

**HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING
PRACTICES AMONG ACADEMICIANS IN
MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**

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HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING PRACTICES
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MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge sharing practices have been gaining much attention in organizations because of its contribution in optimizing organizations' competitiveness credibility. However, the lack of understanding in its process such as the content and contribution impedes knowledge sharing effectiveness. It has been argued that people management in knowledge management is important because knowledge is considerably personal. This study integrates Linstone's Multiple Perspectives Theory and Stewart's Human Resource Development Model into the framework of study. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the human resource development and knowledge sharing practices in public universities in Malaysia. The research adopts the mixed method sequential approach using survey and interview. Questionnaires were e-mailed to academicians in 20 universities, while semi-structured interviews were conducted with top management and policy makers. The quantitative study investigated current knowledge sharing practices and identified their relationships with knowledge sharing factors. A total of 725 academicians responded to the questionnaires. The qualitative study further described the issues and challenges that arise and dominant factors that explain knowledge sharing practices which were identified in this study. Statistical tests show that knowledge sharing level is moderately practiced by academicians. The organizational factor has the highest relationship ($r= 0.819, p=0.0001$) to knowledge sharing practices. The moderator effect tested in this research only moderates the relationship between technological factors and knowledge sharing practices. The main issues and challenges in knowledge sharing practices are voluntarism, social interaction and knowledge sharing gap. The knowledge sharing awareness is influenced by factors other than self-efficacy namely religion and nation culture. The human resource development's current practices has not placed much emphasis on informal ways of learning, and formal policy for knowledge sharing practices is not yet developed. Theoretical contributions from the research include the development of a theoretical model of human resource development and knowledge sharing framework of Malaysian academicians. Methodologically, the research illustrates the effective use of a mixed method approach within the positivist research paradigm. The research highlights the central importance of human resource development roles and its contribution in knowledge sharing practices among academicians in Malaysian public universities.

ABSTRAK

Amalan perkongsian pengetahuan telah mendapat perhatian yang besar dalam kebanyakan organisasi disebabkan sumbangannya dalam meningkatkan daya saing organisasi. Walau bagaimana pun, kekurangan pemahaman terhadap proses perkongsian pengetahuan seperti kandungan dan sumbangannya menghalang keberkesanan perkongsian pengetahuan. Pengurusan sumber manusia di dalam pengurusan pengetahuan dikatakan begitu penting kerana pengetahuan bersifat lebih peribadi. Kajian ini menggabungkan teori *multiple perspectives* oleh Linstone dan Model Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Stewart di dalam satu kerangka kajian. Tesis ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji amalan pembangunan sumber manusia dan perkongsian pengetahuan di universiti awam di Malaysia. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah rencam berjujukan, iaitu kaji selidik atau tinjauan dan temubual. Soal selidik telah di email kepada ahli akademik di 20 buah universiti. Manakala, temubual separa berstruktur dengan pengurus atasan dan juga perencana polisi universiti turut dijalankan. Kajian kuantitatif mengkaji amalan perkongsian pengetahuan semasa dan mengenalpasti hubungannya dengan faktor perkongsian pengetahuan. Sejumlah 725 orang ahli akademik telah memberikan respon kepada soal selidik. Kajian kualitatif seterusnya menjelaskan isu dan cabaran yang timbul dan faktor dominan yang menerangkan amalan perkongsian pengetahuan iaitu yang terhasil daripada kajian ini. Ujian statistik menunjukkan tahap perkongsian pengetahuan di kalangan ahli akademik berlaku pada tahap sederhana. Faktor organisasi menunjukkan hubungan yang tinggi dengan amalan perkongsian pengetahuan ($r = .819, p = .0001$). Ujian ke atas kesan moderator dalam kajian ini mendapati ia hanya berlaku di antara hubungan teknologi dengan amalan perkongsian pengetahuan. Isu dan cabaran utama dalam amalan perkongsian pengetahuan adalah kesukarelaan, interaksi sosial dan jurang perkongsian pengetahuan. Kesedaran ke atas perkongsian pengetahuan dipengaruhi oleh faktor selain *self-efficacy* iaitu agama dan budaya bangsa. Amalan semasa pembangunan sumber manusia kurang menekankan pembelajaran secara informal, dan polisi formal untuk amalan pengetahuan perkongsian belum dibangunkan. Sumbangan dari segi teori dari kajian ini ialah sebuah model teoretikal pembangunan sumber manusia dan rangka kerja perkongsian pengetahuan bagi ahli akademik Malaysia. Dari segi metodologi kajian, kajian ini membuktikan keberkesanan penggunaan kaedah rencam di dalam paradigm penyelidikan positivis. Kajian ini menitikberatkan peranan utama pembangunan sumber manusia dan sumbangannya dalam amalan perkongsian pengetahuan di kalangan ahli akademik di universiti awam di Malaysia.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
	DECLARATION	ii
	DEDICATION	iii
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
	ABSTRACT	v
	ABSTRAK	vi
	TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
	LIST OF TABLES	x
	LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
	LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xv
	LIST OF APPENDICES	xvi
1	INTRODUCTION	1
	1.1 Introduction	1
	1.2 Background of the Research	10
	1.3 Problem Statement	13
	1.4 Research Questions	14
	1.5 Research Objectives	15
	1.6 Research Hypotheses	15
	1.7 Conceptual Framework of the Research	16

1.8	Scope of the Research	18
1.9	Significance of the Research	19
1.10	Operational Definition	19
1.11	Structure of the Thesis	21
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	25
2.1	Introduction	25
2.2	Knowledge Sharing perspective	27
2.3	HRD practices in Knowledge Sharing	40
2.4	Theoretical foundation and development of hypothesis	46
2.5	Conclusion	61
3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	64
3.1	Introduction	64
3.2	The Paradigm of Inquiry	65
3.3	Research Design	71
3.4	Conclusion	87
4	THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENT	89
4.1	Introduction	89
4.2	The Preliminary Study	90
4.3	The Construct Measurement	97
4.4	Pilot Study	103
4.5	Conclusion	107
5	QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY	108
5.1	Introduction	108
5.2	Analysis on the KS Level	109
5.3	Analysis on the Hypothesis Testing	135

5.4	Conclusion	149
6	QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY AND INTERVIEW	151
6.1	Introduction	151
6.2	Analysis on the KSP Issues and Challenges	153
6.3	Analysis on the HRD Perspectives to Foster KSP among Academicians	173
6.4	Conclusion	190
7	CONCLUSIONS	195
7.1	Introduction	195
7.2	Synthesis	196
7.3	Contributions	216
7.4	Limitations and Recommendations for future research	219
7.5	Concluding Remarks	221
	REFERENCES	223
	Appendices A - E	242 - 254

