make organisations share knowledge, but it may broaden the breadth and scope of such exchanges if individuals want (Al- Bastaki and Shajera, 2014). As Marc Demarest (1997, p.379) disclosed, "the only reasonable purpose of an organised knowledge management practice in the firm is to increase the quality and quantity of marketplace performances". However, when reviewing the academic literature published on the matter, there is not much the relative absence of empirical research proving an actual correlation between knowledge management and organisational achievement. Previous research (Tanriverdi, 2005; Zack et al., 2009; Kianto, 2011) has suggested that knowledge management does have some effect on performance, still it is debatable whether this effect is direct or is mediated by other factors like organisational procedures or intermediate performance metrics. In the same vein, rather than emphasising knowledge management practices, the vast majority of past investigations concentrate on knowledge processes. Although certain management practices can either accelerate or impede knowledge processes, these processes also naturally occur in all entities, regardless of organisational efforts (Demarest, 1997). Therefore, studies that settle on knowledge processes have not provided satisfactory answers to how good knowledge management practices might boost field performance. A corporation with IT capabilities also carried out empirical research in the form of a survey to show how successful sharing knowledge is among personnel (Reich et al., 2014). Project Management Institute (PMI) members and Computer Weekly subscribers were the two samples of this study. The study's findings are unequivocal; when the IT team is provided with knowledge and expertise from project managers, they feel like their decision-making process is more manageable. To condense, recent evidence suggests that knowledge management is increasingly demonstrating its impact on the effective operations of any organisation. To ensure the seamless functioning of knowledge management within the organisation, it is imperative for organisational management to actively advocate for and acknowledge the significance of knowledge management. This entails integrating knowledge management practices into the organisational structure and culture. Through such integration, a gradual shift in mindset can be cultivated, wherein knowledge management is

embraced as a pivotal tool for enhancing organisational effectiveness.

## 2.2 *Critical thinking: its pedagogies and outcomes*

Undeniably, along with the development of society and people, employers are becoming increasingly strict about their employee requirements.

Moreover, critical thinking skills are one of the factors that are receiving the most

attention worldwide. However, the author recognised that the importance of critical thinking abilities in the workforce—in the particular case of this paper, the hospitality industry—has not been acknowledged enough. This was proved by Oberli (2019, p.5), as he said, quoted, "If the usage of critical thinking remains the assumption that is a scholarly skill, then the benefit of such a skill is underrated and unexploited for higher purposes and broader application, such as in forming critical citizens." Historically, the definition of critical thinking has always been widely debated among researchers, and to this day, there is still no officially recognised definition. John Dewey, an expert in the study of thinking, describes critical thinking by using the term "reflective thinking" as the thinking style constantly involving mentally circling an issue and giving it mindful, long- term consideration (Dewey, 1993). Furthermore, Chance (2013), a cognitive psychologist, has currently defined critical thinking as the capacity to analyse information, elicit and organise ideas, defend beliefs, compare, draw conclusions, and solve issues.

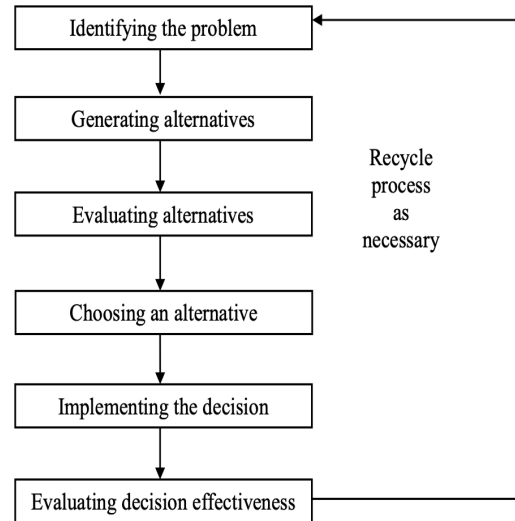
Despite the fact that researchers utilise various approaches to defining critical thinking, there are aspects where scholars might concur, including the particular skills that the definition covers, such as the set of sub-skills that link to the six

critical thinking abilities by Facione (1990) depicted in Table 1.

