

MOTIVATION FACTORS ON KNOWLEDGE SHARING
AMONG PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS IN MALAYSIA

BY

NURIN HANANI BINTI BAHARUL AZHAR

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Abstrak

Tujuan utama kajian dijalankan adalah bagi mengenalpasti faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi perkongsian pengetahuan di kalangan organisasi sektor kerajaan di Malaysia. Ramai dari penyelidik mempersetujui tentang kepentingan perkongsian dalam pengurusan pengetahuan serta telah dikenalpasti oleh kebanyakan organisasi pada masa kini sebagai salah satu faktor utama dalam meningkatkan kreativiti seseorang individu. Kepentingan dalam perkongsian pengetahuan dapat meningkatkan kecekapan dan keberkesanan perkhidmatan di kalangan organisasi sektor kerajaan dan swasta di Malaysia melalui pengaplikasian teknologi dan budaya sesebuah organisasi untuk lebih berdaya saing. Pelbagai usaha telah dijalankan sejajar dengan saranan kerajaan dalam menggalakkan perkhidmatan pelanggan yang lebih telus serta berkualiti terutamanya di kalangan sektor kerajaan dalam meningkatkan produktiviti dan pembangunan ekonomi. Kajian telah dijalankan ke atas 237 responden pelbagai organisasi sektor kerajaan di Malaysia melalui kaedah soal selidik dalam mengenalpasti faktor-faktor utama yang mempengaruhi perkongsian pengetahuan. Disamping itu, teori bagi menyokong rekabentuk kajian juga dicadangkan dengan tanggapan bahawa terdapat hubungan yang signifikan di antara pembolehubah kelakuan individu, pergaulan sosial, budaya organisasi, sokongan ketua serta aplikasi teknologi dalam mempengaruhi pembolehubah perkongsian pengetahuan. Dengan menekankan kepentingan budaya dalam perkongsian pengetahuan serta pengaplikasian teknologi dapat meningkatkan keberkesanan dan kecekapan perkhidmatan pelanggan di kalangan pekerja organisasi sektor kerajaan.

Abstract

A study has been conducted to explore the motivation factors on knowledge sharing among public sector organizations in Malaysia. Nowadays, knowledge management (KM) has been identified by most of the organizations as a positive force in creating new knowledge hence increase sustainable competitive advantage. Many researchers have agreed on the importance of knowledge management as the process that should integrate individual talents, culture and technology to increase the knowledge generated throughout the organizations. Knowledge sharing is the most essential part in the implementation of knowledge management. Application of knowledge sharing culture in both public and private sector organizations may develop efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Malaysia's public sectors have promoted numbers of key measures to enhance economy-wide productivity, accelerate economic growth as well as to develop innovation and creativity towards better quality, responsive and knowledge-based public services. Thus, this paper proposes a theoretical model which identifies the motivation factors that promote knowledge sharing in the public sector organizations. Data are collected through a questionnaire survey. The sample consists of 237 usable responses in different government institutions in Malaysia. The findings provided some empirical support for the theoretical framework. It is assumed that there is a significant relationship between variables includes individual attitude, social interaction, organization culture, supportive leader as well as technology application and knowledge sharing. By educate the employees with the appropriate knowledge sharing in their mindset and technology to support them will rapidly bring a knowledge sharing culture in the public sector organizations in increasing the capability of service delivery.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Knowledge sharing among employees in many organizations nowadays are encouraging as part of a crucial process in order to meet the organization's goals and objectives. Most organization whether profit or nonprofit oriented need to manage their knowledge to encourage the sharing of ideas and expertise throughout the organizations. Knowledge sharing is important as it allows more people to communicate and exchange information in effective manners.

When the knowledge is effectively shared and built among the people, it will provide benefits to the entire organizations in which it helps to increase individuals' performance and productivity as well as reducing valuable time people spends on looking for relevant knowledge. The more people share their knowledge with each other will allow the relevant and needed skills to be maximized. Besides, through knowledge sharing, there are more people involve which allow the organizations to move forward and achieve their overall goal and purpose.

The government's strategic plan to improve economic growth and development in both public and private sector organizations have been recommended in creating core competency of innovation and creativity through the importance of knowledge as a strategic resource. In the realization towards the knowledge-based economy, the implementation of knowledge sharing practices in the public sector organizations in

Malaysia has been encouraged among and within the government agencies to deliver the quality and superior service delivery (Skyrme, 2003).