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
2.1	HRD in relation to KM/S	43
2.2	Summary o MPF component for KS Factors and KS Practices	61
2.3	Overview of concepts and theories in relation to KS perspectives	62
2.4	Overview of concepts and theories in relation to HRD perspectives	63
2.5	Overview of concepts and theories in relation to development of conceptual framework	63
3.1	Basic assumption about the nature of social science	67
3.2	Summary on the research questions and methodological design	73
3.3	Participants for interview	79
3.4	The categorization of level used in this study	84
3.5	Example of identifying themes/dimension in coding	86
4.1	Instrument development for preliminary interview	92
4.2	The description on KSP level	99
4.3	Summary on construct measurement	100
4.4	Survey instrumentation	101
4.5	Interview instrumentation	102
4.6	Reliability analysis	104

4.7	The factor analysis result on KS awareness	104
5.1	Demographic of the Respondents	111
5.2	The overall level of knowledge sharing among academicians in MPU	112
5.3	The level of KS awareness among academicians in MPU	113
5.4	Mean difference between gender and KS awareness	115
5.5	Mean difference between designation and KS awareness	116
5.6	Mean difference between working experience and KS awareness	117
5.7	Mean difference between academic field and KS awareness	118
5.8	The level of KSP among academicians in MPU	120
5.9	The level of technology factors that influence KS among academicians	121
5.10	The finding on the work environment dimension	123
5.11	The finding on the immediate superior dimension	123
5.12	The finding on social interaction dimension	124
5.13	The finding on attitude towards KSP	125
5.14	The finding on the degree of enjoyment in helping others	126
5.15	Mean difference between age group and personal factors	128
5.16	Mean difference between designation and personal factors	129
5.17	Mean difference between working experience and personal factors	131
5.18	Mean difference between academic field and personal factors	132
5.19	Guilford's rule of thumb	136
5.20	Correlation coefficient between technology, organizational, personal factors and KSP	139

5.21	The estimate of model coefficient	140
5.22	The ANOVA table	141
5.23	The effect of KS awareness on the relationship between technology factors and KSP	146
5.24	The effect of KS awareness on the relationship between organizational factors and KSP	147
5.25	The effect of KS awareness on the relationship between personal factors and KSP	148
5.26	Summary on the Quantitative Results	149
6.1	Findings on open-ended questionnaire about KSP issues and challenges	154
6.2	Interview analysis on KSP issues and challenges	159
6.3	Analysis on DVCA and HOD response on current HRD practices	174
6.4	Analysis on HRDA response on current HRD practices	183
6.5	Summary on Qualitative findings	193
7.1	Summary on hypothesis testing	203

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
1.1	Organization of Chapter 1	2
1.2	Conceptual framework of the research	17
1.3	Organization of the thesis	23
2.1	Organization of Chapter 2	26
2.2	Explicit knowledge is just tip of the iceberg	29
2.3	Tacit to explicit knowledge	32
2.4	Four types of <i>Ba</i>	34
2.5	Sequences of experience leading to positive learning outcomes for students who express need for help	36
2.6	Competencies required by new economy workers	41
2.7	Managerial competencies required for people development in the new economy	41
2.8	The Relationship between HRD and KS practices	46
2.9	The HRD model	53
3.1	Organization of Chapter 3	65
3.2	The deductive type of mixed-methods design	75
3.3	The operational framework	88
4.1	Organization of Chapter 4	87
5.1	Organization of Chapter 5	108
5.2	Scatterplot graph of linearity test	138

5.3	Normal p-p plot of regression standardized residual	142
5.4	Scatterplot of studentized deleted residuals vs. standardized predicted values	143
6.1	Organization of Chapter 6	152
6.2	Themes analyzed for KSP issues and challenges	172
6.3	Example of staff portal application	187
6.4	Example of group box application	187
6.5	Example of virtual class	188
6.6	Themes analyzed for current HRD practices	191
6.7	A Rich picture of KSP in MPU context	192
7.1	Organization of Chapter 7	196
7.2	The partial KSP framework (result after the survey)	207
7.3	The gap of HRD practice for KSP among Academicians in MPU	213
7.4	The framework of HRD and KS practices among academicians in MPU	215

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	-	analysis of variance
HEI	-	higher education institution
MPU	-	Malaysian Public Universities
ICT	-	information and communication technology
MOHE	-	Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia
IS	-	information systems
KM	-	knowledge management
KS	-	knowledge sharing
KSP	-	knowledge sharing practices
TOP	-	technology, organizational and personal
HRD	-	human resource development
HRDA	-	Human Resource Development (Academic)
DVCA	-	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
HOD	-	head of department
CoP	-	community of practice
T&L	-	teaching and learning
S&T	-	science and technology
KPI	-	key performance index
DOE	-	directory of experts
RU	-	research university

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX	TITLE	PAGE
A	Survey questionnaire on knowledge sharing	242
B	Semi-structured interview questions	246
C	Interview Protocol	251
D	Profile of participant in interview	252
E	Approval letter from MOHE	254

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Knowledge sharing practices (KSP) is viewed as an important platform that can bring an organization to remain competitive and innovative. However, the unwillingness to share knowledge becomes the main issue and is difficult to manage. This is due to lack of understanding of the KS process and its context by researchers and practitioners. This thesis is focused on developing a framework for human resource development (HRD) and KS practices among academicians within the context of the Malaysian public universities (MPU). This chapter introduces the area of concern of the research, encompassing the sections shown in Figure 1.1.

1.1.1 Human Resource Development and Knowledge Management/Sharing

This section provides some overviews about HRD at different levels; international, national and Malaysian context. The aim of this section is to provide a basis of understanding on how HRD plays its significant role in developing people for different purposes depending on how HRD is being viewed and defined. With different levels of HRD practices, this section also illustrates how various kinds of HRD practices are being developed.

