

How can storytelling play a role as a mechanism in knowledge transmission in an education- based organization in Malaysia?

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ABSTRACT

In an effort to achieve a developed nation status by 2020, the Malaysian government is embarking on transforming a manufacturing driven economy to a knowledge driven one. In such an economy, the key drivers to growth are its people, knowledge and capabilities; while its business model is based on people and knowledge. Participation in knowledge management requires high investment which means huge capital. However, 99.2% of the business community in Malaysia comprises small and medium enterprises. A gap has been identified in the literature to address the issue of how these small and medium businesses with limitations in funding and capital can participate in knowledge based economy. It is proposed in this dissertation that storytelling be used as a mechanism to allow this to happen. The Nonaka and Takeuchi SECI Model (Socialisation-Externalisation-Combination-Internalisation) together with Collison/Parcel Knowledge Management Model are used as the basis of this study. The primary purpose is to look at the factors that would affect the usage of storytelling as a mechanism to transfer knowledge in a business or an organization. This research is a qualitative study and data was collected using semi-structured in-depth interviews of 18 employees of a private educational institution which had been observed and identified to be using storytelling in its operation. A total of 1018 minutes of interviews were conducted that resulted in 300 pages of interview transcripts. From the data collected, 45 common perceptions emerged and were grouped into 15 emerging patterns which were further refined into 5 different themes. The themes; 1) Exchange Factors 2) Knowledge Flow 3) Personality Preferences 4) Story Characteristics and 5) Story Acceptance form the basis for the new framework proposed in this dissertation.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In the knowledge society the most probable assumption and certainly the assumption on which all organisations have to conduct their affairs is that they need the knowledge worker far more than the knowledge worker needs them (Peter F. Drucker, American Management).

The researcher's interest in the area of knowledge management was triggered by the Malaysian Government's call in its Third Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3), 2001-2010 (Economic Planning Unit, 2001) to develop Malaysia into a knowledge-driven economy and achieve the status of a developed nation by year 2020. In 2002, a Knowledge-Based Economy Master Plan was launched with 136 recommendations made to accelerate Malaysia's progress into becoming a Knowledge-Based Economy and among the main identified contributors to the development of a knowledge driven economy is the development of human capital (ISIS, 2002). As such, Malaysians are beginning to understand the importance of the development of human capital and its relationship to knowledge management (Huat, 2008).

As a concerned business student, the researcher pondered on questions of "how" and "what" which are related to this topic. What exactly is the knowledge-economy? (K-economy) How can the K-economy benefit Malaysian businesses? In what way may businesses in Malaysia take part in this new economy? What criteria do Malaysian businesses have to establish in order to participate in the K-economy? What will it cost to become a K-economy country?

Realising the amount of capital an organisation needs to manage knowledge with technology, the researcher questioned the fate of small and medium organisations as they play an important role in the national economy contributing RM405bil (43.5%) of the national output (Huat, 2008). Should small and medium organisations be left out just because they could not afford the high initial capital investments? How can they

participate in a K-economy given their limited resources? Is there a way to manage knowledge successfully with minimal investment? This dissertation is the result of the researcher's attempt to answer these questions.

As knowledge management is a new phenomenon of interest, specifically to Malaysian small businesses, this research takes an interpretivist approach as a research paradigm that allows for subjectivity, context specific and complexity of multiple simultaneous variables in its assumptions (Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran, 2001). It is also most appropriate for this research to achieve methodological purposiveness and methodological congruence as emphasised by Morse and Richards (2002) in grounded theory. This means that the most likely data sources for this study are interviews, participant observation, diaries and field notes, and the analysis techniques to be applied use theoretical sensitivity, developing concepts, coding of categories and search on core concepts and processes.

Based on the discussion above, the research question being constructed for this dissertation is as below:

How can storytelling play a role as a mechanism in knowledge transmission in an education-based organisation in Malaysia?

1.1 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter two of this study analyses the literature from the field of knowledge management (KM), where various definitions and approaches to KM are discussed. Two approaches are identified, namely a hard approach which focuses on information technology, and a soft approach which focuses on the knowledge that resides within the human mind. A literature review on the soft approach leads to a study of Intellectual Capital. In addition, the chapter also examines the literature which discusses an important function of KM: knowledge sharing, or knowledge transmission, within an organisation. Other aspects such as an environment that stimulates sharing, management

support, organisational culture, and resistance towards sharing are also included in the literature review.

After reviewing the broader function of knowledge management, the research narrows the scope of the literature review in examining the most suitable method for transmitting knowledge in organisations. Of all the methods available for knowledge transmission, the research gives special consideration to storytelling as it appears to be a viable choice for business of any size due to its cost-effectiveness in transmitting knowledge in organisation, and which is consistent with the research's goal of finding a way to enable small and medium organisations to participate in the K-economy.

Following a review of the literature on storytelling, it is argued in the context of the research at hand that storytelling is indeed the most suitable method for knowledge transmission. Detailed discussions of the literature in this area bring forward topics such as the differences between a narrative and storytelling, the types and nature of storytelling, the reasons why storytelling may be preferable, and the techniques of storytelling.

The research then describes two models that are used as the basis of the study's working conceptual framework – the Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) SECI (Socialisation-Externalisation-Combination-Internalisation) Model and the Collison/Parcell (2004) Knowledge Management Model.

After reviewing the literature, the research identifies the gaps that are to be found in the available literatures. In the context of Malaysian organisations, the gaps that exist in the literature are as follows:

- What type of conditions needed in an environment to encourage knowledge-sharing?
- Is there any specific place and time, which is suitable for knowledge transfer?
- Is management support perceived to be important to encourage knowledge-sharing?
- What are the factors that hinder sharing?

- What types of stories are usually being shared among the employees?
- Do employees resist their stories being shared?
- What motivates employees to share their stories with others?
- Are there specific techniques used by employees when sharing their stories?

Chapter three provides a detailed discussion of the research methodology used in conducting this study. Specifically, Chapter Three begins with a general discussion about research philosophy, research paradigms, the differences between qualitative and quantitative research, strategies of inquiries and considers the issues of validity and reliability. The chapter then moves on to establish that the interpretivist approach (also known as the qualitative paradigm) is the most suitable paradigm for this research.

Following this, a discussion on the various data collection methodology available for the qualitative study is made. The strengths and weaknesses for each data collection method: focus group interviews, observation, and in-depth interviews (Bryman, 1984) are discussed. It is established at this point that the most suitable data collection methodology for the research is semi-structured in-depth interviews.

In the chapter, three data collection methods employed by this research are explained briefly, with an emphasis on semi-structured in-depth interviews as the main method that will be used in this dissertation. The research details every step of the data collection process that took place whereby all communication, announcements and agreements (including those concerning ethical issues) employed by the researcher are attached in the Appendices.

Chapter Four analyses the data collected in the study, identifying forty-five common perceptions of the subjects that emerge from the data. These perceptions are analysed in detail and grouped into fifteen emerging patterns. From the patterns, the researcher then coded the data to find the common features which then were further refined into five different themes. These themes become the basis for the new framework for understanding knowledge sharing processes that is proposed in this research.

The foundation for the framework is provided by the concept of with Knowledge Transmission, a situation when knowledge is about to be transmitted from one person (knowledge bearer) to another (knowledge recipient) in the organisation. Here, *Exchange Factors* (T2) which are considered to be important in determining whether a culture of knowledge transmission through storytelling exists within an organisation must be present to encourage the knowledge transmission. When the *Exchange Factors* are present, then three other factors could come into play, which are *Knowledge Flow* (T1), *Personality Preferences* (T3) and *Story Characteristics* (T4). These three factors are inter-related and have an influence on the success of the knowledge exchange (T2). Finally, when the knowledge is transmitted, the last factor which is *Story Acceptance* (T5) determines whether those stories that were shared between the employees are being accepted or resisted by them.

Finally, chapter five discusses and details the findings identified in chapter four. Each of the identified themes is discussed in detail in Chapter Five. At the end of the discussion, the researcher proposes a new framework for knowledge management around storytelling that is supported by the five themes found in the research. c

As Malaysia has moved from an Agriculture-Based Economy to an Industrialised-Based Economy (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2005) and now aims to move towards a Knowledge-Based Economy, this research can contribute both to the literature of knowledge management and to the policy development and managerial practice. The research concludes with a discussion of the suggested steps management may take to capitalise on the storytelling method within an organisation.

1.2 Limitations of the research

1. 2. 1 External Validity

For this research, generalisability to the population is not possible due to insufficient representation (one organisation) and the nature of the research being interpretative.

1.2.2 Internal Validity

- Purposive sampling is one of the limitations of this research which is required in a qualitative inquiry sampling method.
- A further limitation comes from the interview methodology where only stories or narratives that are ‘story-worthy’ are being shared by the participants due to the ontological paradigm of a qualitative study.
- The study adopts the Nonaka and Takeuchi’s Model (1995) as one of its working conceptual framework and focuses on two from the four quadrants of the Nonaka and Takeuchi Model (1995) which are socialization and externalization. This is because these two quadrants are about knowledge transfer using face-to face and peer-to-peer interaction. Therefore, the issue of whether the knowledge transferred is actually being internalised by the recipients is outside the scope of the study.

1.3 Conclusion

This study is both innovative in its approach and relevant for the aspirations of the Malaysian economy. In particular, it proposes insights with regards to knowledge management for small Malaysian businesses. There are many questions raised around the research issues which require innovative and systematic research in order to fill the identified gaps in the existing literature. The main purpose of this research is to discover the usage of storytelling in transmitting knowledge to small organisations specifically to an education-based organisation in Malaysia.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

All around the world, companies have continuously tried to find ways to develop a competitive advantage that will ensure the sustainability of their organisations (Barney, 1991; Prahalad and Hamel, 1990). Unfortunately, the uncertainty of the external environment has created a generally unstable climate for many businesses worldwide (Emery, 1999). In response to this, the corporate world has shifted its focus to the type of resources managed by each organisation. These resources include both tangible and intangible asset; such as knowledge held by employees (Drucker, 1994). It has been recognised that management of these intangible resources is crucial in increasing a corporation's competitiveness (Nonaka, Toyama and Byosiére, 2003; Reinhardt, 2000).

This new corporate focus became evident in Malaysia when the Malaysian Government announced in 2001 its desire to become a knowledge-based economy by the year 2020 (Economic Planning Unit, 2001). With such high national aspirations, organisations in Malaysia reacted positively to the Government's call and have started to shift their focus to intangibles/employee development. Malaysian organisations started to embrace the concept of 'people as an organisation's assets' when they realised that 50-90 percent of an organisation's 'know-how' resides within the minds of its employees (Emery, 1999). An important source of knowledge within an organisation is its people (Davidson and Voss, 2002). The individuals within the organisations acquire the necessary and critical 'know-how' to perform their jobs and responsibilities. On such a premise, organisations have begun to understand that it is employees, not the organisations themselves, who actually 'own' the knowledge (Bartel and Garud, 2003).

For example, Daimler Chrysler was said to attribute 80 percent of its success to its people (Kannan, Aulbur and Haas, 2005). This pattern is visible in many other organisations. Xerox saved 5 to 10 percent of its service call costs simply by

understanding that its employees possess critical 'how-to' knowledge (Holtshouse, 1999; Trussler, 1998). Through this understanding, Xerox has managed to capture the 'know-how' from its employees, which has allowed knowledge sharing among employees in the company. This move has certainly benefited the company as a whole (Holtshouse, 1999; Trussler, 1998).

Success stories of some of the well-known and successful knowledge-sharing practices such as British Petroleum (Dixon, 1999), Xerox (Holtshouse, 1999), and Buckman Labs (Buckman, 2004) in harnessing the knowledge of employees has prompted many organisations to place importance in managing and capitalizing on their employees' 'know-how'. Therefore, many other companies have started to seek the relevant techniques to capture this knowledge in order to transmit and share it easily among their employees.

It is therefore not surprising that an extensive research literature can be found on the topics of knowledge management and knowledge transfer (Vaara, Sarala, Stahl and Bjorkman 2012; Frank and Echeveste 2012; Pasher and Ronen 2011; Defillippi, Arthur and Lindsay 2006; Byrant, 2005; Carrillo, 2004;; Fang, Tsai and Chang 2005; Trussler, 1998). However, these researches mostly focuses on large organisations and mainly in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (Reinhardt, Bornemann, Pawlowshy and Schneider, 2003); and not on small and medium organisations and countries outside OECD group. Therefore, there is a clear gap in this area of research with regard to the Small and Medium Enterprises and Asian Enterprises, particularly in Malaysia.

This research gap is important and needs to be addressed as 99.2 percent of Malaysian businesses are small and medium organisations (Secretariat, National SME Development Council, 2007). Unlike large corporations, small and medium organisations do not have sufficient resources to spend on studying and implementing knowledge management technique (Davenport, 1994; McDermott, 1999). Malaysia will definitely benefit if 99.2 percent of its businesses is able to apply knowledge management techniques effectively. These organisations will become more competitive as they are able to understand the best methods of managing their employees' 'know-how.' However, to achieve this, these organisations need to learn the most effective, cost-efficient method of managing these intangibles.

Various methods of knowledge transmission have been identified in the literature (McDermott, 1999). Such transfer includes through community of practice (Miller, Fontaine and Muller, 2002), databases (Chen, Lee, Zhang and Zhang, 2003), narratives and storytelling (Denning, 2001; Swap, Leonard, Shields and Abrams, 2001, Brown, Denning, Groh and Prusak , 2005 ; Snowden, 2001), intranet (Stenmark, 2003 ; Ali , 2001; Heiskanen and Assinen, 2003); and lastly through manuals, procedures and documents (Kakabadse, Kouzmin and Kakabadse, 2001; Landrum, 2000).

While it is common that organisations use multiple channels to transmit knowledge in their organisations, each method's costs and maintainability issues vary, depending on the size of the organisation and employees' involvement during both start-up and maintenance. Effectiveness and suitability too, varies between the methods.

The reviewed literature identifies storytelling as the most cost-effective method to transmit knowledge for small and medium organisations in Malaysia as it only requires two employees to interact and exchange knowledge without much need for capital investments such as IT infrastructure and IT maintenance (Davenport, 1994; McDermott, 1999).

However, as mentioned earlier, there is insufficient Malaysian research on knowledge transmission using the storytelling method that may provide beneficial insights for small or medium Malaysian organisations.

Although a business corporation would be an ideal subject of research, the absence of Malaysian corporations that incorporate storytelling prevents such a study. This is because most Malaysian business corporations have the financial means to employ the 'harder approach' of knowledge management such as electronic databases and manuals. However, the observation of a private Malaysian college which uses storytelling to transfer knowledge among its employees led the researcher to notice the similarities that exist between the College's business practices and traditional business practices. The literature reviewed combined with the researcher's

observation at the College prompted the researcher to seek answers to this research question:

How Can Storytelling Play a Role as a Knowledge Transmission Mechanism in a Malaysian Education-Based Organisation?

2.1 General Insights on Multiple Fields of Literature Reviewed

It is important to note that, although knowledge management (KM) is a relatively new area of study (Reinhardt, 2000), it has gained in popularity in both the business world and in management research. This is evident as reported by Hylton (2002) that the search on ‘knowledge management’ in Google has produced 9.3 million hits in October 2009 as compared to only 4.47 million hits in 2005. And as of the writing of this dissertation (11th November 2011), a search on Google Scholar for topic of ‘knowledge management’ has resulted in more than 3 million articles in various journals, websites and other sources. However, since the research on KM is in its early stages, much of the available literature has been largely exploratory in nature (Abdul Hamid, 2003; Bajunid, 2005)

The sources discovered during this study stem from the field of knowledge management. Literature in this field highlights definitions, functions, and approaches to knowledge management (Denning, 2001; Easterby-Smith and Lyles, 2004; Nonaka, Toyama and Konno, 2002). This study also incorporates a brief review of sources and forms of knowledge, which discusses intellectual capital and tacit knowledge.

The structure and organisation of the literature review is detailed in Figure 1. After a general review of the concept of knowledge management, this study narrows its focus to one of the agreed-upon functions of knowledge management, which is knowledge transmission/transfer as the objective of this research is to find out the best method of knowledge transfer.

Various knowledge transmission methods have been identified, which include databases (Chen, Lee, Zhang and Zhang, 2003), manual documentation (Kakabadse, Kouzmin and Kakabadse, 2001; Landrum, 2000), intranet (Ali, 2001; Heiskanen and

Assinen, 2003; Stenmark, 2003), community of practice (Millen, Fontaine and Muller, 2002), and storytelling (Denning, 2001; Swap, Leonard, Shields and Abrams, 2001).

This study evaluates the various options available in knowledge transmission. The research shows that the above-mentioned transmission methods differ in cost and implementation practicality. By examining the selected literature, the research sought to discover an effective, cost-efficient method to transmit knowledge that might benefit small and medium businesses in Malaysia. The examination reveals that storytelling is a viable method of knowledge transmission to be used within such organisations.

This study proceeds to review a final group of literature pertaining to the field of storytelling. Despite storytelling being a relatively new field of study, some literatures do exist that helped the researcher to answer the proposed research question (Boje, 1991; Boje, 1995; Boje, 1999; Boyce, 1996; Collison and Mackenzie, 1999; Currie and Brown, 2003; Dennings, 2001; Davenport and Murtaugh, 1997; Dawson, 2003; Snowden 1999). However, as mentioned earlier, there is a gap in the literature, which fails to address the question of how storytelling could play a role in knowledge transmission in small and medium organisations in Malaysia. Hence, the research first takes a broad approach to this study by examining knowledge management, then narrows the focus to specific literature on knowledge transmission, and finally focuses on storytelling.

Tunnel Vision of Literature Review Flow

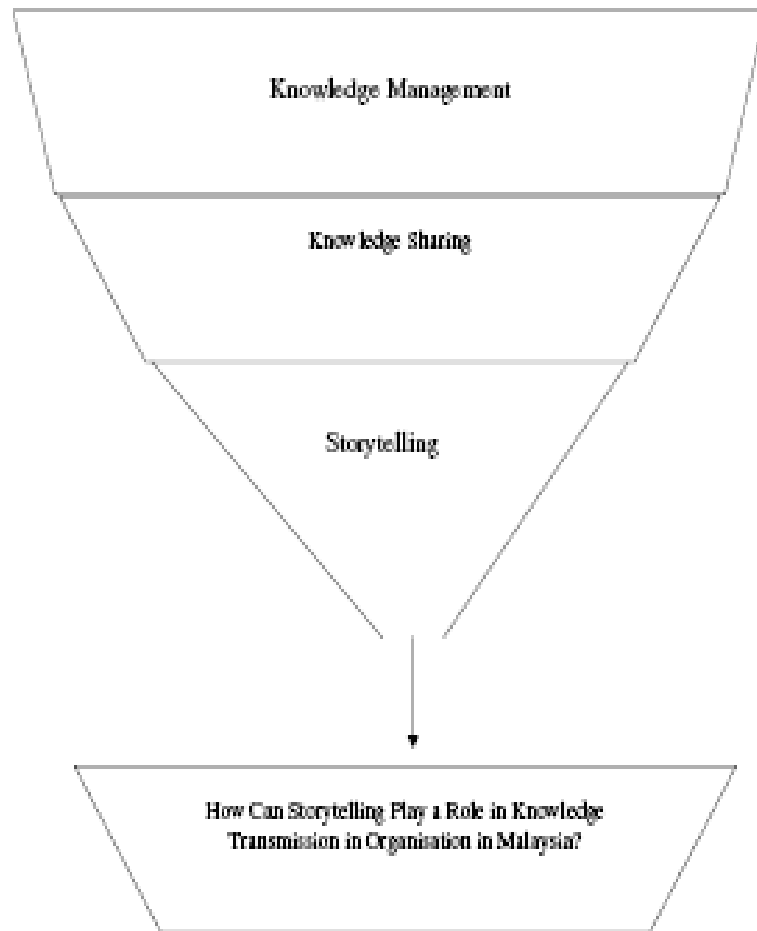


Figure 1.0: The Structure of the Literature Review

2.1.1 Review on Literature from the Field of Knowledge Management

2.1.1.1 Definition of Key Concepts

First, to avoid any confusion and to clarify the issues, the research briefly defines the terms that are used throughout the literature review.

2.1.1.1.1 Knowledge

Senge (2000) defines knowledge as the capacity for effective action. As long as something is able to result in action, it may be defined as knowledge. Nonaka et al.

(2002) characterize knowledge as something that is dynamic, context specific, related to human action, and deeply rooted in the value system. In agreement with that, Meyer, Connell and Klein (2005) state that knowledge is interwoven with an individual's personal dimension. This is known as a constructivist's view of knowledge. These definitions above show a few general and common characteristics of knowledge. Firstly, knowledge must be context-specific, then action-related, and finally value-laden to an individual. These characteristics must exist in order to consider a piece of information to be defined as knowledge.

2.1.1.1.2 Knowledge Management (KM)

Since KM is a fairly new field of study, it has suffered from lack of consistency and from an absence of consensus among its researchers as to its definition and application. To date, debates are still ongoing regarding an appropriate definition (Easterby-Smith and Lyles, 2003).

The first wave of definitions described KM in a broad and general way. Dalkir (2005, p. 3) defines KM as:

The deliberate and systematic coordination of an organisation's people, technology, processes, and organisation's structure in order to add value through re-use and innovation. This value is achieved through the promotion of creating, sharing, and applying knowledge as well as through the feeding of valuable lessons learned and best practices into corporate memory in order to foster continued organisational learning.

Such broad definitions describe an organisational tool that exploits knowledge resources (Newell, Robertson, Scarbrough and Swan, 2002), maximises its returns (Barth, 2005), creates a competitive advantage (Davidson et al., 2002), ensures organisational survival and success (Natarajan and Shekhar, 2000), and pursues new business values (Cross, 1998). Some definitions of knowledge management, however, focus on its functions within an organisation. These definitions may highlight functions such as retention of knowledge (De Jarnett, 1996) and dissemination of knowledge (Quintas, 1997). Another literature describes a process of capturing and

transferring knowledge (Awad and Ghaziri, 2004; Kermally, 2002; Natarajan et al., 2000) and this definition continues to appear in the KM literature (Meyer, Connell and Klein 2005). Grey (1999) then extends the functions of KM to include decision-making. However, the weakness of this type of definition is that it might not provide specific directions to the audience in their KM efforts. Wiig (2005) has acknowledged that KM can be defined from either a process perspective or an approach perspective. This flexibility in definition is welcomed as it has allowed researchers to have the flexibility in defining their KM efforts.

From the above discussions of the definitions, this research summarises KM as **‘an on-going process of capturing, selecting, documenting, *sharing* and utilising knowledge gained from its stakeholders to be used within the organisation to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage’**.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the researcher further refines the definition of KM as follows:

Knowledge Management is an on-going process of sharing and transmitting knowledge in a way that allows the organisation’s employees to perform their responsibilities effectively within the organisation
--

2.1.1.1.3 Two Approaches to Knowledge Management

The research literature discusses handling KM in two ways - to manage knowledge through the use of information technology, and secondly through the people wherein the knowledge resides. This section discusses the differences between these two approaches.

During the early stages of KM study, researchers focused on IT whereby emphasis was placed on IT infrastructure and software (Suhaimi, Abu Bakar, Alias, 2006; Davenport, Eccles and Prusak, 1992; Fahey and Prusak, 1998). However, as the study of KM progressed, researchers began to realise the importance of non-technical

aspects of KM (Wiig, 1997; Marsick and Watkins, 1999). This leads to the second approach which focuses on employee-held knowledge.

From then, the study of KM subsequently broke into two distinct premises – the hard (IT) approach and the soft (employee) approach.

The differences between these two approaches are discussed below. The hard approach focuses on IT infrastructure as being the most important instrument in managing knowledge (Fahey and Prusak, 1998). Researchers who stress the hard approach define KM as a system which facilitates a continuous process of information seeking and knowledge making (Abdul Hamid, 2003). Their concerns are on hardware and software selection, intranet and databases, and maintenance of IT infrastructure. This is the essence of the IT approach of KM (Ruggles, 1998; Alavi and Leidner, 2001).

Despite the early focus on IT as a tool in KM (Hasanali, 2005; Goodson, 2005; Davenport et al., 1992; Fahey and Prusak, 1998), an increasing volume of literature has been written on the importance of managing employee-held knowledge, or “intellectual capital” (Brown and Duguid, 2002; Bajunid, 2004; Wiig, 1999; McDermott, 1999).

The act of managing knowledge that resides within the employees’ minds is known as the “soft approach” of KM. Denning (2001, 97), a researcher of the soft approach, defines KM as “connecting people who need to know with those who do know.” Researchers in this area identified that knowledge may be managed within the organisation simply by using human-to-human interaction. To them, not possessing IT infrastructure is not a hindrance to KM efforts. They emphasise the fact that in order to remain competitive, organisations must be prepared to use the resources available within their organisations and must recognise the importance of the intellectual capital that resides within their employees. The researchers who support this soft approach of managing intellectual capital include Nonaka and Konna (1998), Snowden (2000), Silverman (2004a), Kanahe (2004), Kakabadse et al. (2001).

The benefits, drawbacks, and types of Intellectual Capital will be discussed in the next section.

2.1.1.1.4 Intellectual Capital (IC)

In 1969, John Kenneth Galbraith coined the term ‘Intellectual Capital’ (Grantham, Nichols and Schonberger, 1997) in the letter he wrote to economist Michael Kalecki:

‘I wonder if you realise how much those of us in the world around have owed to the intellectual capital you have provided over these past decades’ (Sveiby, 1998, 1)

Intellectual capital (IC) is now accepted as a key asset for any organisation (Wiig, 1999; Grantham et al., 1997; Hansen, Nohria and Tierney, 1999; Kakabadse, Kakabadse and Kouzmin, 2003) and this concept has been widely used in the context of knowledge management. A great deal of literature highlights the potential benefits to organisations that successfully manage their intellectual capital effectively. Among those benefits are: an increase in competitiveness (Krohn, Davies and Weeks, 1999; Beveren, 2003), reduction in redundancies (Davidson et al., 2002), emergence of new values in organisations (Krohn et al., 1999), and an increase in innovations (Carter and Scarbrough, 2001; Arora, 2002).

Strict reliance on IC, however, has its drawbacks whereby in that it can potentially stifle innovation and creativity (Ali, 2001). IC can also be time-consuming, labour intensive, and costly (Teare and Rayner, 2002). An organisation too, may become dependent upon key employees (Mohayidin, Kamaruddin and Ahmad Sabki, 2005), but most importantly, IC is context sensitive (Ali, 2005).

Regardless of the apparent gains and shortcomings of IC, Kakabadse et al., (2001) emphasise that exploitation of intellectual assets solely depends on an organisation’s capacity to manage it. Therefore, they suggest that each organisation should assess its own capacity in that context.

2.1.1.1.5 Human Capital, Structural Capital and Customer/Supplier Capital

Grantham et al., (1997) and Davidson et al., (2002) have divided IC into three components: Human Capital, Structural Capital and Customer/Supplier Capital.

Human capital is the collective knowledge of brainpower of the employees (Grossman, 2002). The organisation's system and processes is known as its structural capital (Davidson et al., 2002). The relationship which an organisation has with its suppliers and customers is known as Customer/Supplier capital (Davidson et al., 2002). As the researcher's objective is looking at the issue of how knowledge within an employee's mind might be managed, from here on, the reviewed literature focuses only on human capital. Using the human capital as explained by Gill (2000) as a place where the explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge reside, the next section discusses the differences between tacit and explicit knowledge.

2.1.1.1.6 Tacit Knowledge (versus Explicit Knowledge)

This research is interested in focusing on the tacit knowledge of employees, rather than explicit knowledge, because this type of knowledge (tacit) only resides with the employees and not in the manuals or databases of the organisation. This section reviews the definition and literature on tacit knowledge and only briefly contrasts it with explicit knowledge.

The concept of tacit knowledge was first expounded by Polanyi (1962) and was later developed by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). Tacit knowledge is characterised as being highly personalised (Liao, 2005; Zack, 1999; Hansen et al., 1999), difficult to share through writing (Liao, 2005), inherently know-how based (Polanyi, 1962; Brown and Duguid, 1998), acquired by experience (Polanyi, 1962; Zack, 1999), and difficult to communicate (Polanyi, 1962). According to Droege and Hoobler (2003), tacit knowledge must be reinterpreted by the receiver in order to transfer knowledge to others and it cannot be preserved in its entirety. It is shared through a highly interactive medium of communication (Zack, 1999) and is able to secure a competitive advantage for the organisation (Grant, 1996).

Droege et al. (2003, 53) also define tacit knowledge as: ‘the information about work processes and products that individuals hold above and beyond what the organisation has documented. These are the “tricks of the trade” that promote smooth organisational functioning, overall know-how competitive advantage.’ With this understanding, tacit knowledge is the type of knowledge that is not documented and exists only in the mind of the employees (Fahey and Prusak, 1998; Nonaka et al., 1998 and Smith, 2001)

On the other hand, explicit knowledge is defined as knowledge of ‘know-what’ (Brown et al., 1998) that is easily shared and transmitted (Fahey and Prusak, 1998; Kakabadse et al., 2001). It is retained within the organisation when the employees leave (Droege et al., 2003), and exists in company databases and handbooks (Droege et. al, 2003; Kakabadse et al., 2001). Therefore, explicit knowledge, contrary to tacit knowledge, is documented knowledge, which is readily available for public consumption.

The importance of tacit knowledge is acknowledged in the research done by Delphi Group (1997) which indicated that 42 percent of organized knowledge resides within an individual; while the rest of 12 percent, 20 percent and 26 percent can be found in the electronics databases, written documents, and electronic documents respectively (Liao, 2005).

Therefore, the emphasis which some organisations place on the understanding and transfer of tacit knowledge by their employees is justified because as Branch (1998) and Trussler (1998) point out, retention of employees’ knowledge in an organisation is equal to the retention of the organisation’s wealth.

Thus, it is to the benefit of the organisation to look for ways to ‘retrieve’ the tacit knowledge from their employees’ minds as it has implications on the organisations’ financial well-being. The basic question is - How can the organisations encourage their employees to share their personal experiences in handling work tasks, to overcome a problematic situation or to make work processes more efficient? The answer lies in finding suitable methods, which the employees may use to share or transfer their tacit knowledge more easily with others.

2.1.2 Review of the Literature on Knowledge-Sharing

The research task involves searching for an effective knowledge transmission method that is cost-effective and may be used by small and medium-sized organisations in Malaysia. Therefore, the Chapter now turns to a review of the literature of knowledge-sharing.

One of the main functions of KM is actually sharing the knowledge. An organisation decides how it wants to transmit or share the knowledge within it (Argyris, 1995; Trussler, 1998; Bennett, 2001; Byrant, 2005; Fang et al., 2005; Carrillo, 2004; Zakaria, Amelinckx and Wilemon, 2004) depending on its capabilities, needs and resources. The methods of sharing knowledge however, vary from one organisation to another. Table 1.0 summarises the methods of knowledge-sharing and their corresponding literature.

Table 1.0: Methods of Knowledge-sharing

Methods of knowledge-sharing	Sample Literature
Intranet	Stenmark, 2003; Ali, 2001; Heiskanen and Assinen, 2003
Databases	Chen, Lee, Zhang and Zhang, 2003
Manual Documentations	Kakabadse, Kouzmin and Kakabadse, 2001; Landrum, 2000; McDermott, 1999
Community of Practice	Miller, Fontaine and Muller, 2002; McDermott, 1999 ; Flaherty, 2000; McDermott, 1999
Storytelling	Denning, 2001; Swap, Leonard, Shields and Abrams, 2001; Trussler, 1998.

