

THE POWER OF STORY

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (KM) A NARRATIVE INQUIRY RESEARCH

Ghazali Mohamed Fadzil , PhD



CONTENT

- ▶ Research Objectives
- ▶ Research Approach
- ▶ Research Process
- ▶ Data Sources and Gathering
- ▶ Data Analysis
- ▶ Honesty and Biases
- ▶ Findings, Conclusions & Recommendations

What is KM?

The **discipline** of enabling individuals in an organisation **to collectively acquire, share, & leverage knowledge** to achieve business objective.

Dyer, Greg and Hobson, Paula (2000), Knowledge management profile series: Arthur Andersen. IDC Bulletin, Sept. 2000.

‘..as **processes**, technologies, & organisation for **capturing, classifying, & adding value to the intellectual capital of the firm** - then deploying it to the employees.’

Ernst & Young

‘...a **discipline** that promotes an integrated approach to the **creation, capture, organisation, access & use of an enterprise’s information assets**. These assets include **structured databases, textual information & most importantly, the tacit knowledge & expertise** resident in the heads of individual employees.’

Gartner Group

The **discipline, culture & process** in managing the **strategic knowledge assets** of organisation

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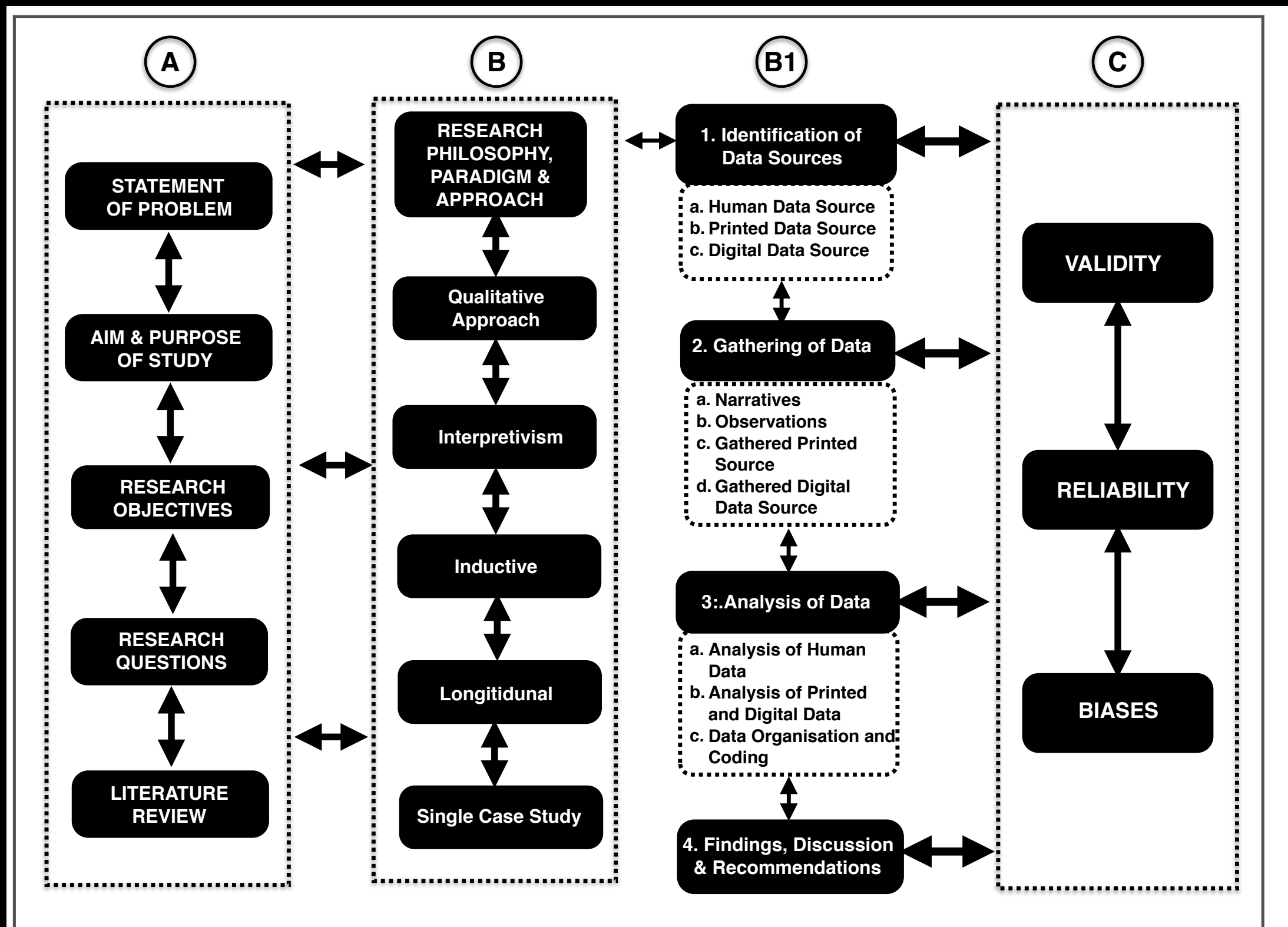