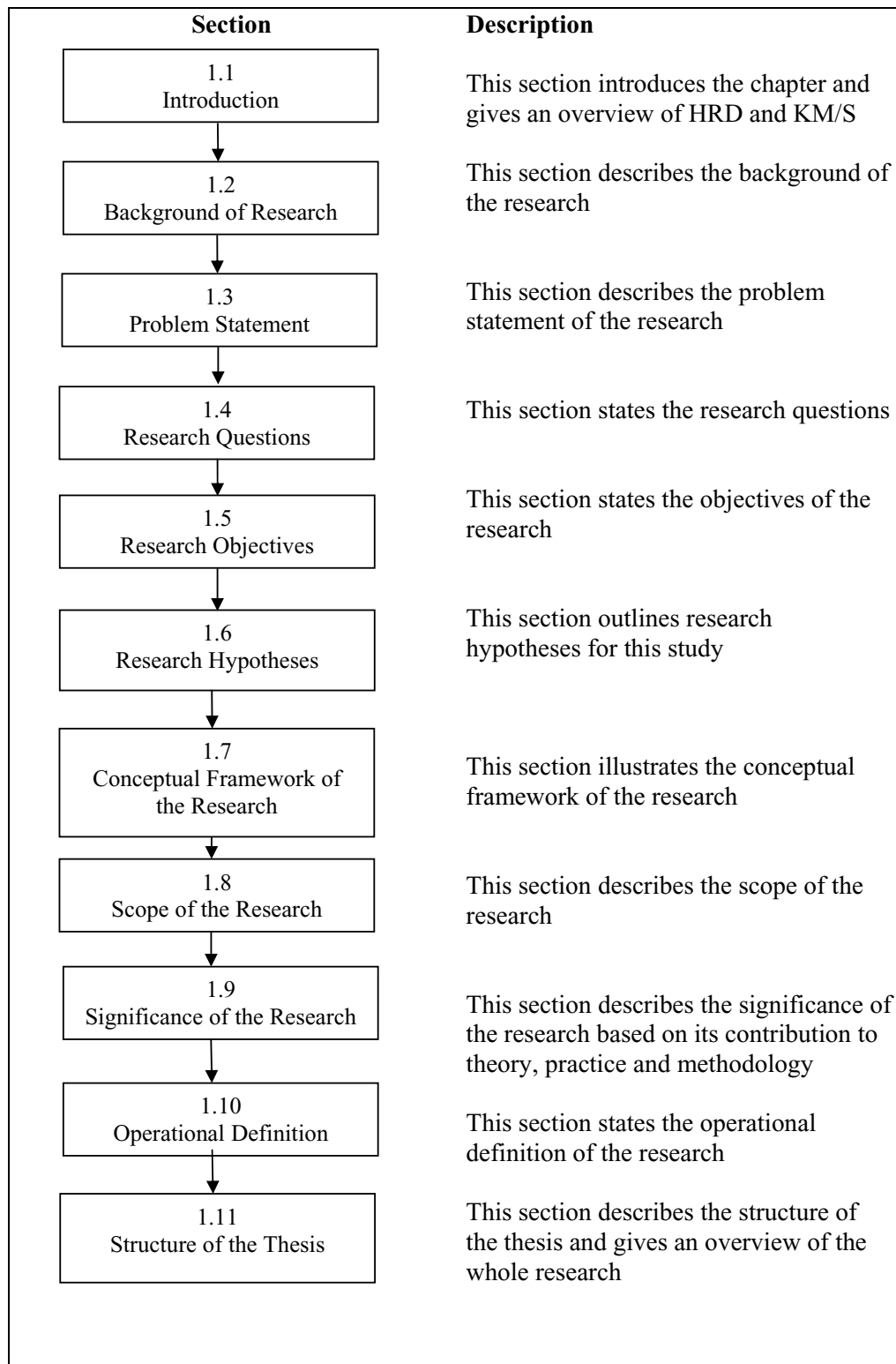


Figure 1.1: Organization of Chapter 1

The next three subsections provide some overviews about HRD at different levels; international, national and Malaysian context. The explanations provide a basis of understanding on how HRD play its significant role in developing people for different purposes depending on how HRD is being viewed and defined.

1.1.1.1 Overview of HRD in International Context

There is no solid definition on HRD and many attempts are made by the previous researchers to redefine HRD. As defined by McLean and McLean (2001, p.322) “HRD is any process or activity that, either initially or over the long term, has the potential to develop adults’ work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity and satisfaction, whether for personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation or, ultimately, the whole of humanity”.

Previous authors (Nafukho *et al.*, 2004; and Xiao, 2008) who are interested in examining developing human resources for national productivity and performance quoted McLean and McLean’s definition. For example, according to McLean and McLean (2001), some factors that influenced the diversity of HRD’s definitions are: (1) the economic factor; the economic transition in Russia and China has made HRD a driver to cope with the current challenges (2) the government legislation; the government involved in setting HRD policy such as in France where HRD is meant for social development and (3) the external factor; the influence of HRD in the United States education, and the exposure of US definition has influenced how HRD is viewed in other countries.

The definitions of HRD also vary according to various sectors: non-profit HRD, corporate HRD, government agency HRD. For instance, HRD in USA is too diverse and complex compared to centralized HRD in Singapore. Other factor such as the changing environment may influence HRD to be independently set up (Swanson, 2007). According to Kuchinke (2008), the HRD field is being continuously developed beyond classroom training though its function in designing training program is still important. The diversity of broad range of HRD’s topics or

issues covered in HRD International (HRDI) shows that the field is growing in popularity and demand. The example is the International Conference on HRD Research and Practice across Europe held in Lille recently, which demonstrated great reflection of HRD field where various aspects of HRD research and practice ranging from global to the individual levels were presented. “The variety of HRD theories and communities thus reflects the variety of HRD applications and HRD practice. As long as HRD practice continues to grow in scope, HRD theorizing is bound to follow” (Kuchinke, 2008).

It is revealed that India is the oldest among other countries that conceptualized and implemented the integrated HRD because at that time the term HRD has not yet achieved its full meaning (Pareek and Rao, 2008). In fact, India appeared to be the first country that renamed its Ministry of Education to that of HRD in 1985 (Cho and McLean, 2004). Nevertheless, it has been argued that the extensive literature on India’s HRD are yet to be recognized outside Asia compared to those by US and the UK.

Khandelwal (2007) shares the experience of HRD’s role in the transformation of public bank (the Bank of Baroda) in India. HRD was a centre for business agenda, and connects HRD values to business values. HRD is the key driver to the business success. HRD should not maintain its traditional characteristics anymore by being only service-oriented, disconnected to business, normative, and focusing on a single constituency (employees). That is why many people are ignorant about the power of HRD. In this case, HRD is linked with the business agenda such as transformation strategy. Some of the HRD interventions in the Baroda Bank’s case involved communicating with people and sharing (the positive and negative aspects in the bank’s performances). According to Pareek and Rao (2008), the development of HRD in India started in the early 1970s and then the establishment of Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA) serves as the platform that is responsible for the HRD’s growth. The establishment of the Academy of HRD, India (AHRD) in 1990-1995 strengthened the development of HRD in this country. To date the National HRD Network (NHRDN) has gained tremendous attention with increasing number of publications. HRD’s practice and research are steadily continuing there.

The Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) in US is one example of HRD's established body. It was found on May 7, 1993 with the organization vision of "Leading HRD through research", this organization is responsible to: (1) encourage the systematic study of HRD theories, processes, and practices (2) disseminate information about HRD (3) encourage the application of HRD research findings (4) provide opportunities for social interaction among individuals with scholarly and professional interests in HRD from multiple disciplines and worldwide. The organization has successfully produced high profile journals which are used for reference purposes by researchers all over the world regardless of their field of study. It is also amazing that AHRD has a large numbers of professional networks amounting to 700 members worldwide.

Based from the above examples, it can be concluded that HRD has become an emerging field that receives a lot of contributions by both researches and practitioners to enhance the understanding in the field of HRD. This development has led HRD into a positive direction by giving clearer picture on how HRD strategy can be developed through training, learning and development.

1.1.1.2 Overview of HRD at National Context

According to Paprock (2006), the "theory about the nature and extent of National HRD (NHRD) was firstly informed by the human capital theory and later by social capital, open systems, change, and also transformational. Within these theoretical perspectives, the people skills of a nation are considered hidden assets and capital critical not only to the economic goals of modern societies but also essential to attaining their social, political, and economic goals".