Skills	Sub-skills
1. Analysis	Examining ideas
	Identifying arguments
	Analyzing arguments
2. Evaluation	Assessing claims
	Assessing arguments
3. Interpretation	Categorization
	Decoding significance
	Clarifying meaning
4. Inference	Querying evidence
	Conjecturing alternatives
	Drawing conclusions
5. Explanation	Stating results
	Justifying procedures
	Presenting arguments
6. Self-Regulation	Self-examination
	Self-correction

**Table 1.** Sub-skills under Critical Thinking (Facione, 1990)

Different individuals will have different opinions and viewpoints on issues in life, depending on their experiences, beliefs, environment and personal thoughts. Then they will rely on them to make a decision. As was previously said, critical thinking involves obtaining and analysing pertinent data from a variety of sources. By analysing data, facts, and supporting evidence, decision-makers are able to understand the context and effects of various decisions, thereby enhancing the likelihood of choosing the right results (Facione, 1990). Besides, questioning assumptions and biases allows one to evaluate the options available to them more correctly. As a result, judgements become less subjective and have fewer blind spots (Chance, 2013). The logical framework of Schoenfeld in Figure 2 reveals that six processes are involved in making decisions (Schoenfeld, 2011). Upon identifying an issue, various alternative solutions are generated. After careful consideration, the optimal choice is chosen for implementation. It is then reviewed over time to ensure the implemented alternative's immediate and ongoing efficacy. Recycling may take place if problems develop at any point during the procedure. As a result, there is no doubt that making decisions involves a logical progression of actions.



**Figure 2.** The decision-making process (Lunenburg, 2010)

Critical thinking scholars bemoan how little 'constructed' critical thinking there is among the community of well-educated people, especially pupils. As an example, Halpern (1998) claims that many, if not most, individuals lack the ability to think critically in a wide range of contexts. She uses the example of how many people claim to believe in supernatural occurrences even though there is little to no evidence to back those assertions. Halpern believes that such misconceptions result from flaws in thinking rather than a lack of capacity to reason clearly. According to the scarce studies on this subject conducted in Vietnam, critical thinking is not adequately discussed. According to Moosavi (2022), the primary explanation for this stems from the antiquated assumptions of Westerners, refusing to admit the diversity of personalities within Asian cultures and underestimating their capacity to be assertive, opinionated, and capable. Even in the education system aspect, until now, it is believed that Asian education revolves around rote learning and not critical thinking. As per Moosavi (2022), conventional expectations suggest that East Asian students are perceived to lack critical thinking skills, frequently engage in plagiarism, and, sadly, diminish the overall quality of education worldwide. Nevertheless, it would be inaccurate to dismiss these cliché entirely. Potter (1996, p.31) studied a typical Japanese university lesson and declared that it "consists rather heavily of the teacher lecturing while the students take notes which they then repeat in order to pass exams." It can be presumed that the failure to recognize the significance of critical thinking in Asian countries such as Vietnam has contributed to a work culture devoid of creativity, observation, analysis or evaluation of

available knowledge. Ergo, many Vietnamese businesses resist innovation, stagnate, and eventually decline, as employees lack initiative and are solely accustomed to following directives from superiors.

To conclude, the escalating demands from employers worldwide underscore the burgeoning importance of critical thinking skills. Such skills are indispensable for businesses to adapt and thrive amidst constant changes, thereby furnishing them with a competitive edge over rivals. Regrettably, in Vietnam, critical thinking has been grievously overlooked both in educational curricula and professional environments. Without a robust foundation in critical thinking, the implementation of knowledge management strategies is destined to fall short of its anticipated impact. To tackle this shortfall, investing in training shows considerable promise for organisations. However, the efficacy of any approach hinges on company culture that encourages and supports critical thinking.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Research Approach

"Plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation" is a common definition of research approaches in academia (Creswell, 2014, p.31). The selection of a research approach is of the utmost importance since it influences how the study is going to be implemented.