Figure 1 Research Framework

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

- ▶ Knowledge economy - that leverages on knowledge assets.
- ▶ Knowledge assets, the biggest & most valuable assets
- ▶ Organisations are knowledge-based organisations (KBO)
- ▶ To be a KBO requires understanding of important factors, perspectives & processes that heavily involved human being & the culture.
- ▶ It is a journey & in Malaysia not many organisations are willing to take the journey and share their experiences.
- ▶ This research is a study of one major organisation in Malaysia





TO EXPLORE AND UNDERSTAND

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- ▶ **Why** implement KM programme?
- ▶ **Elements involved** in KM and their relationship among each other?
- ▶ **How** KM programme retains strategic knowledge assets?
- ▶ The **barriers** in implementing KM and specifically knowledge retention, and
- ▶ The **policies, structure, resources and activities** involved in retaining knowledge assets



WHY & HOW

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Questions 1

Why Organisation X developed into a KBO in the context of its business?

Questions 2

How is the KBO (KM) programme strategically implemented in Organisation X?

An aerial photograph of a vast tea plantation in a valley. The tea bushes are arranged in neat, terraced rows across the rolling hillsides. In the center of the valley, a small village with several buildings and trees is visible. A winding road or path cuts through the tea fields on the right side of the image. The overall scene is lush green and scenic.

APPROACH & METHOD



CRESWELL (1994) SAYS;

...REASONS FOR CONDUCTING A QUALITATIVE STUDY IS THAT THE STUDY IS EXPLORATORY; NOT MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE TOPIC OR POPULATION BEING STUDIED, AND THE RESEARCHER SEEKS TO LISTEN TO INFORMANTS AND TO BUILD A PICTURE BASED ON THEIR IDEA

RESEARCH APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

Researches on KM in Malaysia

- ▶ **Testing-theory & deductive** in which elements & characteristics of good KM being identified*.
- ▶ **Do not really study the experiences, implications** of KM & whether their implementations are **successful or not**.

*ZAINAL ABIDIN ET AL, 2001; RAMANATHAN, ET AL , 2001 ; ASLEEMA, 2002; ALI, 2002; TOH, 2003; HAFIZI & ZAWIYAH, 2004; SYED OMAR & ROWLAND, 2004; KALSOM, ET AL, 2004; BADRUDDIN, 2004; NIZA ADILA & WOOD, 2004; RAJA DANIAL & ZUNAIDAH, 2013



THIS STUDY ...