The concepts of NHRD and HRD as national policy are similarly used interchangeably (Wang and Wang, 2006). Akin to the concept of international HRD, the NHRD is differently defined from one country to another (Cho and McLean, 2004). It has been argued that there is a challenge for other countries especially the developing countries like Philippines and Malaysia to move towards established

NHRD policy. For examples their readiness to carry out the same moves done by others (moving towards offshore such as in the United States and Europe) (Cho and McLean, 2004). Malaysia for instance, has adopted the “Look East” policy in the quest of emulating the Japanese success as an industrialized country (Mahathir, 1997). Nevertheless, Japan’s HRD is fore fronting other Asian countries due to the fact that they have a strong nation culture of being literate, competent, diligent and loyal workers which could be the lessons for both industrial and developing countries (Low, 1998).

Furthermore, McLean and McLean (2001) observed that the purpose or aim of HRD varies across the world. It has been reported that in Australia HRD is aimed to improve organizational effectiveness and individual performance. On the other hand, in both Singapore and Thailand, HRD is aimed to benefit the individual, the organization and the nation. Thailand also includes its community as the beneficiary. In the US, HRD focuses on the individual, organizational and process level.

McLean (2004) explains that the NHRD in some countries besides US such as Singapore, India, Kenya, South Africa have developed radical approach for NHRD. HRD has been defined differently across the world. In the US, the HRD has strong relations to vocational education. HRD in Singapore has changed to human capital development (HCD) and its development of human resources has been given top priority in strategic planning for national development. In other cases, the Korean Ministry of Education was renamed into the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, and this demonstrates the importance of HRD in a specific government policy.

NHRD is being importantly highlighted to the field of HRD around the world, and this illustrates that human resource issues are becoming an important agenda and highlighted for the national and local stability. For example, human resource is Singapore’s single capital and that is the strong reason why HRD is being put as the core element in Singapore’s strategic economic plan (M Osman-Ghani and Tan, 2000). But it is reported that there is a lack of identified publication on what a country has experienced in its attempt to develop NHRD in their countries (McLean,

2004). For example, literature on HRD in the Pacific Asia and individual countries is still limited (Low, 1998).

1.1.1.3 Overview of Malaysia HRD

Malaysia is one of the developing countries in Asia and is now heading towards an industrialized country by the year 2020. The aim is to be a “developed country in our own mould” (Mahathir, 1997). Being considered rich with natural resources does not mean it is enough to bring Malaysia towards achieving the status of a developed nation. People are the most important resource to be developed. “Nothing is more important than the development of human resources. Our people is our ultimate resource” (Mahathir, 1997).

Ismail *et al.*, (2007) asserts that education and HRD are the core elements being emphasized in Malaysia. For that reason, the HRD in Malaysia is linked closely with the major development of economic policies namely the New Economic Policy (NEP) and the National Vision Policy (NVP). According to Yeop Abdullah (1994), it is proven through the empirical studies that a good education and training system when combined with appropriate national policies and enterprise structure will produce significant rapid economic and social development.

Again, HRD is being given the top priority in developing the nation towards achieving the Vision 2020 and the status of industrialization. To accomplish this, education, training and skill development have become most critical in HRD practices (Fisher *et al.*, 1994). At present, under the latest Malaysian Plan (the Ninth Malaysian Plan) the government aims to enhance human capital and technology development in order to exploit the efficient and talented workforce to increase national productivity and growth (Abdullah, 2007). New skills and expertise are required to improve Malaysian employability and productivity in knowledge-based economy (Fong, 2006; Abdulai, 2001). The government is counting on HRD to develop human capital with positive work values, high integrity and competitive (Fong, 2006).

The Malaysian Government has manifested its commitment towards education and HRD by allocating the highest amount of budget for education and training under the Malaysia's Five-Year Development Plan for instance, 20.6% of the total budget allocation in the Eight Malaysia Plan (2006-2010), in line with the Government's resolution to enhance the human capital quality (Abdullah, 2006a). This big investment in developing human capital is the secret of Malaysia's economic, social and political success (Abdullah, 2006b) The Government has also developed the Knowledge-Based Economy Master Plan to establish the right infrastructure to nurture the growth of all forms of intellectual capital. (Knowledge-based Economy Master Plan, 2002). Research and development activities are continuously encouraged and supported as well as utilizing the latest technologies or the use of information communication technologies (ICT) (Abdullah *et al.*, 2007).

The above description on Malaysia's HRD reflects that HRD is seriously being emphasized by the government, and in fact it has been constituted as a national policy. The involvement of HRD Council (HRDC) as a government arm that provides the HRD Fund (HRDF) to all HRD providers show the strength of HRD in Malaysia (Ismail *et al.*, 2007). As asserted by McLean and McLean (2001), the government legislation may influence the role and significant contribution of HRD in Malaysia. In this case, it can be said that Malaysia's HRD practices is stressing more on individual, organizational, nation and community developments. The practice focus is similar to Thailand's HRD.

1.1.1.4 The HRD Practices in Malaysian Higher Education Institutions

Higher Education Institutions (HEI) have also played an important role in developing people through education and training which is similar to the HRD role. HEI is one of the agencies that assist government in developing the nation. In fact, among the three institutions (universities, public schools and public or private sector institutions) that are responsible in developing people, universities seemed to be the most important institution that could close the gap between current levels of knowledge and skills and the future level that is required in achieving Vision 2020

(Robert *et al.*, 1994). Their role is not limited to achieving the country's vision, but they must take part in the k-economy era as well (Ning *et al.*, 2005). HEI and staff need to recognize and respond to their role in changing this new era society (Steyn, 2004). In order to develop human resources, HEI in Malaysia serves as a platform by the government to provide learning infrastructure ranging from formal to informal activities such as educational program and workplace learning (Fong, 2006).

The real challenge for HEI nowadays is to take action of the requirements of an emerging knowledge-based society which leads to change in education and training need, as well as the trend of learning such as lifelong learning (Langlois, 2003). Academic staff or academicians in universities are the important engine to gear their organizations in coping with edges. In HEI, an academician is categorized as a knowledge worker. They rely on knowledge rather than skills, possess intelligent input, creative ability and the authority to perform a job. They are given autonomy to perform their tasks in teaching and researching and recognized as experts in their particular fields of discipline (Moses *et al.*, 1992). As a result, they must be responsible to develop and share their knowledge and expertise continuously (Ning *et al.*, 2005).

Syed-Ikhsan and Rowland (2004) in their study stresses that managing knowledge in the public sector is similarly important as in the private sector. In fact, it is significant to understand how the government or particularly the public sectors demonstrate KM. Besides, the previous attempt by McAdam and O'Dell (2000) explains that the public sector reflects KM in a positive manner in which their awareness towards knowledge contribution is positively achieved. Therefore this study aims to focus on how HRD practices in MPU is being or could be developed to prepare academicians into responding to the current needs of managing and sharing knowledge for institutional improvement and country's development.