Deductive and inductive analysis are the two fundamental forms that are commonly used for research intentions (Soiferman, 2010). As notified by Khaldi (2017), inductive studies tend to emphasise qualitativeness; deductive studies are permitted to perform quantitative research. Qualitativeness and quantitative approach, not as distinct as it seems, one involves questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's cultural setting, and the other tests objective theories by examining the relationship between variables that can be measured so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2014).

On behalf of this paper, the researcher is using an inductive method to carry out the stated aim and objectives. Induction is the process of extrapolating findings from the current set of insights by using observations to search for patterns in the data and correlations between variables (Woo et al., 2017). In addition to ground theory serving as a central theme of their work, some particular examples of qualitative inductive research techniques are ethnography, discourse analysis, rhetorical analysis, and content analysis. Although there are an array of possible

approaches to the topic of the relationship between knowledge management approaches and critical thinking practises, the author of this work has chosen to use the Interpretive Paradigm and Ethnography Inductive technique as she believed these methods seek for a close relationship with the context of culture of the case study.

### 3.2 Sampling

Research investigations often concentrate on a predetermined population known as the sample. Sampling is the process of researching a subset of the population instead of the entire population (Thompson, 1999). As Morse (1994) suggested, a qualitative research design with interviewing methods should only have a maximum of 50 participants. The researcher has chosen to interview 10 participants, all are current InterContinental Hanoi Westlake employees, in order to get the answers to the aim and objectives. Judgemental sampling has been selected as the sampling technique to be applied. This method belongs to non-probability sampling, in which, depending on the population, the researcher decides who will take part in the interview (Palinkas et al., 2015). In addition to ensuring that the sample and suggested objectives are accurately assessed, it will also ensure that the quality of the interpretation is maximised in accordance with the resources available (Suri, 2011).

### 3.3 Data Collection

Per Morgan (1996), interviews have reemerged as a common method for acquiring qualitative data over the past decade, becoming popular among sociologists and across various academic and practical research fields. It is also pointed that structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews are the three primary and most used types of interviews (Qu and Dumay, 2011). While unstructured interviews are like a free-flowing conversation that might not touch the issue that needs to be investigated, structured interviews make it harder to retrieve personal data (Mueller and Segal, 2014). Considering the weaknesses of these methods, the semi-structure approach in which some questions are pre-established while others are developed as the interview progresses based on the circumstances and the interviewees' initial responses, was adopted. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face, and one employee at a time and only using audio-recording technique. As indicated by Newton (2010), this procedure will generate a natural exploratory conversation atmosphere and restrain the precautionousness of individuals, thus encouraging more sincere responses.

### 3.4 *Data Analysis*

The language of material in qualitative investigations is complicated and it might be challenging to grasp if not correctly analysed (Thorne, 2000). Several stages will lead to transforming data collected into data that is prepared for analysis of findings and discussion. The first stage of data analysis is the transcription of interviews. Transcribing is the way the researcher reproduces audible words into written text (Halcomb and Elizabeth, 2006). All ten respondents' responses and conversations will be audio-recorded and reprinted for this study. Previous research by MacLean et al. (2004) has documented the transcription's layout or accuracy is significantly influenced by how the notary interprets the interview's content. Due to this reason, the author will employ the verbatim transcription approach, which means that the written words are an exact duplicate of the audio-recorded words (Poland, 1995).

The second stage prepares the narratives for a subsequent thematic analysis. This stage is the coding of the narrative, which is typically utilised to collect and categorise comparable data in order for the researcher to swiftly locate and classify the segments that relate to one another (Stuckey, 2015). Based on the characteristics of the potential data gathered in this research, the author has chosen three of the most appropriate tools for coding, namely *in vivo* coding, descriptive coding and versus coding.

The author then compiles all of the code created from the data sources, sorted and categorised in compliance to the appropriate underlying theme discovered, which can be determined as thematic analysis, which is the third stage of the treatment of qualitative data. Themes, in this case, refer to the categorization of more specific ideas or concepts.

