“Good Research @ Great Return”

⇒ Making a Difference to the Management of Technology in Malaysia

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strategic intent towards “Professor of Bio-Business”

senior professor = Senior Citizen = Being Critical

Honorary Professor, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman

President, Association of Asian Pacific OR Societies

Founding President, Management Sciences @ Malaysia

Founding President, 1999-2004, Customer Relationship Management and Contact Centre Association of Malaysia
Outline

A World of Knowledge-based, Innovation & Dream Economies in Developing Countries

Reflections on a World of Complexity:
Empirical Cases from ANT-Complexity-Structurational Lens

Making a Difference:
Best Practices vis-à-vis Great Practices from Good Research
Innovation Economy

Malaysia = going into Innovation-led Economy, Market- & Technology driven

- ICT – MSC Malaysia
- Health Care – Local products eg Tongkat Ali
- Business & Finance – Venture Capital
- Materials & Manufactured Products – Biotechnology

Return on Innovation
Dream state
Sultan tells of his vision for Selangor

I want every child born in Selangor to be given a hope that they have a chance to make their dreams come true

— Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah

THE Sultan of Selangor says he envisions Selangor to be a dream state for every resident who wants development and loves peace.

Speaking at the investiture ceremony in conjunction with his 61st birthday at the Istana Alam Shah in Klang yesterday, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah said that for him, the most valuable gift was a peaceful and prosperous Selangor.

In his 20-minute speech, the Sultan called on:

> Elected representatives to work harder to serve the people.
> THE Selangor royal family to continue to uphold the good name of the royalty and state.
> Civil servants to carry out their work efficiently and cut red tape.
> Those concerned to improve certain areas to ensure that his subjects of various races live good and comfortable lives.

> See Page 3
PRACTICAL and FUNCTIONAL VALUE of things is eclipsed by their ability to serve as conduits for meaning; to stand as representative signs or symbols for things of the imagination = ideas, hopes, aspirations and dreams.

Value of a pair of shoes $\not\equiv$ comfort, fit or durability

but rather in the names such as Nike, + PRADA

and in the ability of those names to serve in consumer culture as signs of wealth, exclusivity, athleticism, achievement, and so on.
Complexity in World Today

- MBA and scientific training focus on the formal description rather than the real world

- The real world is complex

“Managers Not MBAs”

“From Higher Aims to Hired Hands…. …Unfulfilled Promise of Management as a Profession”

Mikulecky 2001

Mintzberg 2004

Khurana 2007
K-ICT Blueprint
2001-2007
Structurational Analysis
MSC MALAYSIA: CYBERCITY @ STATE
Towards a Knowledge-Driven Economy: The K-ICT Blueprint

Chief Minister of The State, Malaysia
23 October 2007
STRUCTURATION ~ Way of Seeing and Knowing

Signification  Domination  Legitimation

Interpretative Schemes  Resources  Norms

Communication  Power  Sanction
Malaysia’s Multimedia Super Corridor 1997-2007
Complexity Analysis
Multimedia Super Corridor ~
“A Gift to the World”

MDeC will continue to be a cost centre with strategic intent on socio-economics and digital divide, development of local industry, and attracting foreign investments.
Complexity Theory - Essential Features

- Large numbers of elements
- Local Interactions
- Emergence – global from local
- Feedback
- Self-organization
  
  Key idea – often over-hyped
- Importance of the environment
  
  Often overlooked
Complexity Theory

Complex Systems

- Large number of independent relatively dumb elements interact according to a small set of rules
- Self-organizing – order emerges
- Local rules, local interactions – global order emerges

Definition by Example

- Ant Colonies – clear tunnels with no idea of how to clear a tunnel
- Neighborhoods – create a structure with no central planning
Based on their backgrounds, practices and culture, MSC decision makers assumed, during MSC inception,

- Change initiatives should start from the top
- Certainty and predictable stages of development
- Implicit belief on national development

- Applying Complexity Advantage to the MSC Malaysia
**ANT Analytics**

**Social Context**

- **Ministry of K+ICT**
- **ICT Players**
- **Public The Unemployed**

**Human actors**

**Non-human actors**

**Knowledge Centre**

**Technological Context**

**Strategic Alignment**
A World of Difference

Developing and Developed Countries
Approaches & Ideas in the West are entirely different from the East
But we use the textbooks of the West for our MBA