Developed by A. Bakar, Zabrina for the purpose of this study

All types of knowledge-sharing differ in terms of costs, suitability for a particular organisation, and the level of effectiveness. For example, Intranet and databases are two methods that require an initial investment for IT infrastructure. Community of practice, on the other hand, is a relevant method of knowledge-sharing whereby groups of individuals communicate and share knowledge online. Members post questions, while some answer them using IT infrastructure. As for manual documentation, it is the sharing method that requires the employee's efforts to

document all the knowledge that s/he possesses. Storytelling, on the other hand, is a method, which requires a face-to-face interaction between the employees.

Table 2.0 below indicates the basic factors that an organisation must consider when choosing a method of knowledge-sharing. These basic factors are developed from the selected literature for the purpose of this research.

Table 2.0: Basic Factors for choosing a method.

Method Used	Initial Cost	Maintenance Cost	Minimum Size of Organisation	Involvement Required from the Employees	Extent Knowledge to Reach Employee
Intranet	Yes	Yes	Large	Yes	Many
Databases	Yes	Yes	Large	Yes	Many
Manual Documentations	Yes	Yes	Small	Yes	Many
Community of Practice (IT based)	Yes	Yes	Large	Yes	Many
Storytelling	No	No	Small	Yes	Few

Developed by A. Bakar, Zabrina for the purpose of this study.

Although there is a question of the effectiveness of knowledge reaching high number of employees, this table shows that the most cost effective knowledge transmission method is storytelling, because it does not require a lot of participants and has no initial cost or maintenance cost. The finding of a survey that supports the use of storytelling method is that conducted by Davenport (1994) reflecting that two thirds of knowledge was actually derived from an informal face-to-face interaction, and only one third came from documents indicating that storytelling was an effective method in transferring knowledge as it was conducted face-to-face.

In support of the storytelling method, Nonaka et al., (2002) and Droege and Hoobler (2003) emphasised the importance and the need of social interaction as the core platform in seeking new knowledge (Davenport and Prusak, 1997; Boisot, 1998). This view is also supported by Brown et al. (2002). To explain this, according to McDermott (1999), knowledge-sharing occurs when one person guides another to solve a matter using his knowledge and insight so that the learner understands better

and sees the situation clearer, thus supporting the importance of face-to-face and social interaction when transmitting knowledge between the individuals.

By these interactions, the individuals who discuss and share their work-related problems are able to assimilate their ideas and are directly involved in a two-way learning process in which the end result is to achieve their common goals (Holtje 2011; Senge, 1990; West, 2004; Hutchings, 2005; Chen, 2005; Connelly and Kelloway, 2003).

Social interaction alone however, is insufficient to support knowledge transmission. In order for the individuals to learn, Koshinen (2003), Cohen and Levinthal (1990), and Wiig (2004) suggest that a person's capacity to learn new information depends largely on their existing knowledge and their ability to reflect on the new knowledge using their existing knowledge (Tyler, 2003; McDermott, 1999; Kim, 1993). Knowledge, both explicit and tacit, which has already exists within an individual (Senge, 1990), is recorded into mental models (Chermack, 2003; Wiig, 2004) and the behaviour of a person is always congruent with her/his mental model (Argyris, 1996). Behaviour may be modified when s/he receives new knowledge (Chermack, 2003). If the new knowledge conflicts with her/his deeply held images, her/his mental model must be modified (Senge, 1990, Wigg, 2005; Spicer, 1998) before the new behaviour can emerge.

Despite the importance of individual learning, Spicer (1998) insists that individuals may maximise the benefits of learning at the organisational level. This view is echoed by Daft and Weick (1984), who state that individual learning alone is insufficient for an organisation and that an organisation may only enjoy the benefits of the lessons learned by its employee when the knowledge is transferred to and shared with other members in the organisation (Kim 1993).

Argyris (1995) agrees with this point and adds that there should be a high level of inter-dependency between individuals, groups, inter-groups, and the organisation to facilitate knowledge transfer efforts within the organisation. To encourage individuals to continue sharing their knowledge, perceived management support is also crucial in stimulating a culture of knowledge-sharing (Connelly et al., 2003). While Dixon

(1999) highlights the importance of support by the top management in knowledge-sharing culture, MacNeil (2003) points out the importance of line managers in encouraging the culture in an organisation. Failure to support this culture will result to the failure of an organisation to capitalise the benefits of knowledge transfer despite the enormous amounts of available intellectual capital (Powell, 1998) that exist within the organisation.

Besides the need for social interaction and supporting organisational culture, according to Nonaka (1995), knowledge may also be shared and transmitted via the social structure in an organisation. He defines social structure as the pattern of relationships between employees which exists within one organisation. The relationships that employees establish among themselves can either allow or prevent efforts of internalisation of tacit knowledge by the employees receiving the knowledge (Davidson et al., 2002).

Despite the support given by employees to knowledge-sharing efforts, Argyris (1997) recognises that employees may encounter resistance or difficulties in learning and communicating during the knowledge-sharing process. For example, Hanappi-Egger and Hofmann (2005) caution that gender plays a factor in determining how a person perceives knowledge that is being shared. In a similar vein, Connelly et al., (2003) found that females tend to need a more sharing-conducive and positive social interaction culture before participating in a knowledge-sharing culture.

Another factor that an organisation needs to consider concerns its employees' cultural background, which may affect the receptiveness to knowledge-sharing and the ability to share the knowledge among the employees. For example, Japanese employees are much more interested and receptive in adapting the knowledge-sharing culture as compared to their Western counterparts (Holtshouse, 1999). Russian employees, on the other hand, are hostile towards an organisation's knowledge-sharing efforts (Husted and Michailova, 2002). Meanwhile, Hutchings (2005) points out that in Chinese culture, information is shared only with people whom the transmitter trusts and has a high degree of respect for. These findings tend to show that culture does play a role in how people transmit knowledge (Hanappi-Egger et al., 2005) and an organisation should be aware of such factors upon embarking in

knowledge-sharing efforts. Whereas in Malaysia, because of its culture to respect power and authority, information is shared when instructed by the superior (Amir, 2009)

Other general issues regarding resistance to knowledge sharing are attributed to human frailty and fears. When knowledge is seen as power, people are reluctant to share what they know (Holtshouse, 1999). There is also concern that once knowledge is shared, the risk of imitation from competitors will increase (Husted and Michailova, 2002). Ignorance is also a hindrance to knowledge-sharing efforts when employees fail to realise that they possess the knowledge that is essential or valuable to the organisation's well-being, and, therefore, do not share it with others (Husted et al., 2002). Reige (2005) and McDermott (1999) summarise the resistance or barriers to knowledge-sharing as personal barriers, organisational barriers and social barriers.

Table 3.0 below summarises the various factors affecting the knowledge-sharing effort in organisations as discussed above.

Table 3.0: Summary of various factors affecting the knowledge-sharing effort .

Factors	Personal Barriers	Organisational Barriers	Social Barriers
Social Interaction among Employees	✓	✓	
Employee's Capacity to Learn	✓		
Perceived Management Support		✓	
Social Structure among Employees		✓	
Gender	✓		
Employees Individual Culture	✓		✓
Fear of losing power	✓		

Factors	Personal Barriers	Organisational Barriers	Social Barriers
Risk of Competitors Imitation		✓	
Ignorance of Importance of Knowledge	✓		

Developed by A. Bakar, Zabrina for the purpose of this study.

In this kind of scenario, the challenge faced by any organisation interested in pursuing knowledge-sharing is developing a sharing-conducive culture and a supportive organisational system and process (Trussler, 1998; Riege, 2005). This leads to the next section that discusses the two models of knowledge sharing which will be used to guide the researcher in answering the research question. These models are known as the SECI Model and the Collison Parcell KM Model.

2.1.2.1 A Japanese Model of Knowledge Transmission – The SECI Model

Nonaka and Takeuchi developed a knowledge creation model (SECI Model) in 1995 to explain how knowledge may be created and shared within an organisation. Their model is important and has been extensively applied in the field of knowledge management. The model is based on Polanyi's (1962) distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge and emphasises the social interaction aspects of knowledge sharing, which is the continuous and dynamic spiral flow of knowledge from an individual to the group and back again.

The SECI (Socialisation-Externalisation-Internationalisation-Combination) Model is also used as the basis of the conceptual framework utilised in this current research because it defines knowledge as human knowledge and emphasises social interaction as the core platform for seeking and transmitting knowledge. It also acknowledges that knowledge is being transmitted from one employee to another via the socialisation process.

Figure 2.0 below is the SECI Model by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1998). There are four components of the Model, also known as modes of knowledge conversion - Socialisation, Externalisation, Combination and Internalisation. This model proposes two important things: the process of individual employees transferring the tacit knowledge to another; and the process of tacit knowledge being converted into explicit knowledge and back again.

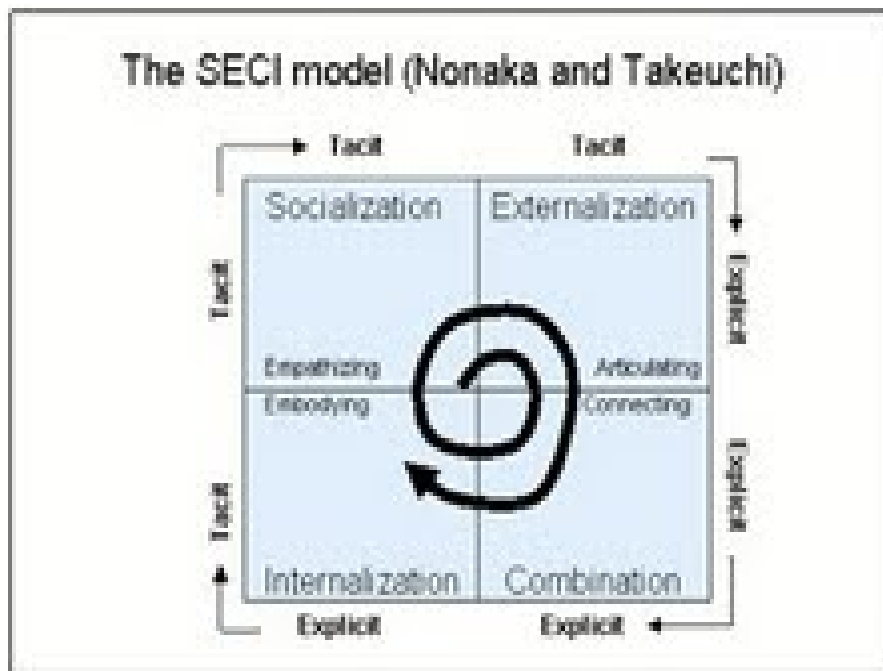


Figure 2.0 SECI Model

In this model, socialisation demands that sharing of knowledge is done between individuals through joint activities (Nonaka et al, 1998, 42) and physical proximity (Nonaka et al, 1998, 43). Knowledge is then captured for example via direct interactions, employees spending time together, employees walking around the company area among others. To enable employees to socialise, the SECI Model also acknowledges a need of what is known as 'ba' (also translated as shared place for interaction) for knowledge to be created and transferred from one employee to another.

The word 'ba' when translated into English simply means a 'place' or to extend it further, 'a shared place to develop a relationship'. This may refer to:

- physical places such as a meeting room or a café;
- virtual forums like email correspondence or chat rooms; or
- mental places where people share ideas and experiences (Bennett, 2001).

This model proposes that, in order to implement knowledge transfer or transmission, an organisation may create, for example, extra office spaces and complimentary food and drinks to encourage social interactions among the employees (Davidson et al., 2002).

Externalisation involves expressing the tacit knowledge of one employee into a form that is understandable by another employee using techniques such as words, metaphor, concepts, analogies, stories and even visuals. Basically, this is the stage where tacit knowledge is being converted into explicit knowledge.

Combination is the stage where newly transferred knowledge acquired by the employee is being combined with the existing knowledge of the employee. At this stage, knowledge is being analysed, organised and processed to make it more usable before it is being spread among the organisational members.

Internalisation means that the explicit knowledge has now being internalised, transformed into tacit knowledge and embodied in the individual employees of the organisation. This is being achieved through training, learn-by-doing, experiments and even stimulations.

Then, the cycle continues by spiralling back the knowledge into socialisation process when individual shares his tacit knowledge silently with another employee. This is how the stock of knowledge grows and the previous conceptions might change.

However, a word of caution is that this model's importance tends to be specific to Japanese business and culture, and is not appropriate as a universal, general model; but may be helpful as a tool for explaining general phenomena under certain circumstances. Nevertheless, the Nonaka and Takeuchi SECI Model provides a good understanding of how knowledge may be created and the processes and

conditions that are involved in knowledge creation and knowledge transfer. It also gives an insight to the process of knowledge creation from a Japanese business perspective.

The SECI Model is used as one of the working conceptual frameworks in this research as it supports the conditions needed for knowledge transfer using storytelling to happen which among others requires face to face interaction (Davenport et al, 1997; Boisot, 1998), conversion of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge (Droege et al , 2003) and the need to have a suitable place for knowledge transfer to happen (Davidson et al., 2002)

However, as mentioned earlier, this research uses two models as its working conceptual framework. The SECI Model explains the process and supporting conditions for knowledge creation to happen and knowledge to be transferred, the next model discussed emphasizes on the importance of having the right kind of environment for knowledge to be transferred.

2.1.2.2 Collison and Parcell Knowledge Management Model

The Collison and Parcell (2004) KM model originated in 1998 by a knowledge management team in BP (Collison, 2001) and was first published in 2001. Since then, more than seven hundred organisations have used this model. The Collison and Parcell KM model (2004) was developed on the premise that the term ‘knowledge management’ is an oxymoron, whereby knowledge can never be managed. What may be managed is only the environment in which the knowledge is created, discovered, shared, transferred, adapted and applied. The environment in this model includes both ambience and the physical structure of the organisation, supporting the SECI Model (Nonaka et al. 1995) where the process of socialisation is about bringing employees together to share knowledge and the importance of place of exchange in creating a successful knowledge-sharing organisation.

Figure 3.0 below depicts the Collison and Parcell KM Model. The central idea is that the captured knowledge which consists of three elements: learning during,

learning before and learning after; and the environment that should exist for knowledge to be ‘captured’ and transferred.

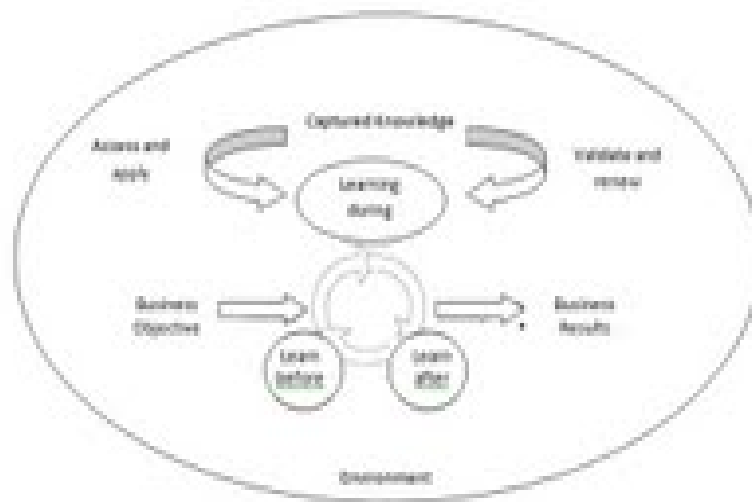


Figure 3.0: Collison and Parcell KM Model (2004)

The knowledge management process in the Collison and Parcell KM Model is said to start with people and teams having *an agreed and similar set of ‘Business Objectives’ and goals to achieve*. The individuals involved in achieving the goals share their knowledge with each other before, during, and after the completion of the project, and should reach the desired ‘Business Results’. This whole process of learning before, during and after leads to the creation of a ‘Knowledge Bank’ or Captured Knowledge, which links together the individuals who hold the knowledge and network among themselves. A supportive organisational culture helps internalise this new behaviour until it becomes embedded into its core processes.

Learning before means that upon embarking on a new task or project, employees should be searching for someone who has previously undertaken the responsibility, similar to where the concept of socialisation in Nonaka et. al. (1995) takes place. The questions to be asked are such as ‘what do others know?’, ‘who are they’ and ‘what has already been captured?’. This is important as according to Collison et. al (2004, 34),

“Reusing knowledge is faster than recreating it. By concentrating on what you need to know, then finding out the best way to learn it before focusing on what we need to do, the outcome is achieved faster and with less effort”

Learning during is when employees learn continuously on the job while performing the tasks at hand. This can be done by constant discussion, reviewing and getting feedback among project members, and making changes when necessary.

And *Learning after* is a form of post-project appraisal to help draw lessons and insights from those involved in the project. This is necessary as usually organisational projects and activities are not a one-time events.

For all these learning process to happen, the right environment is required within the organisation. Collison (2001) listed that there are four different elements that are required to create a conducive environment for knowledge management as summarised in Table 4.0 below.

Table 4.0: Collison’s Four Environment Elements (2001)

The Environment Contains:	Explanation:
Right Conditions	Reliable and common infrastructure is needed.
Right Means	Model, Tools and Processes for learning must be common throughout the organisation.
Right Actions	Individuals in the organisations must continuously seek, share and use knowledge.
Right Leadership	Sharing and learning must be role-modeled and reciprocated across the organisation.

From the table above, the four elements that make up an environment are right conditions, right means, right actions and right leadership. All four must exists in the organisational culture in order to encourage and stimulate knowledge transfer and sharing.

As noted in the discussion above, both Collison and Parcell (2004) KM Model and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) SECI Model highlight the importance of environment and the required social interaction involved in knowledge transmission within an organisation. And the reviewed literature recognises the importance of both the individual and the organisation in transmitting knowledge, and the necessity of a sharing-conducive environment to allow the transmission to occur. Thus, this research uses both models as the basis of its conceptual framework for this study.

This research now proceeds to review the literature of storytelling as a means to transfer knowledge. It is selected as it fits well into the basic concern of the researcher to find the most cost-effective method that would allow small and medium organisations to transmit knowledge in their organisations.

2.1.3 Review of the Literature on Storytelling and Narratives

This literature review on knowledge-sharing establishes the importance of knowledge transference in an organisation and in wider communities. The literature has established that knowledge can be shared and transferred via various methodologies. For the purpose of answering the research question, storytelling has been identified as a cost-effective method of transmission for small and medium businesses due to its minimal cost implications during start-up and maintenance of the process. Thus, this section is dedicated to reviewing the literature on storytelling.

Traditionally, people use stories to relate ideas and values, which are important to them (Collison et al., 1999). In fact, it is an ancient art where events, be them real or fictitious, are verbalised in words, visualised in images and heard in sound. Stories are like verbal pictures that are used to spark and stimulate the interest of the listeners, add variety to the content and consequently used to present anecdotal evidence, clarify and support a point of view and /or even crystallize ideas of the storyteller.

Moving forward to the current business world, according to Denning (2001, xiv),

“Storytelling gets inside the mind of the individuals who collectively make up the organisations and affects how they think, worry, wonder, agonize, and dream about themselves and in the process create-- and re-create-- their organisation. Storytelling enables the individuals in the organisation to see themselves and the organisation in a different light, and accordingly take decisions and change their behaviour in accordance with these new perceptions, insights, and identities”

Morgan and Dennehy (1997) claim that stories are more powerful than statistics in terms of understanding. Denning (2004b) echoes this view by suggesting that storytelling helps to translate dry and boring numbers into compelling pictures. Collison et al. (1999) support this view by adding that stories nudge individuals to create a much needed paradigm shift. Nonaka et al. (1995) further strengthen this claim by proposing the SECI Model of knowledge management where “socialisation” of employees facilitates the transfer of tacit knowledge and the retention of the knowledge happens when knowledge is ‘internalised’ by individuals.

Before proceeding, it is important to highlight the different opinions among the researchers on the definition of organisational storytelling and narratives as researchers in this field use different definitions for both organisational storytelling and narratives.

An organisational story consists of a narrative of events that needs an interpretation and retelling of events within the organisation (Landrum, 2000) while Swap et al. (2001, 103) suggest a more detailed definition: *‘a detailed narrative of past management actions, employee interactions, or other intra- or extra-organisational events that are communicated informally within the organisation’*.

These definitions reflect an informal conveyance of events in an organisation as told by the individual based on her/his own interpretations.

According to Landrum (2000), the term 'narrative' is said to have a deeper definition. He states that a narrative analysis involves an individual's interpretation of both events and things, and also analyses others' interpretation of the two. These outside interpretations are absent from the definition of organisational storytelling. Therefore, as narrative analysis involves both interpretation and analysis of events, Snowden (2001b) proposes that narrative patterning can be used for creating a sustainable intervention within an organisation when changes are needed in an organisation's culture, system or structure.

It can be said then, that narrative analysis focuses on narrative interpretations while narrative patterning focuses on narratives used for organisational intervention. Some writers view the stories circulated within an organisation as knowledge (Schreyogg and Geiger, 2002; Cook and Seely Brown, 1999) while some view them as a method of pattern finding (Boje, 1999). Stories are used to make sense of the processes and relationships in an organisation (Snowden, 2001a; Boje, 1999). Stories are also seen as vehicles of socialisation and learning (Hanappi-Egger et al., 2005).

Boje (1991) suggests that stories may be in either written or in oral form. However, Boje is of the opinion that storytelling occurs when the communication involves at least two people trying to interpret past or future anticipated experiences thus does not recommend the text form of storytelling within an organisation due to the absence of interaction and reaction between the storyteller and the listeners (Boje, 1991).

This is consistent with the views of Nonaka et al. (2003) and Collison et al. (2001) who state that there must be interaction between the storyteller and the receivers/listeners. Collison et al (2004) mentioned that in 1971, Albert Mehrabian in his book 'Silent Message' suggested that all communication is roughly 7 per cent words, 38 per cent tone of voice and 55 per cent in body language. This according to Collison et al (2004, 231) means that "we lose 93 per cent of the message - the context - when we reduce someone telling a story to a simple textual document". Further supporting that view, Morgan et al. (1997) highlights the positive impact of oral storytelling, which has a high visual imagery resulting in long-term memory retention.

Storytelling may be used for various reasons within an organisation. Uses include making the complex simple (Smith and Juwah, 2011) explaining organisational culture (Boje, 1991; Boje 1995; Coopman and Meidliner, 2000; Hansen and Kahnweiler, 1993), organisational change (Kolb, 2003; Kitchell, Hannan and Kempton, 2000), organisational strategy (Denning, 2004b; Silverman, 2004b), and transferring 'know-how' and management development (Morgan et al., 1997). It may be incorporated into a manager's leadership style (Collison et al., 1999; Denning, 2004) and also assists in facilitating the decision-making process (Coopman et al., 2000), organisational communication (Smith and Keyton, 2001), training (Hogan, 1997) and promoting organisational values (Randall and Martin, 2003).

Morgan et al. (1997) are of the opinion that a good story includes real people and events. Supporting this point are Denning (2004b) and Morgan et al. (1997) stating that it is crucial for an organisational story to be true; otherwise, there is no actual knowledge transferred. Melymuka (2004) echoed a similar view.

However, in 1998 Czarniawska (cited in Landrum, 2000) disagrees, stating that perception, rather than truth, determines the power of narratives in an organisation. Hansen et al. (1993) support this view by agreeing that stories are seldom factual.

Kolb (2003) states that storytelling helps an organisation 'manage continuity' as a powerful tool in linking its past, present, and future. Managing continuity is important for an organisation as it allows employees to relate to the organisation and make sense of the events that have happened and are happening in the organisation.

From the discussion above, not only do the researchers differ in their interpretation of what a story is and its form but there are also differences of opinion in terms of delivery technique between a professional storyteller and a storyteller in an organisational context.

Taylor, Fisher, and Dufresne (2002) agree with Aristotle's view that emphasises the importance of aesthetics in management storytelling. This means that

despite the stories being told are organisational stories, they should not be void of the art of good storytelling itself which should include elements such as dramatic quality, central character, environmental settings and imagery. Finlay and Hogan (1995) too propose that an organisational storytelling technique should be based on the art of conventional storytelling technique as above.

Denning (2004b) acknowledges that although Aristotle's style is legitimate, he disagrees that it applies in the organisational context. Listeners in an organisation do not have the time, patience, or mental capacity for traditional storytelling. Therefore, Denning (2004b) proposes a straightforward, minimalist style of presentation (Melymuka, 2004).

Despite the arguments on the delivery style, Gold's (1997) research shows that regardless of the storytelling style, leaders in an organisation should be master storytellers for their organisations to learn and innovate. Taylor, Fisher and Dufresne (2002) agree with this. Their research shows that by exercising the "Ten Roles of Mintzberg" and combining them with storytelling, an organisation is stimulating learning and knowledge-sharing among its employees.

Another aspect of storytelling is that individuals tend to interpret stories and narratives based on their own social and historical context (Landrum, 2000) due to their existing mental model (Wiig, 2004). With this understanding, Boje (1995) suggests that at any one time, organisations must be aware that there will be multiple competing perspectives or a 'plurivocal' interpretation to any of the stories, which is shared in an organisation. In line with that view, since storytelling is subjective to the participants, Meyer (1995, 1997) cautions that values transmitted through storytelling can either unify employees or diversify them, depending on similarity, commonality and differences of value the employees hold.

However, the opposite could also happen as employees may be subjected to a hegemonic storyteller (Boje, Luhman and Baack, 1999). This concern is shared by Hansen et al. (2000), who state that a storyteller might be imposing his own values and impact on the listeners' valuations of the stories.

Despite all these concerns, Swap et al. (2001) suggest that due to a story's episodic nature, storytelling allows stories to be grounded in the mind of the listener and to be encoded as a personal experience thus, making it more memorable to the listeners or recipients than reading for example, a company's manual.

Not only does storytelling benefits individuals, Boje (1991) states that the collective stories, which reside in an organisation's employees, become part of an organisation-wide information processing network which, in turn, results in organisational memory. Kolb (2003) further highlights its importance when he says that storytelling can only be effective when there is a collective story within the organisation, also known as organisational learning as proposed earlier by Spicer (1998) and Kim (1993).

To make an employee willing to participate in a collective storytelling effort, one of the fundamental issues faced by an organisation is trust (Simmons, 2001). As discussed earlier, knowledge is sometimes viewed as power. Therefore, when a person gives away knowledge, they may feel that they are giving away power. When this happens, knowledge is only transferred and shared using storytelling when the speaker is comfortable and has some level of trust towards the recipient.

Meyer, et al. (2005) add another dimension to the issues of trust by stating that the delivery style of a story as well as its content will affect the level of trust between both the storyteller and his listeners. Also, Denning (2005) stresses the importance of telling a story within a context to allow the recipient understand the facts that surround the story. Stories without context raise doubts due to its inapplicability to other situations.

Lack of trust and context can easily lead to what is known as the 'anti-story' (Denning, 2004b). This happens when the listeners choose not to believe the stories shared in the organisation (Snowden, 2001b). Thier and Erlach (2005) draw attention to the importance of a validation process for all stories where the recipients are able to verify the legitimacy of the stories shared with them to help overcome the anti-story situation.

Another issue that demands attention is the experience of the storyteller (Snowden, 2001). An inexperienced storyteller may fail to deliver their points successfully, resulting in the knowledge being rejected by other employees. A storyteller may increase the effectiveness of their delivery and also the acceptance of their stories by using humour (Morgan et al., 1997). Meyer (1997) too, recognises the importance of humour in helping to bridge value differences among employees, while at the same time, providing opportunity to re-emphasize some commonalities between them (Meyer 1997). Humour may also reduce the tendency of an individual who attempts to read too much into a story (Smith et al., 2001), which may result to mistakes in interpreting the stories shared.

To assist the employees in building the culture of storytelling, Abma (2003) proposes using storytelling workshops as platforms for knowledge-sharing. Organisations such as United Kingdom's Post Office has successfully use stories to communicate experiences of employees (Quintas, 2002) while North Carolina Credit Union League (Silverman, 2004a) brought together individual employees to tell and share their stories with others in the organisation.

The World Bank has an exceptional success story using story fairs as a functional platform for storytelling (Denning, 2001). Denning, being the Program Director for Knowledge Management in World Bank explains that during the knowledge fair, booths are set up with lots of exhibits, displays, brochures, charts, video-conferencing, posters, photographic enlargements and banners; all scattered all over the place. People are interacting one on one, eyeball to eyeball, informally and haphazardly with lots of talking, negotiating, chat, plan, complain and praise going around. The atmosphere is noisy, jolly, attractive and what is called 'manageable chaos'. Employees are communicating at many levels including interdepartmental, intra departmental, across levels of hierarchy and between teams. The purpose of the fair is to orchestrate and catalyse the massive amount of informal storytelling in a short space of time. Everyone can tell their experiences and share the meaning with others. Stories are shared via anecdotes, examples, narratives, horror stories, war stories, highlights, lowlights, catastrophes and even near misses. And by the end of the story fair- problems are being solves, individual employee situations have improved and decisions are being made based on the information gathered during

those informal discussions. As examples, in a conversation with a booth sponsor, a task manager discovers sites relevant to her work and another employee is told about the availability of model bidding documents on line.

Now, after detailed discussions on multiple fields literature starting from reviewing the general area of knowledge then going into the broad field of knowledge management literatures then narrowing down to knowledge sharing and finally focusing on storytelling, the final section of this chapter identifies the gap in the literatures that leads to the research question.

2.2 Identifying the Research Gap

From the above discussion of various fields of literatures related to this research, there has been little research conducted on the use of storytelling as a knowledge transfer mechanism in Malaysia.

Despite having Nonaka et al (1995) SECI Model stating the four stages/quadrants of knowledge creation and knowledge transfer, this model is limited in terms of its context to the Japanese organisation. While Collison et al (2004) highlights the four elements of environment to stimulate knowledge sharing culture in organisation, based on the cultural concerns highlight by Holtshouse (1999), Husted and Michailove (2002), Hutchings (2005) and Hanappi-Egger et. al. (2005), there exist a glaring gap in literature on the type of environment needed to encourage knowledge transfer and whether this suits the culture of a Malaysian organisation. Going back to the interest of this research which is to address the issue of how can small organisations participate in knowledge transmission without costing them much. Among the options available, coupled together with the objective and purpose of this research, it is proposed that storytelling method to be adopted by such employers to effectively transmit their knowledge in their organisation (Boyce, 1996 ; Snowden, 1999 ; Snowden, 2000; Morgan and Dennehy, 1997; Currie and Brown, 2003; Collison and Mackenzie, 1999 ; Denning, 2004; Forster, Cebis, Majteles and Mathur, 1999; Hogan, 1997; Coopman and Meidliner, 2000). However, to date, there is no study done on usage of storytelling as a knowledge transfer mechanism in Malaysia, leaving a gap fertile for research in this area.

With the main research question being ‘How can storytelling play a role as a mechanism in knowledge transmission in an education-based organisation in Malaysia?’, the research sub-questions that the researcher has upon embarking into the data collection phase are as follows:

a) In a Malaysian context, from the field of knowledge-sharing:

- What type of conditions needed in an environment to encourage knowledge-sharing? Here, the research is interested to find out if there are particular conditions that need to exist in an organisation that would encourage knowledge sharing among its employees. This is based on the Collison and Parcell KM Model (2004) that emphasises the need for the right conditions to exist in the organisation’s environment to stimulate knowledge transfer to happen.
- Is there any specific place and time, which is suitable for knowledge transfer? This question seeks to find the answer if there is any specific type of place and time that employees would choose to share their knowledge in the organisation. The importance of place is highlighted in Nonaka et al (1998) in SECI Model that there should be a place for social interaction as the platform of knowledge sharing.
- Is management support perceived to be important to encourage knowledge-sharing? The question here aims to find out if management support perceived as important by the employees before embarking into knowledge sharing. It also seeks to understand the type of support which employees feel important to encourage them to share knowledge. Importance of management support is highlighted in many literatures for example Connelly et al. (2003), Dixon (1999), MacNeil (2003) and Powell (1998).
- What are the factors that hinder knowledge sharing? The focus of this question is to find out the barriers or resistance to knowledge sharing in organisation.