Hence, knowledge sharing practices plays an important role in the organizations. When knowledge is shared among the people in their working culture and environment, it becomes a collective resource and creates new knowledge (Van den Hoof, 2003). This new knowledge enables the public sector organizations to respond to the forces of change and transform into the knowledge-based environment to develop more creative and innovative in new capabilities of public services in increasing the positive perception and expectation in the mind of the public customers.

However there are present challenges in the process of encouraging knowledge sharing since such practices involve the willingness of the employees to share their knowledge in the public sector organizations (Gibbert and Krause, 2002). Hence, it is important to analyze the strengths and weaknesses and what drive the public sector organizations to motivate and educate the employees in building and implementing knowledge sharing to bring healthy and understanding environment of the organizations in ensuring its longevity and sustainability.

1.1 Background of the Study

Knowledge has become an increasingly important assets in many organizations nowadays (Levin and Cross, 2004). The concept of sharing knowledge is considered to be a crucial process in developing competitive advantage and superior performance. Knowledge sharing provides several important advantages to both employees and organizations such as

the ability to formulate strategies, good decision making and high performance level to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of public services will be remained competitive in respective industry.

The transparency, integrity and accountability of public service delivery have been identified as the important current issues need to be highlighted by the public sectors organizations as the government is striving towards becoming a develop nation in year 2020. In the context of public services, the implementing of knowledge sharing is important in order to exchange and create new knowledge to achieve innovative, creative and knowledge-based public services.

The success of knowledge sharing practices among the employees in the public sector organizations are highly depends on the individual's willingness to share the knowledge they possessed or created with others (Kayworth and Leidner, 2004). Lack of knowledge, skills and expertise among the employees are several factors that contribute to the delays and failures in deliver quality services as well as responding to the needs of public customers.

The term public sectors includes all local levels of government agencies, cooperations, departments and miscellaneous units that perform some form of public services to meet the needs and preferences required by the public customers and businesses. Thus, the main purpose of the study is conducted to analyze more than five different government agencies in Malaysia in identifying the motivation factors that affect the employees' willingness to share their knowledge with others and among themselves in the public sector organizations.

1.2 The Evolution of Knowledge Sharing in Malaysia

The importance of knowledge in the public sector organizations is a central resource to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government service delivery. The need of transformation from a production-based economy towards a knowledge-based economy of Malaysia have been highlighted since the announcement in achieving vision 2020 to develop competitive and sustainable public sector performance (Yap and Rosmaini, 2008).

The former Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad in his speech at the opening of the Second Global Knowledge Conference stated that, *"...in the Information Age which we enter, our society must be information rich., this country must most seriously enhance the production and supply of information, knowledge and wisdom and ensure their accessibility to all our people in every area of work."* (Mahathir, 2000).

The various efforts and initiatives have been taken in order to ensure the implementing of knowledge sharing among government agencies and ministerial departments in responding towards the concept of K-based Economy Master Plan (KEMP), which was introduced at the end of year 2002 in developing Malaysia as a country of world-class knowledge-based public services for creativity, innovation and sustaining growth economy.

The National Information Technology Agenda (NITA) and the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) have been established by the government of Malaysia to emphasis on the importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which serves as a competitive advantage to help many organizations nowadays to stand in the challenge era of 21st century. Besides, the government has developed several targets and strategies for

increasing knowledge capabilities to create innovative and ‘first class human capital’ (Government of Malaysia, 2008).

The understanding of potential advantages of knowledge sharing practices will help the public sector organizations to formulate strategies and policies to enhance internal efficiency of service delivery and improve service quality as well as customer relationship in serving the public. (Kochikar and Suresh, 2004).

1.3 Problem Statement

The relationship between knowledge sharing and job performance has a strong influence in the quality and superior of products, services and processes which helps to provides benefits and generates value to the customers. Since knowledge is a main resource affecting the organizational performance, the public sector organizations must be prepared with the ability in developing effective learning environment among the employees.