Henry Mintzberg 2004 “Managers Not MBAs” are of GREATER RELEVANCE to Developing Countries
A Hard Look = Successful Execution in Developing Countries does not need an MBA

Customer Centricity is simply a jargon and catch phrase learnt from MBA; indeed
Super-Normal Profit is the Strategic Intent, Unwritten Rule, “Higher Aim”
Structuration
Complexity
Actor Network
Lens
&
Being Critical
Wisdom is a Sophisticated Model

... at best hollow replicas of the real Silicon Valley, mere real-estate developments... high-technology-related sweatshops... where cheap labour does simple programming or call processing for foreigners... but there’s no sign that any Asian country is rethinking...

AN ANCIENT WISDOM: Newsweek, Dec 02-Feb 03 Special Edition on Issues 2003

Such a simplistic and superficial analysis fails to consider the reflexive monitoring of policies and their implications done by skilful actants and players as they constantly rethink, reinvent and recreate their strategies and projects.

More sophisticated methodologies are needed to generate better insights

Wisdom comes by illumination from using a sophisticated model
...I reproduce below a piece of written prescription for policy makers from a practicing technopreneur:

“So, Malaysian policy makers, take heed. Efforts of leapfrogging to a k-based economy does not involve tinkering with only a few parts of the national development system, derived from a short-sighted emulation of American technological hubs and funding systems.

Therefore, the players must consist of people who are collaborative in nature and unafraid to conduct frank, open dialogues, debates and analysis, ..... Turf wars and personal agendas should be eliminated and observance of the Asian concept of face be reduced, lest we lose our heads in the process.”

This prescription has been based on presumptions of a world where diverse interpretive schemes, asymmetrical relations of power, divergent values, actor networks, uncertainty, contradictions and conflicts in human relations are non-significant.
Wasting millions on computers they don’t need

By Sarban Singh
news@nst.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: They are given hundreds of millions of ringgit in taxpayers’ money every year to buy information technology systems and computers to improve the public delivery system.

But the sad truth is that some civil servants entrusted with these funds don’t spend the money judiciously or rather, don’t know what they are spending it on.

Auditor-General Tan Sri Ambrin Buang said there were also situations where millions of ringgit had been paid to vendors but the equipment had yet to be installed or delivered in full.

“In the course of our audit, we have even found stacks and stacks of boxes of brand new computers stored away in rooms. Why are we wasting money on something which we don’t need?” he asked in an interview.

In a recent audit, Ambrin said it was found that the government was exposed to losses running into hundreds of millions of ringgit simply because civil servants did not peruse purchase agreements signed with vendors.

One example was the case where officers failed to understand the need for “source code” ownership, a computer program written by the programmer in a formal programming language such as Pascal, Basic, C++, and Java.

Without correctly interpreting this code, the computer system cannot be used to the maximum.

This also means that if the buyer is not thorough when reading the provisions of the purchase agreement, the system would still “belong” to the

Although all seven government departments provided similar services, they bought different systems. Had they all used a generic information system, the potential savings could have run into hundreds of millions of ringgit.

“- Auditor-General Tan Sri Ambrin Buang
Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed’s recent disclosure:
“The Cabinet is not made up of experts…Cabinet merely passes on the basis of principle. They do not really study the implications of some passages in the agreement… and usually the small print is not there…”

Civil Service to make definitive, fair and unbiased decisions on implementation.

Government expertise should not be “systematically marginalised”.

Suggestion: Expert Committees, disclosure of decision rules and intended agreements, public scrutiny for transparency…
so that serious mistakes of the past will not be repeated (The Edge’s view)
Where is the Government Expertise?

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Han : **DISAGREES** to “stupidity”, “lack of expertise”, “stupid ministers”, “incompetent”

“**WORLD-CLASS SKILLFUL ACTORS**”

by the Ant-Complexity-Structurational definition
Best Practices versus Great Practices from Good Critical Research
Best Practices

Best Approach and Methodology that work in real-life experiences in organization in that industry

Could be partially developed from Prescription or Explicit Models such as Blue Ocean Strategy; Porter’s Value Chain; Six Sigma; Tapscott’s Wikinomics; Triple Helix on Innovation;

Practitioners align to their specific organizational interests and contexts and Implicit Theories from their life-long practical experiences
GOOD, indeed Very Good Research versus EXCELLENT RESEARCH \{ academic \} is about Description and Prescription in the trenches in organizations.