Various literatures that discusses different types of barriers are such as Davenport et al. (1997), Koshinen (2003), Wiig (2004), Argyris (1997) and Husted et al. (2002).

b) In Malaysian context, from the field of storytelling:

- What types of stories are usually being shared among the employees? From the literatures discussed, there are many different types of stories that are being shared by employees. This question is looking into the nature of stories that are being shared in the organisation. Among literatures that highlights types of stories are Boje (1991), Kolb (2003), Silvernman, (2004b), Denning (2004b), Snowden (2001a), Schreyogg and Geiger, (2002) and Randall et al. (2003).
- Do employees resist their stories being shared? Here, based on literature that discusses resistance to sharing stories such as Landrum (2000), Wiig (2004), Meyer (1995) and Simmons (2001), the research seeks to find out if there is any resistance from the employees to share with stories with others in the organisation.
- What motivates employees to share their stories with others? In this question, the research seeks to understand and find out the encouragements and motivations needed by employees to share their personal stories or knowledge among themselves. What makes them willing to share? Factors that stimulate and motivate sharing are addressed in literatures such as Hanappi-Egger et al. (2005), Denning (2004b) and Abma (2003).
- Are there specific techniques used by employees when sharing the stories? Assuming that employees share their stories among themselves, what is the technique or style that is being used? Styles of delivering stories are discussed in many literature among others by Boje (1991), Taylor et al. (2002), Denning (2004b), Melymuka (2004) and Hogan (1995).

From studying the literature, developing the research questions, and using a qualitative approach as described in Chapter Three, the researcher has developed an interview protocol for the purpose of this research. A working conceptual framework is also developed using input from the protocol questions. It is noted that the interview protocol would only be used as a guide during the interview session.

In total, there are 11 (eleven) research questions that the research has identified related to two different fields of knowledge - knowledge sharing/transfer and storytelling- in this working conceptual framework. While three issues are commonly shared, five issues are uniquely to the field of knowledge sharing/transfer and another three issues are for the field of storytelling.

The eleven areas are:

From the field of Knowledge Sharing/Transfer:

- Place of Transfer
- Ambience of Transfer
- Interdepartmental Transfer
- Time of Transfer
- Knowledge Decision

From the field of storytelling:

- Types of Stories
- Resistance to Stories
- Delivery Techniques

From both fields of study:

- Motivation to Share
- Methods of Transfer
- Management Support

Figure 4.0 below is the diagrammatic representation of the general areas pertaining research question and sub-questions as discussed above and being used as the working conceptual framework for this research.

2.3 Conclusion

The reviews on the multi-disciplinary field of knowledge have shed light on the usage of organisational storytelling but the literature leaves as many questions unanswered as answered.

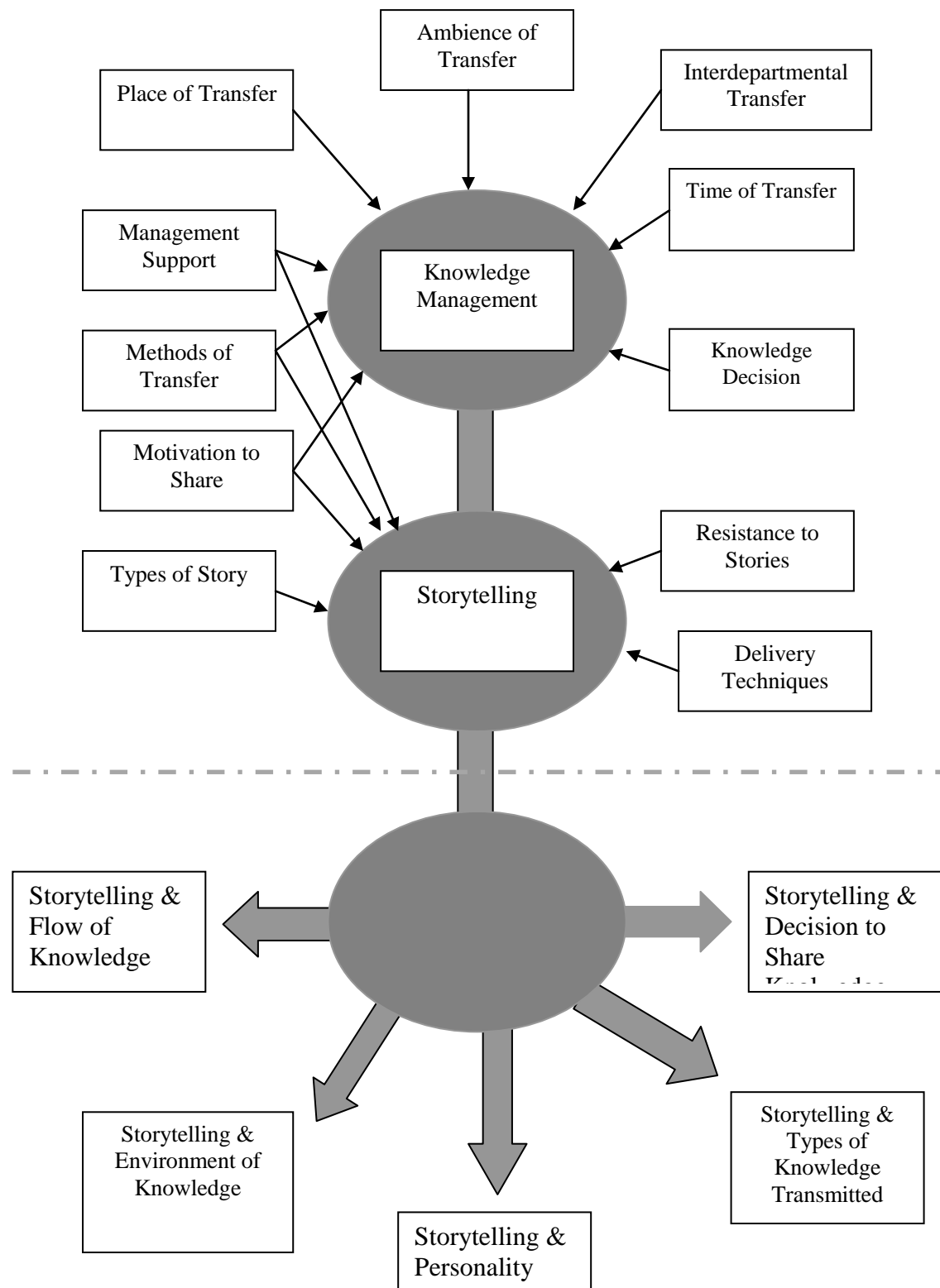


Figure 4.0 Working Conceptual Framework developed by A. Bakar, Zabrina for the purpose of this study

Reviewing the basic literature of how knowledge is being defined, the types of knowledge which includes tacit as highlighted by Gill (2000), Polanyi (1962) and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) and explicit knowledge (Brown et al., 1998; Fahey and Prusak, 1998; Kakabadse et al., 2001; Droege et al., 2003). The literature then moves to the broad and still debatable area of knowledge management. Narrowing down further, the researcher proceed to review literatures on knowledge sharing to find the best mechanism to transfer knowledge (Stenmark, 2003; Ali, 2001; Chen, Lee, Zhang and Zhang, 2003; Landrum, 2000; Miller, Fontaine and Muller, 2002; Denning, 2001; Swap, Leonard, Shields and Abrams, 2001; Trussler, 1998) .

Here, two models are used to develop the working conceptual framework for the research. They are Nonaka and Takeuchi SECI Model and Collison and Parcell KM Model. From there, the researcher then finally reviews literatures of storytelling before identifying the gap in the literature.

In order to answer the research question, four different sub-questions are developed for each field of study. From there, a total of eleven areas are identified that need to be addressed by the researcher. The eleven areas are the areas of knowledge transfer related to place, ambience, interdepartmental, time and place that are suitable for knowledge sharing; the areas of storytelling related to types of stories, resistance to stories and story delivery techniques; while the last three areas are motivation to share stories, methods of transfer and management support that is needed to stimulate knowledge sharing in the organisation. This eleven areas are depicted in a diagram and to be used as a guideline during the data collection session which methodology be discussed in the next chapter.

In the next Chapter, the researcher expounds upon the generally accepted scientific methods and then explains the chosen methodology used in this research with is the qualitative, in-depth interview method. The researcher acts as the Interviewer and develops a working conceptual framework in order to process and analyse the research questions posed to the interviewees. The questions come from both fields of knowledge-sharing and storytelling. The interviewees' answers and the analysis are discussed in the later Chapters.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.0 Introduction

All around the world there has been a surge in the popularity of qualitative research across various fields of knowledge (Carson et al., 2002; Denzin et al., 1994; Travers 2002; Padgett 2004; Huberman and Miles 2002). This new phenomenon is reflective of increasing complexity of the current world situations and qualitative research fits well into this type of circumstances as it allows subjectivity and complexity in its assumptions (Cavana et al., 2001).

Although the subjective and complex nature of qualitative research is criticized, proponents of qualitative research maintain that research integrity is protected. This is because most institutional research is subject to ethical protocols and the data are collected by a researcher without leading participants and are not self-constructed by the researcher (Murphy, 1995). Echoing the same view, Guba and Lincoln (1994) contend that questions of paradigm take priority over questions of method because of the nature of paradigm being the basic belief system that guides the researcher.

This research involves observation; listening; recording and analyzing, requiring it to be placed in an interpretive paradigm.

Before embarking on any research activity, the researcher must outline the philosophical basis for the conduct of the research, that is how the world and the experience in it are viewed, as this helps to determine whether the research would adopt a quantitative (positivist) or qualitative (interpretivist) approach (Cavana et al., 2001).

The researcher discusses the different types of research philosophies and paradigms that can be used, explaining both quantitative and qualitative methodology. The various alternative data collection methodology is then explained, such as case study, focus group interview, observation and in-depth semi structured interview before embarking into a detailed discussion on qualitative research design issues, focusing specifically on data collection methodology of in-depth interviews. The chapter continues describing the selection process of the research setting and proceeds to discuss the selection process of the interviewees. Finally, the researcher discusses in detail the limitations of the research.

3.1 Research Philosophy and Paradigms

In order to gain a greater understanding of the philosophical basis of the research, one needs to give consideration to the five underlying assumptions of the two paradigms that guide one's decision as to whether to adopt a qualitative or quantitative approach (Mason 2002). These 5 areas are the ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological assumptions underpinning both qualitative and quantitative methods. Answers to these assumptions determine whether the philosophical basis underpinning the research is a positivist paradigm (quantitative study), an interpretivist paradigm (qualitative study), or a critical research (mixed qualitative and quantitative study) (Cavana et al., 2001).

The ontological assumption answer questions regarding the social reality to be investigated such as people, societal attitudes, narratives, culture and beliefs (Mason 2002). A researcher must position her/himself between one of these two types of reality - a subjective reality or an objective reality. In brief, if the reality is subjective, then it has multiple versions and is socially constructed (Carson et al., 2002) thus requiring an interpretivist approach. On the other hand, if the other reality is objective and singular, then it reflects the need for the philosophy of the positivist (Carson et al., 2002)

The epistemological assumptions consider the relationship between the researcher and the participants. Where the researcher personally interacts, and becomes involved with the participants, this points to an interpretivist approach. If the

researcher plans not to interact with the participants, it is appropriate to undertake a positivist approach (Mason, 2002) in the research. For an example, when asking questions during the interview session, and the researcher needs to probe into the answers further (requiring interaction with the participants), this denotes interpretivist paradigm. However, in situations where the participants use surveys and questionnaires which require no interaction between the researcher and the participants, that denotes positivist approach.

The axiological assumptions would require the researcher to question the extent of involvement of her/his personal values and biasness during the study. If the researcher's personal values would remain independent and detached from the phenomenon to be investigated, then a positivist approach is proposed (Patton, 1987). However, if the study indicates that the researcher's own values and biasness will be considered while conducting the investigation, then an interpretivist philosophy is deemed appropriate (Easterby-Smith et al., 2003). This is why an interpretivist approach is sometimes criticized under this paradigm due to the researcher's inability to be objective. On the other hand, a positivist approach boasts value-free and unbiased research results. For an example, doing a questionnaire or survey form as data collection methodology detaches the researcher's personal values from the research while in-depth interview methodology allows the researcher's personal values during the process.

Rhetorical assumption explains the language of the research. An informal style approach which uses personal voice and qualitative words in its writing and analysis, indicates a need for an interpretivist approach whereas a formal approach that uses impersonal voice and quantitative words reflects a positivist based study (Padgett, 2004). An example is when reporting and writing the analysis if the researcher uses an informal writing style, quoting the answers given by participants verbatim and analyzing them. This would reflect an interpretivist approach.

Lastly, the methodological assumptions question the process of the research. Interpretivist research reflects the use of inductive reasoning, involves study of simultaneous variables, is context-bound, requires examination and identification of patterns that emerges, and the research aims for verification of its data collected. On

the other hand, if deductive reasoning is needed, examination of cause and effect of the phenomenon of interest, the research is context-free, generalizability is possible, and validity and reliability testing are involved, then the research points to a positivist based research (Cavana et al., 2002). For an example, in this research, a specific context is selected, and upon analysis of data collected using in-depth interview patterns are identified. This indicates the need to use the interpretivist approach for this research.

From the discussions and examples given above, the researcher suggests that this study of knowledge transmission through story telling would require that the following are made explicit:

- 1) The ontological assumptions that allows the investigated social reality to be interpreted as subjective, has multiple versions, and is socially constructed,
- 2) The epistemological assumptions that allows the researcher to interact with the participants,
- 3) The axiological assumptions that allows the researcher's own values and biased to be considered,
- 4) The rhetorical assumptions that allows analysis of the narrative content and a reporting style that requires descriptive, informal and qualitative words, and
- 5) The methodological assumptions that requires inductive reasoning, context-bound research, and pattern identification.

These requirements signal the researcher that from all the assumptions' characteristics that underpinned the paradigms, this study shall use the interpretivist approach or qualitative approach. However, to make a conclusive decision, a detailed discussion of the differences between qualitative and quantitative research is needed.

The next section discusses in greater details the differences between qualitative and quantitative research.

3.2 The Virtues of Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Denzin et al., (1994:2) define qualitative research as ‘a multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter’. It allows studying the participants in their natural settings (Carson et al., 2002) and perceives reality as subjective (Mason, 2002). The researcher is permitted to be sensitive to the stakeholders’ perspectives (Patton, 1987). The qualitative method further allows a goal-free evaluation (Patton, 1987) and the interviewees may state their own ideas without using a predetermined model or hypothesis (Patton, 1987; Silverman, 2000).

Qualitative research is best used when the researcher is exploring a new phenomenon of interest and where current literature and theory is lacking (Eisenhart, 1989). Since the ontological nature of qualitative research allows multiple interpretations of reality, the researcher is empowered to explore, discover and give meanings to the phenomenon under study (Denzin et al., 1994).

Quantitative research is characterized by ‘objective observation, precise measurement, statistical analysis and verifiable truth’ (Cavana et al., 2001:34). It uses a standardized measure that fits a participant’s opinion into predetermined response categories, which are derived from a theoretical framework.

Qualitative research seeks to discover the paradigms of reality and it thrives on the depth of data generated from a relatively small sample size (Mason, 2002; Easterby-Smith et al., 2003; Patton, 1987). In contrast, quantitative research focuses on the efforts to verify or to discount variables from a large sample size, showing the functional relationships between the variables (Guba et al., 1994; Patton 1987).

Critics of qualitative methodology also cite the research’s absence of reliability and validity. Mason (2002) posits that validity and reliability of qualitative data are greatly dependent on the researcher’s methodological skills, competency, sensitivity, training and rigor. The research is highly dependent on the researcher because he is the instrument conducting the research (Patton, 1987). Therefore, generating data through qualitative research not only requires highly active engagement (Mason, 2002) but also discipline, knowledge and hard work.

After deciding on a philosophical base, the researcher must formulate a research design (Sekaran, 2003). According to Cavana et al. (2001:106), research design is a process that 'involves a series of rational decision-making which includes the purpose of the study, the types of investigation, the extent of the researcher's inferences, and the unit of analysis and time horizon (Cavana et al., 2001; Patton, 1987).

Unlike quantitative research, which has a rigid research design (Mason, 1996), a qualitative research design is an on-going process because it is 'grounded in the practice, process and context of the research' (Mason, 2002:24) and is more fluid and exploratory (Mason, 1996). For example, in a quantitative research, a sample size is fixed before the data collection starts but qualitative research allows flexibility for the researcher to continue until it reaches sample saturation level (Morse, 2000).

The study's purpose in a qualitative research design can be exploratory or case study in nature. Data is gathered from an unknown phenomenon of interest through unstructured interviews, focus group interviews or observations (Sekaran, 2003). Descriptive and hypothesis-testing for quantitative study, on the other hand, requires a statistical testing to show the relationship of a known phenomenon (Cavana et al. 2001).

Qualitative investigation searches for clarification as it allows exploration of issues in a more flexible manner compared to causal, correlation, and experimental investigation (Cavana et al., 2001) under quantitative study.

In qualitative research, minimal interference by the researcher during observation is more beneficial as it fits into the exploratory and descriptive nature of the study (Cavana et al., 2001) as the interest lies in understanding, not in participation. In contrast, hypothesis-testing study requires manipulation of certain variables for results (Sekaran, 2003) in the quantitative study.

To allow the participants to behave normally in a work environment, exploratory, descriptive and correlation studies should be conducted in a natural, non-contrived setting (Sekaran, 2003). However, a hypothesis-testing study uses

laboratory experiments to find cause and effect, and work is done in a contrived setting which allows a high degree of control in the artificial setting (Cavana et al., 2001).

Unit of analysis is reported at the end of the research (Sekaran, 2003) and is dependent on the research question itself. Unit of analysis may be any quantifiable thing for example individuals, dyads, groups, divisions, organisations, industries, country, families, subcultures, agencies, communities, events, occurrences and incidences (Patton, 1987; Cavana et al., 2001). Sekaran (2003) explains that decisions on sample size and sampling strategies depend on the unit of analysis.

A researcher's final decision is the time horizon of the study. If the researcher is studying a phenomenon at several points in time within a certain time frame, then data will be gathered across that time frame. This is known as a longitudinal study (Sekaran, 2003). On the other hand, if the research is once but over a few days or weeks or months, then it is a "one-shot" or cross-sectional study (Cavana et al., 2001).

The researcher, guided by Cavana et al. (2001) and the information presented above, determined that this study is exploratory in nature. The topic under study is a new phenomenon or area of interest, and as such, the study aims for clarification and investigation of the new phenomenon. This requires the researcher to have depth and understanding in the subject matter. To enable this, the participants must be allowed to behave normally in their natural settings, only allowing minimal interferences by the researcher during the observation period and uses an 'individual' unit of analysis.

These criteria indicate that a qualitative research design is the most suitable for this research. After determining that this study requires a qualitative method, the research investigates the appropriate strategies of inquiries and data collection methods.

3.3 Strategies of Inquiries

Creswell (2009) recommends that qualitative researchers choose among these five strategies of inquiries which are narrative and phenomenology (for study of

individuals), ethnography (for study on broad culture-sharing behaviour of individuals and groups); and case study and grounded theory (for exploratory study of processes, activities and events).

As discussed previously, since this research is exploratory in nature; and is interested in studying the process of knowledge sharing in an organisation, the two strategies of inquiries that are to be considered are case study and grounded theory. A brief explanation of both are as below:

3.3.1 The Case Study

In a case study, a researcher attempts to understand the dynamics that exist within a single setting (Eisenhardt, 1989). It is a preferred strategy when the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ questions need to be addressed by the researcher (Yin, 2003). A case study is unique and can be employed in both qualitative and quantitative research and uses multiple data collection methods such as questionnaires, interviews, observation and archives (Eisenhardt, 1989). It can also involve either single or multiple cases within one study and may involve many levels of analysis. The weakness of the case study method is that it is highly dependent on the researcher’s skill in gathering the required data from multiple sources. And also the specificity of case study – the degree to which it can be generalised.

3.3.2 Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory was first expounded in a 1967 book ‘The Discovery of Grounded Theory’ by its originators Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, and it is a method of inquiry that enables the researcher to develop a theory which offers an explanation on the new phenomenon of interest (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). And since its inception, grounded theory has spread fairly quickly and gain popularity as a qualitative research method across fields. Charmaz (2000: 522) explains grounded theory as “the study of experience from the standpoint of those who live it”. Its goal is “to derive inductively from data a theory that is ‘grounded’ in the data- hence, grounded theory” (Merriam, 2002: 7). Therefore, one does not begin the research with a theory, and then prove it. Instead, “one begins with an area of study and what is

relevant to that area is allowed to emerge” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 23). According to Urquhart (2001: 3), the “idea of constant comparison is at the heart of grounded theory as a method” where this process means the researcher constantly compare “instances of data that has been labelled as a particular category with other instances of data to see if the categories fit and are workable”. And if the data fits and instances mount up, the researcher has achieved what Strauss (1987) and Glaser (1992) called ‘theoretical saturation’. Among the critics of grounded theory are that the field work that entails grounded theory such as tape-recording the interviews and transcribing the interviews that are time consuming and tedious (Bryman, 1993) and the need for the researcher to look for interviewees who have experience the phenomenon being explored by the researcher (Creswell, 1998).

3.4 Validity and Reliability

The credibility of any research study is dependent on its validity and reliability (Silverman, 2000). In this research, validity results from the researcher’s direct relationship and dealing with the participants and the data collected from them (Yeung, 1995). Reliability, on the other hand, is a result of consistency and stability of the observation, labeling and interpretation of the data gathered (Boyatzis, 1998).

To address both issues, the researcher has designed the data collection process and interpretation process at the beginning of the research. Discussions below include the measures taken by the researcher to address validity and reliability.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The researcher has chosen qualitative method as the research design and from there the data collection method in the research is selected. The epistemological and ontological paradigms of qualitative research indicate that researchers should be up-close and face-to-face with the participants in order to penetrate their individual thought processes regarding logic and interpretation of the phenomenon. The researcher should also record a participant’s personal views of the subject under investigation (Murphy, 1995; Shaw, 1999).

The methods that the researcher may use to collect data in a qualitative study which result to the richness in details are: focus group interviews, observation, and in-depth interviews (Bryman, 1984). Each method has its own strengths and weaknesses and is discussed further below. A number of data collection methods available for qualitative study are briefly discussed below.

3.5.1 Focus Group Interview

A focus group interview is used when the researcher needs to interview between four and twelve people and observes how these individuals think and react as a group and how they influence each other. These individuals are selected if they satisfy certain requirements set by the researcher. Strengths and weaknesses are similar to that of an in-depth interview as discussed below. Additional strengths are low-cost and relatively quick results. Apparent weaknesses include less control over the group, data which is more difficult to analyze and the requirement of a highly trained observer-moderator to conduct the sessions (Marshall et al., 1995).

3.5.2 Observation

Observation is suitable when the researcher is interested in seeing interaction, actions and behaviours involving large numbers of people (Mason, 2002). Observation is appropriate when social explanations require depth, complexity, roundness and multidimensionality (Mason, 2002).

Among the issues raised in observation method are the roles played by the evaluator-observer, the portrayal of the evaluator's role to others, the portrayal of the purpose of the evaluation to others, the duration of the evaluation observation and the focus of the researcher during the observation period (Patton, 1987). An issue of ethics and morality is raised when deciding whether to conduct a covert, overt or partially covert/overt method of research (Patton, 1987). The strengths of observation are that it allows a better understanding of the context and detection of data that might 'escape' during the interview and provides an opportunity to move beyond the selective perception of others (Patton, 1987). The weakness, however, lies in the

possibility that participants may engage in controlled behaviour during the period under observation.

3.5.3 In-depth/Semi-structured Interview

An in-depth interview is described by Kahn and Cannell (1957) (as cited in Marshall et al., 1995:80) as ‘a conversation with a purpose’. The purpose is to allow the researcher to probe and solicit details that can help the researcher to understand the interviewee’s inner perspectives on the subject under investigation. Patton (1987) explains that the ‘fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understanding in their own terms’.

The open-ended interview is best used when a large volume of data is needed but its trade-off is that interviewing requires much time and is dependent on the narrative skills of the interviewee (Patton 1987). Marshall et al., (1995) suggest that the interviewer’s personality, adaptability, listening and responsive skills may affect the quality of the information obtained.

Meanwhile, an in-depth interview allows a natural flow of data, probing, and clarification whereby the interviewee is unbound by pre-determined phrases. It may provide an ability to capture the complexity of an issue. Weaknesses of this method include its time consumption, its difficulty in analyzing the data, its dependency upon the researcher’s and interviewee’s skills, and the potential bias of each (Marshall et al., 1995; Patton 1987; Sekaran 2003).

3.6 Qualitative Research Design Issues

From a study of methods on data collection under qualitative research, the research selected a semi-structured in-depth interview for this study as it suits the study the best since it allows interactions, depth and clarification during data collecting sessions

First and foremost, this study is conducted in Malaysia for reasons explained earlier in Chapter One. And this organisation is selected in particular due its success becoming one of the leading higher learning institutions in Malaysia and most importantly, its employees use storytelling as a method of transferring knowledge among themselves. Further discussion on selection of the organisation under Selection of Research Setting below.

The discussion that follows provides a detailed explanation of the data collection methods undertaken by the researcher.

In this study, the researcher engaged in a participant observation role, engaged in overt observation and fully disclosed to the participants the purpose of the study. A written authorization letter that details the agreement between the researcher and the organisation on matters such as data gathering method, participation, confidentiality issues and rights to the results of the research was also prepared. (Please refer to Appendix A). The Chairman of the organisation made an announcement in the beginning of the data collection period to notify employees of the approval of the research.

This next section discusses in detail the qualitative research design issues of in-depth interview, sampling method and selection of interviewees.

3.6.1 In-depth Interviews

The researcher proceeded to conduct in-depth interviews as the data gathering process. In-depth interviews involve asking open-ended questions to the interviewees (Patton, 1987). The interviewer listens and records the answers followed by requests for clarification and elaboration when needed. This ‘probing technique’ allows soliciting details beneath the surface and enables a researcher to get a more holistic understanding of the person’s perspectives and understanding of the issue (Patton, 1987:115).

Meyer (1995) has proposed that an inquiry protocol be developed and used as a general step-by-step guideline for the researcher to follow during the interview

session in an outline form. The advantage of this method is that while it provides a framework and basic checklist of questions and may allow a more comprehensive and systematic data gathering method, the researcher is still free to build the conversation during the interview process. The disadvantage of this style is that some important topics may be inadvertently omitted (Patton, 1987) during the interview session if the interviewee fails to bring up the issues listed in the inquiry protocol.

Apart from being important, it is part of an ethical requirement to get the participants to sign a consent form which spells out the purpose of the study, confidentiality issues and a participant's permission to use the data gathered during the interview (Endlich, 2001). After the interviews, the data was then converted to transcript form to allow a full analysis of the interview sessions (Silverman, 2000). Carson et. al. (2002) propose that researchers set the initial target for participants at thirty, though Grace and O'Cass (2002) agree that the right number of interviewees is subjective. Any number of interviewees is acceptable as long as the interviewer is able to confirm the current interview findings and allow verification and convergence between the interviews. Bauer and Aarts (2000) agree by stating that the researcher will proceed with the interviews until the research has achieved its theoretical saturation during the interview process.

As mentioned above, the researcher has developed an interview protocol as a guideline during the interview session. This interview protocol consists of both the general guidelines and general interview questions that help guide the interview sessions. The general guidelines concern, for example, the interview environment. The environment prepared for the interview session should be comfortable and the interviewer must ensure the participants' comfort during the session. Room conditions, seating arrangements, equipments, lighting and refreshments are among the matters included in the checklist. A sample of the Interview Protocol can be found in Appendix B.

3.7 Selection of Research Setting

The objective in sampling is to understand the researcher's phenomenon of interest (Mayan, 2001). Unlike quantitative inquiry, qualitative inquiry depends on

samples which are purposefully selected. The idea of a qualitative research is to learn from the ‘expert.’ A researcher either selects the individuals and context by determining who can give the best information about the topic and which context can provide the most and best information on the area of research. Holliday (2002) has outlined five criteria for the selection of research setting in the following table.

Table 5.0: Criteria for Research Settings

No	Criterion	Details
1	The setting must have a sense of boundedness.	Time, place, culture.
2	The setting should provide a variety of relevant, interconnected data.	People to watch or interviews, artefacts.
3	There should be sufficient richness.	Different instances, facets and viewpoints – microcosm of the research topic in wider society.
4	The setting should be sufficiently small.	Logistically and conceptually manageable.
5	There should be access.	For the researcher to take whatever role is necessary to collect data.

For the purpose of discussion the research setting selection, the research question is being stated again here:

“How can storytelling play a role as a mechanism in knowledge transmission in an education-based organisation in Malaysia?”

First of all, the selected organisation is a new, small-sized but thriving private higher learning institution in Malaysia and has marked a tremendous growth of over four thousand students in just four years since its incorporation. The researcher was also given full cooperation by the top management to conduct the research at the college. In addition, the number of employees who volunteered to participate in this interview was very encouraging

It was observed that storytelling is the method, which the organisation uses to transfer knowledge across its divisions and departments; making it a good sample to understudy the researcher’s phenomenon of interests. All levels of management and non-management demonstrate the use of storytelling to transfer knowledge in the organisation. .

The selected organisation depends minimally on written manuals, documentations and instruction books to pass on knowledge among its employees. Knowledge is passed down informally, using face-to-face and one-on-one interactions, frequently using storytelling as the method of knowledge transmission among the employees.

From the earlier discussion on methodology, it has been established that the unit of analysis in this research is individual. This means that the researcher is interested in looking at the employees individually at and how storytelling is being used to transmit knowledge among them. All employees at the organisation were invited to participate in the interview session.

Please refer to a sample of the Invitation Letter to Employees to participate in the research in Appendix C.

To summarise, the researcher finds that selected organisation is a suitable place to conduct the research as it fits into the research setting criteria by Holliday (2001).

3.8 Selection of the Interviewees

Cavana et al. (2001) mentions that all interviews must be done voluntarily. The interviewer is responsible for providing all information regarding the objectives and potential values of the study (Carson et al., 2002) in order to develop a positive feeling during the interview session between him and the interviewee (Yeung, 1995). This is essential in order to enable the establishment of trust, rapport and good communication patterns (Janesick, 1994). Rubin and Rubin (1995) and Kriz (2002) propose that at minimum, the interested interviewees are able to share their experiences on the subject matter.

Since interview is conducted on a voluntary basis, the researcher sent out an announcement inviting interested individuals to participate in the research. The

researcher had listed two criteria that must be fulfilled by interested individuals to ensure that the participants have sufficient knowledge and experience to share during the interview session. The criteria are as follow:

1. Interested individuals who have been working in the organisation for at least one year.
2. Interested individuals must hold any administration duties.

Criteria 1 was set because the researcher wants to ensure that the participants have sufficient experience to share with regard to the subject under investigation and can be seen as having 'expert' knowledge. This is also to avoid newly appointed employees who are unfamiliar with the work processes to participate for the same reason.

