

The Framework of Knowledge Transfer towards Sustainable Development in the Process of Planning Approval Stage At Malaysian Local Government

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Abstract— over the past decade in particular, sustainable development has become an important aspect of at Malaysian local governments. There are many ways in which sustainability issues can be incorporated in an organisation. In relation to that, this study looks at the perceptions of stakeholders in knowledge transfer of sustainable development at Malaysian local governments' planning approval. An intended study is to provide an in-depth and better understanding of the strength and weaknesses and other relevant factors that promote or hinder the Sustainable Development. The respondents are from the selected stakeholders based on the discussion with the local governments. They are interviewed and the analysis is conducted using qualitative method. This study is to contribute to the enrichment of knowledge on the role of Local Governments in Sustainable Development. Therefore, this research seeks to find out the knowledge transfer practices of sustainable development at local governments in Malaysia, which is needed to be improved for sustainability deliverables.

Keywords—sustainable development; knowledge transfer; Malaysian local governments, Planning approval

I. Introduction

The notion of sustainable development in terms of knowledge transfer in local governments has become the topic discourse in academic research, business fields and governance, where as suggested by (Hester, 2008; Osterloh & Frey, 2007; Yuan & Yang, 2009), Knowledge transfer describes how knowledge and ideas move between the knowledge sources to the potential users of that knowledge. In general terms, knowledge can be transferred by moving a knowledge reservoir from one unit to another or by modifying a knowledge reservoir at a recipient site. Staff members can be moved from one unit to another. Similarly, technology can be moved and routines can be transported from one organization to another. Hence, through communication and training, the knowledge transfer is existed.

Moreover, local government takes responsibility for the environment, social and economic development of the country (Milutinovic, 2010; Streib & Willoughby, 2005). The local government through the policy, programs, plans, and strategies oriented people to choose sustainable development. However, sustainable development cannot develop without an appropriate knowledge in government. Hence, knowledge transfer can be thought of as a cycle where knowledge is communicated around in the organization and to the community via a variety of methods. Although knowledge transfer differs greatly between fields, there are several factors which are needed to make any knowledge transfer practices successful (Bender & Fish, 2000; Donate & Guadamillas, 2010; Liyanage, Ballal, Elhag, & Li, 2009). It means that the organization must understand the context of the new knowledge generated. For example, the importance of sustainability takes on increased relevance to knowledge of the staff as well as the policy makers when viewed in the context of development and as a solution for next generation. Moreover, it is crucial working at various levels of management to promote the sustainable development of local government. This study aims to study the perceptions of stakeholders of sustainable development at Malaysian local government practices.

II. Background Study

The transferring of knowledge in the local governments to address the needs and challenges of the sustainability is considered as one of the most important aspects of this research. This research was conducted to study knowledge transfer practices of sustainable development in local governments. Understanding the practices and how actions affect the organizations and its impact are crucial to answer the research objectives.

Sveiby (2001) iterates that people use their capacity-to-act in order to create value in mainly two directions; by transferring and converting knowledge externally and internally to the organisation. It means that by introducing knowledge transfer practices, many organizations could improve the flows of knowledge around their organization, make it accessible when and where needed, and use it to add sustainability value, such as through planning development, improved development processes or new products and services. Thus the knowledge transfer practices of sustainable development could help stakeholders to become more effective with sustainability deliverable.

Apart from that, sustainable development requires the participation of diverse stakeholders and perspectives with ideal and subsequent coordination of mutual action to achieve multiple values (Hawkins & Wang, 2011; Segger, 2004). It means that if local governments' lacking in managing the knowledge of sustainable development, the negatives consequences could occur as shown in Figure 1.1. It shows that, local governments and its stakeholders must have mutual coordination in order to manage knowledge of sustainable development.