The sufficient knowledge in the public sector organizations could assist in improving the employees’ job performance hence better service delivery by increasing quality, productivity, processes, innovations and better decision making. Without sufficient knowledge, the public sector organizations may not be able to perform their duties and responsibilities to serve the public customers with excellent and high standards of services. Besides, lack of knowledge in delivering services to the customers will leads to poor quality of services hence increasing the numbers of complaints from the public.

The process of implementing knowledge sharing will not only increase the competitive advantage of the public sector organizations but also the employees’

competencies. Knowledge sharing provides better opportunity for the employees to enhance their skills by working together while improving their own performance (Gold, Malhotra and Segars, 2001).

However, in the real practice, there are certain barriers in implementing knowledge sharing such as reluctant to share knowledge and expertise with others in which will leads to the insecurity of job performance and positions in today's competitive organizations. The Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006) has reported that there is lack of information and knowledge sharing among government agencies in which leads to poor and less efficiency in public services.

The government, like other non-profit organization, has some unique challenges to develop a knowledge sharing capability as compared with industry. (Liebowitz, 2001). Furthermore, service delivered by the public sector organizations have always been measured or benchmarked against the private sector organizations in delivering a better job quality and performance in serving the public (Ali, 2006).

Therefore, the public sector organizations are supposed to develop strengths and overcome barriers in creating the participative environment of knowledge sharing to increase their efficiency and be more proactive in delivering a quality and superior services to the customers (Damanhuri, 2004).

1.4 Research Objectives

Knowledge sharing is affected by accessible value of knowledge that an individual possesses and transfers from one and another. The objectives of the research are:

1. To identify the motivation factors that influences the willingness among the employees in the public sector organizations to participate in the knowledge sharing in achieving the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.
2. To discuss how knowledge sharing can be used and put into practices as a strategic resource to create the organizational capabilities hence lead the public sector organizations to increase their productivity and quality in service delivery.

1.5 Research Questions

The study attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the motivation factors of knowledge sharing that influence the employees' performance in the public sector organizations?
2. What are the important roles of knowledge sharing in enable the public sector organizations to enhance its service delivery?

1.6 Scope of the Study

The main purpose of the study is conducted to identify the motivation factors affecting knowledge sharing practices among the employees particularly in the public sector organizations. The importance of knowledge sharing in public sectors has been identified as strategic resources in enhancing the employees' continuous performance as well as improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery. Sample has been selected which concentrated numbers of the respondents in more than five different government institutions in Malaysia in order to get the employees' perspective through

questionnaire survey on how factors such as individual attitude, social interaction, organization culture, supportive leader as well as technology application influence the capabilities of knowledge sharing practices in public sector organizations.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Knowledge sharing provides several advantage such as improve the speed and quality which are likely to be relevant and applicable across public services. The primary intention of the study is to provide a better understanding of knowledge sharing in service delivery particularly in the public sector organizations in Malaysia. The motivation factors that affect the willingness of the employees to share their knowledge with others in the public sector organizations have been identified in providing reliable and responsiveness public services delivery. The proposed theoretical framework have been emphasized in which individual, organizational and technological dimensions has taken into consideration that might affect the implementing of knowledge sharing practices in Malaysian public sector. Furthermore, specific recommendations are given through the exploration of knowledge sharing in emphasizing the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the public sector organizations.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

The definitions and descriptions of terminologies which have been addressed in the study are:

1. Knowledge : Knowledge is considered as the information process of an individual including idea, fact, expertise and judgments which are relevant for the individual, team and organization performance (Wang & Noe, 2009).

2. Knowledge Management : Knowledge management refers to the systematic process of finding, selecting, organizing, distilling and presenting information in a way that improved an employee's comprehension in a specific area of interest (Slack, Chambers & Johnston, 2004).
3. Knowledge Sharing : Knowledge sharing is a process where individuals exchange knowledge and together create new knowledge (Van den Hooff, 2003).
4. Service Delivery : Service delivery can be defined in two forms; behavior and economy. In behavior, a service means an act or service offered by one group to another. Whereas in the form of economy, a service is an economic activity that generates value and provides benefits to customers within a specific time and place (Lovelock, 2001).
5. Performance : Performance is refer to what is expected to be delivered by an individual or a set of individuals within a time frame (Rao, 2004).
6. Individual Attitude : Individual attitude refers to the favorable or unfavorable response to things, people, places, events or ideas (Simpson, 1994 & Koballa, 1995).
7. Social Interaction : Social interaction is when the participants of equal status share similar need and make an effort to understand each other (Ellis, 1994).
8. Organizational Culture : Organizational culture is an organization's values, beliefs, practices, rituals and customs to integrate processes in all organization functions (Marguardt,2002). Organization culture is important factor used to determine how well an employee fits into their organizational context (O'Reilly, 1991).
9. Supportive Leader : Supportive leader is someone who provides guidance to followers, treats them fairly, and recognizes their inputs as valuable (House &

Dessler, 1974).