1.2 Background of the Research

Today's world economy has evolved and has emphasized knowledge as the basic economic resource. Terms such as capital, natural resources and labor are no longer reliable to be used except for "knowledge" (Drucker, 1993). According to Biejerse (1999), knowledge plays an important role for the economic growth, therefore sharing knowledge within an organization is necessary in order for the organization to utilize knowledge for the betterment of the organization. Effective KSP can give direct influences on knowledge management (KM) implementation (Lin and Lee, 2006) for instance, the process of acquiring, developing and accumulating knowledge are meaningless unless it is applied (Ahmad *et al.*, 2004; Gun and Valinkangas, 1998).

For example, it is important for a person who has gained expertise from working experience, training or attending courses to share his or her knowledge within the organization so that there will be a continuation and re-creation of knowledge within the organization (Biejerse, 1999). Knowledge when shared throughout the organization can increase organizational effectiveness. Organizational members who share valuable information freely with other members can avoid those members from having to repeat the same problems (Marks *et al.*, 2008).

Despite the powerful contribution of KSP in solving problem (Berends, 2005; McDermott and O'Dell, 2001), difficulties or barriers in sharing knowledge has become an issue. Many researchers do not emphasize on the KS process and as the result the process towards sharing knowledge remains ambiguous (Laycock, 2005; Berends, 2005). Furthermore, the KS content and contribution are ignored by practitioners and are not empirically studied by previous researchers (Jain *et al.*, 2007; Berends, 2005). For example, many organizations only focused on the amount and directions of KSP that make them fail to manage their own knowledge and fail to remain competitive in the market. Soller (2004) strongly suggests that further research is necessary to understand the effectiveness of KSP. Therefore, managing

knowledge such as facilitating KSP among expertise within organizations remain a challenge for managers (Hinds and Pfeffer, 2003).

KSP is not a natural act and need to be nurtured and facilitated (Bock *et al.*, 2005, Yang, 2004; Smith and McKeen, 2003), especially on tacit knowledge (Desouza, 2003). A study on KM/S reveals that technology is not the main issue that deters KSP, but the human resource themselves (Cabrera and Cabrera, 2002). For example, only seven percent of the companies surveyed by the consulting company report on KM (KPMG) mentioned technology as a barrier to successful managing KM, whereas others mentioned about non-technological problems (Cabrera and Cabrera, 2002), such as individual barriers (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) and supportive culture for KS (Liebowitz, 2001; McDermott and O'Dell, 2001). Taylor and Wright (2004) also highlight that “the main barriers to implement KM were all people related”.

As KSP resides within individual (Bock *et al.*, 2005; Riege, 2005; Davenport *et al.*, 1997), people need to be persuaded and human cohesion is greatly demanded (Guzman and Wilson, 2005; Clark, 2003; Endres *et al.*, 2007). For example, people's non-supportive beliefs in sharing knowledge either formally or informally can result in KM efforts to fail in an organization (Smith, 2005). For that reason, KS awareness is very important to be cultivated among employees within organization to ensure that the importance and contribution of the KSP is understood and supported (Van den Hooff and de Ridder, 2004; Denning, 2003). Even though many researchers seek to explain the personal or human factor, KSP is nevertheless still more complex and requires more holistic investigation (Ford, 2004). Sondergaard *et al.*, (2007) support that the key fundamental to study KSP is viable by two integration factors, namely technical and social. To overcome this issue, this research focuses on the three aspects of technology, organizational, and personal in order to provide a comprehensive perspective on KSP. Moreover, another potential limitation that is identified in this area of study is the lack of solid theory on KSP and therefore further studies on understanding KSP is strongly demanded (Jain *et al.*, 2007; Ford, 2004). Thus, by applying the multiple perspectives approach a more comprehensive picture on KS field will be provided.

KM is not only being emphasized by private sectors, but also public sectors. These organizations have been realizing the benefits of managing knowledge in their organization and have started following the current changes. They start to emulate on how successful business organization is; the private sectors have started to implement it. Nevertheless, there is no established model suitable for public sector to replicate, with regard to the dissimilarities of the both sectors (Cong and Pandya, 2003). This is why the development of a KM/S framework for the public sector, particularly MPU is seen as a contribution to the field of study. In fact KM discipline in the public sector is still new and many issues are still disclosed (Taylor and Wright, 2004; Cong and Pandya, 2003). The changing role of public universities into a knowledge-based society (Rowley, 2000) has also demanded the institutions to focus more on identification, sharing and utilization of knowledge (Cong and Pandya, 2003). Though previous studies have discussed about KM efforts in the public sectors (Syed-Ikhsan and Rowland, 2004; Cong and Pandya, 2003; McAdam and Reid, 2000), it is hard to find how public universities adapt and take the challenge in managing their knowledge.

It is argued that there are still many facets needed to be improved in order to practice KS among universities in developing countries (Thulstrup *et al.*, 2005). In Malaysia, the implementation of KM is still a relatively new phenomenon. In fact, the KS culture in HEI is still at a minimum level (Maizatul Akmar and Yang, 2005). There is an ongoing debate that most of the HEI in Malaysia have not yet created proper mechanisms to allow KSP as compared to business organizations (Maizatul Akmar and Yang, 2005). One of the possible reasons is that the organizations struggle to create KS awareness that motivate people to readily share and reuse knowledge (Cong and Pandya, 2003). Van den Hooff and de Ridder (2004) concurred that an individual's awareness of knowledge needs within the organization may influence the extent to which how the individual is willing to donate and receive knowledge. For instance, KS difficulties may also arise among academicians group even though they are working within an academic environment which values knowledge. There is an obvious case of KS resistance among academicians which show that they are reluctant to share their expertise because of self interest and narrow perspectives (Karhu, 2002). Ning *et al.*, (2005) share some scenarios in universities that made academicians hesitate to share their knowledge. They are

mainly professors or assistant professors who believe that unique knowledge can be a source of power, and they feel reluctant to share.

The above issues provide an insight that people management is central to KM/S practices. Though literature in KM/S do not specifically relate people's development to HRD (Gourlay, 2001), HRD has great roles in continuously developing employees and facilitate people in managing their knowledge predominantly through learning process (Sun 2003; Kubo *et al.*, 2001; Sambrook and Stewart, 1999; Harrison and Kessels, 2004; Walton, 2004; Wouters *et al.*, 2001; Poell and van der Krogt, 2003; Gilbreath and Montesino, 2006; Parise, 2007). In Europe for instance, research in HRD has been greatly discussed on HRD role in supporting various forms of learning including informal and collaborative learning (Kessels, 2007). In Malaysia, the role of HRD is strongly promoted in transforming public servants to become knowledgeable workforce (K-Based Economy Master Plan, 2003). Along this line, it has been suggested by previous authors (Garavan *et al.*, 2000; Buyens *et al.*, 2001) that further studies on how HRD's role assists employees in creating and using knowledge are important and may contribute to current practice and theory building on both HRD and KM/S fields.