Criteria 2 was set because the organisation is primarily an educational institution. Therefore, there are three types of employees. Type 1 would be employees who exclusively lectures but do not hold any administrative responsibilities. Type 2 would be employees who exclusively do administrative work but do not lecture. Type 3 would be the employees who do both- lecture and administrative work at the same time. Therefore, in order to capitalize and safeguard the richness of data collected, the criteria is set that the participants has to at least do administrative work as this is where most working knowledge are transferred in the organisation.

The invitation announcement was made using a few media – posters, email, and oral announcements during academic meetings. In the invitation letter, interested participants were requested to contact the researcher directly using the contact details. All communication between the researcher and interested participants were held in private and with confidentiality. A deadline by which to indicate the interest was also provided in the letter.

Once the deadline ended, the researcher drew up an interview schedule based on the participants' preferred time of interviews to be conducted. All interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participants. One day before the interview took place, the researcher gave the scheduled participants a courtesy call to remind them of their interview sessions. If the participant fails to turn up on his scheduled day and

time, the researcher planned to make three phone calls. If there is still no response, the interview session would be cancelled and the participant would have to be regarded as not interested in participating. Participants would not be penalized in any way for their withdrawal from the interview session.

All interviews were conducted separately on the organisation premises. A conducive and comfortable room was provided to allow the interviewees some privacy and confidentiality.

When the participant turned up for the interview session, the researcher read the participant's rights as per the invitation letter. Once the participant indicated that s/he agreed and understood her/his rights, s/he would then sign a consent form. (Please refer to Appendix D).

The interview session was recorded and was later transcribed by professional transcribers to give the researcher a full record of the interview session. All recordings and transcripts are kept and locked in a safe inaccessible to others except for the researcher and her supervisors.

Although the original interview target was twelve, eighteen qualified individuals expressed their interests in participating in the study. The researcher recorded and scheduled everyone's preferred time to be interviewed.

All eighteen interviewees showed up for their interview sessions. Table 6.0 details each participant's relevant characteristics.

Table 6.0: Respondents' Details and Interview Schedule

Resp	Age	Gender	Attachment	Education Level	Years in Organisation	Nationality	Session	Interview Length (mins)
1	39	Female	Both	Bachelor	4	Malaysia	Morning	61
2	30	Male	Both	Master	1.1	Malaysia	Morning	38
3	27	Female	Administratio n	Bachelor	3	Malaysia	Afternoon	73
4	23	Male	Administratio n	Diploma	2.5	Malaysia	Evening	38
5	35	Female	Both	Bachelor	5	Malaysia	Morning	81
6	33	Female	Both	Master	4	Malaysia	Morning	73
7	27	Female	Administratio n	Bachelor	3	Malaysia	Afternoon	55
8	27	Male	Administratio n	Master	3	Malaysia	Evening	45
9	32	Female	Both	Bachelor	6	Malaysia	Morning	76
10	44	Male	Administratio n	Bachelor	6	Malaysia	Afternoon	60
11	28	Male	Administratio n	Bachelor	5	Malaysia	Morning	36
12	26	Male	Administratio n	Bachelor	1.3	Malaysia	Morning	25
13	28	Female	Administratio n	Master	4	Malaysia	Afternoon	48
14	32	Male	Both	Master	1.3	Malaysia	Afternoon	80
15	31	Female	Both	Bachelor	5	Malaysia	Evening	82
16	29	Male	Administratio n	Master	2.5	Malaysia	Morning	40
17	68	Male	Administratio n	Bachelor	6	Malaysia	Afternoon	47
18	32	Male	Both	Master	5	Malaysia	Evening	60

Source: Interview Data

In general, the interview participants were representatives of the employees' population in IIC. All participants has at least a year and one month experience; and seven senior employees with at least five years of working experiences in the organisation participated in the interview.

The range of age of the interviewees were from twenty-three to sixty-eight years and this had no effect on the impact and the length of the interview sessions.

Ten males and eight females participated in this study. The researcher uses the third-person masculine (make it gender neutral) to discuss all interviews regardless of

gender, for ease of use and confidentiality. Exception exists where the passages of a participant's interview made it clear of the interviewee's gender.

The interviewees came from two types of attachment to the organisation. Ten of them are pure administrators. Although they may have been employed as lecturers in the beginning of their tenure, they are now responsible solely for managing the Administration Department.

Eight interviewees are both academicians and administrators in IIC. This means that they both hold major administrative duties and lecture concurrently.

Since the research setting is an educational institution, the researcher collected information on the interviewees' level of education. Ten interviewees are Degree holders in various fields while seven hold Masters Degrees. One interviewee possesses a college Diploma. The interviewer noticed that the level of education had minimal impact on the quality of the answers given by the interviewees.

The length of service of each interviewee was also recorded which ran from thirteen months to six years. The interviewer noted that all interviewees had similar knowledge sharing and storytelling experiences regardless of their length of service in the organisation.

Due to the interviewees' hectic schedules, the interviews were conducted at their convenience. The interviews were divided into three sessions. Morning interviews started around 9:00 AM, the afternoon sessions started at 2:00 PM and the evening interviews started at around 5:00 PM.

The length of the interview per interviewee depended on how much information the interviewees were willing to share. The length of interview ranged from twenty-five minutes to eighty-two minutes over a period of seventeen (17) days. There was no pilot interview done and no follow up after the interview either.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The first ethical issue concerns the researcher's responsibility in protecting the identities, confidentiality, and interests of the participants (Denscombe, 2002). To overcome this, Bouma (1996) suggests that a researcher may mask the participants' identity by using fictitious names, numerical codes or by not recording any names. This is important because during semi-structured interviews, participants might disclose that they have negative perceptions of people or decisions made within the organisation. The researcher should ensure that no comment and feedback can be traced to the participants. The information provided must be kept confidential.

To overcome this issue, the researcher has omitted all names mentioned during the analysis and coding process.

The second ethical issue concerns the required consent from the organisation and participants (Bouma, 1996). Denscombe (2002) explains that 'informed' means that participants understand all pertinent aspects of what will or might occur. 'Consent' means participation which is made voluntarily, free from any coercion and undue influence.

The researcher has received an approval letter and an authorisation letter from the top management (Please refer to Appendix E and Appendix A). An announcement of the research to the organisation was also made by the Chairman, indicating his full support for the research (Please refer to Appendix A). All interviewees signed consent forms indicating that they were fully aware of their rights [and that their participation was voluntary (Please refer to Appendix D). The researcher also ensured that proper and detailed explanations of the research's objectives, confidentiality issues and the need for the data were provided to the participants.

Another ethical concern is the protection of the participants from any negative repercussions within the workplace (Bouma, 1996). Issues concerned, for example, who is able to access the data, how the data stored, who stores the data and who has access to the final report. The researcher provided answers to all these questions in the consent form. The interviewees were guaranteed that there were to be no negative

repercussions for their participation in this research. All shared information remained private and confidential. The interviewees could withdraw at any point during the interview session. They could review their interview transcripts or delete/omit/change/edit any part of their responses (Please refer to Appendix D). The researcher also guaranteed the safekeeping of the data in a locked and safe place accessible only to the researcher and her supervisors.

The fourth issue concerns the interview questions. All questions should regard only the relevant phenomenon of interests and the researcher should ensure each participant's privacy (Bouma, 1996).

Since participation was voluntary, the researcher was especially considerate and respectful of the interviewees' time. Unnecessary, irrelevant questions were avoided during the interview. The researcher conducted the questions according to the interview protocol to ensure relevancy and to save time.

The fifth ethical issue concerns the level of trust between the researcher and participants. Schram (2003) advises that the researcher has a dual responsibility while conducting research. The researcher engaged with the participants authentically as an observer/friend/peer, while at the same time remained faithful to the research's objective. This assisted in maintaining a balance of shared knowledge, which is necessary to establish rapport and the participants' trust and ensuring that none of the participants is exploited by any information they revealed during the interview sessions.

The following general steps were taken to address the ethical issues in the study:

1. The researcher procured informed consent forms, which detailed the researcher's guarantee of confidentiality, anonymity and rights of the participants.
2. The researcher obtained a written consent from the organisation.
3. The researcher ensured that data is accessible only to herself and her supervisors. Participants were given the option to omit/ delete/ change any

- part of the data collected from them in order to avoid negative repercussion from employer. Or to withdraw at any time
4. The researcher was aware of the participants' time constraints and willingness to be interviewed. The researcher was prepared with relevant initial and follow-up questions for the participants.
 5. The organisation shall receive a summary report of the result of the research conducted,

3.10 Methods of Data Analysis

3.10.1 Analysis of Qualitative Research Rich Data

Miles and Huberman (1994) state that analysing data in qualitative research is an on-going, continuous and a cyclical process. As such, data analysis in qualitative inquiry is a systematic pattern of data collection-analysis-collection-analysis and infinitum (Morse 1999). It demands that the researcher recognises the patterns, themes, categories or taxonomies from the rich data gathered (Gioia and Pitre, 1990; Boje 1991).

All interviews were tape-recorded and included in the study. Interviews were then transcribed and coded according to the themes that emerged.

The researcher has chosen to analyze the data manually although a computer software program called NVIVO is available to assist qualitative researchers in analyzing transcript-rich data. The usefulness of this software has been acknowledged by experienced researchers in qualitative research (di Gregorio, 2000). The size and scope of this study do not require any software analysis and unfortunately, NVIVO's use in this study is not cost effective.

Once the researcher received the transcribed interview scripts, the coding process began. Mayan (2001) proposes using a coding method called latent content analysis, which requires a researcher to identify, code and categorize all the primary patterns found in the data. Mayan (2001) proposes the following steps on how to conduct a latent content analysis:

Step 1: Read, re-read, highlight, and make comments on the margin on anything which is striking.

Step 2: Cut the highlighted sections and group them into categories in separate files or folders. If highlighting is needed in more than one category, copy and place the section in all the affected categories. Every decision to categorize or eliminate data must be recorded separately to allow the researcher to refer to it later, if needed. This is called memoing.

In drawing up categories, there are two critical issues which are: internal and external homogeneity. Internal homogeneity requires the researcher to ensure that the data reflects and fits nicely into the individual categories. External homogeneity requires the researcher to ensure the relationship between these categories is distinct and separate while the differences between them should be bold and clear.

Step 3: Once all of the categories are identified, take each file and read through the clippings. Sub-categories are identified. A tree diagram may be drawn to assist in illustrating the relationship.

Step 4: Look for similar cases in the event of negative case (when the participant says anything which is not mentioned by others). If there is no similar case, then the initial case is considered an anomaly.

Step 5: Write a summary for each category and sub-category. Once certain patterns or themes are recognized, the researcher must interpret the meanings by looking at the relationships, linkages and common threads between them (Patton, 1987).

Step 6: Re-analyze when necessary. Since content analysis is a circular process, continuous addition of new data results in categories and relationship changes. The working conceptual framework changes accordingly.

Step 7: Start the next interview. After each interview, transcribe the interview data and repeat these steps. This cyclical process continues until theoretical saturation is achieved which means that there is no more new finding. The researcher keeps at least two copies of the original transcriptions for security and safety reasons.

The researcher chose the latent content analysis coding method and has followed all the steps proposed by Mayan. All the eighteen interview transcripts were analyzed by looking at the meanings of specific words or passages uttered by the interviewees. These data are examined and categorized according to the common themes found in them. This type of analysis has a greater validity as it allows the right coding as per the intent of the interviewees.

3.11 Report Writing

Patton (1987) suggests that all reports of the research process should include the activities that took place, the interviewees' participation, the analysis of the raw data and how the researcher arrived at the conclusion.

It is the researcher's intent to report every step taken in conducting this research to allow the readers a deeper understanding of the process.

3.12 Limitations and Key Assumptions of Research Methodology and Design

3.12.1 Limitations of the Research

3.12.1.1 External Validity

This study does not allow for any generalizing to the population due to the insufficient representation (one organisation) and the subjective nature of the research being interpreted.

3.12.1.2 Internal Validity

Purposive sampling is one limitation of this research which is required in a qualitative inquiry sampling method. This is because the samples (the interviewees) are selected based on their perceived ability to share their knowledge and experiences related to the researcher's phenomenon of interest because they are uniquely able to provide the needed information for the research.

Another limitation comes from the interview methodology where only stories or narratives that are ‘story-worthy’ are shared by the participants due to the ontological paradigm of a qualitative study.

As discussed in detail in chapter two, this study uses both Collison and Parcel (2004) and Nonaka and Takeuchi’s (1995) model as the basis of its working conceptual framework. These two models study knowledge transfer using face-to-face and peer-to-peer interaction. The issue of whether the knowledge transferred is actually internalized by the recipients is outside of the scope of the study.

3.12.1.3 Construct Validity

There is an inherent problem in instruments, dimension, coding and analyses where the ‘jingle’ and ‘jangle’ fallacies occur. This is when one word has more than one meaning or when different words are characterized together. Although this is allowed by the ontological and axiological paradigms of qualitative research, it must be acknowledged as a limitation to this study.

Another limitation exists due to the subjectivity of the researcher’s interpretations, interactions with participants and making sense of the words used by the interviewees. Participants have the right to review the transcripts and delete/edit/add if they wish to do so. And no independent or third party review is allowed of the transcripts.

However, consistent with the foundation of the axiological, epistemological and ontological paradigms of a qualitative research, the research is no less valid for it being interpreted in this manner.

3.13 Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter reflects that the researcher has taken an interpretivist approach which allows social reality that is socially constructed and subjective. This qualitative method encourages interaction between both the

researcher and the participants. Other features of this style include an analysis of the narrative content using a descriptive and informal reporting style, pattern identification, inductive reasoning and context-bound research. The chapter also discusses in great detail the various steps taken by the researcher in its data collection process. Ethical issues of confidentiality and privacy are addressed.

With this understanding, the researcher realizes the importance of having a sharp eye, a high degree of alertness, questioning and probing skills, language skills and other interpersonal skills throughout the research process.

Curiosity and a willingness to probe further into an investigation enable the researcher to identify the patterns that arisen from the examples and words used by the participants.

In chapter four, the researcher discovers the storytelling advice of the interviewees, collects data and identifies patterns which uncover the emerging themes in this study. The data collected in chapter four leads to the analysis of chapter five, where the researcher discusses the research findings and constructs a new storytelling framework which is appropriate for similar educational institutions in Malaysia.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

Chapter Four aims to present the themes identified and developed by the researcher from eighteen interview sessions which resulted to over three hundred pages of transcribed data. The data analysis process consisted of identifying and recognising the patterns, themes, categories and taxonomies from the in-depth rich data gathered, as suggested by Gioia and Pitre (1990) and Boje (1991).

Due to the small number of interviewees involved, the data was analysed manually using Microsoft Word, rather than through a qualitative data analysis package such as NVIVO. Using the latent content analysis method, the researcher analyzed the data as it was collected in a cyclical manner as described by Miles and Huberman (1994). This process continued until literal saturation was achieved. A detailed explanation of the cyclical process is described previously in Chapter Three.

Each interview session aimed to find answers to the following research question:

How Can Storytelling play a Role as a Mechanism in Knowledge Transmission in an Education-Based Organisation in Malaysia?

In this chapter, the researcher explains briefly the data analysis process used for this study. From the total of eighteen interviews, forty-five perceptions emerged and these were further coded into eighteen different patterns which were then grouped into five distinct themes. A nomenclature tool was used throughout this to identify the perceptions, patterns and themes within the interview transcript. The chapter goes on to explain and discuss in great details how each perceptions, patterns and themes are developed. Examples and direct quotes verbatim are used to support each perceptions identified throughout the chapter.

4.1 Data Analysis Process

The researcher used the latent content analysis method whereby the meanings of specific passages or paragraphs within the data are examined and categorized (Gioia and Pitre, 1990). Latent content analysis is defined as a process of identifying, coding and categorizing the primary patterns in the data (Mayan 2001). The analysis involves verbatim transcription (Gold et al, 2002) as the researcher seeks to achieve literal replication (Bauer and Aarts, 2000) as proposed by Mayan (2001).

The researcher uses internal and external homogeneity guidelines as described in Chapter Three to define the themes and categories. This ensures there will not be any overlapping in any of the themes and categories discussed. Extra precaution was exercised continuously by checking and re-checking the categories to ensure that the data reflected and fit nicely into the individual categories (internal homogeneity), while the relationship between the categories remained distinct and separate (external homogeneity). No external validation of the interpretation was used.

4.2 Development of System of Codes

The data analysis process resulted in the emergence of ‘perceptions’. These perceptions were later coded into patterns, which ultimately lead to classification within themes.

Five general themes emerged from the analysis of all data collected during the interview sessions, which are as follows:

- i) Storytelling and the Flow of Knowledge
- ii) Storytelling and the Environment of Knowledge Exchange
- iii) Storytelling and Personality
- iv) Storytelling and the Types of Knowledge Transmitted
- v) Storytelling and the Decision to Share Knowledge

The following table summarises the summary of the data analysis and coding and classification of themes (see Figure 5.0).

The table shows two main areas. The area above the dotted line is the area/type of questions covered during the interview based on the inquiry protocol questions. The questions cover both fields under investigation- knowledge sharing and storytelling. Among questions posed to interviewees are types of stories that are transferred, motivation to sharing the stories, methods they use to transfer the knowledge, place where transfer of knowledge happens, ambience of location of transfer and many more.

It is to be noted that some of these questions posed are sometimes uniquely presenting one field of knowledge (arrow pointing to one bubble), while some questions represent both field of knowledge (arrows pointing to two bubbles). As an example, questions related to ‘motivation to share’ covers both storytelling field and knowledge sharing field of knowledge; while questions related to ‘ambience of transfer’ are only specifically for knowledge sharing field.

The second part of the table (under the dotted line) reflects the themes that were found after the process of coding and analysis is done. Five themes emerged which are storytelling and flow of knowledge, storytelling and environment of knowledge exchange, storytelling and personality, storytelling and types of knowledge transmitted and storytelling and decision to share knowledge.

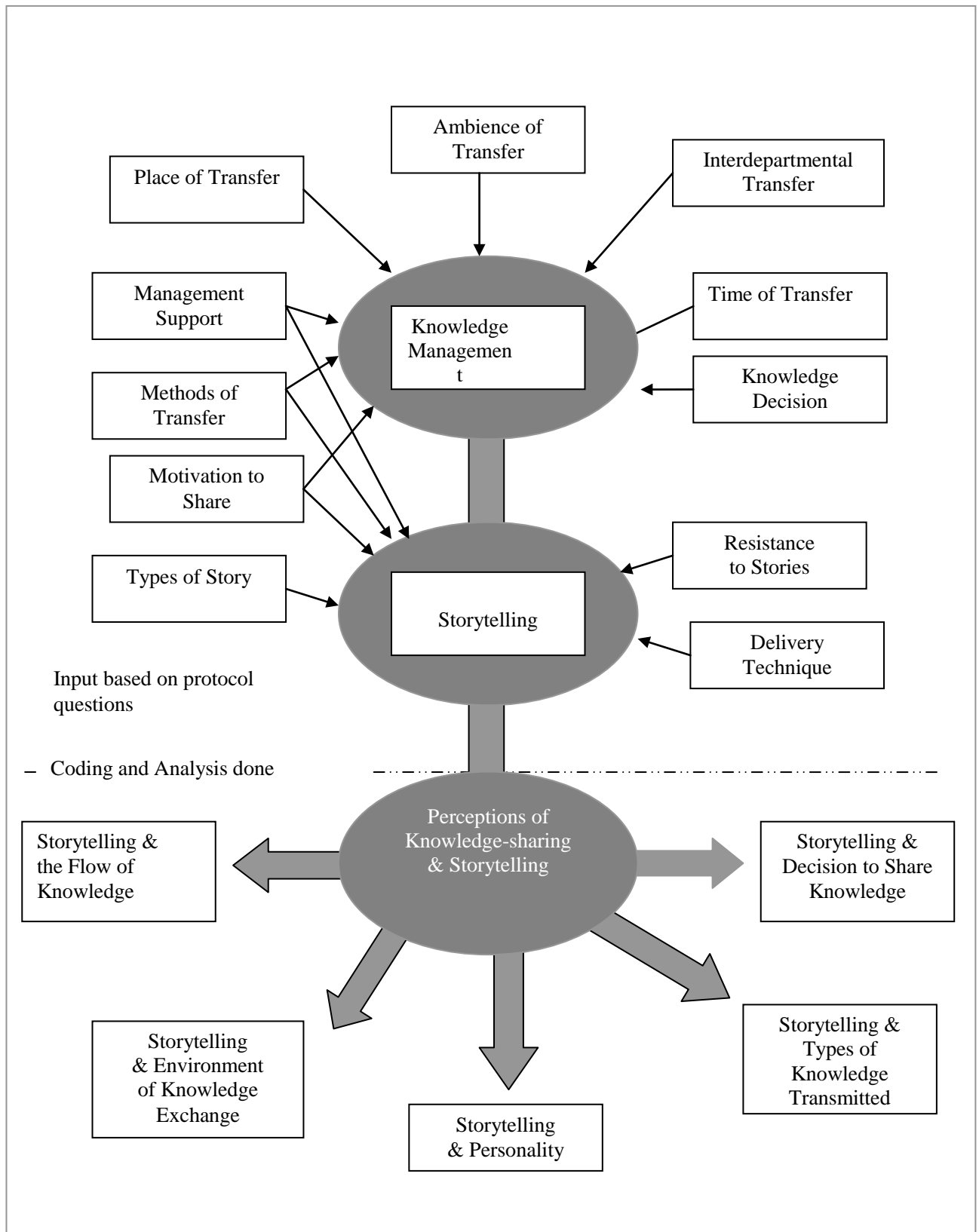


Figure 5.0: Summary of Data Analysis Framework and Outcomes

4.3 Nomenclature Tool

Latent content analysis is a tool that guides the researcher in conducting content analysis of the interview transcripts (Mayan, 2001). The researcher also needs tools to assist in identifying the patterns and themes within the interview transcripts, particularly at Stage Five of the latent content analysis process. A nomenclature is a systematic tool developed to assist in identifying the patterns and themes within an interview transcript. The nomenclature reports the findings of any pattern or theme which is consistently mentioned during the interview process and found during the coding and analysis process. However, the nomenclature is not a statistical tool; hence, it should not be used for quantification (Kriz, 2002).

In this study, the researcher used the nomenclature tool to identify the frequently repeated words spoken by the interviewees. The frequencies of repetitions were noted by the researcher and formulated to discover the emergence of both themes and major categories and minor categories within the themes.

Four labels are used to assess the frequency of the interviewees' perception towards certain concepts or themes (refer to Table 7.0).

Table 7.0: Nomenclature Used to Describe Assessed Frequency of Interviewees'

Nomenclature	Percentage of Interviews
None	0 percent
Few	More than 0 percent but below to 40 percent
Often	More or equal to 40percent but less than 60percent
Frequently	More than 60percent

Perception Source: Adapted from Purchase (1999) and Kriz (2002)

The interviewer identified certain patterns that emerged from the text of the transcripts. These patterns were then analysed and clustered together by the interviewer according to their similarities. These clusters or perceptions were later identified and coded as Storytelling Perceptions (STP). The perceptions will be stated with their frequencies and are identified and numbered below as (STP##).

Example: More than 60 percent of the interviewees frequently cited that knowledge is transferred directly from person to another person (STP1).

4.4 Summary of Perceptions, Patterns and Themes that Emerged from the Data Analysis Process

Forty-five storytelling perceptions were found during the analysis. Out of these forty-five storytelling perceptions, eighteen patterns emerged which were then grouped into five themes of which could be further broken down into major and minor categories. Below is the table showing a Detailed Summary of Perceptions Table.

The next section discusses the perceptions, patterns and themes using the interviewees' responses to the questions during the interview process. There are three parts of the table. The first part consists of the perceptions that emerged during the data analysis process. The first perception is being labelled as STP1 indicating StoryTelling Perception 1 (STP1), the second perception is labelled as STP2 indicating StoryTelling 2 and so on and so forth. There are 45 perceptions in total and all perceptions (STP1 - STP45) are listed in the table below. The second part of the table reflects the patterns that evolved after the grouping and massaging of the perceptions. There are a total of 18 patterns which are then being categorized into 5 different themes.

Perceptions	Description
STP1	Very often cited by the Interviewees that the initiatives and persistency to ask is important for knowledge transfer in the organisation. It is noted that more than 60% of the Interviewees agreed that individual's efforts are needed for a knowledge transfer to take place.
STP2:	Very often cited by the Interviewees that knowledge is transferred physically and directly from person to another. More than 60% of the Interviewees used face-to-face as the style of communication to transmit knowledge in that organisation.
STP3	A few Interviewees had cited that making mistakes is a by-product of this transferring of knowledge using this method. Although this was said by less than 40% of the Interviewees, it suggested that there are risks involved in face-to-face method of transferring knowledge.
STP4	Less than 40% of the Interviewees cited that proper documentation is needed to support the verbal discussion and for future references.
STP5	Between 40% and 60% of the Interviewees cited that receptiveness could be gauged through facial expression and body language. This receptiveness is important to stimulate further discussion.
STP6	Less than 40% of the Interviewees cited speed, ease, and convenience as the factors making face-to-face communication preferred.
STP7	Between 40 and 60% of Interviewees responded that immediate feedback was the reason why they preferred face-to-face interaction.
STP8	Less than 40% of the Interviewees said that professionalism is the reasoning behind the preferred face-to-face interaction method.
STP9	Less than 40% of the Interviewees responded that face-to-face was preferred due to its ability in ensuring that both parties remembered the discussion that took place between them.
STP10	More than 60% of the Interviewees cited that their initial point of contact were their superiors.
STP11:	Less than 40% of the Interviewees said that they referred to the right person to discuss any issues raised or problem faced.
STP12:	Less than 40% of the Interviewees cited that their colleagues were their points of contact when they initially came into the organisation.
STP13	Interviewees very often cited (more than 60%) that even during interaction between departments, physical and face-to-face styles were used.
STP14	Very often cited by the Interviewees that easily accessible public places are where stories were being exchanged. Informal venues are mentioned by more than 60% of the Interviewees.
STP15	Often cited by the Interviewees that formal venues are being used as places of knowledge being exchanged. 40% to 60% of the Interviewees said that formal venues were used.
STP16	Very often cited by the Interviewees that stories were exchanged during meal time. This means that more than 60% of the Interviewees said that their interaction and discussions with others were done while having their meal.
STP17	Often cited by the Interviewees that the time before, during and after gathering was used by the employees to exchange knowledge whereby 40% to 60% of them mentioned the same thing.
STP18	Very often cited by the Interviewees that comfortable and positive environment is important to encourage the exchanging of knowledge. Friendly, relax, homely and calm environment are among the characteristics

	mentioned by more than 60% of the Interviewees.
STP19	Very often cited by the Interviewee (more than 60%) that good image and disposition of the knowledge bearer is important. These Interviewees cited trust, integrity, respect, and sincerity as important traits.
STP20	Often cited by the Interviewees (40%-60%) that a knowledgeable story bearer is important. These Interviewees said that a knowledge bearer must be seen as knowledgeable.
STP21	Only a few cited (less than 40%) that communication skill is important.
STP22	Often cited by the Interviewees (40%-60%) that the position of the knowledge bearer is critical.
STP23	Often cited by the Interviewees (40%-60%) that willingness to listen, share and participate is important to encourage the knowledge bearer to share more.
STP24	A few cited that loyal, committed, and trusted knowledge recipient is important. Less than 40% of the interviewees say this.
STP25	Often (40%-60% of the time) Interviewees cited that a good general attitude is important for the knowledge recipient.
STP26	Few (less than 40%) cited that knowledge is transmitted to the recipient regardless of the recipient's character.
STP27	A few Interviewees (less than 40%) cited that intelligence is important.
STP28	A few interviewees (less than 40%) cited that similarity in goals and opinion is a factor to encourage sharing knowledge.
STP29	Very often cited by the Interviewees (more than 60%) that continuous interaction is needed to maintain a positive relationship between the knowledge bearer and the knowledge recipient.
STP30	Very often (over 60%) cited by the Interviewees that stories on organisational culture were shared. Interviewees stated that teamwork, tolerance to mistakes, sense of belonging, customer service, cooperation and management style were shared with stories.
STP31	Very often (over 60%) Interviewees cited that stories on problem-solving were shared and transmitted.
STP32	40% to 60% of the Interviewees cited that stories have a potentially infinite timeline.
STP33	Less than 40% of the interviewees cited that multiple techniques such as simplifying the stories, breaking the ice, use of past experiences, seating positions, and humour could be used to transfer knowledge through storytelling.
STP34	Very often cited by the Interviewees (more than 60%) that the process of verification is important in knowledge transmission.
STP35	Very often cited by the Interviewees (more than 60%) that verification is often done by referring to the right source or the source of the knowledge for verification.

STP36	Few Interviewees (less than 40%) cited that verification depended on their available free time.
STP37	Few (less than 40%) cited that verification is done during the post mortem period and that the post-mortem period is the determining factor for verification.
STP38	Few (less than 40%) cited that their own instincts determine whether verification is done.
STP39	Very often cited that individuals interpret transferred knowledge differently, thus, making verification necessary in knowledge transmission. More than

	60% of the Interviewees mentioned this during the interview sessions.
STP40	Very often cited (more than 60%) that adaptation of the stories to the new context is made.
STP41	Often cited by the Interviewees (40%-60%) that knowledge is resisted because of the knowledge bearer's attitude.
STP42	Often cited by the Interviewees that resistance could happen because of the knowledge itself. 40% to 60% of the Interviewees mentioned that knowledge which are unrelated, tedious, or impractical are usually resisted.
STP43	A few of the Interviewees (than 40%) suggested techniques on how resistance could be overcome such as – clarification, sharing objectives, sharing personal experience, humbleness, a listener, seen as a knowledgeable person, etc.
STP44	Very often cited by the Interviewees that encouragement to interact between employees could encourage knowledge sharing between them such as gathering, more venues to socialise, time factor and a few others. More than 60% of the Interviewees mentioned the importance of interaction in encouraging knowledge sharing.
STP45	Often cited by the Interviewees that appreciative organisation would encourage knowledge sharing in the organisation. 40% to 60% of the Interviewees agreed that organizations with an open door policy and appreciative towards the employees would encourage knowledge sharing in the organisation.

Perceptions Table

No	Perceptions	Patterns
1	STP1	Physical Presence
2	STP2	Face-to-face Transfer
3	STP5 – STP9	Receptiveness of the Recipients
4	STP10 – STP12	Point of Contact
5	STP13	Inter-departmental Exchange
6	STP14 – STP15	Places to Exchange Knowledge
7	STP16 – STP17	Exchange Time
8	STP18	Characteristics of the surrounding environment
9	STP3, STP4, STP44, STP45	Management Support
10	STP19 – STP22	Characteristics of the Knowledge Bearer
11	STP23 – STP28	Story Recipient Characteristics
12	STP29	Maintaining Relationship
13	STP30 – STP31	Variety of Stories
14	STP 32	Story Survival
15	STP 33	Story Delivery Techniques
16	STP34 – STP40	Verification of Story
17	STP41 – STP 42	Resistance to the Story
18	STP43	Techniques of Overcoming Resistance

No	Patterns	Themes
1	Physical Presence, Face-to-face Transfer, Receptiveness of the Recipients, Point of Contact, Inter-departmental Exchange	Storytelling and Flow of Knowledge
2	Places to Exchange Knowledge, Exchange Time, Characteristics of the surrounding environment, Management Support	Storytelling and environment of exchange
3	Characteristics of the Knowledge Bearer, Story Recipient Characteristics, Maintaining Relationship	Storytelling and Personality
4	Variety of Stories, Story Survival, Story Delivery Techniques	Storytelling and Type of Knowledge/Story Transmitted
5	Verification of Story, Resistance to the Story, Techniques of Overcoming Resistance	Storytelling and decision to share knowledge

4.5 Theme One: Storytelling and the Flow of Knowledge

4.5.1 Knowledge Flow Summary

Face-to-face communication was used by nearly all interviewees, making it the most common method for transferring knowledge. Interviewees tended to seek knowledge from certain classes of individuals within the organisation.