### 3.5 *Ethical Issue*

Ethical dilemmas are a significant issue that all researchers need to take into account since they involve people and volunteers (Yip et al., 2016). In a comprehensive study, the World Medical Association of Helsinki (2013, p.373) reported that researchers are responsible for "protecting the life, health, dignity, integrity, right to self-determination, privacy, and confidentiality of personal information of research subjects."

Sikes and Piper (2010) have remarked that Informed Consents are one of the most significant steps in conducting an interview, which is the research approach of this study. After being fully informed of all experimental details that might affect their decision to participate, a participant approves their willingness to take part in a particular examination through the procedure of informed consent

(Baber, 1994). The informed consent is needed since it ensures that researchers are not harming the participants, such as redirecting and misrepresenting their opinion (Creswell, 2014). That affirmed the participants' identities are unrecognisable and the data obtained are examined as objectively as possible.

Other significant ethical concerns include the need to maintain concealment (Eysenbach and Till, 2001), the preservation of data (Orb et al., 2000), and integrity (Kirk, 2007). As a researcher, this study's writer is required to protect interviewees' points of view from any parties not explicitly mentioned in the consent form, ensure that data is correctly stored and cannot be accessed, and refrain from shaping participants' responses to suit the researcher's needs.

### 3.6 *Trustworthiness*

To date, numerous studies have been concerned with the precision of qualitative research, emphasising the potential neglect of adequate descriptions of the researcher's assumptions, criticisms and bias toward data analysis (Gunawan, 2015). As reported by Sandelowski (1993), this section acts as a matter of persuasion as the author renders those practices evident and correspondingly auditable. Audit trails and member checking approach was adopted to assess the management practices of trustworthiness. In this particular study, the audit trail will be utilised to entail a systematic recording and presentation of every stage of the research process including theoretical, interview, and any analytical choices made by the author. Member checking offers an opportunity for respondents to review the data, verifying or refuting its accuracy. This procedure will mitigate the transmission of inaccurate information resulting from the evaluator's bias or other factors. (Candela, 2019). All in all, the author is confident that incorporating the two aforementioned methods will enhance the transparency and reliability of this research.

### 3.7 *Limitations*

Compatible with Akanle, Olusola and Shittu (2020), the author believes it is essential for researchers to recognize and acknowledge the limitations of their study. Limitations encompass challenges or biases that researchers encounter and can not control, which may potentially influence or impact the results and their subsequent interpretation (Price and Murnam, 2004). A research paper without limitations or only presenting a subset of it may lead less critical readers to overestimate the credibility of the study's finding. An extensive number of studies investigating critical thinking have been conducted in the history of literature, not to

mention knowledge management. Therefore, the selection of literature for this particular study may introduce errors or bias into the foundation of the interpretation, potentially leading to a less accurate outcome.

A further problem to the internal validity of this study arises when respondents provide deceitful answers to interview questions, potentially providing responses based on desire to please society. This is most likely in light of the fact that the case study is based in Vietnam, a nation with a high context culture, as was previously mentioned in the background information. Furthermore, it is possible that the Hawthorne effect—a phenomena in which participants alter their behaviour because they are aware that they are part of an experiment or study—will unintentionally leave an impact (Sedgwick, 2015). A limited sample size also affects the study's conclusion since it produces fewer data that can be applied broadly, which could lead to judgements that are more prone to fluctuation. Besides, the study covers aspects such as management approach and employee perceptions in a distinctive work culture of InterContinental Hanoi Westlake, which are exclusive. Consequently, the outcomes of this study may not be readily transferable to other contexts.

## Chapter 4 Discussion

### 4.1 Introduction

Recent advancements have heightened the significance of knowledge management and critical thinking in the workforce, prompting increased exploration and research into these areas (El-Farr and Hosseingholizadeh, 2019; Živković, 2016). However, despite the extensive research and proven benefits of implementing these practices in the workplace, only a limited number of studies have examined managerial approaches and employees' perspectives on the matter. In this chapter, the employees' perceptions of a Vietnamese-driven knowledge management approach through the application of critical thinking at the workplace under the view of InterContinental Hanoi Westlake, Vietnam will be further investigated.