1.3 Problem Statement

While KS is recognized for its benefits, its implementation is also ambiguous and complex. The complexities surrounding the KS require deeper understanding of the practices so that the process of transferring and disseminating knowledge in organizations can be facilitated. It is difficult for KSP to become a culture in an organization primarily because of people's unwillingness to share. KS is not naturally being practiced, but KSP must be supported and implemented in a systematic way. This includes a proper methodology to support KSP in acquiring, learning, disseminating and sharing knowledge to achieve organizational goal. KS awareness resulted from people's self efficacy which influence their action to share;

therefore there is a need to understand KSP through people development approach, particularly the HRD.

In conclusion, the research problem revolves around the lack of willingness and difficulty in practicing KS in the public sector especially MPU. Since difficulty of practicing KS is closely related to people factor, therefore further studies on HRD and KS practices become fundamental. The main research question that this study attempts to answer is: What are HRD practices that can cultivate KS awareness, which in return will effectively promote and improve KSP among academicians in a particular context of the MPU?

1.4 Research Questions

Several research questions can be extracted for this research:

1. What is state of the art of KSP in MPU?
 - i. What is the level of KS awareness among academicians?
 - ii. What is the level of KSP among academicians?
 - iii. What is the level of technology, organizational and personal (TOP) factors?
 - iv. What are the current issues and challenges in KSP?

2. What are the main factors from the HRD perspectives that can foster KSP among academicians in the MPU?
 - i. What is the relationship between TOP and KSP?
 - ii. Which factor is the most dominant in KSP?
 - iii. What are the current HRD practices in TOP to support KSP?
 - iv. What is the effect of KS awareness on the relationship between TOP and KSP?
 - v. What are the current HRD practices that can foster academicians' awareness on KSP?
 - vi. What is the gap between current HRD practices and ideal state of facilitating KSP among academicians?

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To explore state of the art of the KSP in a particular context of the MPU.
 - i. To identify the level of KS awareness among academicians.
 - ii. To identify the level of KSP among academicians.
 - iii. To identify the level of TOP factors.
 - iv. To discuss the current issues or challenges in KSP.

2. To investigate in-depth the main factors from the HRD perspectives that can foster KSP among academicians in MPU.
 - i. To measure the relationship between TOP and KSP.
 - ii. To identify the most dominant factor in KSP.
 - iii. To identify the current HRD practices in TOP that support KSP.
 - iv. To evaluate the effect of KS awareness on the relationship between TOP and KSP.
 - v. To identify the current HRD practices that can foster academicians' awareness on KSP.
 - vi. To identify the gap between current HRD practices and ideal state of facilitating KSP among academicians.
 - i. To suggest a framework of HRD and KSP practices among academicians in MPU.

1.6 Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses that can be developed in this study are listed as below:

- H1: There are significant differences between academicians' KS awareness and demographic factors (gender, designation, working experience, academic field)
- H2: There are significant differences between TOP factors and demographic factors (gender, designation, working experience, academic field)

- H3: Technological factors have positive influence on KSP
- H4: Organizational factors have positive influence on KSP
- H5: Personal factors have positive influence on KSP
- H6: KS awareness moderates the relationship between TOP and KSP.

1.7 Conceptual Framework of the Research

This study attempts to integrate the concept of KS and HRD. The component of learning is found as central to both HRD and KS. This connection is further explained in Chapter 2. On the other hand, this research adapts different model, concept and theory which are integrated into the research framework in order to answer the research questions, namely: (1) the KS awareness, (2) the Linstone's multiple perspective framework (MPF) and (3) the HRD model by Stewart (2007) that uses HRD intervention and learning. All this can be illustrated in the Figure 1.2.

The diagram shows that the KS awareness moderates the relationship between the three factors of technology, organizational and personal (TOP); and KSP. The component of technology factors includes knowledge diffusion facilitation, and support for information accessibility. The organizational factors comprises of KS environment, leadership, social interaction, team-based structure, reward and incentives. The personal factors include attitude toward KS and the degree of enjoyment in helping others.

The two key components of HRD practices namely HRD intervention and learning are to support KSP practices. The three HRD interventions of education, training and development facilitate learning, direct learning outcomes, and manage the learning resources. At the individual level, the outcome of learning improves individual's knowledge, skills and attitude/values (KSAs); whereby, the KS culture can be developed at the organizational level. The learning outcomes both at individual and organizational level in turn, change individual's behavior towards having the awareness and willingness to share and get involve in KSP.

In order to understand the whole process in detail, the MPF is incorporated into the conceptual framework as a lens of this study. Meaning that, the study on HRD and KS practices among academicians are being designed from the holistic views of technology, organizational and personal.