10. Technology Application : Technology application can be defined as material artifacts such as software and hardware used to perform duties in organization (Orlikowski, 1992).

1.9 Organization of Remaining Chapters

The study is organized in which chapter one gives an overview of the research and describes the importance of knowledge sharing in the public sector organizations. The objectives of the research and the problem statement are discussed to give a direction of the study. It also illustrates the key research questions and the significance of the study to provide rationale of conducting the study. Chapter two reviews the literature and conceptual framework done on knowledge sharing in which it is focus on the influencing factors of knowledge sharing in the public sector organizations. Chapter three explains the key methodological issues and the data analysis of the study. This will include a research model, theoretical framework, statement of the research hypotheses, population and sample, the unit of analysis and questionnaires design.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

The chapter reviews the literature and conceptual framework on the motivation factors identified to be conducted in the public sector organizations to promote knowledge sharing and the importance of effective knowledge sharing in the public sector organizations. By creating the awareness on the importance of knowledge sharing and how knowledge can be used in the public sector organizations will leads to increase the capability of service delivery in achieving the business objectives.

2.1 Knowledge

Knowledge is generally observed as the most important asset that should be carefully managed. Many organizations have realized the importance of knowledge as a strategic resource in achieving business goals. According to Bock et al. (2005), “knowledge is the foundation of a firm's competitive advantage and, ultimately, the primary driver of a firm's value”. Knowledge is also regarded as a key resource in discriminate the organizations’ competitor. (Fu and Lee, 2005). As mentioned by Sveiby (2001), knowledge is identified as an intangible asset which grows when a person use and apply the knowledge in the organizations and tends to lose or depreciate in value when it is not use or apply. There are two types of important knowledge need to be possessed by an individual in the organizations which include explicit and tacit knowledge. (Nonaka, 1994 and Lam, 2000).

Explicit knowledge is knowledge that can be obtained from learning and understanding through formal education or structured study and can be easily transferred and shared among users. On the other hand, tacit knowledge is knowledge that can be obtained from direct experiences but difficult to be transferred and shared among users. Both explicit and tacit knowledge are required in the organizations to make decisions, solve problems and influence in the collective behavior of their members (Liebowitz and Beckman, 1998).

2.2 Knowledge Sharing

According to Davenport and Prusak (1998), knowledge sharing is identified as one of the processes in knowledge management. It is “the process of transferring knowledge from a person to another in an organization” (Park et al., 2003). As mentioned by Lee and Al-Hawamdeh (2002), “Knowledge sharing is a deliberate act that makes knowledge reusable by other people through knowledge transfer”. Knowledge sharing in broader perspective is defined as process where individuals or group of people exchange all kinds of knowledge including explicit and tacit knowledge, hence create and facilitate new knowledge. (Van den Hooff, 2003). As explained by Goh (2002), knowledge sharing requires the willingness of an individual or group in an organization to display a high level of co-operative behavior by working with one another and share their knowledge for their mutual benefits. Knowledge sharing provides individual with opportunity to enhance their skills and performance by working together while improving the organizational productivity, efficiency, quality and innovation in achieving the business success.

2.3 Knowledge Sharing in Public Sector

Many organizations are concentrating their efforts to create the effective medium and social network of sharing and transferring the particular useful knowledge across the organizations. It has become the foundation of the organizations' competitive advantage in achieving the business goals and value. Knowledge sharing has been identified as the important capable in improving the quality and superior of service delivery in the public sector organizations. (Zhang et al., 2006 and Thomas, 2005). The public sectors refers to all nonprofit organizations which include government agencies, corporations and military departments that functioning and performs some form of public services. For nonprofit organizations like public sectors, "knowledge sharing represents ways to increase continuous performance, and is thought to improve the customers and employees satisfaction". (Pan and Scarbrough, 1998). The public sector organizations can seek to maintain the practices of knowledge sharing into the activities that meet their needs and to ensure the continued participation in developing the knowledge based environment hence delivering quality and superior services to the communities.