RESEARCH APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

- ▶ Qualitative & inductive that create understanding; & build abstraction, concepts and theories.
- ▶ Organisation X's social situation changing with younger generation. The culture base evolved that is strong, creating tension within the nature of business already complex.
- ▶ Phenomenology as the main framework & single case study as the methodology
- ▶ This research approach is suitable for KM because the philosophy's flexibility facilitates the discovery of the reality of a situation or the reality behind a situation

CHOICE OF RESEARCH PARADIGM

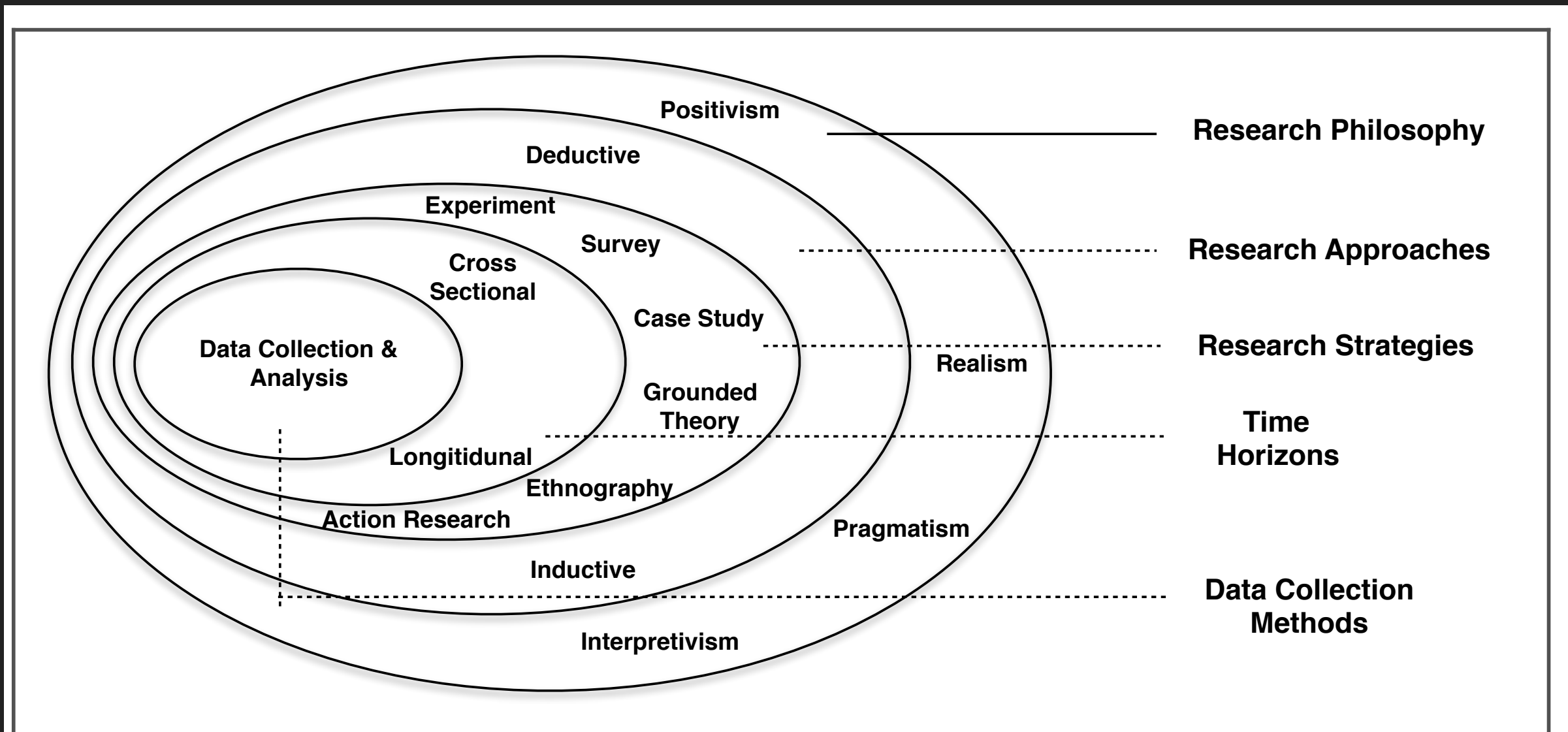


Figure 17 Research Onion adapted from Saunders et al (2009)

Interpretivism - Inductive - Case Study - Longitudinal
Narrative Inquiry as the main Data Collection Method