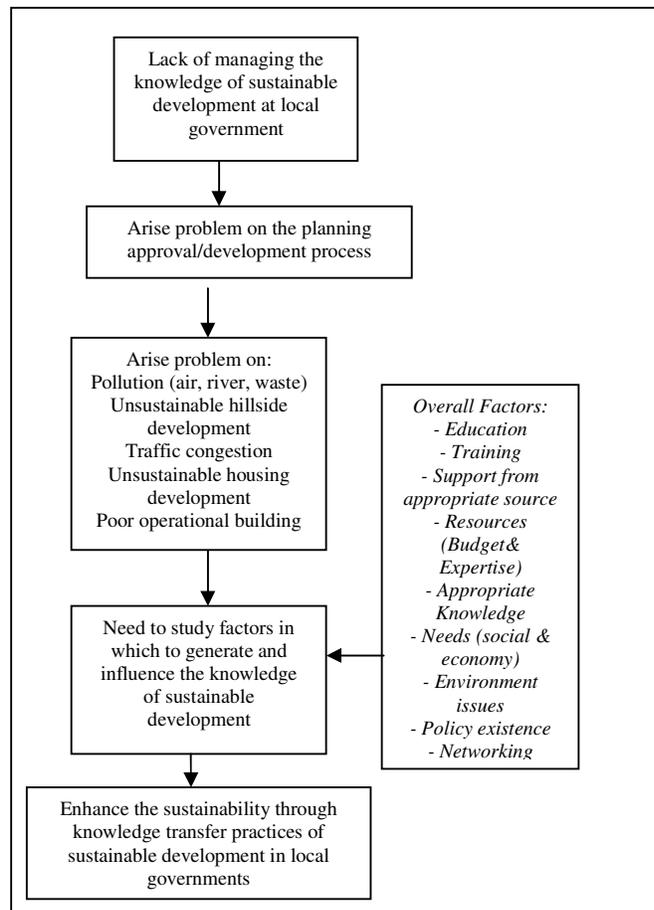


Figure 1.1: Theoretical Framework

In order for sustainable development to achieve its objective, it must be integrated into the planning of development at any organization. Therefore, a holistic approach are essential if the full sustainability agenda is implemented (Bourdeau, 1999; Executive, 2006; Gilham, 1998; Hai, Hai, Dung, & Hens, 2009; Upadhyay & Brinkmann, 2010). It means that there is a need to

create awareness while using natural resources sustainably and making a broader contribution to the community's social aims and objectives. Moreover, local governments are where the local community infrastructure underpins the nation's economy and provides significant support to the state and national development projects (Evans & Theobald, 2003; OECD, 2007; Sola, 2005). This means that local governments should be able to deliver the services and increasing the stakeholders' belief.

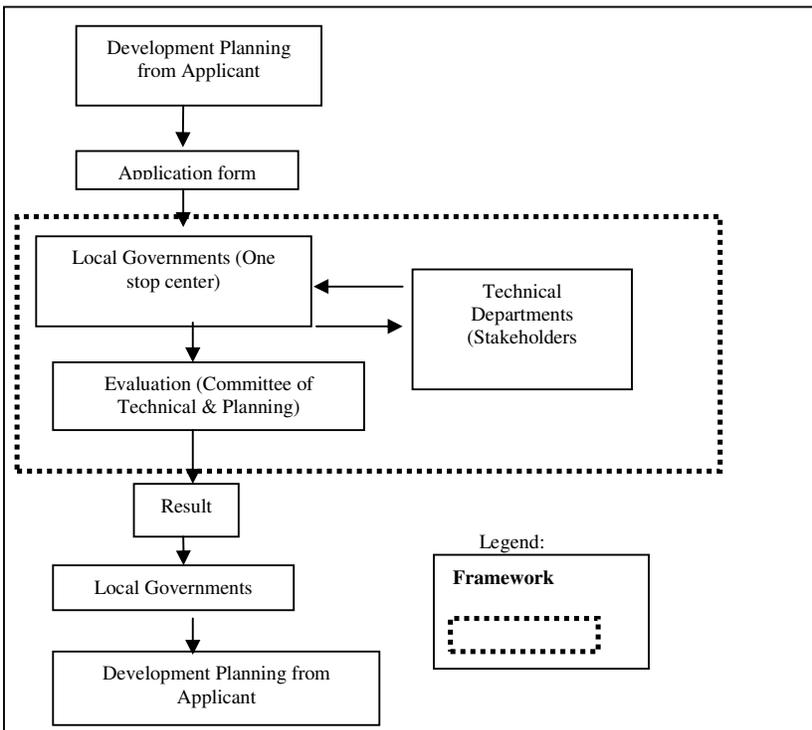


Figure 1.2: Existing Planning Approval Chart

Figure 1.2 shows the stage of planning approval and where the framework of this study lies. In addition, the resistance of construction industry as well as other stakeholders to adopt new knowledge (Almazan et al., 2011; Knutsson, 2006; N.Zainul, 2010; Shafii & Othman, 2007). It means that the limited competencies and skills are some of the main handicaps for the application of sustainable development. This brings to the aim of the framework of this study to look into the stage of planning approval. The stage of planning approval consists of practitioners of various departments and it is where the development projects are discussed and approval is made (A Rahman et al., 2011; MHLG, 2013). It means that the knowledge transfer practices should be practiced at the stage of planning approval where sustainability deliverables are best to be discussed and integrated here in the development projects. Figure 1.2 shows the framework in which knowledge transfer practices are important in order for planning approval at the local governments is emphasized on the scope of social, economic, and environmental.