2.4 Social Exchange Theory (SET)

A few empirical studies and that have been conducted in prior research shows that knowledge sharing practices involves the changing of human behavior. (Ruggles, 1998). As suggested by Davenport and Prusak (1998), "sharing one's individual knowledge is not easily carried out". Managing knowledge has been part of the biggest challenge faced by many organizations nowadays since constraint to knowledge sharing practices may relates to the issue of managing human behavior. The Social Exchange Theory developed by Kelly

and Thibaut (1978) is particularly focus on motivation in relationships to measure the effect of cost and benefit on individual attitudes towards knowledge sharing practices. In knowledge sharing as mentioned by Liao (2008), people tend to participate in exchanging their knowledge, expertise or resources with other people when they perceive the reward for such behavior is equal or greater than the amount of cost they pay. However, the maintenance behavior of people in social exchange is based on rational self-interest, trust, loyalty as well as commitment shows in personal characteristics and interaction process between individual and team members in both social and organizational context.

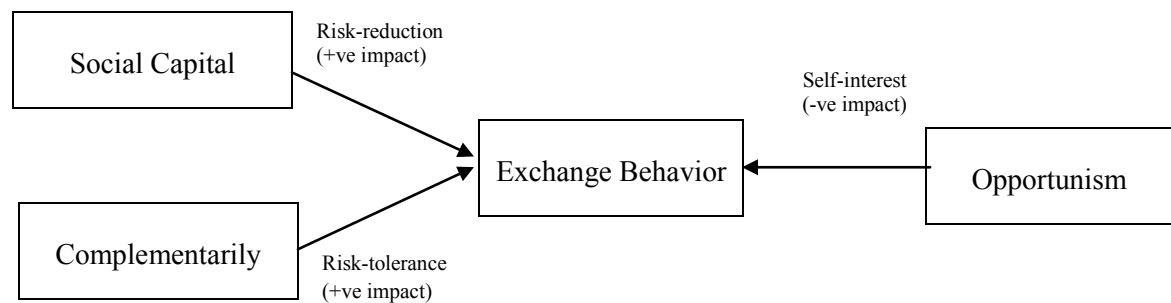


Figure 2.4: Social Exchange Theory (Kelly & Thibaut, 1978)

2.5 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) is often used in social psychology to explain on the theories and concept of human attitude and behavioral intention. The basic assumptions of TRA suggested “the more favorable the attitude of an individual toward a behavior, the stronger will be the intention of the individual to engage in the behavior; the greater the subjective norm, the stronger the intention of the individual to perform the behavior; and the stronger the intention of the individual to engage in a behavior, the more likely the individual will be to perform it.”

(Alavi & Leidner, 2001). The Theory of Reasoned Action has been adopted by many researchers to forecast different kinds of people's behavior on knowledge sharing. The relationship between individual attitude toward knowledge sharing and individual intention to share knowledge can be applied and supported by using the Theory of Reasoned Action. According to Bock (2005), individual attitudes toward factors such as extrinsic motivators, organizational climate and social psychological forces have positive relationship and could influence the individual intentions to share knowledge. Lin (2007) also found that individual with high knowledge self-efficacy and enjoyment in helping other have more positive intentions and attitudes toward knowledge sharing behavior.

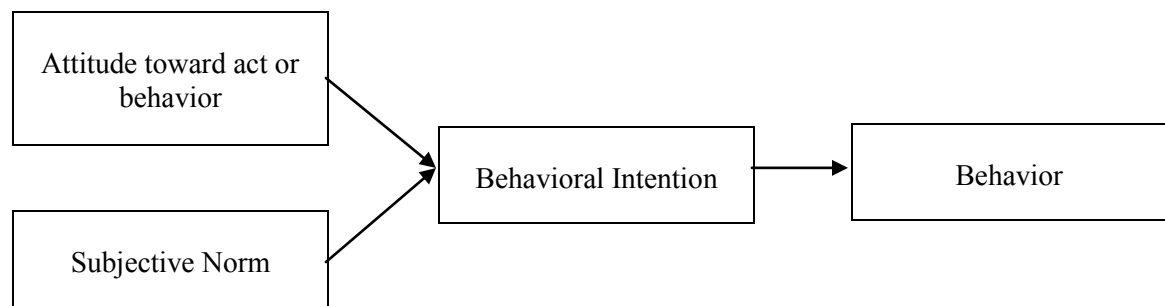


Figure 2.5: Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Azjen, 1975)