“in-organization” empirical data collection using reflexive methodology, mixed theory method, interpretive and post-positivist approaches.

Rather than primary or secondary data analysis based on quantitative models and algorithmic knowledge.

Conventional Management Sciences and Economics increasingly capture a part of the sophistication. Necessary but not sufficient.
THE DISMAL SCIENCE
How Thinking Like an Economist Undermines Community

STEPHEN A. MARGLIN
Bad Management Theories Are Destroying Good Management Practices

SUMANTRA GHOSHAL
Advanced Institute of Management Research (AIM), UK and London Business School

The corporate scandals in the United States have stimulated a frenzy of activities in business schools around the world. Deans are extolling how much their curricula focus on business ethics. New courses are being developed on corporate social responsibility. Old, highly laudatory cases on Enron and Tyco are being hurriedly rewritten. “What more must we do?”, the faculty are asking themselves in grave seminars and over lunch tables (Bartunek, 2002).

Business schools do not need to do a great deal vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil” Keynes (1953: 306).

This is precisely what has happened to management. Obsessed as they are with the “real world” and sceptical as most of them are of all theories, managers are no exception to the intellectual slavery of the “practical men” to which Keynes referred. Many of the worst excesses of recent management practices have their roots in a set of ideas that have emerged from business school academics over the last 30 years.
Being Critical

**INSIGHTS**: In-depth Investigations at local levels through interpretive, contextualist, hermeneutic and ethnographic approaches.

**CRITICAL OUTLOOK**: Critique of taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning organizational, managerial and technological practices.

**TRANSFORMATION**: Development of knowledge for action and practical understanding that enable ICT-related organizational change, diversity, and re-construction new ways of working and living.
Good research comes from sophistication and simplicity, using scientific approaches such as a combination of ANT, Complexity, Structuration theoretical frameworks that provide greater insights = WISDOM

Research-based “Wisdom” is pivotal to implementable and doable practice = GREAT RETURN = TRANSFORMATION
Each and everyone of you for your kind presence this morning!
Good Research @ Great Practice

Professor vis-à-vis Practitioner

The Professor
Chun Kwong Han is a senior professor at the Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti Putra Malaysia. He obtained the PhD in Information Technology from Cambridge University’s Engineering Department. He is the author of the book Government Information Technology Policies and Systems: Success Strategies in Developed and Developing Countries published by the Commonwealth Secretariat, London. His research papers have appeared in journals such as OMEGA: International Journal of Management Science, Journal of Applied Systems Analysis and Accounting, Management and Information Technologies. He is Editor-in-Chief of the Asia-Pacific Journal of Management Sciences and Contributing Editor of International Abstracts in Operations Research. Prof Han is a Fellow of the Malaysian Scientific Association, President of Management Scienze@Malaysia and President of APORS-Association of Asian Pacific Operational Research Societies. He is a Honorary Professor, Faculty of Accountancy and Management, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

The Practitioner
Prof Han's managerial experiences include a 2-year secondment at the Multimedia Development Corporation as senior manager of Borderless Marketing, 3 years as director of Centre for Research on Information Management and Policy Action, and 2 years as director of Electronic University at Universiti Putra Malaysia. He was the key resource person in the Commonwealth Top Management Programme on Organizational Transformation, 1996-2000. As the reflexive policy practitioner, he played a key role in government policy initiatives including drafting the 1992-93 National Council for Scientific Research and Development's strategy for an information-rich society, drafting in 1997 the IT 2000 Strategic Plan for Sabah State Government, a member of 2 brains trusts of the K-Economy Masterplan responsible for ICT action plans during 2000-2001, and chairman of the Blueprint Committee of Penang State K-ICT Council and lead writer of the Penang K-ICT Blueprint in 2002. Prof Han is the Founding President of Customer Relationship Management and Contact Centre Association of Malaysia for 4 terms, 1999-2004.
HE GLORIA M ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

Prof C K Han
Malaysia

7.00 pm TV News 16 Jan 06 Manila