iii. Methodology

Step 1 is literature review and desk research. Information is gathered from academics journal, publication, related articles, and documentary and government reports where available. Step 2 is using survey method which is interview. Survey data can be collected either through face-to face interview, telephone interview or postal questionnaire (Bryman, 2008; Yang, Liuyanping, & Jie, 2008; Yates, 2004; Yin, 2009). This study looks into the practice of Malaysian local governments in sustainable development. Therefore, literature reviews inform researchers of the background to their research projects and provide context and ideas for their studies. The preliminary information gathering is conducted by reviewing relevant literature, which helped the researcher to understand and gain a wide view of possible research problems (Chua, 2006; Liyanage et al., 2009). There are good reasons for spending time and effort on a review of the literature before embarking on a research project. These reasons include; to uncover the gaps in the literature, to carry on from the point others have already reached (reviewing the field allows the research to build on the platform of existing knowledge and ideas), to identify information and ideas that may be relevant to the research, and to identify methods that are relevant to the research.

Framework is validated in order to present the uniqueness of it. That is, by obtaining in depth the opinion of the expert and practitioners regarding the framework. Validations ensure that the data has certain values or meet specific requirements (Benbasat & Dhaliwal, 1989; Eisenhardt, 1989; Halder & Bhattacharya, 2011). Hence, this research employs interviews with expert and practitioners in order to validate the proposed framework. The combination of literature review and preliminary study are used in formulating the framework. The responses collected from the questionnaires are also input to the framework. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to validate and gain suggestions to improve the framework. To validate the framework, the interviewees were requested to answer the following questions:

1. What are the problems arising from the framework?
2. How can these problems be addressed?
3. What actions are necessary to improve the framework?

The data collected from the interview paved the way for the final step of the research: the development of a framework that highlights the factors in the knowledge transfer practice of sustainable development in Malaysian Local Governments. The analysis, interpretation and literature review support the findings which developed into the formation of the framework. The development of the framework has enabled the author to accomplish the overall aim of this research, which is to develop the framework of knowledge transfer to improve the implementation of sustainable development at Local Governments' planning approval. Table 6.6 shows the selection respondent based on their experience and suitability for the validation. More in-depth treatments of different types of interviews as discussed by various authors and qualitative methodologists are used for validation. These include general introductions to qualitative interviewing (Krauss et al., 2009; Yates, 2004b) and texts devoted to explicating specific interview genres for example, focus group interviews (Bryman, 2008a; Yates, 2004a).

The semi-structured interview is aimed to achieve the following purposes; to validate the framework and identify the errors that may lead to misconception of the model. Interviewees were encouraged to propose possible solutions and considerations to deal with these sustainability-related matters. Apart from that, interviewing is conducted in order to get an insight from the expert and practitioners. It is to get insight and clear views on the framework. Considering the time limit and the numbers of questions, the researcher allowed the interviewees to give their comments based on their understanding. Interviewees were also encouraged to present their opinions on the framework. Each interview was expected to last from half an hour to 30 minutes and 1 hour.

The semi-structured interview for this validation purpose is also aimed to achieve the following purposes, to identify the current practice at planning approval stage, to identify constraints of knowledge transfer practice, factors into current practice and to obtain the industry practitioners' recognition of the framework of this study. The researcher has a list of predetermined questions to be asked of the respondents either personally, on the telephone, or through the medium of a computer (Bryman, 2008a; A. Smith, 2005). Moreover, it is to clarify and ascertain the uniqueness of this framework.

Table 1.1: Respondents

	No of Respondent
(R1) Architect at private firm	1
(R2) Architect at local government	1
(R3) Senior lecturer at local university	1
(R4) Engineer at private firm	1
(R5) Planner at local government	1

It means that selecting people or elements from a population in such a way that each individual has an equal chance or probability of selection (Lin & Ryzin, 2011; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Selection of the respondents was based on the position in the department and work scope.

IV. Result

The interview reveals views from the respondents that the framework is acceptable to enhance knowledge transfer practice of sustainable development at Local Governments. They equipped that it could motivate the individual/staff and contribute to gain new information on social, environment and economy sustainability as in planning approval guidelines needed. R1 responded, "the knowledge transfer practices added a new dimension for the planning approval stage, it could help the recipient to obtain reliable sources for sustainable development's matters..". R4 equipped, "the training, on-job training, seminar, simulation and documentation are practices that could enhance the committee's understanding and awareness of sustainability element...it in turn would be beneficial in evaluating the planning approval...". In addition, based on the interviews, it is equally important to address

the lacking in training, policy and technological know-how at government departments, which must deliver on sustainable development. Moreover, the links between private and public sectors also important in knowledge transfer practice as it could provide expertise consultation and networking on sustainable development to alleviate the lacking of sustainable deliverable at local governments. This validation therefore authenticate this framework of study and the factors of knowledge transfer practice in sustainable development at Local Governments' planning approval.

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