WEBSTER AND MERTOVA (2007) SAID, '...IT IS WELL SUITED TO ADDRESSING ISSUES OF COMPLEXITY AND CULTURAL AND HUMAN CENTREDNESS BECAUSE OF ITS CAPACITY TO RECORD

RESEARCH APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

- ▶ **Narrative inquiry** as the main data gathering tool & supported by **observation & document content analysis**
- ▶ An investigation of how **humans experience** the world **through their stories**.
- ▶ **KM stories** narrated by respondents in Organisation X are **captured, constructed and reconstructed**.
- ▶ This allow researcher to **present the life experiences of the respondent holistically** & to find **meaning** from the experiences.



WHY NARRATIVES?

IT IS THE STUDY OF THE WAYS HUMANS EXPERIENCE THE WORLD (CONNELLY & CLANDININ, 1990). HISTORICALLY, KNOWLEDGE HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION THROUGH THE NARRATIVE OF REAL LIFE EXPERIENCES AND FOLKLORES.

RESEARCH APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

- ▶ Suits the nature of the study & the availability of Mr A, as narrator from the perspective of the **implementor, stakeholder & the benefiter** of the KM programme,
- ▶ The **only organisation** that is successful in its implementation. The implementation is **complex** & full with **human centred issues**. Since 2012 **benchmarked by 208 organisations** worldwide.
- ▶ The implementation **started with technology, system & repositories** for explicit knowledge & **faced with more complex human issues** that are tacit in nature. (Linde, 2001).
- ▶ Provides **capability for rich description, contextual understanding, & explanation** of either a **person, place or events** they are observing (Wilson, 2007)
- ▶ Both the researcher & practitioner have voice in the narrative. **Mutual storytelling & restory** (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990)

RESEARCH PROCESS

DIRECTIONAL ARROWS THAT INDICATE A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP OF THE COMPONENTS WITHIN EACH SECTION THAT ARE INTERLINKED AND REITERATIVE IN NATURE.