Still, given the particularity of this research paper where primary investigation has not yet commenced, the subsequent discussions will be delineated, analysed, and supported based on the findings of secondary literature studies as outlined in the literature review.

### 4.2 *To investigate the impact of the knowledge management approach on influencing employees' workplace*

### *decision-making process at InterContinental Hanoi Westlake Hotel.*

Various studies have been proposed to elucidate the significance of integrating knowledge management strategies within the hospitality sector, particularly concerning the decision-making process with employee involvement. Thus, such an approach in InterContinental Hanoi Westlake Hotel cannot be overstated.

In studying knowledge management, the researcher referenced findings from Tanriverdi (2005), Zack et al. (2009), and Kianto (2011), indicating a positive effect on employee's performance. This is supported by an empirical research in a project management firm that highlighted that the IT team members make better decisions when provided with knowledge and expertise from their counterparts in the business team (Reich et al., 2014). However, these researches all faced the challenge of quantifying the exact impact of knowledge management practices to decision-making efficacy. It is consequently assumed that a good knowledge management process, with the proper support of people, knowledge-sharing motivation, and technology, could positively affect employee decisions and the organisation's performance. In the case of Intercontinental Westlake Hanoi, a similar conclusion was reached. Management recognized that by exposing employees to shared knowledge resources, they could arrive at better solutions in shorter time frames. The interviews further revealed that knowledge management procedures contribute to reduced training periods and expedite personal development. In ideal situation, effective knowledge management ensures that employees can readily access pertinent information while fostering a culture of knowledge sharing among individuals. This initial impact remarkably enhances decision's accuracy, as employees can tap into the expertise and experience of others, thereby reducing the possibility of mistakes. Secondly, the accessibility of data enables employees to make decisions quicker. This assertion is supported by Epetimehin and Ekundayo (2011), who claimed that knowledge management mitigates duplication of efforts, facilitates the efficient retrieval and dissemination of information, and thereby accelerates responses to workplace issues. Nevertheless, there have been a few instances where employees have expressed difficulties in selecting relevant information due to the overwhelming volume of accessible data.

It is evident that knowledge management approaches have a massive influence on the outcomes and precision of employee decisions. Hence, it is advisable that InterContinental Hanoi Westlake Hotel persists in incorporating knowledge management application into its operational culture and ethos, helping nurture a



progressive shift in mindset wherein knowledge management is convinced as a critical instrument for augmenting organisational efficacy. In order to accomplish this, the hotel could consider implementing training workshops to firstly educate employees of the value of knowledge management, then establishing dedicated knowledge sharing platforms where employees can access and contribute their insights, practices or lessons learned. Following that, benefits and rewards are essential to encourage and inspire staff to actively engage in knowledge sharing activities and initiatives. With the youthful and actively developing characteristics of InterContinental Hanoi Westlake Hotel personnels, it is unlikely that the management will have a hard time creating a dynamic and adaptive environment that fosters innovation, agility, and sustained growth.

#### *4.3 To analyse the implementation of critical thinking training at the InterContinental Hanoi Westlake workplace.*

In today's complex and fast-paced business environment, organisations are constantly faced with multifaceted challenges that require up-to-date solutions. Therefore, critical thinking is undeniably vital in the workplace, serving as a cornerstone for effective problem solving, innovation and decision making (Saatci and Ovaci, 2020). On a global scale, critical thinking is a required skill for employees, also a persuasive rationale for evaluating both personnel skills and organisation culture (Brown, 2010). However, the absence of empirical research on critical thinking in Vietnam indicates a lack of reformation within the country. This has been proven right from the educational level when Vietnamese believe in memorising and learning by rote based on pre-prepared lesson plans passed down through generations, instead of asking questions and analysing problems (Moosavi, 2022). For that reason, it can be concluded that the critical thinking proficiency of Vietnamese individuals post - high school is notably deficient. Differently put, most Vietnamese enter the workforce lacking an awareness of critical thinking skills.