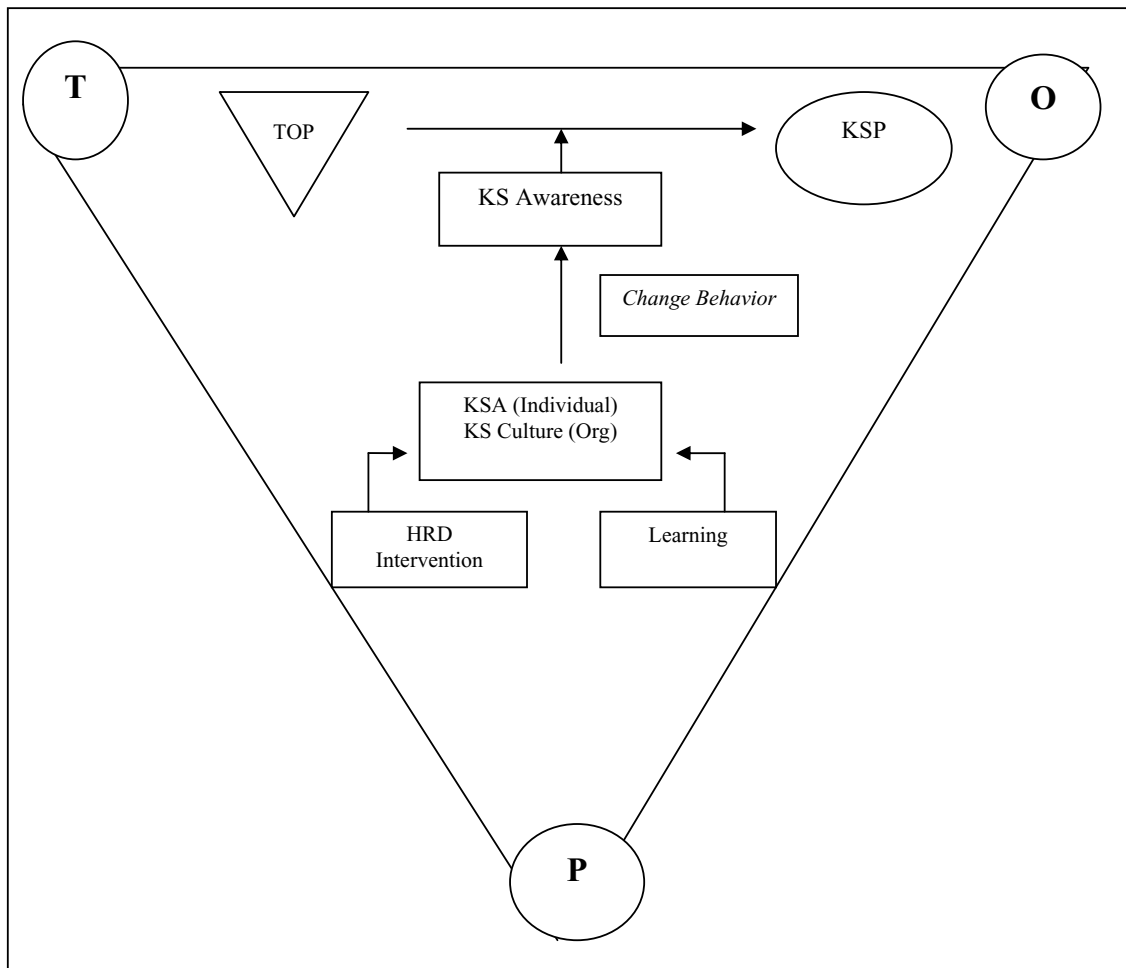


Figure 1.2: Conceptual Framework of the Research

1.8 Scope of the Research

The scope of this study is confined to the public universities in Malaysia which encompasses 20 universities. A survey is distributed to academicians. On the other hand, interviews are carried out to explain in more detail the findings from surveys particularly on the significant issues and challenges, the HRD current practices in TOP to support KSP among academicians, and the current HRD practices that can foster KS awareness among academicians. This involves second group of stakeholders, the HRD practitioners and top management at universities level.

The variables for this study are formulated within the perspectives of HRD. There are a number of factors in KSP, but dependant, independent and moderator variables are selected based on their connection to HRD. Though the items in surveys do not mentioned at all the word “HRD”, they are constructed from the conceptual framework between HRD and KS practices. For example, the item on ‘social interaction’: “we have a ‘buddy/mentoring’ system that helps me and my colleagues to build trust” (refer to Appendix A). Both KS and HRD in theory emphasize this approach in a learning process. In HRD for instance, intervention such as training and development practices of mentoring facilitate and manage learning process. Moreover, the mentoring itself is a mean of education that directs learning process. The outcome of learning will change an individual’s KSA and organizational culture of KSP. In conclusion, it can be assumed that HRD practices influence KSP. Nevertheless, the magnitude of this relationship is not being quantified in this study. This study is interested only in understanding and identifying the HRD practices that facilitate KSP. That is the reason why the second phase of explaining the HRD practices is carried out only through interviews among HRD practitioners. Since the HRD and KS practices are explained from the multi views of TOP, the HRD practices in each T, O, P are discussed accordingly. The explanation on findings is closely related to one another and there are cases of repeated findings. For example, HRD intervention in facilitating, managing and directing learning process within technological perspective such as using ICT facilities, are also explained in organizational perspective like leadership role in creating KS culture.

1.9 Significance of the Research

This research contributes to the theory, practice and methodology. This research proposes a framework that incorporates HRD and KS practices from multiple angles. The linkages between HRD and KS field are literally explored and added new knowledge into both fields. Furthermore, the combination of both hard context such as technological factor and soft context such as organizational culture will assist in studying HRD and KS practices in a holistic perspective.

As for its contribution to the practice, the HRD practices can be utilized by the department/personnel in MPU which include developing people that value knowledge and aware on the importance of sharing knowledge. The issues and challenges of KSP in MPU can create higher understanding level among top management of MPU. As a result, this information can build their awareness on the contribution of KSP and why HRD should be placed at the central level and must be integrated into organizational main business agenda.

The research also illustrates the effective use of mixed methods approach through the positivist paradigm. The research incorporates survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview in which reduce bias of choosing one method in a single study.

1.10 Operational Definition

Knowledge

Knowledge is referred as the tacit and explicit knowledge in academic setting. The example of tacit knowledge includes leadership role in performing administration task; knowledge of examiners discretion in grading examination manuscripts; and through teaching and learning (T&L) experience. Whereas, the explicit knowledge

could arise from one personal document or material such as T&L materials, research or publication papers.

Knowledge Sharing Awareness

In this research KS awareness refers to two concepts namely self efficacy and self esteem. Self efficacy is a belief on the academician's ability to share or not to share knowledge. An academician with high self efficacy is assumed to freely share knowledge and participate in KS activities such as seminars, academic talks and discussion. Similarly, an academician with high self esteem will see KS as an important activity and the academician's KS will contribute to the development of knowledge in an organization. Both concepts of self efficacy and self esteem are closely related and work with each other.

Knowledge Sharing Process

This is related to how academician's share their knowledge including acquiring, learning, disseminating and sharing information and knowledge, and transferring tacit knowledge into explicit and vice versa. The process of KS occurs within formal platforms such as meeting and seminars, and informal platforms such as informal chat, and tea break discussion. The process also involves sharing knowledge through ICT facilities. KSP among academician's is related by performing academic jobs particularly T&L and researching and other academic duties such as administering, consultancy, academic advising, academic writing, research and publication, and community service.

Knowledge Sharing Practices

This is related to how KS is going to be institutionalized and become a culture in an organization. This research examines how knowledge is being shared within an organization (intra-organization) such as, between individuals, colleagues, departments, and between head of departments to staff. To make KS as a culture, knowledge must be effectively shared and an organization must facilitate the process, therefore knowledge hoarding's issue does not occur. The Indiana University for

instance, has used ICT to facilitate KS practices. They create online forum or online communities of practice for the exchange of tacit knowledge and on-the-job experience. The Internet Learning Forum enables mathematics and science teachers across the State of Indiana to virtually visit other teachers' classrooms, view lesson plans, explore inquiry-based teaching methods, connect with national organizations and to trade insights and informal know-how with peers.

Human Resource Development (HRD) Practices

This research relates HRD practices beyond the context of training. This includes broader perspectives than training such as HRD intervention and learning. Intervention describes HRD practices based on education, training and development. The HRD practices do not only develop individuals but also organizations. Through learning strategy, knowledge, skills and attitudes for individuals, and organizational culture can be improved. This are the outcomes of learning which in turn will influence behavior to share knowledge.

1.11 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is organized in seven chapters, as shown in Figure 1.3. The thesis presents the development of the research in a structured and coherent manner. Although the chapters are written in a seemingly linear fashion, the development of the research is in no way linear. There are inter-relationships between different chapters and sections of the thesis and they are clearly stated in the chapters. They should not be read in isolation and therefore, the best approach to understanding the research is by briefly revisiting the related sections.