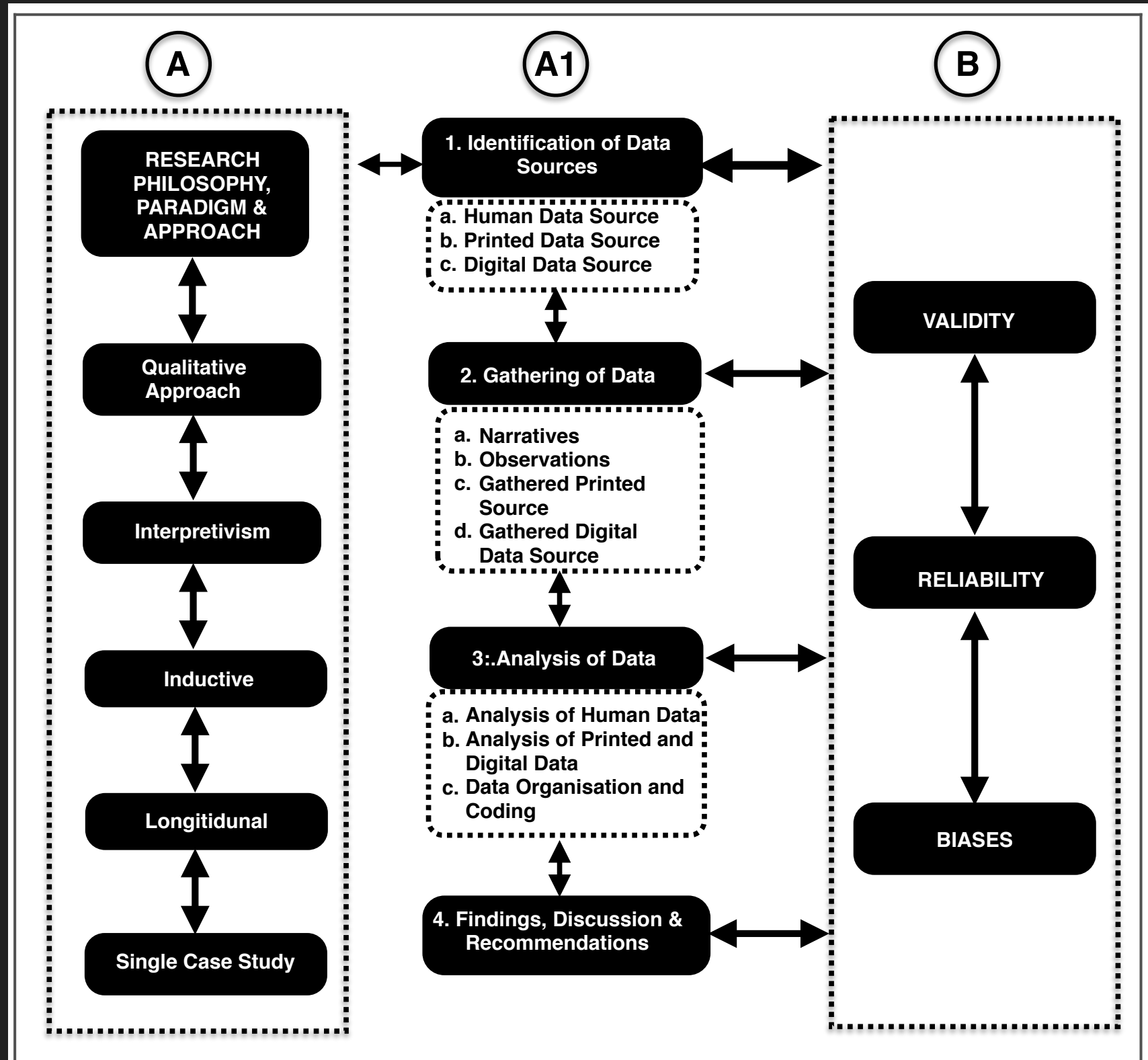


Figure 18 Research process

IDENTIFICATION OF DATA SOURCES

▶ Mr A

Involved in the KBO programme since its inception in the organisation as **user, implementor, practitioner, manager and SME**

▶ Mr B

Senior Manager in the **Strategic Management**. Involved in the KBO programme from the beginning. He was the **secretary to the Knowledge Management Committee** from 2000 to 2004.

▶ Observations

Six (6) KM initiatives & activities were observed.

HUMAN DATA SOURCE....



IDENTIFICATION OF DATA SOURCES

Annual Reports

Sixteen (16) sections from the annual reports from the period of 2000 - 2014

Speeches

Eight (8) speeches by leaders of the organisation from the period of 2000 - 2008.

Trainees Practical Reports

Four (4) practical students training reports from the period of 2009 - 2012

Presentation Slides Three (3) presentation slides were used.

Field Notes

Rich with reflection of what observed & felt. Written structurally along with either the narratives or text of documents. Some are the mindmaps, doodle and sketches

**PRINTED DATA
SOURCE....**



IDENTIFICATION OF DATA SOURCES

DIGITAL DATA SOURCE.....



► Websites

The website is structured to provide corporate information regarding the organisation & publications such as annual reports, speeches of the senior management as well as major activities of the organisation.

► Facebook

The Facebook of the KMC contain activities & services of KMC like their current awareness services are visible to the public.

► Emails

Email communication between respondents & relevant personalities.