In the instance of Intercontinental Hanoi Westlake, indications suggest that there has been an attempt to foster critical thinking within the workplace but has not been effective. The hotel has established procedures pertaining to critical thinking, and managers have acknowledged its significance in the work environment. However, noted from the perspective of employees, there appears to be a discrepancy between rhetoric and practice. Staff members assert that while critical thinking is occasionally mentioned, it is not genuinely esteemed or actively encouraged. The prevailing working culture remains rooted in a

leader-centric command-and-control approach, characterised by a rigid hierarchy that leaves the staff no room to use their analysis ability. Especially, the hotel does not provide any form of training on critical thinking for its staff, not through formal sessions, coaching, mentoring, and neither through access to educational resources.

There exists evidence that suggests critical thinking is not inherently innate to humans (Facione, 1990), implying that individuals can develop the skill through consistent and proper training efforts. Therefore, given the significance of critical thinking, the hotel should implement the actual integration into their daily work practices. Several strategies can be used to facilitate this. First of all, shifting the working environment from leader command-and-control to employees giving ideas and solutions while leaders only giving feedback and guiding. Subsequently, offering training to all level staff members regarding critical thinking is also a professional method. Next, it is essential for senior managers to exemplify critical thinking skills, fostering an organisational culture where staff feel empowered to offer constructive feedback on superiors' viewpoints. Last but not least, regularly scheduled meetings should also be established to facilitate the presentation of fresh ideas by employees, ideally occurring at least quarterly.

#### *4.4 To identify the work performance standards and expectations applied by hotel InterContinental Hanoi Westlake.*

For quite some time, scholars have underscored the significance of skilled and committed staff members for the prosperity of any organisation (Hinkin and Tracey, 2000). Wallace et al. (2013), in their study of service-oriented enterprises, further emphasised that the hotel industry's triumph predominantly hinges on the dynamic between employees and customers. These insights collectively reinforce the practical understanding that employees constitute the most major asset in a hotel setting. Consequently, prioritising employee conduct and contributions becomes imperative, necessitating consistent communication and adherence to explicit performance criteria and expectations. Those standards define the expected service level and serve as benchmarks for employee evaluation and training. Employees at the InterContinental Hanoi Westlake have indicated that the hotel has established standardised protocols that all staff members are expected to adhere to. These protocols encompass two distinct categories: standards in terms of outcome and standards in terms of behaviour. Behaviour standards encompass a collection of principles or codes of behaviour that create norms within the workplace

and are published to the entire organisation. Behaviour standards encompass a collection of principles or codes of behaviour that create norms within the workplace and are published to the entire organisation. Staff must appear professional, have general knowledge of the hotel's offerings, treat others respectfully, be curious about novelty and improvements, and remain alert at all times. Following behaviour norms is necessary since they specify what behaviour is deemed appropriate versus inappropriate. Conversely, outcome standards use customer approval and work quality as evaluation criteria. The functions and positions of the personnel determine which criteria apply. For example, front desk staff can be judged on their ability to upsell, and marketing staff might be rated on the hotel's overall room occupancy rates. Employees with longer tenure or higher ranks will be expected to meet higher standards. Thus, everyone in the workforce feels motivated to improve their abilities and skills, regardless of their position.

The interview revealed that many employees express a positive view of the work performance standards and claim that they provide precise guidance for their jobs. They value knowing straightforward expectations concerning retaining professionalism and providing outstanding customer service. Likewise, they regard the development of such criteria as supportive instead of compulsory, enabling employees to achieve not only company objectives but also personal growth and development.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

In essence, evaluating employees' perceptions of the hotel's actual situation regarding knowledge management and critical thinking can offer a more objective and comprehensive understanding of the unresolved issues. While knowledge management is deemed crucial in any business, its efficacy is greatly enhanced when complemented by employees' critical thinking skills, and vice versa. Capitalising on knowledge management to bolster the effectiveness of critical thinking in the workplace is a fitting strategy for InterContinental Hanoi Westlake, especially given its high-context setting. Nonetheless, a disparity was identified between the managerial positive rhetoric on critical thinking and the actual tangible support provided by the hotel. The researcher posits that by uncovering the matter from the employees' perspective, InterContinental can enhance its practices by endorsing professional training and appropriately rewarding contributions.