The interviewees' communication preferences and trends discovered during the study are discussed below.

4.5.1.1 Point of Contact

This broad question was asked by the interviewer at the beginning of every interview session:

When you first came to this organisation, how did you learn about things here?

The interviewees were asked to reflect on their methods of gaining knowledge when they first started working at the organisation. Although there were generally some similarities between their answers, the responses varied.

Interviewee One stated that knowledge was gained by taking the initiative to ask friends for help in solving problems.

“... I guess here, I mean solving this problem maybe is through friends, asking how this and that...” (Interviewee One)

Interviewee Two mentioned that the colleagues and the Deans were the individuals who first approached the interviewee.

“... I learn from my colleagues, ask other lecturers, Dean, they give me instructions, what should I do...” (Interviewee Two).

This answer was predictable as all new employees are directed to the Dean of their respective Schools within the organisation.

Interviewees Eight and Thirteen noted that they went to colleagues when they had questions.

“...My colleagues, the colleague will tell something like, what you should do or what you can do something like that...” (Interviewee Eight)

“... And at that time somehow I try to refer to my colleagues if I want to know anything about the course, the organisation itself...” (Interviewee Thirteen)

Interviewees Five and Six acknowledged that the Head of Department initially explained the rules and regulations of the Department:

“... ... the Head [of the department] will basically explain to us the do's and don'ts about the department...” (Interviewee Five)

“...The Head was the one who brief[ed] me how, and things, [for example] the rules and regulations...” (Interviewee Six)

Interviewees Seven, Fourteen, and Sixteen acknowledged that their initial reference points were their superiors. For example,

“...when I first came to this organisation, I learn[ed] things through the orders given by my boss” (Interviewee Sixteen)

Interviewee Eighteen confidently expressed the opinion that knowledge could be sought only from a senior staff member:

“There is just [a] way to get to know things for one institution. Is of course by asking by enquiring form our seniors, how things worked around here. That is the most appropriate one...” (Interviewee Eighteen)

Meanwhile, Interviewee Nine cited the Human Resource Department as a source of knowledge:

“...I like to go to straight to HR and ask anything...” (Interviewee Nine)

Interviewee Fifteen gave a general and indirect response. Nevertheless, it was clear that the Interviewee had asked for help several times:

“... I had to ask the first batch of the lecturer here on the process because they don’t have a written process, so you just had to keep asking them...” (Interviewee Fifteen)

The interviewer observed that the interviewees very often cited that they go to other people when they need particular knowledge about the organisation. The preponderance was for interviewees to indicate that there were particular people whom they go to for information.

A summary of responses is provided in Table 8.0. The statements are gathered from the interviewees who said that they would go to these individuals to seek clarification or knowledge.

Table 8.0: Individuals' Efforts to Gain Knowledge

No	Output Code	Interviewees
4	...colleagues, lecturers, dean...	Interviewees 2, 8, 13,14
3	...some of the senior staff ...	Interviewees 7, 14, 18
3	... Head ...	Interviewee 5, 6, 7
1	... through friends...	Interviewee 1
1	...I like to go to straight to HR and ask ...	Interviewee 9
1	you just had to keep asking them.	Interviewee 15
1	ask them to come and see me...	Interviewee 16

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

Table 8.0 above demonstrates that over 60 percent of the interviewees indicated that when they first came to work at the organisation, they took the initiative to seek information. This information was necessary not only to perform their job functions but to 'fit in' at the organisation. The information they sought including work processes, rules and regulations, and organisational norms and culture. Fourteen out of eighteen interviewees; that is, more than 60 percent; stated that knowledge about the organisation is transmitted from person to another person within the organisation. Sources of organisational orientation include Deans, Heads of School and Human Resources staff. These individuals transmit important knowledge about how the organisation operates and impart information about the organisation's rules and regulations.

This pattern leads the interviewer to form the following perception on storytelling and knowledge transmission:

More than 60 percent of the interviewees indicated that a new employee initiates efforts to obtain knowledge about the operation of the organisation upon first arriving at the organisation (STP1).

In addition to asking the interviewees about their initial points of contact, the interviewer asked their source of preference for obtaining this information. The interviewees' responses varied from one another.

Interviewees Two, Six, Eight, Nine, and Thirteen mentioned a preference for seeking knowledge from their peers rather than from their superior.

Interviewee Thirteen stated:

“I do not ask directly from the superior which I can ask friends that have been working at this college..... normally peers.” (Interviewee Thirteen)

Interviewees One, Eight, Sixteen, Seventeen, and Eighteen stated a preference for gathering knowledge from the source of the information itself. Interviewee One noted:

“... I mean, like if I want to know about ACAD [academic], add-drop, all these things, I go straight to the source...” (Interviewee One)

The following table summarises the interviewees’ responses.

Table 9.0: Preferred Persons to Whom Individuals Referred In Seeking Knowledge

No	Output Coding	Interviewee
11	Head, Dean, Manager, Superior	Interviewee 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15,
5	Colleagues, Lecturer,	Interviewee 2, 6, 8, 9 & 13,
4	Right or Original Source	Interviewee 8, 16, 17 & 18

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

The interviewer identifies the following pattern and conclusion based on the interviewees’ discussions regarding their initial points of contact at the organisation. A consistent minor category emerging within the data concerned how most interviewees frequently indicated that they referred to their superiors for information during their initial employment period (STP10).

4.5.1.2 Face-to-Face Transfer

Interviewees were asked to identify the most commonly used method of communication at IIC. While written memos and email are commonly used within IIC, most interviewees indicated that face-to-face communication was the most common mode of communication used by them.

Interviewee One stated:

“... And also, I guess so many things, in this organisation were passed by mouth. How is the rules. How to apply for this and so on and normally no black and white...” (Interviewee One)

Interviewee Nine stated that the flow of communication within the interviewee’s department had always been informal and face-to-face:

“... We will discuss, have a chat, informal but because my subordinates when I inform one of them, this person will inform to others verbally.” (Interviewee Nine)

In addition to the interviewee’s noting that face-to-face communication was the most common mode of communication, most interviewees indicated that they preferred this mode of communication over other potential modes of communication.

Interviewees Four and Eighteen mentioned that face-to-face discussion is important in everyday interaction due to the wealth of information that may be gathered during the discussion. Interviewee Eighteen used the term ‘*physical communication*’ which entailed face-to-face communication.

“.....discussion for me is very important. From discussion, we can get more information...” (Interviewee Four)

“...But normally when it comes to these kind of enquiries which you need a very detail information and is so crucial for you to have a physical communication with, rather than going by other forms of communication...” (Interviewee Eighteen)

Interviewee Eleven indicated that daily discussions pertain to education goals:

“...discuss everyday at that time, we called (them) as subject coordinator, we exchange the idea and also the method of teaching...” (Interviewee Eleven)

By stating the importance of everyday discussions, the interviewee indicated that there was constant interaction between the interviewee and other parties.

Interviewees Four, Seven, Eight, Eleven, Twelve, Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen, and Seventeen explicitly and strongly expressed their preferences for face-to-face communication reflecting a commonality of preferred style of communication. However, they cited different reasons for their preferences.

Interviewee Two told of an occasion when an external evaluator was scheduled to validate the organisation’s system. To ensure that affected employees were in the know, the interviewee went personally to each and shared the knowledge face-to-face. This personal communication ensured that the knowledge was transferred faster as well.

“...Some people don’t like formal communication. They like informal communication. It’s a[n] effective mechanism to disseminate knowledge, to tell people...” (Interviewee Two)

Interviewee Three preferred face-to-face communication in a one-on-one situation:

“...Usually we did face to face. When individual, I prefer face-to-face because sometime individual (because previous I was also a lecturer) so when (it) comes problem to the lecturer, they are my friends so I prefer face-to-face...” (Interviewee Three)

Interviewee Five stated a preference for face-to-face communication due to the effectiveness of the style, especially if the communication took place between two people:

“...normally, I prefer face-to-face because I think it is more effective and...if that situation is just concerning one individual, I think it is better face-to-face” (Interviewee Five)

Interviewee Six stated that regardless of the person’s position, face-to-face communication should be used.

“...So to me, whoever you are, as a leader or anything, get straight to the person and talk. Be professional in that sense...” (Interviewee Six)

Interviewee Ten preferred sharing an idea informally with a friend. Their reasoning was that it breaks the positional barrier and allows informal communication between the interviewee and the friend. The interviewee implied that this is face-to-face interaction:

“...you should do this, you should do that informally. If we are mistaken, we felt it’s alright because it’s after office hours and we talk as a friend rather than officers. That’s the most important thing...” (Interviewee Ten)

The majority of interviewees noted that they preferred communicating face-to-face over other styles of communication and that this method is the one used most often for the purpose of knowledge transmission at the organisation.

A summary of the responses of the interviewees who indicated face-to-face interaction was the preferred communication style is set out in the following table.

Table 10.0: Overview of Preferred Style of Communication Gathered from Interview Data

No	Output Code	Interviewees
9	...face to face...	Interviewees 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17
2	... by word of mouth	Interviewees 1, 2
1	...get straight to the person and talk...	Interviewee 6
1	...is so crucial for you to have a physical communication..	Interviewee 18
1	...share ideas informally ... we talk as a friend rather than officers...	Interviewee 10
1	...nice to see the face of the person that we talk to	Interviewee 13
1	..verbally, discuss, have a chat, informal...	Interviewee 9

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

This discovery is consistent with Nonaka's Knowledge Transmission theory (1995), which suggests that face-to-face communication between individuals is the prime method to be used in the transmission of knowledge (Refer to Chapter Five).

What could be concluded from this analysis is that interviewees preferred face-to-face communication whereby the interviewees used face-to-face style of communication to transmit knowledge at the organisation (STP 2). Further discussion is continued in greater detail in chapter five.

4.5.1.3 Inter-departmental Exchange

The interviewer was also interested in finding out how inter-departmental communication occurred within the organisation. This is because IIC has three main divisions – Administration Division, Academic Division and Student Affairs Division. Administration division consists of nine different departments while Academic division consists of four different schools and Student Affairs division has three main departments. On top of that, all these divisions are located physically on different buildings and floors. Therefore, communication between these various divisions and departments are crucial in the running of the organisation. This prompts the interviewer to ask the question as noted below:

The interviewer asked questions similar to this:

“This is a big organisation with multiple departments which are physically apart. How do you communicate between departments?”

The interviewees were asked to reflect on their experiences. Most of the interviewees stated that face-to-face interactions occurred between the departments.

Interviewee One stated that the time spent with people from other departments and indicated a preference for face-to-face interaction:

“...I could see and talk, long conversation with staff from different department, so that we could exchange knowledge...”

Interviewees Two, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, Eleven, Twelve, Fourteen, Fifteen and Eighteen all noted that they tended to interact face-to-face when dealing between departments.

“...So my practice is I go straight to the person, I ask why and then let them tell me what they was not satisfy with the department and then I’ll explain. That’s my practice. I want to avoid conflict. I don’t want to delay that one. I don’t want people say this department giving problem to other department because I believe in this college all department work hard to help each other for the students...” (Interviewee Nine)

Interviewee Four insisted that face-to-face interaction is better unless the interviewee faces time constraints:

“...[Using the telephone is] not enough unless lack of time or we are not there while the event happened...” (Interviewee Four)

Perceptions are noted below:

Table 11.0: Preferred Communication Style when Communicating Between Departments Gathered from Interview Data

	Output Coding	Interviewee
13	Face to face, physical	Interviewees 1, 2, 4,5, 6,7,8,9,11,12,14,15 & 18

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

A minor category that emerged from the data concerns how inter-departmental communication is done face-to-face (STP13).

4.5.2 Summary of Theme One: Storytelling and Flow of Knowledge

Three patterns identified from six perceptions make up Theme One of this dissertation. The patterns are ‘Face-to-face Transfer’, ‘Point of Contact’ and ‘Inter-departmental Exchange’.

Four perceptions most often cited by more than 60 percent of the interviewees are:

- the individual’s preference in seeking knowledge from another person (STP1),
- the widespread use of face-to-face knowledge transfer (STP2),
- new employees referring to a superior when seeking knowledge (STP10), and
- the importance of face-to-face inter-departmental communication (STP13).

Using the ‘Face-to-face Transfer’ seems to be a very important perception in order for knowledge to be transferred to another. Davenport et al (1997); Boisot, (1998), stated the importance of having face-to-face interaction and that this was a required condition in order for knowledge transfer to happen. The result from this analysis confirms Davenport et al (1997) and Boisot (1998) findings.

4.6 Theme Two: Storytelling and Environment of Knowledge Exchange

4.6.1 Exchange Factors

This section discusses where and when knowledge transmission occurs, the characteristics of the surrounding environment and the relationship between a story and its time and place.

4.6.1.1 Exchange Place & Characteristics

After establishing the preferred style of communication, the interviewer asked the interviewees some questions pertaining to place and time of exchange of knowledge at the organisation.

For example:

“Where do you usually hold your discussions?”

“Is there a certain venue or place where you usually discuss?”

“When do you usually discuss?”

The interviewees were asked to reflect on their experiences and share them with the interviewer.

The most cited response was that the stories were transmitted in public places where interactions between the participants are free, informal and without any boundary.

Interviewee Two stated that knowledge was shared while walking around the organisation and while having drinks or eating food:

“...when I walk around, in fact, [sometimes] when we go for coffee drinks or lunch...” (Interviewee Two)

Interviewee Five answered that discussions even took place at public places while the janitors worked. Cafés were also mentioned as places where exchanging of knowledge took place:

“...I do have a very short conversation with the cleaners, with the people at the café...” (Interviewee Five)

Interviewee Ten shared an interesting anecdote about using the music room as an informal meeting place. The interviewee had a discussion which took place in the music room during the evening prior to this interview session. The employees were relaxed and listening to music when a conversation concerning work arose. As a result, knowledge was exchanged between several employees, which led to a decision for an improved work process:

“...so, for me informal meeting is important. That’s why they have a platform which is the music room. It is the best place you can share ideas informally. For example, yesterday, I was with some of the people in the music room. I don’t even sing but these people enjoy [singing]. After that, we chit chat. [Discuss] of what we should do. [We should do] this or we should do that. This means that after office hour, you are still talking about how to improve the organisation...”

Informal places such as the lecturers’ lounges, pathways, *surau* (prayers room), corridors, lifts, toilets, café, staff room, open spaces and music room were mentioned by Interviewees One, Three, Four, Eight, Nine, Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen, Seventeen and Eighteen.

Interviewee One described the typical venue of knowledge exchange. For instance, the hall was described as noisy as there were a lot of discussions going on:

“...hall was so noisy at the time because everyone was talking, sharing things, sharing experience...” (Interviewee One)

Interviewee One told why public places like gathering venues are often used for interaction. Since gatherings are the time when almost everyone from different departments is present, it is a convenient place to meet and exchange knowledge.

“... we could see people from other department; we could see the different points of view from different schools... notice of course opinion is different...”(Interviewee One)

Interviewee Thirteen shared an opinion as to why cafés and eateries are important for knowledge exchange:

“...lunch time for everyone. Everyone will be taking their lunch. So I will have more friends with me at that time...” (Interviewee Thirteen)

Interviewees Two and Four stated that by transmitting knowledge in public places, mistakes could be corrected immediately in the places where the mistakes occur:

“...you see them making errors, and then you tell them...” (Interviewee Two)

“Yes. When the event happen at that time” (Interviewee Four)

The interviewer asked the interviewees the characteristics of the environment they believed to encourage the organisation’s employees to share with each other.

More than 60 percent of the interviewees namely interviewees One, Six, Nine, Ten, Eleven, Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen, Seventeen and Eighteen believed that an open, relaxed, comfortable and positive environment is important in encouraging knowledge-sharing among the employees.

Interviewees Fourteen and Sixteen noted:

“...I think [] environment[s] that are open, are more flexible. So I think, what can I say about this through my observation is that the environment itself encourage the people around it to communicate, to interact...” (Interviewee Fourteen)

“...a calm environment, preferably, calm environment, a more relaxed situation in order for the knowledge to be clearly understoodnormally, I prefer a calm environment, whereby the noise, the disturbance around is minimised. Because I want to avoid the message I want to convey can be misinterpreted by my staff...” (Interviewee Sixteen)

Interviewees noted the following details that facilitate knowledge exchange at the organisation:

“... we have these sofas and we have television. So here they will exchange views...” (Interviewee Fourteen)

“...no shoes are allowed inside the room because we want to sit together there. We want to feel at home. And they can eat in my office, no problem as long as they have to throw away all the leftovers. When they step in my office, there not only work will be given but we share the problems, we discuss and we talk over lunch or something. This will create much pleasant environment between me and them...” (Interviewee Nine)

“...best surrounding is a relaxed surrounding, not across the table, not in formal meeting...” (Interviewee Seventeen)

Interviewee Six rationalized the need for such an environment:

“...You create a more relaxed environment and the person will easily absorb the information given...” (Interviewee Six)

Interviewee Eighteen cautioned that not all informal venues are suitable for discussion. They felt that this is especially true when serious issues, which need elaboration and explanation, are discussed:

“...Especially when it comes to crucial issue better to be in office rather than being in a casual way. When it comes to discussion, yes you can, but when come to enquires that you need certain clear explanation it is best to be in a official situation...” (Interviewee Eighteen)

Interviewees Seven and Thirteen stated a preference for a secure and secluded place as opposed to an open space:

“...everybody prefers to come to this room and discuss. It is more secluded (than other rooms). Thus, this room is the more preferred...” (Interviewee Seven)

“...And when we feel that the place is secured and as well as the people surrounding us [we can trust] then only we share the stories...” (Interviewee Thirteen)

Interviewee Eighteen elaborated in length:

“... For example, you try to debate about some [] issues. But the surrounding is so noisy. So the person who listens to you somehow is being distracted. And when it comes to time that give their opinion, you are also disturbed [by the noise]. At the same time you cannot deny that the surrounding is getting annoying. But, you don't have choice, but to accept [the noisy surrounding]. This somehow will disturb your discussion or influence your decision making [due to your irritation]. What if you have the discussion in an area with less noise? For an example an exclusive cafeteria where everybody talks to each of other softly rather than topping each other's voice. So we are more control in ourselves especially in making decision.” (Interviewee Eighteen)

Interviewee Eleven discussed the advantage of sharing knowledge in a formal venue. The interviewee stated that by sharing and discussing in an office environment, facts may be easily rechecked as the need arises:

“...if we talk outside the office, sometimes, they want to say something, than I have check back in the office...” (Interviewee Eleven)

However, Interviewee Four thought that the place of knowledge exchange was immaterial as long as the parties communicated well:

“.....everywhere is suitable if the two parties can communicate with each other.” (Interviewee Four)

From the discussions pertaining to venue, the interviewer realized that the places where face-to-face communication occurs may be classified as formal or informal venues.

About 40 - 60 percent of the interviewees cited that knowledge exchange took place in formal venues such as offices, gathering places, discussion rooms and meeting rooms.

Whereas, more than 60 percent of the interviewees cited informal venues such as the lecturer's lounge, pathways, *suraus (prayers room)*, corridors, lifts, toilets, café, staff room, open spaces and music room as the preferred places of knowledge exchange.

The summary of the responses is depicted in the table below:

Table 12.0: Summary of Preferred Venues and Environment Gathered from Interview Data

No	Output Coding (Place)	Interviewee
14	Formal Venue : office, official gathering place, discussion room, meeting room	Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
11	Environment : Friendly, relaxed, homey, comfortable, lively, secure	Interviewees 1, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
9	Informal Venue : lecturer's lounge, pathway, surau, corridor, lift, toilet, café, staff room, open space, music room,	Interviewees 1, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18
2	No specific place	Interviewee 4, 14

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

According to Nonaka's SECI Model (1995), the place or *ba* is an important factor in stimulating and encouraging knowledge transmission in an organisation. The findings of this section are consistent with the SECI model.

From these findings, the interviewer concludes that 60 percent of the interviewees very often cited that knowledge is exchanged at informal and easily accessible public places (STP14), 40 - 60 percent of the interviewees cited that formal venues are used as places of knowledge exchange (STP15) and more than 60 percent of the interviewees stated a preference for an environment that is positive, comfortable, friendly, relaxed, homey, and calm (STP18).

4.6.1.2 Exchange Time

The interviewer asked the following questions related to time of knowledge exchange:

“When do you usually exchange stories and have discussion?”

“Do you have any specific time when you exchange stories?”

The interviewees were asked to reflect on their experiences and share with the interviewer. Responses varied but may be clustered into a few groups.

Interviewee Eight said that, at times, discussions took place after office hours and during dinner time:

“...Maybe, I mean after working hours, we discuss, take dinner together and then talk about this problem...” (Interviewee Eight)

Similar views were expressed by Interviewees Two, Three, Five, Six, Eight, Nine, Twelve, Thirteen, Fifteen, Sixteen, Seventeen and Eighteen. Interviewee Seventeen stated that lunch, dinner and teatime are the best time to hold discussions and share knowledge between individuals:

“...the best surrounding is a relaxed surrounding, not across the table, not in formal meeting but over lunches, dinners, cups of coffee. That is the best...” (Interviewee Seventeen)

However, Interviewees Three, Eleven and Fourteen stated that there is no specific time to share knowledge. Interviewee Three stated:

“...No specific time. They can come anytime, unless if we have meeting, that’s another platform to transfer knowledge. Other than that you can call me or you can come at anytime. Usually they will just stop by whenever they want to share anything....” (Interviewee Three)

Interviewees One, Three, Seven, Nine, Ten, Twelve, Fourteen, Fifteen and Sixteen noted that gathering is another time when knowledge is shared in the organisation. Interviewees Seven and Three noted:

“...for example, ACAD [academic] gathering, definitely information will be given through the ACAD Gathering, [and during the] session with the CEO, the CEO will definitely see all the employees twice a year, so, during that time, issues will be discuss...” (Interviewee Seven)

“...Usually we will have gathering, we called it family club gathering so we will gather all the staff to have lunch once in every 3 months....” (Interviewee Three)

Interviewees Eight, Ten, Thirteen and Seventeen mentioned that discussions are sometimes held after office hours. Interview Seventeen explained how dinnertime is used for problem-solving discussions:

“...organise a good dinner, invite him for dinner, with cigars. Most things are solved. It has been something that till this day, I play a very important part of discussion and solving problems...” (Interviewee Seventeen)

The summary of the interviewees’ responses related to time of knowledge exchange is shown in the following table:

Table 13.0: Time of Discussions Gathered from Interview Data

No	Output Coding (Time)	Interviewee
12	Breakfast/ Lunch/ Dinner/ Tea	Interviewee 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18
7	Gathering (pre-gathering, during, and after)	Interviewee 1, 3, 7, 9, 10,12, 14, 15, 16
4	After office hours	Interviewee 8, 10, 13, 17
3	No specific Time	Interviewee 3, 11, 14
1	Invigilation	Interviewee 6

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

The interviewer concludes this section with the following storytelling perceptions. More than 60 percent of the interviewees frequently cited that knowledge is exchanged during mealtimes (STP16). While 40 - 60 percent of the interviewees often cited that gatherings are seen as the ideal time for knowledge exchange (STP17). As stated in Chapter 2, the Collison and Parcell KM model (2004) states how the environment is very important as it creates the ambiance whereby knowledge can be exchanged. The findings of this research supports Collison and Parcel Model whereby findings reflect that gatherings and mealtimes people would create a more relaxed and friendly environment, hence allowing knowledge to be exchanged easily.

4.6.1.3 Exchange Stimulants

This subsection looks into the factors that encourage and stimulate individuals to share more of their knowledge at the organisation.

For example:

“In your opinion, what would encourage you to share your knowledge in this organisation?”

“What should the organisation do to encourage more people to share knowledge through storytelling in this organisation?”

Interviewees One, Two, Three, Five, Six, Seven, Nine, Ten, Thirteen, Fourteen, Sixteen, Seventeen and Eighteen suggested that the work environment should encourage interaction among the employees, and they also believed that at present, IIC did not do all that could be done to encourage interaction. For example, Interviewee One stated:

“...I think they should put people together for more interaction. You have to find a way to interact. Physical[] interaction. We’re supposed to mix...”
(Interviewee One)

The interviewees had several suggestions that would encourage knowledge exchange at IIC. The suggestions given including the management providing the time necessary to exchange knowledge, and encouraging a two-way communication:

“...To be frank, I’m still in the learning process. So, whatever I have now I will share with other people. But, I need to have a time I will share. To encourage me...” (Interviewee Three)

“...I think, the first is to be more flexible in term of the time, working time. For example, lecturers have a lot of students, they have more credit hours and teaching hours. When the lecturers have a lot of teaching to do, I think they have no time to mingle around with the friends or other people in the

organisation. I think another opinion is that maybe the organisation could implement instead of Family Day, they may do social gathering where food is served more often. I think most of the lecturers will be there during that time and they can transfer the knowledge at that time...” (Interviewee Thirteen)

“...Because for me, I like to share my knowledge. Depends on what you believe, sometimes when you are sharing, you are actually getting more knowledge. I prefer two way communications- you share with me, I share with you.” (Interviewee Two)

Interviewees also believed that those who held senior positions could be more receptive to exchange knowledge with those who are not in management positions.

Interviewees One, Six, Seven, Nine, Ten, Fourteen, Fifteen, Seventeen and Eighteen expressed the view that if the management shows appreciation and support for the employees’ activities, the employees would be more apt to share their knowledge with each other:

“...You have to make yourself open, so that people feel at ease to see you. As I can see right now, especially very top position the person do not want people to come into the office to discuss. They think they are already at the higher level but they should go and see the lower level. I think those individuals must change...” (Interviewee Seven)

“...at least you [management] show us that you appreciate us. The management [should] show us that they appreciate what we’ve been doing [exchanging knowledge], and sort of support us if we need their support...” (Interviewee Fifteen)

The interviewer summarizes the interviewees' responses regarding management support as in the table below.

Table 14.0: Summary of Suggestions for Management's Encouraging Story-Telling

No	The Output Coding	Interviewees
13	Encourage Interaction – time, two-way communication, availability	Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17 & 18
9	Appreciative organisation - Accept opinion of others , accept other's strengths, open door, appreciate staff	Interviewees 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17 & 18

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

The following Storytelling Perceptions were developed from the interviewees' responses on this topic:

More than 60 percent of the interviewees frequently cited that interactions may be encouraged by the management. This objective may be achieved by providing time to socialise, encouraging a two-way communication, and providing access to employees' superiors (STP44). Also, 40 - 60 percent of the interviewees often cited that an appreciative organisation would encourage knowledge-sharing within the organisation (STP45). Morgan et al (1997) stated how passing information such as the management development and 'know-how' would be done through these types of interactions, clearly showing that these interactions would be encouraged by the management.

4.6.2 Summary of Theme Two: Storytelling and Exchange Factors

Three patterns that describe the storytelling setting have emerged from the seven perceptions in this section, which are 'Exchange Place', 'Exchange Time' and 'Exchange Stimulants'.

Four perceptions are cited quite often with more than 60 percent of the interviewees, which are as follows:

- knowledge is exchanged at informal and easily accessible public places (STP14),
- knowledge is exchanged during mealtime (STP16),

- a comfortable and positive environment is important in encouraging knowledge exchange (STP18), and
- interactions are encouraged between employees by providing time to socialize, encouraging two-way communication, and allowing employees heightened access to their superiors (STP44).

The three perceptions that are often mentioned by 40 – 60 percent of the interviewees are:

- formal venues are used as places of knowledge exchange (STP15),
- gatherings are often used to exchange knowledge (STP17), and
- an appreciative organisation would encourage knowledge-sharing within the organisation (STP45).

4.7 Theme Three: Storytelling and Personality

4.7.1 Personality Preference

During the course of the interview, the interviewer learned that there were certain places, time and environment, which were preferred by the interviewees. From that point, the interviewer probed to determine if there were also certain personality characteristics that the interviewees looked for when they intended to share their knowledge or when they received knowledge from others.

4.7.2 Individual Characteristics

This section discusses the key issues regarding the actors in the exchange: the characteristics of knowledge bearer and knowledge recipient, and the ways of maintaining the relationship between them.

4.7.2.1 Characteristics of the Knowledge Bearer

The subsection looks into the characteristics found among the knowledge bearers.

The interviewer probed the interviewees to elicit motivation by asking questions such as:

“What makes you want to share?”

“What makes you not want to share with certain people?”

“Do you have a specific person that you learn from?”

“Why do you go to this person for discussion?”

Interviewees One, Two, Six and Thirteen’s statements were typical of the subjective and personal nature of knowledge transference. For example:

*“... some people I can share with, and some I just choose not to share...”.
(Interviewee Six)*

*“...I rather go to everybody from top to down... No restriction...”
(Interviewee One)*

Interviewees Two, Three, Six, Eight, Nine, Ten, Twelve, Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen and Eighteen were of the opinion that the well-perceived image or personality of a knowledge bearer is crucial in ensuring a successful knowledge transmission.

Interviewee Three mentioned that a knowledge bearer should embody the elements of respect and trust, so that the recipient would not have any doubt about the knowledge that was shared between them:

‘...yes, respect and trust [must be there]. Because sometime people want us to follow their advice but they themselves are not even correct...’ (Interviewee Three)

Interviewee Ten used the words ‘sincerity’ and ‘frank’ when discussing important traits:

‘...sometimes you communicate with your staff as a boss and subordinate, but sometimes you communicate with your staff as a friend. But for me, I know

that your sincerity must be there in order to tell a story. You must be sincere. These people would know your sincerity. And that's why I am very honest with them so, when you are seen as frank with them, they will be frank with you...'
(Interviewee Ten)

Notably, Interviewee Ten also used the phrase 'emotional bank account' to emphasize the point that sharing knowledge is more than just an act of communication between two people:

"...you must know the emotional bank account. It means how much deposit you made into the emotional part to your staff. For an example, say I say something to a staff whom I have emotional bank account with. Whatever I say or suggest, that person would understand, he would not get upset (even if he didn't like my suggestions). Because he trusted me. Because there is a relationship long established. But, the staff whom I don't know their background, not close to, never go out with to have meal together and suddenly I make a decision like that, he may tend not to agree. For the staff who has understanding with me, has emotional bank account normally would trust me more or more open to me for discussion..." (Interviewee Ten)

Interviewee Fifteen specifically mentioned 'being approachable' as an important characteristic of a knowledge bearer when sharing knowledge:

"...If you are a person who is moody all the time, people will not want to approach you, even though you are so knowledgeable...but you cannot impart that knowledge to them because you not approachable..."