2.6 Individual Attitude and Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing can be facilitated by focusing on the attitude of the employees and their willingness to share knowledge in the organizations. According to Hislop (2003), employee attitudes reveals the most important factor in sharing activities rather than motivation that leads the employees to share their knowledge with others. However, Bock et al., 2005 has suggested that “changing people's behavior seems to be most difficult especially promoting knowledge sharing among employees”. As mentioned by Kaser and Miles (2002), sharing

relevant knowledge or information activities cannot be forced and have to be voluntarily implemented among the members in the organizations. Many employees are not aware on the importance of knowledge sharing and tend to show the attitude of reluctance and unwillingness to share their knowledge with others. (O'Dell and Grayson, 1998). The employees may experience fear a loss of power and superiority as well as knowledge ownership when sharing their own personal knowledge. (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002 and Szulanski, 1996). In order for knowledge sharing to be effective, it is important for the organizations to identify related factors affecting knowledge sharing practices from individual attitude and educate the employees on the importance of sharing their knowledge and ideas among colleagues which has been identified as a positive force in promoting innovative organizations.

2.7 Social Interaction and Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing can be facilitated by focusing on the social relationship of individual employee within the organizations. Kubo, Saka and Pam (2001) identify “good human resource management practice and social networking as enabling factors for knowledge sharing”. The social networks that exist among the employees should not be constrained by hierarchies and status differentiations. (Connelly and Kelloway, 2003). Thus, the organizations should encourage not only among the employees, but also the upper management level to interact more by sharing their ideas and knowledge in reducing the barriers. Furthermore, face to face social interactions across different units or functional departments are also encouraged by many organizations as it provides important basis of competitive advantage for the organizations. (Argote and Ingram, 2000 and Nonaka and

Takeuchi, 1995). According to Nahapiel and Ghoshal (1998), strong social interaction ties among individual in the organizations enable the knowledge to be easily circulated hence leads to create communication channels to speed up the accessibility of information and knowledge resources.

2.8 Organization Culture and Knowledge Sharing

Organization culture is one of the main factors that influence knowledge sharing in determines a success of the organizations. (Tuggle and Shaw, 2000). Schein (1985) defined organizational culture as a system of shared values, beliefs and practices of the people in the organizations. As mentioned by McDermott and O'Dell (2001), organization culture can be translated in “how people act, what they expect of each other and how they make sense of the opposite party’s action”. McDermott and O'Dell (2001) also mentioned that people are tends to act in ways that they feel consistent with its underlying or core values. The organizations is composed of people from different backgrounds and thinking and through building a constant culture of knowledge sharing is very important in reducing the barriers among the people to interact more by sharing their ideas and knowledge as well as achieving the organizations' shared vision. Thus, the employees should be encouraged and supported by developing knowledge sharing practices as part of the culture in the organizations rather than force the employees to share their ideas and exchange knowledge with other members.

2.9 Supportive Leader and Knowledge Sharing

Effective leaders are important factor in promoting knowledge sharing in the organizations by using their ability to shape the structures and processes as well as to develop the norms and values of knowledge sharing among the employees. According to House and Dessler (1974), supportive leader can be defined as “someone who provides guidance to followers, treats them fairly, and recognizes their inputs as valuable”. Therefore, a good leader should be able to motivate and stimulate the employees in sharing their ideas and exchanging knowledge. Furthermore, supportive leader are likely to be encouraged to express a positive attitudes towards knowledge by emphasizing the importance of idea contributions and exchanging or sharing information. As mentioned by Locke, Alavi and Wagner (1997), when a supportive leader engages in participative decision making, the team members or employees in the organizations are more tendencies towards sharing their ideas and exchange knowledge. Cameron (2002) and Roth (2003) are also suggested that mentor leadership would be the most effective in developing knowledge sharing behavior among the employees in the organizations.

