

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**AN ICT-SUPPORTED
INTERGENERATIONAL
KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER
FRAMEWORK FOR FAMILY FIRMS**

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requirements for the degree of
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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the world's aging phenomenon has led to the increase number of retirements in organisations. When people leave their organisations, they also take with them their experience, skills and knowledge, hence leaving the organisation to suffer loss of intellectual knowledge, and certainly caused the business's sustainability and continuity to be in danger. This phenomenon has inevitably affected family firms because their survival depends on tacit knowledge possessed by the founder as the source of its competitive advantage. Therefore, to ensure its sustainability, family firms must guarantee that their knowledge is preserved and being transferred to the successor of the business. Many researchers proposed knowledge transfer models which mostly focused on knowledge transfer methods, strategies, and processes to mitigate knowledge transfer barriers, create an optimal knowledge transfer domain for large organisations and inter-organisational knowledge transfer. However, the methods and strategies proposed were found to be ineffective for family firms, thus caused the success of knowledge transfer in family firm to be very low. This research is motivated to provide a platform for family firm to transfer their knowledge from the older generation to the younger generation with the consideration of family firm uniqueness. The qualitative approach was adopted in understanding the characteristics of family business, strategies, and mechanisms used in transferring their knowledge. A case study approach with multiple unit of analysis was use as the strategy of inquiry where data was collected using interview and observation. Data was analysed using content analysis using inductive and deductive approach. The results reveals the unique intergenerational knowledge transfer process, which are the recalling and assembly of knowledge, and the components found in the intergenerational knowledge transfer process which consist of information source, recipient, communication channel, knowledge content, knowledge transfer mechanisms, motivation to source and knowledge recall process. Three issues that hinders the knowledge transfer were also discovered, which are difficulties in recalling knowledge, knowledge loss during transfer and rigid knowledge transfer environment. This research produced an ICT-supported intergenerational knowledge transfer framework which integrate the knowledge transfer process, components, issues and technologies. The use of multimedia technology, collaboration technology together with mobile and wireless technology reinforce the framework in demonstrating the comprehensiveness of all the aspects in intergenerational knowledge transfer and uniqueness because it deals with two generations in transferring the knowledge. The development of this framework is crucial to assist family business in ensuring their knowledge received by their successor and subsequently ensure the existence of their family business in the future.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The aging population phenomenon has immensely altered the current workforce structure in many countries. One of the glaring effects seen is the increase in the number of retirements in organisations which include family firms. Even though the statutory retirement age in different countries may vary, a report by the United Nations (2015) indicated that the statutory retirement ages are increasing in most countries in the world. The increase might delay the retirement in many organisations but it should not stop the organisations from planning the consequences of the retirement that they might face.

Employees retirement took with them their experience and knowledge, subsequently cause loss of organisational knowledge. In order for family firms to sustain their businesses and remain to be competitive in future, they must consider ways to ensure the knowledge possessed by the founder is learned by the successor; hence transferring knowledge from the older generation to the younger generation in an organisation is crucial. This study aims to examine the intergenerational knowledge transfer in the family firm. Although it has been proven that knowledge transfer in organisations could help the organisations' sustainability, literature shown that the success rate especially in family firms is quite low. Through the understanding of this phenomenon, the research aimed to propose a framework which will be able to assist the family firm in transferring their knowledge and ensure their sustainability in the future. This chapter serves as an introduction which provides a synopsis to the thesis and introduces the readers to the research domain and other area of concern investigated by this research. The research objectives and related research questions are then presented, followed by descriptions of the overall research design and approach. The chapter concludes with an overview of the significance of the research and presents a detailed synopsis of how the rest of the thesis unfolds.