Interviewees Three, Five, Seven, Nine, Ten, Twelve, Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen and Eighteen stated that a knowledge bearer must have the appropriate knowledge:

"... know what you're doing...doing in a right way..." (Interviewee Three)

Interviewee Five gave numerous examples regarding the individuals who were seen as knowledgeable at the organisation. Below is one example:

“...I have these two - who helped me in terms of skills of administration. Even though they are in the same position as me and they are younger than me, I see them very experienced in terms of administration skills and leadership. And that’s why I normally refer to them, I always refer to them, ask questions about this (issues or problems)...” (Interviewee Five)

Interviewees Four, Five, Six, Nine, Eleven, Twelve and Fifteen mentioned that knowledge bearers should be good communicators. For example:

“...because of their approach. Maybe also because of their experiences. They are very cool, very calm. I feel comfortable talk to them and easy for me to share and I really admire the way (they carry themselves). ...so meaning that of course the personality itself make people feel comfortable and they willing to share, they willing to learn...and I respect them...” (Interviewee Nine)

“...easy to understand. There is no need to talk too much but I cannot understand what the point is. It must be clear...” (Interviewee Four)

Interviewee Five provided insight as to why communication is important:

“...I refer to these people because to me, they have the knowledge and then they are able to tell me. You know, there are some people who have the knowledge but they are not able to tell or share them. They can do it, [but when asked] how do you do it, they will say that they don’t know but they can do it. However, these people who I refer to [earlier], they are able to tell me how...” (Interviewee Five)

Interviewee Fifteen referred to appropriate facial expressions as important in communication:

“... Then only you can share, by having that kind of characteristic, facial expression also plays a major role...” (Interviewee Fifteen)

Another important characteristic identified is the position or ranking of the knowledge bearer. Interviewees Five, Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, Eleven, Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen and Eighteen stated this. For example:

“... so not just about trust but also the attitude of the person as well. Is not about the education background but is about the position.” (Interviewee Fourteen)

“...mostly from the superior... I’ve been working with him for almost four years, so, he is the nearest reference that I can ask [and discuss]...” (Interviewee Seven)

The interviewer summarised the desired traits of the knowledge bearer in the following table:

Table 15.0: Favourable Knowledge Bearer Traits Gathered from Interview Data

No	Output Coding	Interviewees
11	Good Image - Trusted, Integrity, Respected, Humble, Sincere, Credible, Not rigid, Approachable	Interviewees 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16 & 18
11	Position	Interviewees 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16 & 18
10	Knowledgeable / Experienced	Interviewees 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 & 18
7	Good Communication Skills – Clarity, Facial expression, Listener	Interviewees 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12 & 15
4	No Restriction	Interviewee 1, 2, 6, 13

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

From this data, the interviewer developed the following storytelling perceptions. More than 60 percent of the interviewees often cited that the knowledge bearer should have a good image and that personality traits portraying trust, integrity, respect and sincerity are important (STP19). 40 – 60 percent of the interviewees cited the importance of a knowledgeable story bearer (STP20). Less than 40 percent of the

interviewees cited that communication skill is important (STP21). Whereas 40 percent-60 percent of the interviewees frequently cited that the position of the knowledge bearer is critical (STP22). This is consistent with Hanappi-Egger et al., (2005) findings on how important culture can be when it comes to listening to the storyteller. For example Hutchings (2005) in his research concluded that in the Chinese culture, information is shared by those whom they trust.

4.7.2.2 Characteristics of the Knowledge Recipient

This subsection looks into the characteristics of the knowledge recipient in the organisation.

The Interviewer asked the Interviewees about the characteristics of the recipients of knowledge.

For example:

“Do you share your knowledge with everybody?”

“Why don’t you want to share with that person?”

Similar to the sentiments regarding the knowledge bearer as discussed above, Interviewees Seven and Thirteen (less than 40 percent) cited that knowledge is shared regardless of recipient’s personality. Interviewee Seven stated:

“...if I am made responsible to transmit the knowledge, I will transmit 100 percent to all of them... regardless of their behaviour towards me...”
(Interviewee Seven)

However, 40 - 60 percent of the interviewees often cited that a general good attitude and personality are needed in knowledge transference. Interviewees Two, Three, Five, Seven, Nine, Eleven, Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen and Eighteen all stated that a good attitude stimulates a deeper sharing between the bearer and the recipient. For example, the interviewer noted the following comments by Interviewees Two and Fourteen:

“...Depends on the people, sometimes I will, let’s say, those who are good I will share half of my knowledge, I’ll ask them to learn, the process of learning, I don’t just simply give A-Z, I just give A-J, the rest you do and then you come back to me and I’ll explain...” (Interviewee Two)

“...Attitude. If I think that the types of person I would like to share the ideas or the knowledge are they’re open to discussion. We can say whether the person is the one who can share the things or not, their ideas or not from their attitude as well. If I think I can accept their attitude then I’ll prolong the conversation or else I just select what to share...” (Interviewee Fourteen)

Interviewees Three, Five, Six, Nine, Eleven, Fifteen, Seventeen and Eighteen often cited that willingness to learn is a characteristic, which encourages knowledge sharing. For example, Interviewees Five and Six made clear that if the knowledge recipient is willing to learn, the interviewee is more than happy to share the knowledge:

“...You see, so, if they want to learn, I will be forever willing to help you. So, the character is that you want to learn, you’re willing to learn. I think it should be that, yeah, it’s correct- the characters. And if I can see that the person is so enthusiastic to learn, I’ll be giving more. I don’t give A, I’ll give B, C, D. I like to share knowledge...” (Interviewee Five)

“... (it depends on) how much that person wants to accept. The more you are willing to learn the more we are willing to share...” (Interviewee Six)

Another identified characteristic that influences the exchange is the trust that the knowledge bearer has in the knowledge recipient. Interviewees One, Three, Ten, Eleven, Thirteen, Fourteen and Sixteen stated that trust is essential. Interviewees Ten and Thirteen explained:

“... when there is trust, and [] you are [believable] to that person, it’s much easier for you to transmit the knowledge.” (Interviewee Ten)

“.....we need to evaluate the person first. Trust is needed and then only I can relay the knowledge on that person.” (Interviewee Thirteen)

Interviewees Five, Ten, Fifteen and Eighteen noted that a similarity of purpose between the knowledge bearer and knowledge recipient is important. In order for the superior to share knowledge with subordinates, the recipient must be seen as having shared objectives. Absence of that results in failure to achieve the objectives of the discussion and knowledge would fail to be transmitted:

“.....same mission and vision...” (Interviewee Five)

“...must have the same belief (and mindset) with the boss. (to share and learn from them)... . So, the most important thing is that you must have the same belief with the boss. If you have a different belief from your boss, you will not achieve the objective. That’s all...” (Interviewee Ten)

The interviewees noted that knowing how receptive the other person was to the content of the knowledge that they were transferring, was important to them. Receptiveness was often labelled by the interviewees as honesty and sincerity. Most interviewees commented that receptiveness could be judged from the facial expression and body language of the other person.

Interviewees One, Five, Twelve, Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen, Seventeen and Eighteen noted that receptiveness could be gauged from the facial expression and body language of the other person. Some examples are quoted below:

“...So, this is where you can identify because from facial expression, from their body movement, you can really know whether that person is reluctant or she is ok..” (Interviewee Five)

“...Because I can see the face and I can get some what you call, what you call it? Expression...” (Interviewee Twelve)

“...I think is because of the eye contact. I can say that whether I, if I have problems, I want to share something, it is nice to see that the face of the person that we talk to. So, the expression of that person we can know whether the person is giving us the, can accept our problem from the, the expression of the face. We can know whether the person can be trusted...” (Interviewee Thirteen)

The interviewer summarises the responses regarding characteristics of the recipients in the following table:

Table 16.0: The Characteristics of the Knowledge Recipients Gathered from Interview Data

No	Output Coding	Interviewees
10	General good attitude	2, 3, 7, 5, 9, 11, 14,15, 16 & 18
8	Willingness- to listen, share, enthusiastic, receptive, participate, focus	Interviewees 3, 5,6, 9, 11, 15, 17 & 18
8	Verbal cues / Body Language / Facial gestures	Interviewees 1, 5, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18
7	Trusted	Interviewees 1, 3, 10, 11, 13, 14 & 16
4	Similarity in vision, opinion	5, 10, 15, 18

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

The interviewer formulated the following Storytelling Perceptions based on the interviewees’ answers regarding ‘Knowledge Recipients’. Between 40 to 60 percent of the interviewees preferred face-to-face contact because they could gauge the speaker/audience’s receptiveness through their body language, such as facial expressions (STP 5). The willingness to listen, share and participate is often cited by 40 - 60 percent of the interviewees as important to encourage the knowledge bearer to share more information (STP23). A trustworthy knowledge recipient is cited as important by a few interviewees (STP24). A good general attitude of the knowledge recipient is often cited by 40 - 60 percent of the interviewees as important (STP25). Less than 40 percent of the interviewees cited that the knowledge may be transmitted to the recipient regardless of the recipient’s character (STP26). Similarity in goals and opinions is cited by a few interviewees, which is less than 40 percent, as the factor that encourages knowledge exchange (STP28).

4.7.3 Relationship Maintenance

This subsection looks into the interviewees' efforts in maintaining their communication relationship with other employees, whether acting as a knowledge bearer or as a knowledge recipient.

The interviewer was interested in how the interviewees maintain a positive and useful bearer-recipient relationship.

Examples of the interviewer's questions:

"How did you maintain a good networking relationship with them?"

"Do you keep in touch other than during discussion time?"

The interviewees frequently cited that regular interaction is needed to maintain a positive and strong relationship, which in turn, allows knowledge transfer.

The following table shows the examples of responses from the interviewees.

Table 17.0: Maintaining Relationships within the Organisation Gathered from Interview Data

Interviewee	The Output Coding 5
R1	.. sit [with them]
R3	...treat them as sisters and brothers...make friends [with everyone]...
R4	...; give them more space to give an idea when problems come up; they feel appreciated... [maintain] trust level...
R5	...informal meetings over the lunch... chit chat...[after] I finish my class...
R6	...hi here and there would be enough, when they need me they will just call me up...
R7	...go out lunch together... meet each other outside [the office]... weekend, I have to go to his house...
R8	... talk everyday...by phone...
R9	... I can call them... I can find them... I can SMS to them...
R10	... visit them during their happy times and sad times...you appear in their life...
R11	...go to their office...go to any café or stall for a drink
R12	...call her for just chat...go to her office and I talk to her...
R14	...take time to meet them... to talk to them...to greet...
R16	... I just greet them, call them...
R18	...regularly discuss with them... meet them...go for some sporting activities...unofficial meeting... to meet their free hour...few lines of email...

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

Interviewee Eleven maintains a good relationship as it is essential for knowledge transfer to take place between the individuals:

“...good relationship, if I don’t know that person, then, I’m not going to tell or to exchange ideas with that person...”

Interviewees One and Eight made the point that smiling helps maintain a good relationship.

Based on the interviewees’ responses, the interviewer concludes this section with the following storytelling perception: more than 60 percent of the interviewees very often stated that continuous interaction is needed to maintain a positive relationship between the knowledge bearer and the knowledge recipient (STP29).

4.7.4 Summary of Theme Three: Storytelling and Personality

There are three patterns emerged from the analysis of eleven perceptions above. They are ‘Characteristics of Knowledge Bearer’, ‘Characteristics of Knowledge Recipient’ and ‘Bearer/Recipient Relationship Maintenance’.

The two perceptions which are quite often cited by more than 60 percent of the interviewees are:

- i) good image and personality such as trust, integrity, respect and sincerity are important characteristics of a knowledge bearer (STP19), and
- ii) continuous interaction is needed to maintain a positive relationship between the knowledge bearer and the knowledge recipient (STP29).

The following five perceptions which are frequently cited by 40 - 60 percent of the interviewees:

- i) important to gauge the audience's receptiveness via body language (STP5),
- ii) a knowledgeable story bearer is important (STP20),
- iii) the position of the knowledge bearer is critical (STP22),
- iv) a willingness to listen, share, and participate is important to encourage the knowledge bearer to share more information (STP23), and
- v) a good general attitude is an important characteristic of the knowledge recipient (STP25).

Less than 40 percent of the interviewees cited the following items:

- i) the communication skill of the knowledge bearer is important (STP21),
- ii) the loyalty, commitment, and trustworthiness of knowledge recipient is important (STP24),
- iii) knowledge may be transmitted to the recipient regardless of the recipient's character (STP26),
- iv) the intelligence of the knowledge recipient is important in knowledge transmission, and
- v) the similarity in goals and opinion is a factor that encourages knowledge sharing (STP28).

4.8 Theme Four: Storytelling & Types of Knowledge/ Story Transmitted

4.8.1 Story Characteristics

This section looks into the types of stories found within the organisation and storytelling techniques used by the employees of the organisation.

4.8.2 Story Variety

This subsection looks into the types of stories, which are transferred within the organisation. Interviewees cited many examples on knowledge exchange via story-

telling within the organisation. This section explores the content of such stories in an attempt to thematically code their intent or general purpose.

Interviewees One, Three, Five, Seven, Ten, Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen, Seventeen and Eighteen mentioned that stories are very often related to the organisational culture within the organisation.

Interviewee Three mentioned the culture of teamwork and interdependency between the Marketing Department and the Academic Division with regards to achieving excellent customer satisfaction. While Interviewee Fifteen elaborated on the organisation's efforts in encouraging their employees to have a sense of belonging in the organisation, Interviewee Thirteen reflected on the importance of responding efficiently to the requests by other departments.

“ ...Like example we have a problem of student intake. Previous years, we achieve the target for our intake. But this year we targeted around 2,500 students but until now, we just have 600 new students registered. Unlike last year, we targeted 2,000 but we achieve 2,471. Previous year, we targeted 1,500, we achieve 1,671. But this year this is the problem- achieving the target. We share this with others, with everybody. So they are aware that it is not the job of promotions only to get new students but is a job of lecturer to maintain the customer relationship with the students. ...” (Interviewee Three)

“ ...The stories I heard when I entered that college came from the CEO. He would share the stories of hard work and effort made by the first batch lecturers to set up the college. They had to work without any leave, had to stay up till 1A.M or 3A.M to ensure that the documents are place. The story was being shared and being told by him over and over again to the new lecturers. I think that is very important to let the new lecturers know that it is not that easy to set up this college. But it's easy for any lecturers to bring down the college. This story is to impart to the new lecturers that you have to have the feeling of belongingness here. It's not just a place for you to earn a living. It's how we say it, it is a second home...” (Interviewee Fifteen)

“... I told them (the departments) that the students really need the past year question papers for the examination especially before the examination and so on. And this is part of the service given to students. So we need to have those question papers [from them to compile]. It is important because students are one of our customer[s]. So if we failed to fulfill, to satisfy our customer’s needs it means that we, on our services part, we also failed. So that what’s I told them at that time...” (Interviewee Thirteen)

Stories are also used by Interviewees One, Two, Three, Four, Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, Eleven, Twelve, Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen and Eighteen to solve any problems that occur. For example, Interviewee Two described the problem-solving involved in updating the organisation’s procedure manuals, while Interviewee Eleven shared an interesting anecdote about a forecasting and planning problem faced during one of the football tournaments:

“...I give you one example. Few months back a memo was issued requesting every department to update their standard operating procedure. Two weeks were given to submit all the updated procedure. After the deadline, a few departments haven’t submitted. When called, they said they don’t have time. Decision must be made because the certification body is coming in around 2 or 3 months time. To complete all the SOP, it’s hard. Almost 70 percent of the quality maintenance system is not updated. It’s quite critical they might pull out our certificate. So I requested the decodings to help organise our first internal audit for second parties. First party me, second party decodings. We are going to use this internal audit to update the standard operating procedure, if not we are in trouble. I have to use decodings...” (Interviewee Two)

“...Last time tournament, Plan A was to play during good weather and then Plan B during the rainy day. It’s good to have plan during the good days and rainy days. My thinking is if it rains during the morning we move the games to the afternoon sessions. But (I forgot) what happen if both morning and afternoon rain? So, it happened that way. There is the morning rain so we

move to afternoon. And in the afternoon it rained also, so, they have to play in rain!” (Interviewee Eleven)

Another interviewee used stories to help solve the problems of arranging an employee’s timetable. The employees were allowed to state their preferences for their classes. However, at times, the employees were dissatisfied because they could not get their desired schedule. To help ease this dissatisfaction and to make the employees more amenable to coping with schedule conflicts, the superior personally called all department staff and used stories as a tool for managing the situation:

“...Some of my lecturer who prefers to have classes at certain time, usually I will use my experiences. For example, those who prefer to have afternoon classes and not to have morning classes. I give them example when I first got back from my maternity leave. My classes started at 8 o’clock in the morning and ends at 7 o’clock in the evening. But, I have never made noise (complain) to my Head of Department because I understand her difficulties. Somehow, I wish them to know through using my experiences that sometimes you cannot have it all. We cannot say that you want to have a class at 8 o clock in the morning and don’t want the class in the afternoon. Sometimes you just have to compromise. So by using my experience, some do agree, some sort of dissatisfied. So my experience will tell my lecturer that sometimes you cannot have everything. Take into consideration that I just got back from my maternity and I was breastfeeding my son at that particular time. So I had to, what you call that pump my breast milk and store it in the lecturers’ room until I get back to my house. I hope by telling that, they will understand. That is my objective...” (Interviewee Fifteen)

Success stories are also shared by Interviewees Fourteen, Fifteen and Sixteen, indicating how such stories are used as administrative and management tools. For example, Interviewee Fourteen recalled sharing the stories on how to win the students’ hearts and how to make them interested in learning:

“...Then like last year they did a surprise party and I receive so many presents and cards and other lecturer keep asking how you can get this kind of

treatment from your students. So from there I shared what I've did to my class. So I tell them I always put myself not only a lecturer but also a business man and my student not only my students but they are also my customer. So there is a time where you can play a role lecturer and there is a certain time you be your role as a business man where you don't want to lose your customer. So I said the mentality have to change the attitude...." (Interviewee Fourteen)

The interviewees' responses are summarised in the following table:

Table 18.0: Summary of Variety of Stories Shared Gathered from Interview Data

No	The Output Coding	Interviewees
15	Problem Solving stories	Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 & 18
11	Organisation Culture Stories: teamwork, tolerance of mistakes, sense of belonging, customer service, cooperation, management style,	Interviewees 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18
3	Success Stories	Interviewees 14, 15 & 16

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

The interviewer formulated the following Storytelling Perceptions and conclusions based on the interviewees' elaborations on this topic. Interviewees frequently indicated that stories concerning organisational culture, such as the organisations culture around teamwork, mistake toleration, sense of belonging cultivation, customer service, cooperation and management style were shared between staff (STP30) and often stories on problem-solving were shared and transmitted (STP31).

4.8.3 Story Survival

Some interviewees related anecdotes concerning events that occurred prior to the interviewees' employment at the organisation. Hence, the interviewer asked the other interviewees to elaborate on any pre-employment anecdotes that had been recounted to them.

Interviewees Three, Four, Eight, Nine, Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen and Seventeen stated that stories were transferred over an indeterminate period of time.

For example, Interviewee Three shared a story that occurred prior to the employment about the management style of the superior:

“...Yeah. Because [] before I came into college, our [] superior was [a] different person from now. Then he was replaced with the current superior. Everybody was like scared, they keep saying the new superior is very strict. He push us to the limit...” (Interviewee Three)

Interviewee Nine stated that the interviewee’s own stories were intended to give the new lecturers a better understanding of the top management’s decisions and to instil a sense of belonging among the new lecturers:

“...So I just share with them “You know when the first time I came here all the lecturers only can request 3 marker pen for one semester. The college very calculative because they are new. I also told them that I used to (as a part-timer) only get 12 hours per week and I have to travel from Klang to here but I said you are lucky because right now the part timers can get 30 hours per week. They can get the salary more than me right now. So when I share with them that story, they feel at least I know the situation. I love to tell them and I said to them since I’ve been here I love this place’s working environment. I love my friends and I never send my resume elsewhere. Of course, anywhere where we go, to any places the stress is there but we cannot find the people like this college outside there. Then, I can see they began to appreciate this college more...” (Interviewee Nine)

The responses received from the interviewees are summarised in the table below:

Table 19.0: Summary of Story Survival Gathered From Interview Data

No	The Output Coding	Interviewees
8	Possible Indefinite Story Survival	Interviewees 3, 4, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 17

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

A major or minor category emerging from the data concerns how stories may have an indefinite survival period (STP32).

4.8.4 Techniques of Delivering Stories

This subsection looks into the techniques of delivering stories effectively.

The interviewer learned that the interviewees generally had no standard techniques in storytelling. Anecdotes shared by Interviewees Four, Five, Six, Nine, Ten and Seventeen reflect on a variety of techniques.

Interviewee Four stated that the stories should be kept simple and straight to the point. According to the interviewee, there is no reason to use complex examples that the knowledge recipient might not be able to understand:

“...I don’t tell the story which needed you to have knowledge about electronic and electricity. For an example, I just give a simple example from our daily lives - after you bathe, if you switch on the light with your wet hands, the effect is that you might be electrocuted. I do not say that this is a big machine that can provide 11KV of electricity which is high in voltage, too big voltage...”
(Interviewee Four)

Interviewee Five usually starts off with a diversion before narrowing the focus of the discussion to the interviewee’s actual purpose:

“....I’ll start with something else and I will narrow my communication to that particular topic...I do find that these people will open up...” (Interviewee Five)

Interviewee Nine uses a similar technique whereby the interviewee practices small talk before easing into a serious discussion. This is done to make sure the other person feels comfortable:

“...start with a small conversation; ease them...” (Interviewee Nine)

Interviewee Ten reinforced that notion, adding that incorporating the other person's interests into the conversation might assist in the communication:

"...For example, they really like to discuss politics. So, normally, with that person, you must use the topic politic. Some people like enjoy music so you must relate the related subject to the person..." (Interviewee Ten)

Interviewee Seventeen uses a technique that involves relating past experiences. For every bit of information that is about to be imparted, the Interviewee finds relevant life experiences to make the point clearer and easily understood. In this example, the Interviewee wanted to demonstrate that everyone must learn to finish what is on the plate; that is, wasting food is not acceptable:

"...why you do certain things, there must be a reason. To me, most of the things that you do, you must have a secret. You just don't do it willingly without giving it a thought. There must be a reason to tell the story. For an example if I want to ask someone to finish their rice, I will say the rice will cry. Now, if I tell them the story of the millions of starving people in Africa, nobody will listen to me. But, I told them that I was a poor person from a poor family. How my parents brought us up was by saying that if you do not finish the rice, it will cry. So, I finish that one piece of rice left. This has greater impact than talking about poverty, Ethiopia..." (Interviewee Seventeen)

Interviewee Four encourages the recipient to explore the truthfulness of the information given. When the interviewer asked for confirmation, this was the remark made:

"...Yes simple, if you do like this, it will happen. If you don't believe, you try..." (Interviewee Four)

Interviewee Six explained that when the recipients feel that a mutual learning process is involved, it is much easier for them to accept the knowledge transferred:

“... I learned from you, you learned from me [not instructive], so they feel very relaxed and they accept the information freely...” (Interviewee Six)

A similar statement was made by Interviewee Nine:

“...don’t want them to feel I’m giving instructions ...” (Interviewee Nine)

Interviewee Seventeen mentioned that the seating position between the knowledge bearer and the knowledge recipient has an impact on the receptiveness of the knowledge by the recipient. The parties should avoid sitting across from each other, which might foster a sense of opposition:

“...If I sit on one side of the table, you on one side of the table, then, the table divides you into two. This is my position, that’s your position. This one, I learn a long, long time ago...do not sit across the table...” (Interviewee Seventeen)

The same interviewee added that it is important to add humour to the discussion, as it had the effect of bringing a feeling of togetherness among people:

“...Humour, make fun of yourself and then everybody enjoys it so that it is both you and them become part of them and they become part of you. You influence people more is don’t just make fun of people, make fun with yourself. So, I gave a parable, if I’m going to marry some girl out there and you tell me she’s beautiful. I want to accept but I have to see the girl then only will I know the girl is beautiful. So these are the type of things I used to say, I bring humour into it but emphasise the point whatever it is. For example in this case I can’t agree without knowing the details, it’s like marrying a woman without knowing how she looks like. Even though people may have described that she is a fantastic lady, I must see her first.” (Interviewee Seventeen)

Interviewee Seventeen was of the view that sharing poor personal experiences makes a story more acceptable to many people:

“...people enjoy it because it [is not] just an advice but sharing an experience; important is that you take on yourself, you blame yourself, you give the worst instances, experiences...” (Interviewee Seventeen)

The interviewer summarises the interviewees’ storytelling techniques in the table below:

Table 20.0: Summary of Techniques of Delivering Stories Gathered From Interview Data

No	The Output Coding	Interviewees
3	“Breaking the Ice”	Interviewees 5, 9 & 10
2	Mutual Learning	Interviewee 6 & 9
1	Past Experience	Interviewee 17
1	Explore Truthfulness	Interviewee 4
1	Straight, Simple	Interviewee 4
1	Seating Position	Interviewee 17
1	Humour	Interviewee 17
1	Bad Experience	Interviewee 17

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

From the extractions of the transcripts on this topic, the interviewer identifies the following Storytelling Perception. Interviewees cited that specific techniques such as simplifying the stories, breaking the ice, use of past experiences, seating positions and humour are useful in transferring knowledge through storytelling (STP33).

4.8.5 Summary of Theme Four: Storytelling & Types of Knowledge/ Story Transmitted

From the analysis above, the three patterns which have emerged from the four storytelling perceptions are ‘Variety of Stories’, ‘Story Survival’ and ‘Story Delivery Techniques’.

Three storytelling perceptions were identified within the data. The interviewees frequently cited that the stories shared among the interviewees were concerned with:

- organisational culture such as teamwork, mistake toleration, sense of belonging, customer service, cooperation and management style (STP30), and
- problem-solving methods (STP31).

Another minor category that emerged from the data concerns how stories survive on perpetuity (STP32). Interviewees identified mechanisms that allowed stories to survive and continue to be told, such as simplifying the stories, using them to break the ice, using stories as examples of past experiences in contextualizing the contemporary context (STP33).

4.9 Theme 5 - Acceptance of Story

This section looks into verification and the decision to transfer depth of knowledge among the interviewees in the organisation.

4.9.1 Verification of the Story

This subsection looks into the verification of stories received from the interviewees. After the interviewer questioned the interviewees on the specifics of the actual story exchange, the interviewer probed into the issue of a story's verification.

For example:

“Do you verify the knowledge received before you apply it?”

“How do you verify it?”

The interviewer observed that most interviewees i.e. more than 60 percent cited the need to verify the knowledge that was shared with them. Interviewees One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, Eleven, Twelve, Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen and Eighteen stated that verification of knowledge newly acquired is

necessary. Interviewees Twelve and Seven stated that knowledge is verified by comparing the newly acquired knowledge with existing knowledge and by verifying it with others.

“...All the knowledge given to me, I just share. I also just compare with what knowledge that I have right now, so, if there are differences between the knowledge, then, I ask someone what is the difference...” (Interviewee Twelve)

“...If I think my knowledge is sufficient, I will assess myself but somehow I will listen to the person who was sharing the knowledge with me first. If the knowledge shared is not conflicting with my existing knowledge, then it is fine and nice already. I would enjoy the conversation. But if the message conflicts with my existing knowledge, I have to verify again, check, verify with somebody else...” (Interviewee Seven)

When the interviewer probed further on the issue of verification, Interviewees One, Three, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen and Eighteen all stated that verification should be done by referring to the original source. For example, Interviewees One and Five opined that knowledge verification should be done with the person or department with authority on the subject. Interviewee Eighteen gave an elaborate explanation as to why this type of verification is important:

“...For me to verify the stories actually I have to wait until the right person. Wait for the right person...” (Interviewee One)

“...I need to know or verify things. We really need to be equipped with the right knowledge. And I will go to the source to get that knowledge.” (Interviewee Five)

“...Of course, that is the only, that is the best way for you to do. Going back to the source. Then you’ll be somehow guided to the path and understand the explanation rather than risking having wrong information from others. Some

people might be seniors in the organisation in the term of the knowledge but they maybe are not aware of particular field or area. So they might be sharing wrong knowledge. For example those who are in academic division might have some confusion when it comes to administrative policies. So it is not necessary that every departments know everything. So, that's why it is good to counter-check and cross-check with the right department. It is better than referring only to one department.” (Interviewee Eighteen)

Some of the interviewees mentioned the reasons for failing to verify any knowledge. Interviewee Two blamed this on the lack of time that precluded any story verification.

“...Depends on time. If I don't have time, I said okay I can accept that knowledge. If I have time, I would verify. It really depends on spare time I have. I don't have problems with anyone. I don't have any problems to communicate with others. I believe in people with the same type of believe. I treat all the people the same...” (Interviewee Two)

Interviewee Fourteen depends on instincts before deciding whether to verify the newly acquired knowledge:

“...if my instinct says that it is correct, then I do not verify...” (Interviewee Fourteen)

Interviewee Eleven verifies knowledge as it is incorporated into existing procedure:

“...Yes. Verify that this is the procedure, this is what we do. If the programmed is maybe around next week, so, at that time, I know what they tell and share with me is true or not. What they say previously is true or not...” (Interviewee Eleven)

When asked why gauging the understanding of the other party is important, Interviewees One, Two, Four, Five, Six, Nine, Eleven, Fourteen, Fifteen, Sixteen and Eighteen elaborated on the importance of clarification. For example, Interviewee Eleven opined:

“...we tend to interpret the different ways what actually the message that we are going to send...” (Interviewee Eleven)

Interviewee One cautioned that an individual's interpretation of knowledge might differ from the knowledge bearer's actual meaning. This makes verification important:

“...we should not assume the other person will tell 100 percent correct thing, the perception and the interpretation of the knowledge will be different ...” (Interviewee One)

Interviewee Two explained how misinterpretation might happen by giving an example in the context of a student-lecturer situation:

“...They might understand differently- depends how you communicate with people. In fact, for an example, when you are teaching, some students will understand differently from what you explained to them. You can see from the result during exams. I said to them that this is the way you have to calculate. But then, some may come out with a wrong and different way of calculation....” (Interviewee Two)

The interviewer probed further by asking the interviewees whether any adaptation and changes were made to the knowledge once they received it. Interviewees Five, Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten, Eleven, Twelve, Thirteen, Fourteen and Eighteen stated that adaptation of knowledge is necessary. Interviewee Five confirmed that adaptation of the newly acquired knowledge is made before adopting it to the current situation:

“... I have to adopt and adapt the application of the knowledge. If I have to use it, I must adapt it according to different situation...” (Interviewee Five)

This view was consistent with the opinion of Interviewee Six, who stated the importance of adapting knowledge to the current situation:

“... In organisation you cannot take as it is but you have to adapt. Adopt and adapt here and there...” (Interviewee Six)

The responses regarding verification have been summarised in the following table:

Table 21.0: Summary of Verification of Story Gathered from Interview Data

No	The Output Coding	Interviewees
15	Generally verification is practiced	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12,13,14,15,18
11	Verify with authority/source	1, 3, 5, 6, 7,8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 18
11	Reason for verifying : Interpretation differed	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18
11	Adaptation of knowledge	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18
2	Verify during post mortem	4, 11,
1	Verify is depending on time	2
1	Verify based on instinct	14

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

Through analysing the data pertaining to the overarching theme of story verification, the following minor categories about Storytelling Perceptions became apparent. The process of verification is important in knowledge transmission (STP34). Verification is often achieved by referring to the correct source or the original source of the knowledge for verification (STP35). Verification depends on their available free time (STP36). Verification is done during the post-mortem period and that the post-mortem period is the determining factor for verification (STP37). One interviewee cited that one’s own instincts determine whether verification is carried out (STP38). It frequently noted that individuals interpret transferred knowledge differently; thus, making verification necessary in knowledge transmission. Interviewees mentioned this during the interview sessions (STP39). Finally, time and again interviewees cited that adaptation of the stories to a new context occurs (STP40).

4.9.2 Story Resistance

This subsection looks into a person's resistance to accepting certain stories.