2.10 Technology Application and Knowledge Sharing

According to Li (2007), technology plays a crucial transformational role in changing the organizational culture to the process of knowledge sharing. Many organizations increase knowledge sharing behavior among the employees by introduces technology as management support in facilitate human activity in the organizations. (Yaacob and Hassan, 2005). Through technology, the employees can share their knowledge across distance barriers (Hendriks, 1999) hence accelerate the flow of information by developing the

communication channel in the organizations such as internet-based discussion groups or electronic meeting software. Besides, technology helps in changing the social interaction between groups in the organizations (Yates et al., 1999). It allows more people especially shy or very busy people to easily express their ideas and willing to share their knowledge rather than face to face interaction by participating in online discussion forum for instance. (Connelly and Kelloway, 2003). Technology also use to preserve and store information over time and brings new form of access for new knowledge to be transferred among the employees (Saint-Onge and Wallace, 2003) by using tools such as electronic document management and document information systems.

2.11 Summary

The literature review discusses the influencing factors towards the practice of knowledge sharing. Based on the review, the variables related to the study include individual attitude, social interaction, organization culture, supportive leader and technology application. Whereas the theories related to the study were further discussed which include Social of Exchange Theory (SET) and Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The methods or techniques used to test the hypotheses will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The quantitative analysis is adopted in this study. The section will outline the methodology used to evaluate the research. This included the theoretical framework, research hypotheses, population and sample, data collection, questionnaires design, data analysis and expected outcome of the study.

3.1 Research Model

The research model for this study (Figure 3-1) is used to access the motivation factors on knowledge sharing that influence the employees' performance in increasing the quality and superior of service delivery among public sector organizations in Malaysia.