Chapter 1 introduces the research area of concern. The chapter begins with the description of the research background, encompassing the KS difficulties, KM/S in HEI context, and the needs of people management or HRD to foster KSP. The chapter proceeds with the problem statement, with a brief argument about the

absence of a suitable framework for KSP in MPU. The chapter then describes in detail the research questions and research objectives. The research hypotheses are outlined accordingly. Then, a conceptual framework which guides the research's fieldwork is described. The scope of the research involving the context of research is clarified. The chapter also describes the significance of the research, based on its contributions to theory, practice and methodology. The chapter proceeds to state the operational definition for the research. Finally, the chapter gives an overview of the thesis structure.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature related to KS and HRD. The discussion begins with the KS perspectives that elaborate the conception of KS and its controversy. To place the discussion within the HRD and KS practices, HRD roles and its relationship with KS is further explained, and summarized selected KS articles that connect HRD to the KS difficulties or dilemma. Then, the chapter proceeds with the discussion on theoretical foundation and development of hypothesis. The suitability of concept/theory/model chosen in this research is clarified and justified. The chapter then presents the research framework used for this research. Finally, the outcomes of the literature discussion concludes the chapter.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology used in the research. The chapter begins by discussing the research paradigm of the research. The chapter continues with the discussion on the research design with the description of types of research used. The rationale of using the mixed methods approach to develop the framework of HRD and KS practices is clarified. The chapter then describes on research procedures that consists of sampling used and methods of data collection. They include discussions on survey and interviews. Methods for analyzing the data such as descriptive statistics, and correlation analysis are explained.

Chapter 4 discusses the process of instrument development for this research. This chapter begins with a discussion on the purposes of conducting a preliminary study in selected MPU. Findings on the preliminary study are used as a basis to

operationalize the research instrument, identifying the suitability of this research in the context of study and to primarily investigate the HRD practices to support KSP. The lesson learned of this preliminary study is summarized. The chapter proceeds by describing the construct measurement on survey, the questionnaire structure, and the actual interview. Then, the discussion on pilot study and its findings are discussed. The purpose of the pilot study is to test the survey instrument within MPU context based on the earlier reviews of the literature.

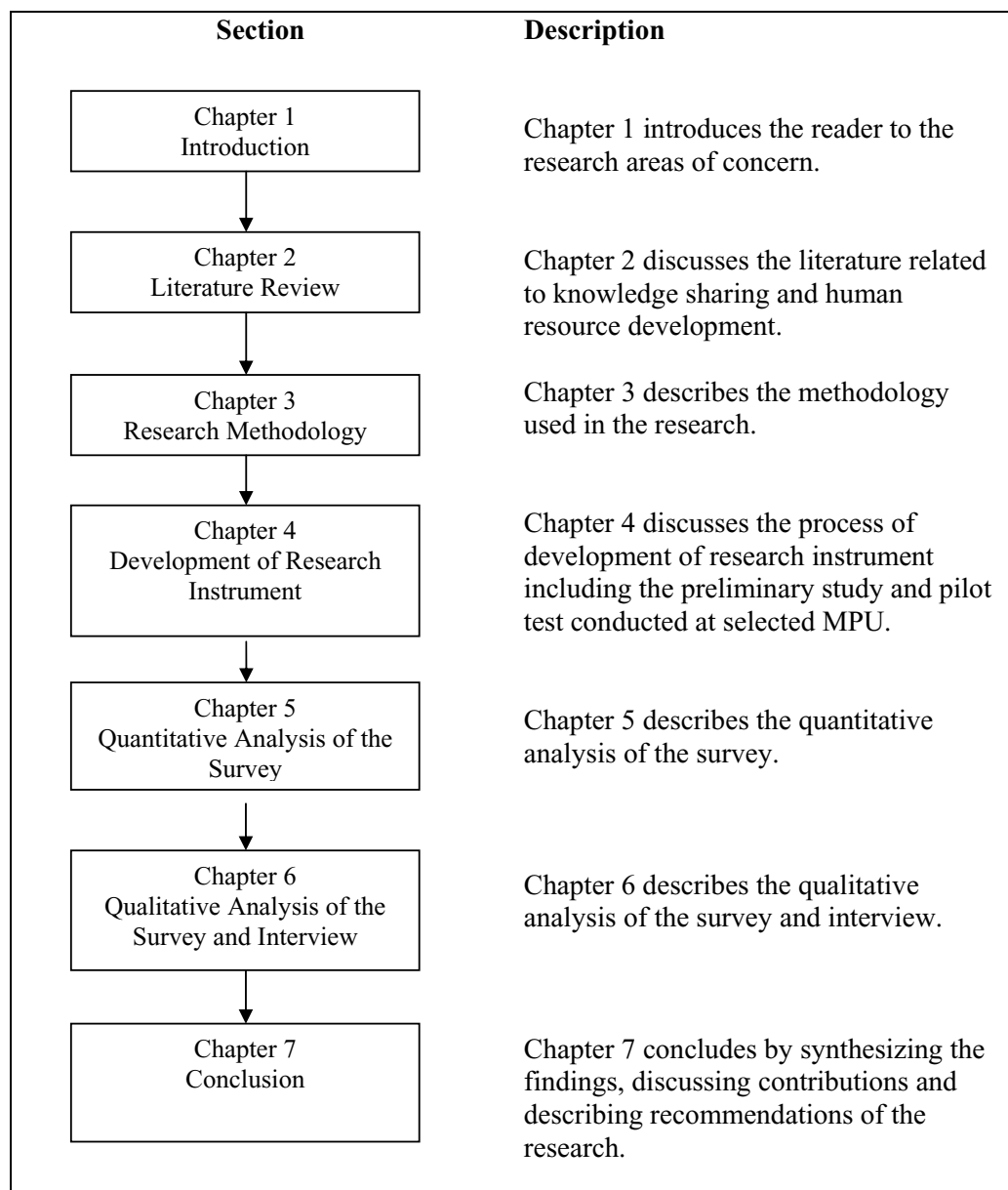


Figure 1.3: Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 5 discusses the quantitative analysis on survey for this research. This chapter begins with a discussion on the KSP level among academicians which comprises of the KS awareness, factors that influence KSP, and KSP practices. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage and mean are used to explain the results. Mean comparisons such as t-test and ANOVA are employed in order to identify any significance differences of KSP level between different demographic profiles of academicians. The chapter then describes on analysis on the hypothesis testing for this study. There are four hypothesis tested and analyzed in this section. The summary on the quantitative results concludes the chapter.

Chapter 6 discusses the qualitative analysis that is obtained from two sources namely the open-ended questionnaire and interview. The chapter begins with a discussion on analysis on KS issues and challenges among academicians in MPU. The analysis is divided into two parts. The first part describes the analysis obtained from the open-ended section. The second part discusses the analysis from interviews. The section ended with illustration on all themes analyzed from quantitative and qualitative analysis to present the whole picture on the issues and challenges. The chapter then proceeds with discussion on the analysis of the HRD and KS practices. The results are organized into two sections which represent different responses from the top gun of MPU; DVCA and HOD, and the HRD for academic including the ICT personnel. Lastly, a summary on findings discussion concludes the chapter.

Chapter 7 concludes the research and identifies the research contributions. The chapter draws the conclusions by describing the research outcomes in relation to the achievement of the research objectives. The chapter then examines the research contributions to theory, practice and methodology. Lastly, the chapter discusses recommendations for future research.