### Chapter 5 Conclusion

This study has attempted to set out insights into employees' perspectives about the influence of critical thinking in a management knowledge work culture under the case of InterContinental Westlake Hanoi, Vietnam. Through the interview discussion, it can be seen that the particular case study took some action trying to implement a knowledge management system in the workplace. Through changes such as shortening training time as well as reducing the time to come up with solutions to solve problems, it expresses that knowledge management practices are effective in some aspects. On the other hand, the hotel lacked increased attention to effort related to critical thinking from the employee's perspective. It is noteworthy to mention that while critical thinking is a skill that has been acknowledged and promoted in the human development process in most countries worldwide, reality reveals that critical thinking remains a relatively novel concept in Vietnam. The prevailing mindset tends to favour conformity and adherence, as Vietnamese believe that following established paths is efficient and time-saving (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2020). This inclination stems from a lack of education and awareness about the importance of critical thinking, likely exacerbated by Vietnam's high-context culture. While this might not seem like an urgent issue, it has resulted in generations with outdated perspectives, reluctance to embrace change, and a lack of initiative. Consequently, businesses are left with low-quality employees who struggle to question or innovate. Given that critical thinking is a skill highly valued by employers worldwide (Chance, 2013), failing to address this situation promptly will hinder Vietnam's long-term business growth and diminish its competitiveness on the global stage. Furthermore, the hotel's official performance standards do not include any elements pertaining to the knowledge management process or critical thinking. Though, the author contends that an imbalance in critical thinking skills among employees can significantly compromise the success of knowledge management approach. Integrating knowledge management practices facilitates the interaction and aggregation of data from diverse sources. However, the absence of critical thinking skills among employees poses a significant challenge in this context. Without the ability to critically assess and analyse the information they encounter, employees may struggle to discern the quality and relevance of knowledge obtained or exacerbate confirmation bias tendencies among employees. Confirmation bias refers to the inclination to seek out information that aligns with preexisting beliefs or opinions while disregarding contradictory evidence, which employees may inadvertently or intentionally gravitate towards.

Throughout this paper, the author has endeavoured to integrate the concept of

knowledge management and critical thinking within the context of the workforce, thereby assessing potential contribution to knowledge. The outcome of this research will give an empirical understanding of the distinction between critical employees and knowledgeable employees. This inquiry hinges upon a dual examination: firstly, scrutinising the influence of critical thinking on the efficacy of decision-making processes, particularly elucidating its role in facilitating optimal choices; and secondly, delving into the impact of facile access to pertinent knowledge on operational efficiency, thereby delineating its potential for time-saving measures. It would then lead to a thorough reassessment of academic procedures, with a renewed emphasis on developing this crucial skill set in both faculty and students. Indeed, the idea that knowledge management is ineffectual without critical thinking calls for an entire overhaul of university or even high school academic curricula, emphasising the development of critical thinking abilities in addition to more traditional means of knowledge acquisition. For instance, there is an urgent need for educational reform in Vietnam, where integrating critical thinking pedagogy within frameworks for compulsory education is still inadequate. One popular initiative for cultivating critical thinking prowess among youngsters is debate since it increases their potential to engage in nuanced conversation and cogent analysis. It is still not too late to encourage firms to boost their focus on personnel management and training efforts. An effective training regime may quickly fill up knowledge and skill gaps among staff members, which will increase productivity in the workplace. Considering the significance of this research, similar topics would be a fruitful area for future researchers, and some recommendations will follow here. The author suggests conducting an extensive investigation to assess how critical thinking within knowledge management affects various outcomes such as innovation, service quality or employee turnover over the long term. This will contribute to validating the findings of this study and also aid in gauging the mutual impact of these two application concepts on each other. Another possible area of future research would be developing and critiquing the efficacy of training programs designed to enhance critical thinking, specifically within the hospitality context. Additionally, comparative studies targeting different cultures or industries would enrich understanding by providing contextual nuances. Last but not least, future studies could employ alternative research approaches, ideally combining qualitative and quantitative methods, as considering multiple aspects would establish a greater degree of accuracy on this matter.

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