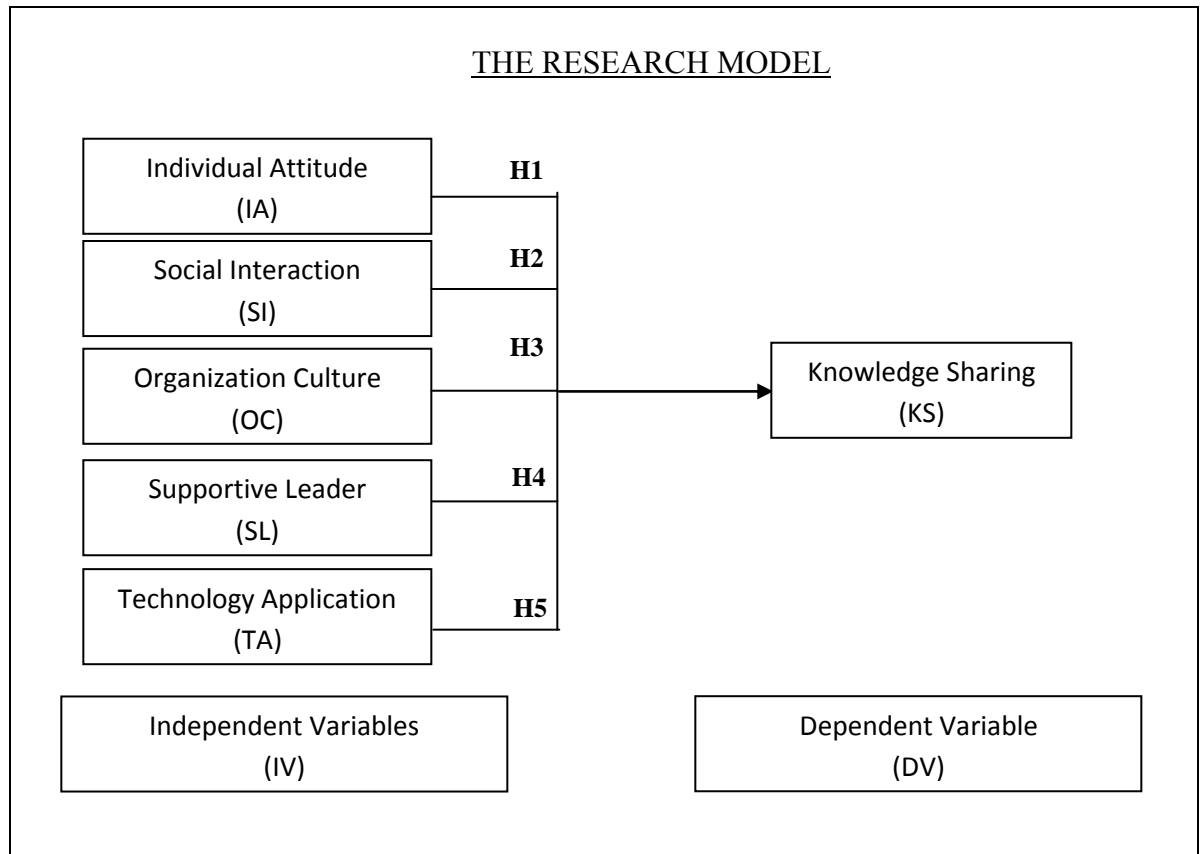


Figure 3.1: The Research Model

3.2 Theoretical Framework

The study seeks to investigate the motivation factors on knowledge sharing in services delivered by the public sector organizations. The determinants of knowledge sharing include individual attitude, social interaction, organization culture, supportive leader and technology application which have been identified as independent variables and knowledge sharing is a dependent variable. The public sector organizations may pursue identified motivation factors by authorized the employees with sense of involvement and direction in the process of knowledge sharing. Effective knowledge sharing will creates synergy of the employees' performance in service delivery whereby transferring knowledge among employees may apply individual skills, experiences and perspectives in solving the

complex situation and contributing new ideas that may be beyond the scope of an individual knowledge. By providing opportunity for each of an employee to practice knowledge sharing will contributes in a better job performance hence increasing chances of achieving quality and superior service delivery experienced by the customers.

3.3 Research Hypotheses

Based on theoretical framework, it is assumed that the more an individual employee in the public sector organizations is involved in knowledge sharing, the better improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in maximizing the customers' satisfaction. Thus, five major hypotheses were developed in viewing the effect between both relationships. Based on the literature review, it could be claimed that there is a significant relationship between variables includes individual attitude, social interaction, organization culture, supportive leader as well as technology application and knowledge sharing. The hypotheses are as follows:

H1 : There is a significant relationship between individual attitude and knowledge sharing.

H2 : There is a significant relationship between social interaction and knowledge sharing.

H3 :There is a significant relationship between organization culture and knowledge sharing.

H4 : There is a significant relationship between supportive leader and knowledge sharing.

H5: There is a significant relationship between technology application and knowledge sharing.

3.4 Type of the Study

The research is a correlation study that aims to test the significant relationship and impact of independent variables which are individual attitude, social interaction, organization culture, supportive leader and technology application on dependent variable that is the practice of knowledge sharing among the employees in the public sector organizations in Malaysia.

3.5 Nature of the Study

The study is conducted in a normal and non-contrived setting (natural environment) without any form of control, influence or manipulation on the respondents.

3.6 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis consists of individuals who are working in the public sector organizations in Malaysia that engage in knowledge sharing practices. The feedback from numbers of the respondents in different kinds of disciplines is required through questionnaire survey in order to get a broad view of the overall situation.

3.7 Population and Sample

The population of the study comprises of the employees in different public sector organizations in Malaysia. Due to the research limitation, the data was collected in Penang from the public sector organizations including the ministry of education, health care, defense and home office. The selection method resulted in a diverse sample of 237 respondents involved in knowledge sharing activities towards answering the distributed

questionnaire survey. According to Slavin (1992), a sample is a group of subjects chosen from a large group or population to which findings are assumed to apply. The selection of the organizations and respondents was done by using stratified random sampling which is more preferable since there was no sample selection bias towards certain types of unit cooperation or knowledge sharing intensity.

3.8 Study Variables

3.8.1 Knowledge Sharing (KS)

Knowledge sharing was measured on four items using five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). Items were adapted by researcher from Bock et al. (2005). Example of question is “Knowledge sharing would create strong relationships with members in the organization.”

3.8.2 Individual Attitude (IA)

Individual attitude towards knowledge sharing was measured on four items using five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). Items were adapted by researcher from Bock and Kim (2002). Example of question is “If I share my knowledge, I believe others will do the same in return.”

3.8.3 Social Interaction (SI)

Social interaction towards knowledge sharing was measured on four items using five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). Items were