Some interviewees indicated that at times that they do not accept knowledge which is transmitted to them. The interviewer put forth questions in order to understand their resistance such as:

"Why didn't you accept the knowledge?"

"Do you accept all knowledge which has been transmitted to you?"

The interviewees were asked to reflect on their past experiences and practices, and came up with many reasons to reject certain knowledge.

Interviewees One, Two, Three, Five, Seven, Eight, Eleven, Thirteen, Fourteen and Eighteen mentioned that at times knowledge is rejected because the transmitted knowledge is unrelated, tedious or impractical.

For example, Interviewee Seven stated that knowledge is resisted due to it being irrelevant, messy and tedious to implement:

"...Ok, first thing, I would resist if I think the knowledge shared is irrelevant and too petty to be highlighted to the organisation. Like if the issue is good for the organisation, I might accept. Or maybe the knowledge transferred to me is too messy, too tedious for me to consider. Perhaps if I see that whatever that I have done now is sufficient already..." (Interviewee Seven)

Interviewee Eighteen stated at length that sometimes knowledge is resisted due to it being inappropriate:

"...Yes, of course I do resist sometimes because one man's medicine is another man's poison. Sometime it might not suit you, the way some other people handle things, but it might suit them. The only thing is that you have to be very sure of the bad implication of their suggestions. As far as you believed

what you are doing is right. But if you think that it is you are not sure that your idea might work, you better admit that and be sincere...” (Interviewee Eighteen)

Some interviewees mentioned that knowledge is resisted due to the knowledge bearer’s attitude. This view is mentioned by Interviewees Three, Four, Five, Six, Nine, Twelve, Fourteen and Fifteen. For example, Interviewee Five admitted to resisting knowledge from particular individuals:

“...So, it depends on the sender of the information. If I don’t want the information you gave me, I will switch off my mind to it. But I will not say you don’t have to share with me but I will totally switch off. And it depends on the person also. The type of person who deliver[s] the information would play a major role...” (Interviewee Five)

Similarly, Interviewee Fourteen mentioned that the chemistry between the bearer and recipient is important in avoiding resistance to knowledge transmission:

“...Maybe because if I don’t like the staff sometime it affects me. The opinion the person gave will affect me negatively. Sometime it depends on the chemistry. If there’s chemistry you can easily receive or accept the ideas. But then if there’s no chemistry and then it’s not about pre- judgment but because you yourself you are not feeling comfortable and it will make me not want to hear these ideas. This does not frequently happen, there are a few times it did...” (Interviewee Fourteen)

The interviewer summarises the responses regarding resistance in the table below:

Table 22.0: Summary of Story Resistance Gathered from Interview Data

No	The Output Coding	Interviewees
10	Knowledge itself – unrelated, tedious, non-practical	1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 18
8	Knowledge bearer attitude	3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 14, 15

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

The following Storytelling Perceptions and conclusions on resistance to transmission were developed based on the interviewees' explanations on this topic. The data indicated that knowledge is resisted due to the knowledge bearer's attitude (STP41). Also, another recurring category within the data concerned how resistance occurs because the knowledge itself is unrelated, tedious or impractical (STP42).

4.9.3 Techniques of Overcoming Resistance

Tempering the interviewees' strong and consistent opinions that knowledge is resistible, Interviewees Three, Seven, Ten, Thirteen and Seventeen had suggestions on how to reduce this resistance.

Interviewee Three explained that providing opportunities for further clarification ensures less resistance among the employees:

"...But, if with my boss, I can argue and discuss and at the same time if I don't agree I can accept what was being discussed because my boss will explain to me the reasoning of why we cannot do this and why we can do that. It makes me understand better. We cannot do it. If I am not comfortable with that person – no, we cannot do this – why? – don't tell me I cannot do this because of this reason. I would not be able to accept it. I just want to do it, something like that..." (Interviewee Three)

Interviewee Ten gave a similar insight on how to reduce resistance:

"...the most important is that you must convince your staff or subordinate about your real objective. As long as they don't understand the objective of what you do, they will not follow you..." (Interviewee Ten)

Interviewee Seventeen elaborated on the importance of humility and personal sharing to reduce resistance:

"...what is important is not to take a position. If you bring them together with you, they are willing to listen to you. If you want to say how great you want to

do this, to do that, nobody is going to do it anyway. If you ask any wise man and you say the easiest thing is to give advice then you can give one million advices that nobody is going to listen to you. But if you share your experience with them, you know, you say, ‘I think this is what you should do, you see, I made this mistake once. I did this and that mistake happened. And therefore from now on, when I do this, I prefer to do it this new way so that the chances of the mistake happening again are much less...’ (Interviewee Seventeen)

The interviewer summarises the responses on this subject into the table below:

Table 23.0: Summary of Techniques of Overcoming Resistance Gathered from Interview Data

No	The Output Coding	Interviewees
5	Techniques to reduce resistance – clarification, sharing objective, sharing personal experience, humbleness, listen, seen as knowledgeable	3, 7, 10, 13, 17

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

The following Storytelling Perception and conclusion is devised based on the responses to the questions posed on overcoming resistance. Less than 40 percent of the interviewees suggested techniques to overcome resistance. Examples are clarification, having shared objectives, sharing personal experiences, demonstrating humility, being perceived as a listener and being perceived as a knowledgeable person (STP43).

4.9.4 Summary of Theme 5: Acceptance of Story

Three patterns have emerged from ten perceptions described in this section. The patterns are ‘Verification of Story’, ‘Resistance to the Story’ and ‘Techniques of Overcoming Resistance’.

The four perceptions which were frequently mentioned by more than 60 percent of the interviewees are as follows:

- verification is important in the knowledge transmission process (STP34),
- verification is often done by referring to the right source or the original source of the knowledge for verification (STP35),
- individuals interpret transferred knowledge differently, thus making verification necessary in knowledge transmission (STP39), and
- interviewees adapt newly acquired information to their own circumstances (STP40). Interviewees often cited the following two storytelling perceptions:
- knowledge may be resisted because of the knowledge bearer's attitude (STP41), and
- resistance may happen because the knowledge itself is unrelated, tedious, or impractical (STP42).

The following four perceptions were a minor category within this theme:

- verification of knowledge is made depending on available free time (STP36),
- verification is done during the post mortem period (STP37),
- interviewees' own instincts may determine whether verification is done (STP38), and
- clarification, sharing objectives, sharing personal experiences, demonstrating humility, being perceived as a listener, and being seen as a knowledgeable person are all techniques a bearer may use to overcome a recipient's resistance to knowledge acceptance (STP43).

4.10 Conclusion

In total, the researcher spent approximately 1018 minutes of interview sessions with eighteen interviewees which took five days to conduct. This has translated into three-hundred pages of interview transcripts of which, the researcher took one month to analyze the transcripts and developed the themes.

Based on the forty-five storytelling perceptions, five general themes were found which are:

- a. Storytelling and the Flow of Knowledge (Knowledge Flow),
- b. Storytelling and Environment of Knowledge Exchange (Exchange Factors),
- c. Storytelling and Personality (Personality Preference),
- d. Storytelling and Types of Knowledge /Story Transmitted (Character of Story), and
- e. Storytelling and Story Acceptance.

Chapter Five discusses the details and steps the researcher took to analyse the perceptions and group them into patterns and themes. It also highlights the implications of the findings to the organisation. Chapter Five concludes with the researcher's tying up the themes together and proposing a new storytelling-knowledge transmission framework. This new framework offers the readers a clear direction for future research for this largely untapped yet important aspect in human resources.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses in detail the findings derived from Chapter Four. It offers a new framework for understanding the storytelling knowledge transmission process and it concludes with a short discussion of the implications and the directions for future research.

In Chapter Four, the researcher extracted 45 story telling perceptions from the data, which are the major themes identified within the interviewee's responses to the questions asked by the interviewer. Below is the list of the total number of perceptions according to the patterns that were discussed in Chapter Four.

Table 24.0: Summary of Perceptions and Patterns as Discussed in Chapter Four

No	Perceptions	Patterns
1	STP1, STP10	Point of Contact
2	STP2	Face-to-face Transfer
3	STP13	Inter-departmental Exchange
4	STP14, STP15, STP18	Exchange Place
5	STP16, STP17	Exchange Time
6	STP44, STP45	Exchange Stimulants
7	STP19, STP20, STP21, STP22	Characteristics of Knowledge Bearer
8	STP5, STP23, STP24, STP25, STP26, STP28	Characteristics of Story Recipient
9	STP29	Maintaining Relationship
10	STP30, STP31	Story Variety
11	STP 32	Story Survival
12	STP 33	Story Delivery Techniques
13	STP34, STP35, STP36, STP37, STP38, STP39, STP40	Verification of Story
14	STP41, STP 42	Story Resistance
15	STP43	Techniques of Overcoming Resistance

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

Further analysis of the fifteen patterns leads the researcher to group them into the five themes as listed in the table below:

Table 25.0 Summary of Patterns and Corresponding Themes

No	Patterns	Themes
1	Point of Contact, Face-to-face Transfer, Inter-departmental Exchange	Storytelling and Flow of Knowledge
2	Exchange Place, Exchange Time, Exchange Stimulants	Storytelling and Exchange Factors
3	Characteristics of Knowledge Bearer, Characteristics of Story Recipient Characteristics, Relationship Maintenance	Storytelling and Personality Preference
4	Story Variety, Story Survival, Techniques of Delivering Stories	Storytelling and Type of Knowledge/Story Transmitted
5	Verification of the Story, Story Resistance, Techniques of Overcoming Resistance	Storytelling and Acceptance of Story

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

After discussing and analysing the data, the researcher develops a new conceptual framework in response to the analysis of the results. This framework replaces the Collison and Parcell model (2004) used throughout the study, and incorporates several previously unknown findings discovered during the research.

These new findings and the other data lead the researcher to formulate an answer to the thesis question as stated below:

How can storytelling play a role as a mechanism in knowledge transmission in an education-based organisation in Malaysia?

5.1 Discussions of the Emerging Patterns and Themes

5.1.1 Discussion of Theme One: Knowledge Flows

In the previous Chapter, four perceptions were identified regarding an individual's general efforts to gain knowledge at the organisation and these

perceptions are listed in the Table 26.0. All of these four perceptions were very often cited by the interviewees.

Table 26.0: Perceptions for Theme One: Knowledge Flow

No	Perception Descriptions	Nomenclature
STP1	Initiative, persistency and individual efforts to ask are important for knowledge transfer in the organisation.	Very often cited : >60 percent
STP2	Knowledge is transferred physically and face-to-face.	Very often cited : >60 percent
STP10	Initial point of contact to gather knowledge were the superiors.	Very often cited : >60 percent
STP13	Inter-departmental knowledge transmission happened face-to-face.	Very often cited : >60 percent

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

The first perception (STP1) states that employees must take the initiative to ask all the questions that are required for the employees to perform their duties in the organisation. However, there are three implications that need to be taken into consideration in fully understanding this perception.

The data indicates that employees must not be too shy and that they must be willing to ask questions when it comes to working in the organisation. If the employee fails to do so, then they run the risk in doing things incorrectly in the organisation. The goal of the organisation, then, must be to account for the personalities of all employees, including the introverts who need time to adjust and to be comfortable with others. Almost all of the interviewees show extrovert tendencies. Here, the researcher realises that people may portray themselves as extroverts in a certain environment but behave differently in other environments. For the purpose of work, however, the researcher concludes that established employees may play a vital role in assisting the newcomers to adapt quickly to the environment of the organisation.

One could also assert from this data that new employees must not be disheartened when the first person(s) they question cannot provide a satisfactory answer. This is important because new employees are likely to ask the wrong person for advice for the first few times. The researcher believes that to overcome this, established employees in an organisation must understand their own limitations in

terms of quantity and quality of knowledge they possess and be capable of identifying the right person to assist with any knowledge deficit.

New employees need to be sure that they receive all the knowledge necessary to perform their duties in the organisation. This means that new employees should use their initiative and be encouraged by management to seek out the right contacts. It is important that new employees exercise curiosity and question themselves on the quality and extent of their current knowledge on a continuous basis.

The second perception (STP2) indicates the interviewees' preference for face-to-face communication when transferring knowledge.

This finding is important for the following reasons:

Firstly, the organisation should have sufficient venues to allow employees to meet and interact with each other and this method of knowledge transfer is convenient and allows knowledge to be transferred quickly.

Secondly, the organisation should organise activities that allow employees to interact intra and inter-departments. To that end, the organisation may foster a healthy interaction among the employees by offering them the opportunities to mingle and exchange knowledge among themselves.

The third perception (STP10) recognizes that the initial point of contact for new employees to gather knowledge involves more than their immediate superior and colleagues.

This finding is important for the following reasons.

First, as with previous research, it reinforces the importance of having the right person in a leadership position. The leaders who are very important to the employees in the organisation are the Deans of the Schools, Managers of the Administration Departments and Heads of the Academic Departments. According to Gold (1997), leaders play a huge role in setting the right storytelling culture in an

organisation. Fisher and Dufresne (2002) propose that Managers should incorporate storytelling into their manager's roles and functions. The information gathered from the organisation definitely supports Fisher and Dufresne's proposal.

The high percentage of interviewees who stated that their superiors are their first point of contacts supports the proposition that having the right leader with the right attitude and ability supports a storytelling culture in an organisation. The interviewees considered it important that the organisation's leaders are knowledgeable of the how, who, what and why in order to give the right advice and direction to new the staff. A leader who lacks such knowledge may face some difficulties in advising new employees. On the same basis, the leaders in this organisation should also ensure that the knowledge they convey is correct.

A country's culture plays a role in people's behavior in setting the storytelling culture in their organisations (Holtshouse, 1999; Husted and Michailova, 2002 and Hutchings, 2005). The Hofstede Cultural Study (Hofstede, 2001) describes Malaysia as a country with high power distance, which means that the individuals who hold power and position are regarded by society as authoritative figures. The organisation employees' choosing their leaders as their points of reference is consistent with the cultural norm of Malaysia which views authoritative figures as knowledgeable experts in their fields. When a leader is seen as an authoritative figure, whatever is transmitted by the leader is seen by the employee as the right and true advice.

Another important perception (STP13) concerns an employee's tendency to transmit the knowledge face-to-face during an interdepartmental transmission. More than 60 percent of the interviewees stated this perception.

Gatherings such as meetings (formal) and lunch hour meals (informal) are viewed as favourable times and events at which to exchange knowledge during an inter-departmental exchange. This is in line with Nonaka's and Collison's 'ba', which highlights the importance of having a place for the exchange of knowledge. Informal meetings and projects that require cross-departmental involvement are also seen as good places to exchange knowledge.

The researcher observed that many cross-departmental working groups within organisation allow a strong working relationship and frequent transmission of knowledge between the departments. The researcher was told during the interview sessions that knowledge exchange was not limited to the tasks at hand but to other topics as well. Therefore, it is important that the organisation continues to form such working groups since it not only strengthens the working relationship between departments but also provides another venue for knowledge transmission among them.

From these four perceptions, three patterns emerged:

Table 27.0: Patterns Identified for Theme One: Knowledge Flow

No	Pattern	The Perception
P1	Point of Contact	STP1, STP10
P2	Face-to-face Transfer	STP2
P3	Inter-departmental Exchange	STP13

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

The three patterns led to the identification of Theme 1 for this research:

Table 28.0: Theme 1 Identified

No	Theme	Code
1	Knowledge Flow	T1

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

5.1.2 Discussion for Theme Two: Exchange Factors

After conducting the data analysis in Chapter Four, seven perceptions are formed with regards to the environment of exchange needed in the organisation:

Table 29.0: Perceptions for Theme Two: Exchange Factors

No	Perception Descriptions	Nomenclature
STP14	Knowledge is transmitted in public and at easily accessible places.	Frequently cited : >60 percent
STP15	Formal venues such as meeting rooms are used.	Often cited : 40 - 60 percent
STP16	Discussions occur while having meal.	Often cited : 40 - 60 percent
STP17	Before, during, and after gathering times are often used for knowledge exchange.	Often cited : 40 - 60 percent
STP18	Comfortable and conducive environment (friendly, relaxing and calm) stimulates knowledge transmission.	Frequently cited : >60 percent
STP44	Encouraging interaction between employees encourages knowledge-sharing between them.	Frequently cited : >60 percent
STP45	An appreciative organisation encourages knowledge-sharing within the organisation.	Often cited : 40 - 60 percent

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

The interviewees frequently cited that public, open and easily accessible venues were used by the employees to transmit knowledge (STP14). This is consistent with the findings of Davidson and Voss (2002) and Collison and Parcel (2001), who all state that convenient places must be available to encourage knowledge sharing.

At the organisation, open places included the music room, lecturers' lounge, pathways, lifts, *suraus (prayers room)*, corridors, toilets, café, staff room and general open spaces. These places are public spaces which are accessible to all employees and are frequented by them. As such, knowledge transmission happens almost everywhere at the organisation.

Frequent use of these accessible places at the organisation seems to support 'Management by Storying Around' (Armstrong, 1992). The preferences for such informal places are related to the fact that the employees use their meal times for discussion as well as taking their meals (STP16). This is in line with the findings of David and Voss (2002) in that knowledge transfer is normal when the employees have food together.

By recognizing this phenomenon, it may assist an organisation tap into a bottom-up approach initiated by the employees themselves. Meal times are also

preferred by the interviewees because it is a time when everyone is available. It is viewed as the best time to hold a discussion with colleagues. A few interviewees do have some reservations about the suitability of public places due to possible interferences from others and the noise that surround these places.

Although the majority of participants stated a preference for open spaces to transmit knowledge, a few interviewees mentioned that there are times when secluded and closed places are favored. Examples cited for such a location were discussions involving confidential matters and issues of trust. The music room was also found to be a useful venue for knowledge exchange at the organisation. Spending time after office hours in the music room had at least on one occasion, resulted in an improved work processes for the employees.

The organisation's employees seemed to be making full use of the monthly gathering sessions. During the interview sessions, the interviewer was informed that the employees would usually start entering the meeting rooms ten minutes before the gathering was scheduled to start. It was during these ten minutes that the discussions among the employees took place. Some of the gatherings mentioned are the academic gathering (formal gathering) and the family club gathering (social gathering).

Other knowledge transmission opportunities exist after office hours when the employees have tea, dinner or late supper together. Some of the formal venues that were mentioned by the interviewees (STP15) are the office, discussion rooms and meeting rooms.

More than 60 percent of the employees highlighted the importance of having places which are conducive for knowledge exchange. The interviewees mentioned that a place should be friendly, relaxed, casual and calm. These characteristics could be found in most places mentioned earlier, especially the staff room, café, lecturer's lounge and *surau* (prayers room).

One interviewee highlighted that having a 'no-shoes zone' for their usual meeting space had helped the interviewee to create a more pleasant environment for

the employees. This is due to cultural influences where the individuals prefer to sit on the floor rather than sit on the chairs and sofas.

Having a television might also help to create a more relaxing and informal environment as mentioned by the interviewees during the interview sessions. One reason why a person seeks a relaxing and calm environment is that it allows the information to be absorbed more easily. Knowledge is easily understood in a calm environment compared to a noisy environment which may cause annoyance and result to the lack of concentration in the discussion.

The interviewees highlighted the importance of having more gatherings, more venues in which to socialize and more time to socialize (STP44). This is consistent with the earlier discussion which emphasized using gatherings to transmit knowledge. Also, as stated earlier, knowledge was transmittable almost everywhere in the organisation. Thus, construction of more venues would certainly be helpful to the employees.

Between 40 to 60 percent of the interviewees agreed that having an open door policy and demonstrating a form of appreciation towards the employees encourage knowledge-sharing in an organisation (STP45). By having such a policy, the employees feel comfortable to go to their superiors' offices to have a discussion, enabling them to gain knowledge. This research suggests a new finding with regarding to the environment.

From these seven perceptions, three patterns emerged which are:

Table 30.0: Patterns for Theme Two: Exchange Factors

No	Pattern	The Perception
P4	Exchange Place	STP14, STP15, STP18
P5	Exchange Time	STP16, STP17
P6	Exchange Stimulants	STP44, STP45

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

These three patterns led to the identification of the second theme for this research:

Table 31.0: Themes 1 & 2 Identified

Theme No	Theme Name	Code
1	Knowledge Flow	T1
2	Exchange Factors	T2

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

5.1.3 Discussion for Theme Three: Personality Preferences

In Chapter Four, eleven perceptions are formed with regards to the preferred personality types involved in knowledge transmission:

Table 32.0: Perceptions for Theme Three: Personality Preferences

No	Perception Descriptions	Nomenclature
STP19	Good image and disposition of knowledge bearer is important.	Frequently cited : >60 percent
STP20	The story bearer being knowledgeable is important	Often cited : 40 – 60 percent
STP5	Important to gauge the audience's receptiveness through body language.	Often cited: 40-60 percent
STP21	Communication skill is important to transmit knowledge.	Few cited : < 40 percent
STP22	Position of the knowledge bearer in the organisation is crucial.	Often cited : 40 -60 percent
STP23	Willingness to listen, share, and participate is important to encourage the knowledge bearer to share more.	Often cited : 40-60 percent
STP24	Committed, loyal, and trusted knowledge recipient is important.	Few cited : < 40 percent
STP25	Good general attitude of recipient important to encourage the knowledge bearer to share knowledge.	Often cited : 40-60 percent
STP26	Knowledge is transmitted to the recipient regardless of the recipient's character.	Few cited : < 40 percent
STP27	Intelligence of the other party is important when transmitting knowledge.	Few cited : < 40 percent
STP28	Similarity in goals and opinion is a factor to encourage sharing knowledge.	Few cited : < 40 percent
STP29	Continuous interaction is required to maintain a positive relationship and encourage future exchange.	Frequently cited : >60 percent

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

There are two terminologies that were created for the purpose of this research- ***Knowledge Bearer*** (or ‘bearer’) and ***Knowledge Recipient*** (or ‘recipient’). The term ‘Knowledge Bearer’ denotes the individual who possesses or owns the knowledge, whereas the ‘Knowledge Recipient’ is the person who receives knowledge or information.

More than 60 percent of the interviewees stated that a good image and disposition is required in a bearer (STP19). The interviewees mentioned that a bearer should be trustworthy, full of credibility and integrity, respectable, humble, sincere, flexible and approachable. When asked to explain the meaning of approachable, the interviewees explained that a moody knowledge bearer is seen as unapproachable. A snobbish and proud knowledge bearer too, is not favoured by the interviewees.

Out of the eight characteristics of an ideal knowledge bearer, only trust has been mentioned in the literature (Simmons, 2001). Also, Hanappi-Egger et al. (2005) mention how trust is a very important characteristic in order for knowledge to be transmitted. Simmons (2001) also states how trust within the organisation is needed for an employee to participate in the storytelling effort. The other characteristics obtained in this research are new findings.

Both the recipient and the bearer should be trustworthy (STP24). A few interviewees mentioned that both the knowledge bearer and knowledge recipient must be trustworthy individuals. If neither the knowledge bearer nor the recipient possesses this characteristic, then the transmission of knowledge in the organisation will be disrupted.

Apart from being trustworthy, the knowledge bearer must have a good disposition and the willingness to listen, share and participate (STP23). These characteristics are important to encourage the knowledge bearer to share with a recipient. These characteristics are new findings on the subject of knowledge transmission.

It was also noted by 40 to 60 percent of the interviewees that a knowledgeable story bearer is important in transmitting knowledge in an organisation (STP20). Here, knowledgeable means that the person is both knowledgeable (possesses the relevant knowledge) and has some general experiences on the subject matter.

The interviewees often cited that ‘a general good behaviour’ of a knowledge recipient is highly appreciated (STP25). Some of the characteristics that describe a good behaviour are the willingness to learn, trustworthiness and loyalty towards the organisation. This finding is important as only a few of the interviewees cited that they would transmit knowledge regardless of the other party’s behaviour (STP26) while the other interviewees mentioned that they resist sharing knowledge with individuals who show poor behaviour.

It is interesting to note that the interviewees tend to give importance to the character of an individual, regardless or whether the individual is a knowledge bearer or a recipient before deciding to share knowledge. Generally, a knowledge bearer does not want to share knowledge with a person of a bad character, and the recipient too, does not wish to receive knowledge from such persons. However, when people have positive opinions on each other in an organisation, a successful knowledge-sharing and storytelling culture is more likely to spread in the organisation. This is another new finding in the research.

As for the importance of the knowledge bearer’s position, the interviewees often mentioned that the position a knowledge bearer holds at the organisation adds importance to the knowledge which the bearer wished to share (STP22). A person with a higher authoritative position in the organisation is seen as more knowledgeable, thus a more favoured source than a lower-ranking person. This new finding is not surprising as this pattern is consistent with the cultural themes discovered in this research where Malaysia, being a high power distant culture, gives high respect to people in authoritative positions.

Although there were some debates pertaining to the style of a story being transmitted (Denning, 2004b; Melymuka, 2004), this research noted that only a few of the interviewees placed importance on the style of communication in a person’s effort

of storytelling (STP21). Rather, importance is placed on whether the knowledge is transmitted successfully. This finding supports the literature by Dixon (1999), MacNeil (2003), and Collison and Parcell (2001) who emphasise the importance of getting the employees across the board to participate in knowledge transmission through storytelling.

The researcher found that only a few of the interviewees stated that similarity in goals and opinion is needed in sharing knowledge (STP28). This finding is healthy as it means that the differences in opinion would not impair knowledge transmission efforts in this organisation. The individuals are able to see beyond their own points of view and this encourages more discussions to take place between them.

Another important aspect that the researcher observed is that a constructive relationship between the knowledge bearer and recipient, the positive character of the actors, and good subjective impressions are important factors in successful knowledge transmission at the organisation. The absence of such criteria might be a barrier to the knowledge transmission efforts in this organisation. As such, management efforts to strengthen the relationship and bonding among the employees should be continued at the organisation. This leads this research to a new finding that suggests that employees have to continuously maintain their relationships with each other for the knowledge transmission to be successful in the organisation (STP29).

About 40 – 60 percent of the interviewees cited that it is important to gauge the receptiveness of the person to whom they are transmitting the knowledge to (STP5). This is a discovery that has not been documented in any literature on this subject. These interviewees stated that this could be done only if the employees could observe the recipient's facial expression and body language.

The importance of gauging the other party's receptiveness is related to the issue of obtaining feedback and trust. As Interviewee Thirteen mentioned, “...*from the expression of that person, we can know whether the person is giving us the attention, can accept our problem. All from the expression of the face. We can know whether the person can be trusted...*”

From these eleven perceptions, three patterns have emerged as outlined in the table below.

Table 33.0: Patterns for Theme Three: Personality Preferences

No	Pattern	The Perception
P7	Characteristic of Knowledge Bearer	STP19, STP20, STP21, STP22
P8	Characteristics of Knowledge Recipient	STP23, STP24, STP25, STP26, STP28
P9	Maintaining Relationship	STP29

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

These three patterns led to the identification of the third theme that occurred in this research:

Table 34.0: Theme Identification 1, 2, 3

Theme No	Theme Name	Code
1	Knowledge Flow	T1
2	Exchange Factors	T2
3	Personality Preferences	T3

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

5.1.4 Discussion for Theme Four: Story Characteristics

Chapter Four illustrated four perceptions that characterise the stories which can be found at the organisation.

The perceptions are listed in the following table:

Table 35.0: Perceptions for Theme Four: Story Character

No	Perception Descriptions	Nomenclature
STP30	Stories on organisational culture such as teamwork, tolerance to mistakes, the sense of belonging, customer service, cooperation and management style are shared.	Very often cited : >60 percent
STP31	Stories on problem solving are shared and transmitted.	Very often cited : >60 percent
STP32	Stories may have a long survival period.	Often cited : 40 - 60 percent

STP33	Examples of storytelling techniques include keeping the stories simple, breaking the ice, citing past experiences, using effective seating positions and adding humour to stories.	Few cited : 40 percent
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Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

This table shows that more than 60 percent of the interviewees used stories to transmit knowledge on organisational culture (STP30) as proposed by Boje (1991), Boje (1995), Coopman and Meidliner (2000) and Hansen and Kahnweiler (1993). Organisational culture subjects such as teamwork, tolerance to mistakes, sense of belonging, customer service, cooperation between parties and management style, are shared.

This also reflects the subjective and personal nature of knowledge transmission whereby an employee has a personal interest in what is being shared with others within the organisation.

Stories may also be used to solve the problems in an organisation (STP31). More than 60 percent of the interviewees transmitted stories of such nature to guide others on how to solve the problems that they face in the organisation.

The researcher also observed that the interviewees were often told stories about incidents that happened before their employment in the organisation (STP32). This new finding on the survival of a transmitted story is significant, because it suggests that a story has the potential to live in perpetuity. The details of the earlier story mentioned in this context was before the organisation was established in 2000. This story described the attributes of the pioneer group which set up the organisation, with the theme that the present employees should work hard despite the odds and be committed to the vision and mission of the organisation as the pioneers had shown before. These are the values that were mentioned by the interviewees throughout the interview sessions.

Like any other style of communication, the techniques used in storytelling were not seen as an important aspect in knowledge transmission in an organisation (STP33). Some of the techniques which were mentioned by a few of the interviewees

including keeping the story simple, ‘breaking the ice’, using past experiences, utilising effective seating positions and adding humour to one’s story.

The following three patterns have emerged based on the researcher’s five perceptions:

Table 36.0: Patterns for Theme Four: Story Character

No	Pattern	The Perception
P10	Story Variety	STP30, STP31
P11	Story Survival	STP32
P12	Story Delivery Technique	STP33

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

These three patterns led to the identification of “Story Character” which is the fourth theme found in the researcher’s study:

Table 37.0: Themes Identified 1-4

Theme No	Theme Name	Code
1	Knowledge Flow	T1
2	Exchange Factors	T2
3	Personality Preferences	T3
4	Story Characteristics	T4

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

5.1.5 Discussion for Theme Five: Story Acceptance

There were ten perceptions that were formed on the types of stories that can be found in the organisation which are shown in the following table.

Table 38.0: Perceptions for Theme Five: Story Acceptance

No	Perception Descriptions	Nomenclature
STP34	The process of story verification is important in knowledge transmission.	Frequently cited : >60 percent
STP35	Verification is done by referring to the right source.	Frequently cited : >60 percent
STP36	Verification depends on free time.	Few cited : < 40 percent
STP37	Verification is done during the post mortem period.	Few cited : < 40 percent

STP38	Verification is done based on the knowledge recipient's instinct.	Few cited : < 40 percent
STP39	Individuals interpret knowledge differently, making verification necessary in knowledge transmission.	Frequently cited : >60 percent
STP40	The knowledge is adapted, creating a new context.	Often cited : 40 - 60 percent
STP41	Knowledge is resisted because of knowledge bearer's attitude.	Often cited : 40 - 60 percent
STP42	Resistance occurs because of the knowledge itself.	Often cited : 40 - 60 percent
STP43	Techniques may be used to overcome resistance.	Frequently cited : >60 percent

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

As the table shows, the interviewees often mentioned that it is important to verify the knowledge that is transmitted (STP34). More than 60 percent of the interviewees stated that verification is important because the interpretation of a story tends to differ from one person to another (STP39). A recipient may misinterpret or misunderstand the content of a story, making the verification process an important step in knowledge transmission (Thier and Erlach, 2005).

Verification of knowledge may be done during free time (STP36) or during the post-mortem period (STP37) as highlighted by a few of the interviewees. The interviewees also stated that they use their instincts to judge if any verification is needed in a particular communication (STP38). The diversity in the interviewee's responses shows that verification occurs according to the interviewee's individual preferences.

When asked how verification is made, more than 60 percent of the interviewees said that verification is done through asking the right person. The "right person" is any person with actual knowledge (STP35).

Between 40 to 60 percent of the interviewees stated that when the recipients received knowledge, they would adapt the new knowledge to their particular situation, creating a new working context (STP40).

There were times, however when a recipient might resist knowledge. The interviewees cited a few reasons for this resistance. A recipient might be reluctant to accept knowledge because of the recipient's dislike for the knowledge bearer (STP41). This finding is consistent with the researcher's finding whereby the character of a knowledge bearer is important to the interviewees (STP19) as discussed in Characteristics of Knowledge Bearer (P7) above. Apart from that, knowledge might also be resisted because it seemed unrelated, tedious and non-practical (STP42).

Some of the interviewees shared a few techniques to help reduce the resistance towards transmission of knowledge (STP43). Those techniques include clarification, sharing personal experiences, demonstrating humbleness, becoming a good listener and projecting oneself as a knowledgeable person.

From these ten perceptions, three patterns emerged as shown in the following table:

Table 39.0: Patterns for Theme Five: Story Acceptance

No	Pattern	The Perception
P13	Verification of story	STP34, STP35, STP36, STP37, STP38, STP, 39, STP40
P14	Story Resistance	STP41, STP42
P15	Techniques overcoming resistance	STP43

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

The three patterns led to the identification of the fifth theme for this research:

Table 40.0: Themes Identified 1-5

Theme No	Theme Name	Code
1	Knowledge Flow	T1
2	Exchange Factors	T2
3	Personality Preferences	T3
4	Story Characteristics	T4
5	Story Acceptance	T5

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

5.2 The New Findings

In this research, the researcher uncovers several new and interesting findings, which were discovered from the process of analyzing the interviewees' responses. As this is a qualitative research and limited to a single case study organisation, the findings cannot be generalised in a broader sense and are, therefore, unique to this research. Nonetheless, they make an important contribution to the field of research, challenging previous research findings and providing new insights into transmission of knowledge within organisations in the form of storytelling. The new findings extracted from all the discussions above are extracted and listed in the table below:

Table 41.0: New Findings Derived From Interview Data

Storytelling Perception	Pattern	Theme	The Findings
STP5	Characteristics of Knowledge Recipient (P8)	Personality Preferred (T3)	Receptiveness of the knowledge recipient can be gauged by observing their facial expressions and body language.
STP19	Characteristics of Knowledge Bearer(P7)	Personality Preferred (T3)	Recipients prefer bearers who project a good image and disposition, and seem to have qualities such as integrity, credibility, respectability, humility, sincerity, and who seem to be flexible and approachable.
STP22	Characteristics of Knowledge Bearer(P7)	Personality Preferred (T3)	A knowledge bearer's position within the organisation brings importance to the knowledge they transmit.
STP23	Characteristics of Knowledge Recipient (P8)	Personality Preferred (T3)	Recipients must be willing to listen, share, and participate in order to encourage the knowledge bearer to share more knowledge.
STP29	Maintaining Relationship (P9)	Personality Preferred (T3)	Employees must persistently maintain their relationships for knowledge transmission to be successful between them.
STP32	Story Survival (P11)	Story Character (T4)	Stories have the potential of surviving indefinitely.
STP41	Story Resistance (P14)	Story Acceptance (T5)	Knowledge resistance may occur because the recipient dislikes the attitude of the knowledge bearer.

Source: Developed from a content analysis of interview transcripts

5.3 The Proposed Conceptual Framework

This research was conducted using the Collison/Parcell KM Model as its conceptual framework. However, after analysis and discussion of the data, the researcher proposes that a new conceptual framework be used to answer the research question:

How Can Storytelling Play a Role as a Knowledge Transmission Mechanism in an Education-Based Organisation in Malaysia?

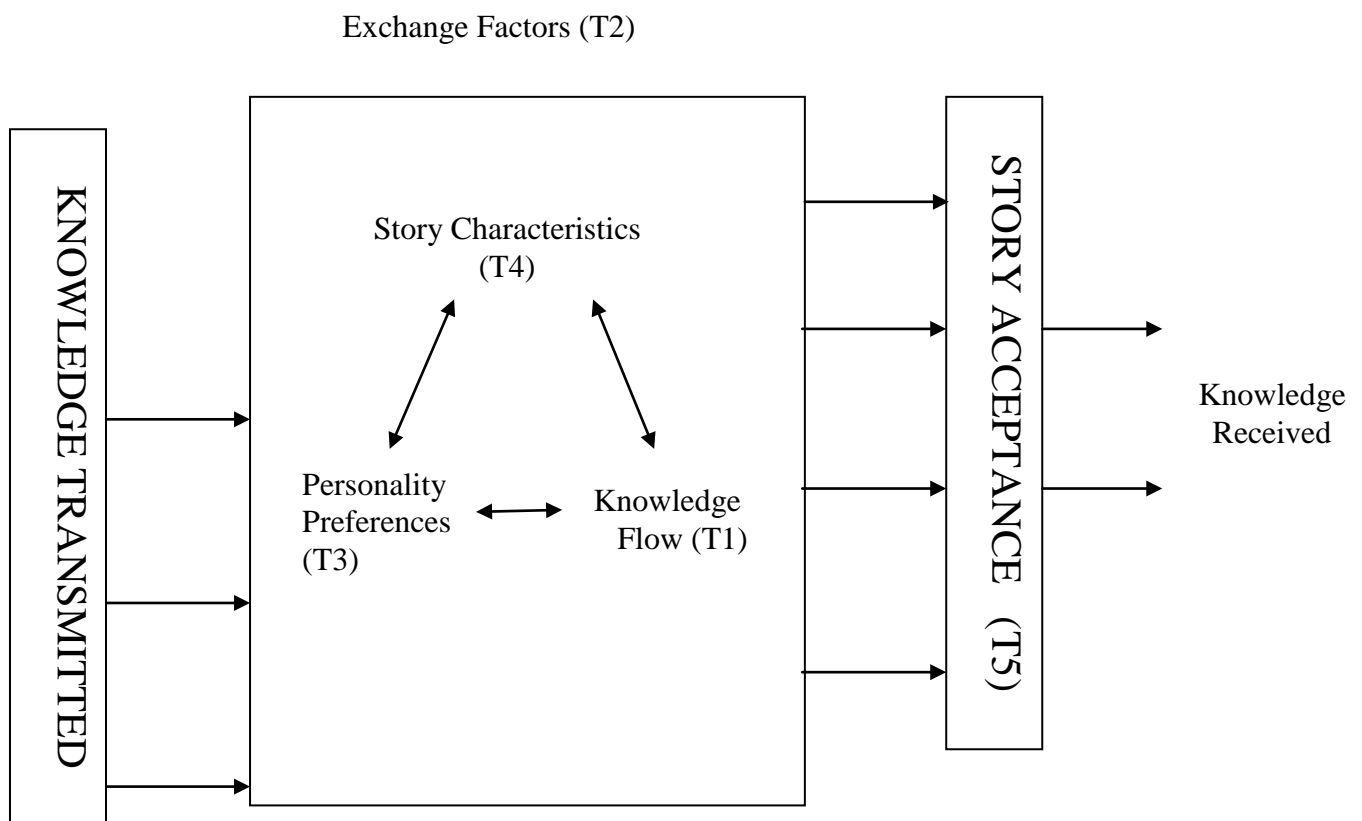


Figure 6.0: Proposed Storytelling-Knowledge Transmission Conceptual Framework

As shown in the new framework in Figure 6.0 the five factors (or themes) proposed by the researcher do influence the success of knowledge transmission using storytelling in an education-based organisation in Malaysia. These factors are

Exchange Factors (T2), *Knowledge Flow* (T1), *Personality Preferences* (T3), *Story Characteristics* (T4) and *Story Acceptance* (T5).

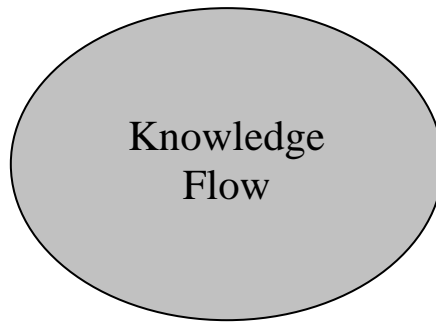
The framework starts with knowledge, which is transmitted by the knowledge bearer in the organisation. Knowledge-sharing may be triggered by any number of needs such as problem-solving, decision-making and instilling an organisational culture, among others. The need will then trigger the action of knowledge transmission.



Exchange Factors

Exchange Factors (T2) are important in determining whether the culture of knowledge transmission through storytelling exists within an organisation. The three exchange factors that must be considered are the place (P4), time (P5) and management support (P6). A place (P4) may be informal and public (STP14) or formal and private (STP15). A comfortable and sharing-conducive environment, which is friendly, relaxing, 'homey' and calm is preferred for knowledge transmission (STP18). As for the timing for knowledge transmission (P5), it may include any convenient mealtime, including tea time or lunch time (STP16). An appropriate time may also include any time before, during or after gathering time (STP17). Stimulants used to encourage knowledge transmission (P6) refer to an environment which promotes interaction between the employees (STP44). As an example, appreciation from the management also encourages knowledge sharing and transmission among the employees in the organisation (STP45).

With the existence of the right place, time and stimulants (Exchange Factors-T2), the employees are encouraged to exchange knowledge among themselves. When the exchange factors are present, three factors could come into play, which are *Knowledge Flow* (T1), *Personality Preferences* (T3) and *Story Characteristics* (T4). These three factors are inter-related with each other and are discussed one by one.

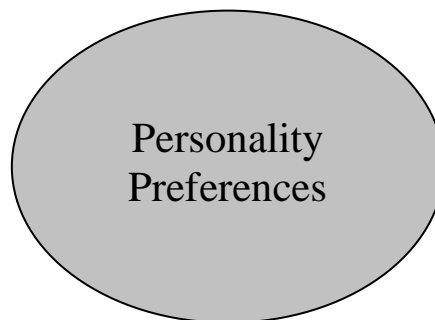


The first factor which is *Knowledge Flow* (T1) covers

- point of contact (P1),
- face-to-face transfer (P2), and
- inter-departmental exchange (P3).

In order to impart knowledge, there must be a point of contact (P1) where the individuals meet to exchange knowledge (STP1). The most preferred style of transfer (P2) is face-to-face contact (STP2). Usually, the point of contact for a new employee is the superior within the department (STP10). Knowledge is transmitted not only between the individuals in the same department but it is also being transmitted between individuals in different departments (STP 13 and P3).

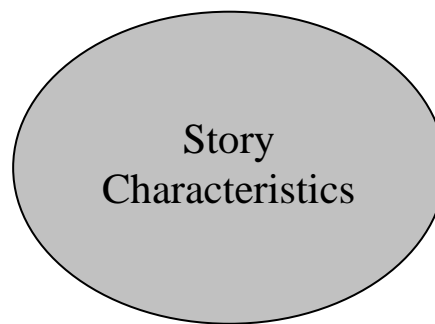
The second factor that would have an impact on knowledge transmission is *Personality Preferences* (T3).



Personality Preferences (T3) are the characteristics, personalities and conditions, which are required for knowledge transmission via storytelling to happen. The knowledge bearer (P7), the knowledge recipient (P8), and the relationship between them (P9) should have certain characteristics to be successful in any knowledge transmission. Firstly, the knowledge bearer (P7) should have a good image and disposition (STP19), be knowledgeable (STP20) and have a good position in the organisation (STP22). Any particular style of communication is unnecessary

(STP21). Secondly, the knowledge recipient (P8) should be a willing learner (STP23) and have a good attitude and character (STP25). These two characteristics, however, are not a condition (STP26) for knowledge transmission to happen in the organisation. It is important that a good ongoing relationship between the bearer and the recipient to be maintained because continuous interaction facilitates knowledge transmission in the future (STP29 and P9). One is able to judge the receptiveness of the recipients (P8) through their facial expression and body language in a face-to-face interaction (STP5).

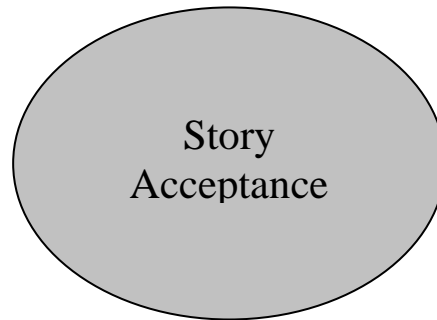
Lastly, the third factor that influences knowledge exchange is the *Story's Characteristics* (P4).



Story Characteristics (T4) reflects the variety of stories (P10), a story's survivability in the organisation (P11) and story delivery techniques (P12). The subjects of stories vary from one another. Stories may concern the organisational culture (STP30), problem-solving methods (STP31) and other related subjects. The stories in the organisation have the potential of a long life survival (STP32). They may survive several cycles of employee turnover and may continue to be useful tools despite their age and subject matter. Even though the individuals may use a variety of delivery techniques, there is no particular technique which is crucial to storytelling (STP33).

The three exchange factors discussed above which are *Knowledge Flow* (T1), *Personality Preferences* (T3) and *Story Characteristics* (T4) do have an influence on the success of the knowledge exchange (T2) between the employees.

The last factor which is *Story Acceptance* (T5) determines whether those stories which were shared between the employees are being accepted or resisted by them.



Story Acceptance (T5) includes the verification of story (P13), factors affecting story resistance (P14) and techniques used to overcome the resistance towards the story shared (P15). Story verification is considered important (STP34) and is usually done by referring to the original source (STP35). The stories can be verified during an employee's free time (STP36) or during an event's post-mortem (STP37). The employees may accept or reject a story based on their instincts (STP38). Verification too, is seen as necessary due to the possibility of the stories being misinterpreted (STP39).

Knowledge, on the other hand, may be resisted due to the knowledge bearer's negative attitude (STP41) or if the recipient doubts the accuracy of the information received (STP42). There are some techniques that may be used to overcome knowledge resistance such as asking for feedback, sharing objectives and personal experiences, demonstrating humbleness, and being considered a knowledgeable person (STP43).

After verification is made, the knowledge recipient usually makes the necessary adaptation to the story to suit the current context (STP40). If a story is accepted by the knowledge recipient, the knowledge has successfully been transmitted using the storytelling method.

5.4 Implications for the Literatures

This research has offered a framework to be used by researchers whose interest lies in the soft approach of knowledge management, particularly for

researchers who are interested to understand and explore further the possibilities of using storytelling as a method of knowledge transfer or knowledge sharing.

In Chapter Two, this research has highlighted 11 (eleven) research questions related to the two fields of knowledge which are knowledge sharing/transfer and storytelling. They are the types of place of transfer, the type of ambience to stimulate transfer, factors that effects interdepartmental transfer, the right time of transfer, the knowledge decision, the types of stories to transfer, the resistance to stories transferred, the variety of story delivery techniques, the motivation to share knowledge, the methods of transferring knowledge and the type of management support needed to encourage knowledge transfer among employees. After data collection and data analysis process, all these research questions have been answered with the introduction of the new Conceptual Storytelling-Knowledge Transmission Framework.

The new conceptual Storytelling-Knowledge Transmission Framework suggested to the researchers that there are 5 (five) factors that needed to be addressed for a successful knowledge sharing to happen via storytelling. They are the factors that would stimulate exchange of knowledge (Exchange Factors – T2), factors that encourages/triggers the start of knowledge transfer (Knowledge Flow – T1), personalities, characteristics and conditions that are required to exist for knowledge transfer to happen (Personality Preferences – T3), the variety of stories, its survival and delivery techniques that would influence knowledge transfer (Story Characteristics – T4) and lastly the factors that would determine the acceptance or rejection of knowledge transferred among employees (Story Acceptance – T5).

With the introduction of this framework, researchers now has a better understanding among others the various stimulants for knowledge transfer, what to do to sustain the knowledge sharing via storytelling culture, what is needed and how to create a storytelling culture in the organisation, critical factors that would affect the success or failure of storytelling culture in an organisation, the types of employees characteristics that would support organisational culture of knowledge sharing via storytelling, the situations of when knowledge transfer is being resisted by the recipient, the importance of having ‘good’ stories circulating in the organisation, the

importance to understand the facial expression and body language of the recipient while transferring knowledge to them and the right ambience that are needed in the organisation to stimulate and encourage knowledge sharing in the organisation.

Researchers in this field may look at each finding in this dissertation and further refine them. For an example, as discussed earlier, Exchange Factors (T2) is an important determinant of whether the knowledge transmission via storytelling culture exists in an organisation. And the three factors of Exchange Factors are Place, Time and Stimulants. A future research may look into Place Factor and further refine their research into finding out types of settings, ambience and environment that most suitable for a specific situation or type of organisation.

5.5 Implications for Business Policy and Practice

While qualitative in nature and limited to a particular setting, the results of this research led the researcher to come up with several practices that organisations may find beneficial in order to seek a culture of storytelling in their respective organisations. These following suggestions are hypothetical by nature and should be adapted accordingly to one's organisation. The suggestions are:

- Identifying their key personnel who carry critical knowledge. This is very much related to the data collected where employees always tend to refer to persons they felt would be able to guide them in solving that particular issue. Therefore, by having identified and make known key employees who carries the critical knowledge, it would save time taken by employees to seek the knowledge and at the same time it would benefit of the organisation in general. The list of these key personnel should be made known within the organisation;
- designing evaluation and compensation systems that reward teams rather than individuals. This might require the organisation to revamp their traditional compensation system that usually rewards individual performance.

Having a team-based compensation would further encourage employees to work as a team as they understood the ‘all for one’ and ‘one for all’ at another level. This would also encourage intradepartmental and interdepartmental cooperation in the organisation;

- considering administering personality tests prior to employment to ensure the suitability of a candidate for the organizational work culture. This is because this research has shown that certain types of personalities are preferred in order to encourage knowledge sharing via storytelling in the organisation. Failing to employ the right type of employees that suits the organizational culture might create a setback to the organisation’s progress forward;
- conducting formal and informal activities regularly that enhance relationships, bonding and trust between employees. Organisations that wish to promote the knowledge sharing via storytelling culture in their set up should continuously hold activities both formal and informal in their organisation. Activities could be as simple and informal as departmental luncheon, Friday pot-luck gathering, to a more formal ones such as organizational yearly dinner, weekly meeting, or even formal but casual activities such as company’s picnic. All these would provide opportunities for employees to get to know one another at a more personal level, increase trust between them and indirectly would strengthen their working relationships;
- Providing venues that are accessible, comfortable and conducive for employees to interact with one another. Employers should provide venues/places that have the right ambience and would stimulate interaction among employees. For example, it can be as simple as having a coffee place/pantry with a good coffee maker where employees would gather and even a nice and comfortable sofa. Suggested venues should also be a common place where employees from various departments could gather to allow interdepartmental sharing

5.6 Limitations of the research

During the research, there were a number of limitations that were faced.

5.6.1 External Validity

For this research, generalisability to the population is not possible due to insufficient representation (one organisation) and because the nature of the research being interpretative.

5.6.2 Internal Validity

- Purposive sampling is one limitation of this research which is required by a qualitative inquiry sampling method.
- Limitation comes from the interview methodology where only stories or narratives that are ‘story-worthy’ are being shared by the participants due to the ontological paradigm of a qualitative study.
- The study uses the Nonaka and Takeuchi’s Model as one of its working conceptual framework and Nonaka and Takeuchi Model focuses on two quadrants: socialisation and externalisation because these two modes are about knowledge transfer using face-to face and peer-to-peer interaction. Therefore, the issue of whether the knowledge transferred is actually being internalised by the recipients is outside of the scope of the study.

5.7 Direction for Future Research

Based on the limitations of this research, as was discussed in Chapter Three, researchers studying storytelling in the future may consider having a larger sample size with variations from different industries in their research. Researchers too, may wish to consider studying the size of an organisation and its impact on storytelling efforts within it. Another topic of research, which a researcher may wish to study, is

the extent of internalisation of knowledge transmitted using storytelling. Researchers may also undertake future researches based on different country or cultural context. Similar future studies can also be conducted across industries and across countries.

5.8 Conclusion

The time is ripe for owners of small and medium business organisations to accept Malaysia's invitation to participate in the knowledge economy. By understanding the characteristics of a K-economy, a business must realize that the knowledge its employees possesses is part and parcel of its assets. As such, this knowledge must be retained and used to increase the business' competitiveness and sustainability. It is also a wise action for the organisation to develop the knowledge further.

This study highlights storytelling as a means to transmit knowledge between employees. Factors such as having the right environment, personality, attitude and organisational culture encourage and stimulate the use of storytelling to transmit knowledge in an organisation.

While the results here are context specific, this research potentially offers insight to present and future organisations in developing human capital management strategies, especially the small and medium businesses.

The results of this research could also contribute to the pragmatic / managerial abilities of an organisation by suggesting methods to capitalise on its work processes, work setting and narrative techniques.

The researcher acknowledges the fact that there is no one element that can be linked to an organisation's financial success. However, from the analysis and discussions throughout this research, small and medium business organisations may be better able to appreciate the importance of using storytelling as means to transmit and retain knowledge in their organisations, which in turn, will contribute to their success.

Finally, the themes within this research may be used as variables in a quantitative study to establish whether the findings can be generalised.

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Appendix A

AUTHORISATION TO DO RESEARCH



INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC COLLEGE
الكلية الإسلامية العالمية
KOLEJ ISLAM ANTARABANGSA
Managed by Intelmatics Sdn. Bhd. (509334-W)
Wholly owned by subsidiary of IIUM



30th May 2006

Ms Zabrina Abu Bakar
(Student I/D : c3036045)
10, Jalan Amzil
Taman Melewar
68100 Kuala Lumpur

AUTHORISATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am pleased to inform you that International Islamic College (IIC) agrees with the new proposed method of participant recruitment.

You are hereby authorized for the following:

- 1) To communicate and deal directly with the staff of International Islamic College and are also allowed to recruit volunteers directly to participate in your research.
- 2) To request the email's addresses of all staff from the Information Technology Department of IIC.
- 3) To request for venue within the campus area for the purpose of conducting the interview.
- 4) To request information/assistance from all/any departments for the purpose of the research.

I understand that you will exercise two types of data collection: observation and in-depth interview. Both data collections may be conducted during the official office hour of the organization which is between 9.00am to 5.00pm. Participations are also voluntary and I understand that all data collected are strictly confidential.

I agree with the newly proposed participant recruitment method as proposed by you.

I agree to disclose the name of the organization in your research dissertation.

I also request the summary report to be given to the International Islamic College in due course.

Should you need any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Shazaizuarni at 03-61876900 ext 111.

I wish you all the best.

Kolej Islam Antarabangsa
No. 1, Jalan 31/10A, Taman Batu Muda, 68100 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel : 03-6187 6900 Fax : 03-6184 1900

Appendix B

INQUIRY PROTOCOL



The UNIVERSITY
of NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

The University of Newcastle
Faculty of Business and Law
Faculty International and Remote
Service Unit (FIRS)

University Drive
Callaghan NSW Australia 2308

Telephone: 61 2 4921 7372
Facsimile: 61 2 4921 6127
Email: Bus-Law-FIRS@newcastle.edu.au

Inquiry Protocol

Welcome and Inform the Participants

1. Welcome the participant and thank them for taking the time to tell their stories about their experiences in the organization.
2. The interview is confidential. They will not be identified to the organization or within the final documents. Their stories and comments will be complied with those of the others being interviewed.
3. They will be given the opportunity to review the transcript of their interview.
4. Review the consent form and ensure that their signatures are obtained. Remind participants that their participation is entirely voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any stage without penalty.
5. Inform them that the interview will be audio-taped which allows me to be sure that I can examine exactly what they said later. Additional, audio-taping allows both of us to focus on the inquiry. Tell the participant that I may make occasional notes.
6. Tell them that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions, I am most interested in their experiences, their memories and the stories that have to tell me.
7. Give definitions of storytelling and knowledge :

Storytelling is:

Story is a part of narrative. Narratives studies a collection of stories to allow **you and the people around here interpret of both events and things in the past or present.** A story is a spoken record of experiences, events and people about the past or present which may or may not include you. You may have stories about a time when you weren't even here and about the organization. Narratives have a deeper meaning than just telling a story. It has a further objective, which is to make the narratives a pervasive element of the organization's life (Snowden, 2001a). It also involves the creation of certain patterns through the analysis of collection of stories, and at the same time, it also allows sense-making (Oliver and Snowden, 2005; Boje, 1991) in the organization.

Knowledge is:

Knowledge is any information that serves the purpose of serving the organization to perform and compete better. It also involves ideas, thoughts and beliefs.

8. Tell them to ask for clarification if they don't understand a question.
9. Ask if they have any questions of me before we begin

The Inquiry Part One : Opening Questions

1. What do you define as organisational knowledge?
2. a) When you think about knowledge in this organization and its role in what you might be doing this year, describe what are the kinds of practices or activities that do you do in relation to the development of knowledge within this organisation,

b) What practices or activities are others within the organisation doing in relation to the development of knowledge within the organisation?

The Inquiry Part Two : Storytelling and knowledge transmission

1. What knowledge do you feel you have, in general terms?
2. Describe on how you think the knowledge you have and the knowledge other people have 'travels' in this organization?
3. When is the 'story' used in your organization to transmit knowledge?
4. Where does story telling take place in your organization? Any specific place?
5. How are stories told in your organization?
6. Tell me the story or stories in this organization on how knowledge is being transmitted. How do you transmit knowledge in this organization?
7. Do you still remember how knowledge was transmitted to you on the first day on the job? What is the nature of the knowledge? Was that knowledge important to you?
8. Tell me the story or stories that are told most. Why is this story important?
9. Tell me your favourite story to tell others about this organization? Why?
10. Tell me the stories that are told about the organization's past way to transmit knowledge.
11. Do you think there are better practices to transmit knowledge than the current practices adopted within the organisation?
12. Are you comfortable with the current practices for transmitting knowledge within this organisation? If no, why? What is the best alternative?

13. What can the organization do to support storytelling in your organization?
14. Have you ever resisted a story being told? If yes, why? If no, why?
15. From your opinion, is there any time when storytelling is more appropriately used?
16. What are the conditions you think best suited for storytelling in your organization?

Closing the Inquiry

1. Are there any stories that are really important to tell me that I didn't ask about?
2. Thank you for telling me your stories.

Appendix C

INVITATION LETTER TO PARTICIPATE



The UNIVERSITY
of NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

The University of Newcastle
Faculty of Business and Law

Faculty International and Remote
Service Unit (FIRS)

University Drive
Callaghan NSW Australia 2308

Telephone: 61 2 4921 7372

Facsimile: 61 2 4921 6127

Email: Bus-Law-FIRS@newcastle.edu.au

12th June 2006

TO ALL STAFF OF INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC COLLEGE

CALLING FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

I am conducting a study on usage of storytelling as a mechanism in knowledge transmission for International Islamic College for my doctoral work in University of Newcastle. My study looks at the stories and its patterns (narratives) that are used to transmit knowledge within the organization.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Participation is voluntarily. There is no negative repercussion for not participating in this research. All data collected are strictly confidential.

Your participation would require approximately one to two hours of your official office hour time to engage with me in a semi-structured interview. During that interview, I will be asking a variety of questions about your stories in the International Islamic College. Additional information about this study is attached. Please refer to Information Sheet attached to this poster.

Please confirm your participation by contacting me directly at the information provided below. You can confirm your interest to participate anytime between 12th of June to 16th of June 2006. I shall contact you to set the date and time for the interview at your convenience between the 17th to 18th of June 2006. The official interview session shall start from 22nd of June to 7th of July 2006.

I will be available within the organizational premises or can be contacted via handphone at 012-6608202 and emails at zabrina.abubakar@gmail.com for answering queries from interested participants from the 9th of June 2006 onwards.

Thank you and I look forward to talking to you.

Sincerely,

Ms Zabrina Abu Bakar
Researcher
University of Newcastle

Appendix D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM



The UNIVERSITY
of NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

Business and Law

The University of Newcastle
Faculty of

Faculty International and Remote
Service Unit (FIRS)

University Drive
Callaghan NSW Australia 2308

Telephone: 61 2 4921 7372

Facsimile: 61 2 4921 6127

Email: Bus-Law-FIRS@newcastle.edu.au

Informed Consent Form

Doctoral Dissertation Research
Zabrina Abu Bakar
University of Newcastle

Dissertation Title

An investigation on the usage of stories as a mechanism of knowledge transmission in International Islamic College, Malaysia

Section 1: Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this study is to examine the usage of stories to transmit knowledge in an education-based institution. The study is founded in the researcher's professional and personal experience as both an academician and administrative staff in the organisation. Observation and individual interviews will be conducted to examine the extent of usage of narrative in the organisation.

Data will be acquired by the researcher through observation and a series of interviews with individuals in both academic and administration position on a voluntary basis. The interviews will focus on each interviewee's observation, experience and interpretation of the subject matter.

Section 2: Confidentiality Statement

All interviews will be audio-taped. All information will remain confidential and anonymous. Any identifying information – names of interviewees and position etc- will be excised from the document.

Access to the research materials is only authorized to the researcher and the research supervisors.

The researcher will acquire the help of a professional transcriber who will sign a confidentiality form agreeing not to divulge any information to other than the researcher and the research advisors.

Once transcribed, both the audio-tapes and interview transcripts will be kept locked in the research supervisor's office.

All recordings will be kept beyond the completion of the dissertation for the purpose of verification. Tapes will be erased and transcripts destroyed once the project has been completed. At the conclusion of the project, data will be burnt onto CD-ROM and stored in a secured area for a minimum of five years. If recordings are to be archived, or used for a purpose different to the research purpose, a specific consent will be required from you. In the event of continued or expanded research on the subject topic, your consent and approval will be sought and Release Form is to be signed by the participants.

Participants will be given the opportunity to review, edit or erase any part of the recording done. During the audio recordings, participants are reminded not to identify themselves or any third party. If the audio recording/tapes are to be destroyed, researcher shall offer to return the tapes to the participants.

Every participant will be provided with the original copy of interview transcript. Interviewee's will have the opportunity to review, correct and verify the records (omit/ erase / change) and data including names and events before approving the interview transcripts.

.

Any participant who has agreed to participate may withdraw anytime without penalty.

There is no monetary compensation for participation in the research.

Section 3: Subject's Permission

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

I understand that I may withdraw anytime without penalty.

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Zabrina Abu Bakar, Researcher
Phone : 019-2658268
Email : siszabrina@gmail.com

(No signature needed)

Professor John Burgess
Work, Employment Relations and Organisations Research Group
School of Business
University of Newcastle NSW
2308
Australia
Phone: [+61-02-49216680](tel:+61-02-49216680)
Email: John.Burgess@newcastle.edu.au

I agree to have my interviews audio-taped under the conditions described in section 2 above.

Signature

Date

This project has been approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee.[Bus-Law/SEGi/5-6/25:06A]

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, telephone (02 49216333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au)

Appendix E

APPROVAL LETTER



INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC COLLEGE
الكلية الإسلامية العالمية
KOLEJ ISLAM ANTARABANGSA
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27th Mac 2006

Ms Zabrina binti Abu Bakar
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PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

With reference to our previous discussions, I am pleased to approve your application to use our organization, the International Islamic College, as your research context.

I understand that you will exercise two types of data collection: observation and in depth interview. Participations are also voluntary.

I understand and agree with the process of recruitment of participants proposed by you.

I also agree to disclose the name of the organization in your research dissertation.

I request that the summary report to be given to the International Islamic College for our own reference in due course.

Should you need clarification or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Shazaizuarni at 03-61876900, ext-111.

I wish you all the best on your research and quest for knowledge.