BIASES AND HONESTY

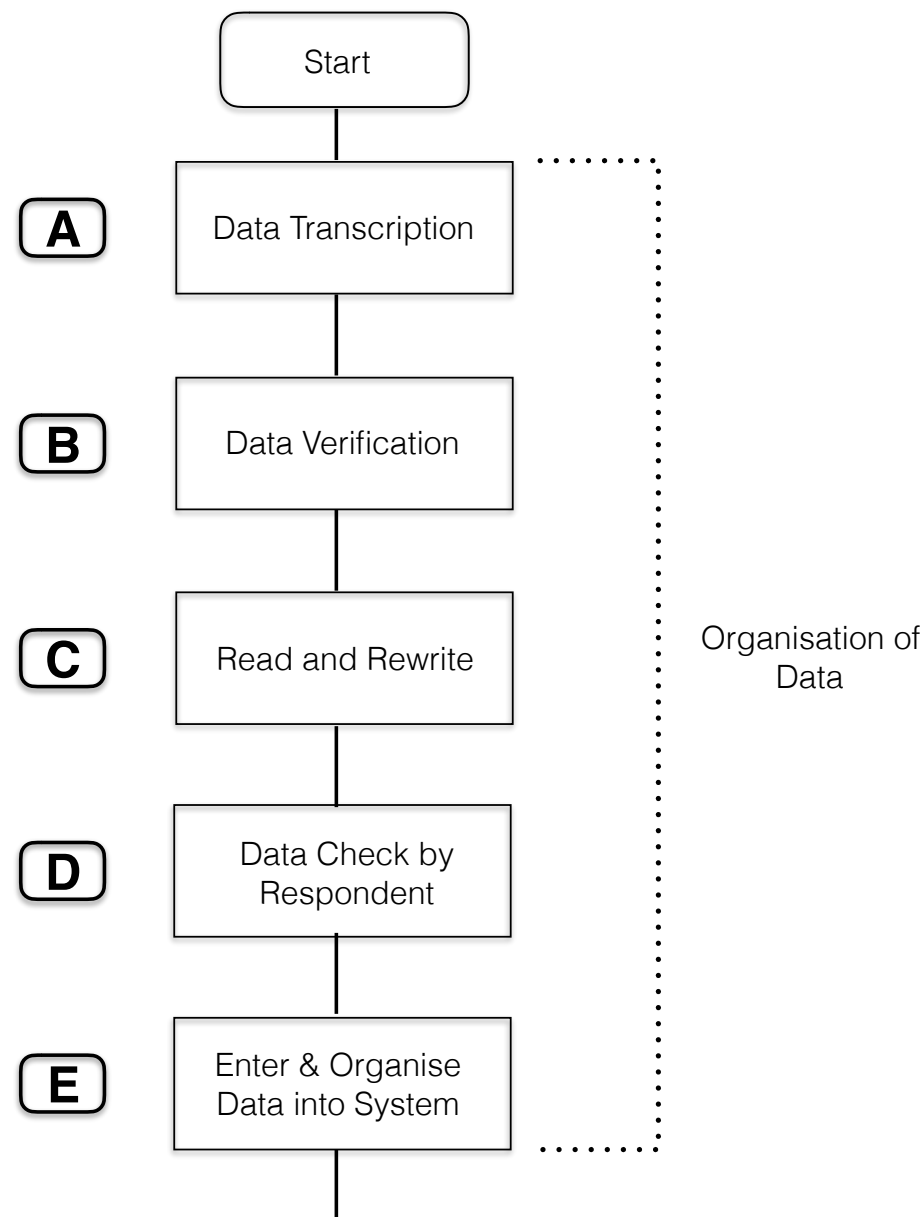
**DEBATES &
DILEMMAS (SHENTON
& HAY-GIBSON, 2009)**

- ▶ The biggest bias is **the researcher is the instrument** of the research.
- ▶ The fact that the researcher is also **one of the main contributor** to the knowledge management initiative in the organisation.
- ▶ **Ethical consideration** (Clandinin, D. J and Connelly, F. M (2000).
- ▶ **Objectivity** - as the researcher subjected to his own thinking, perspective and knowledge in the research.
- ▶ The researcher, in general, faced with the following types of biases (Pannucci and Wilkins, 2010;):
 - ❖ **Moderator bias**
 - ❖ **Biased questions and biased answers**
 - ❖ **Biased sample**
 - ❖ **Biased reporting**



An aerial photograph of a lush green tea plantation in a valley. The tea bushes are arranged in neat, terraced rows that follow the contours of the hills. In the center of the valley, there is a small village with several buildings, including a long, low structure and a few smaller houses. A winding road or path is visible on the right side of the valley. The background shows more rolling hills covered in tea plants, extending towards the horizon under a clear sky.

DATA ANALYSIS

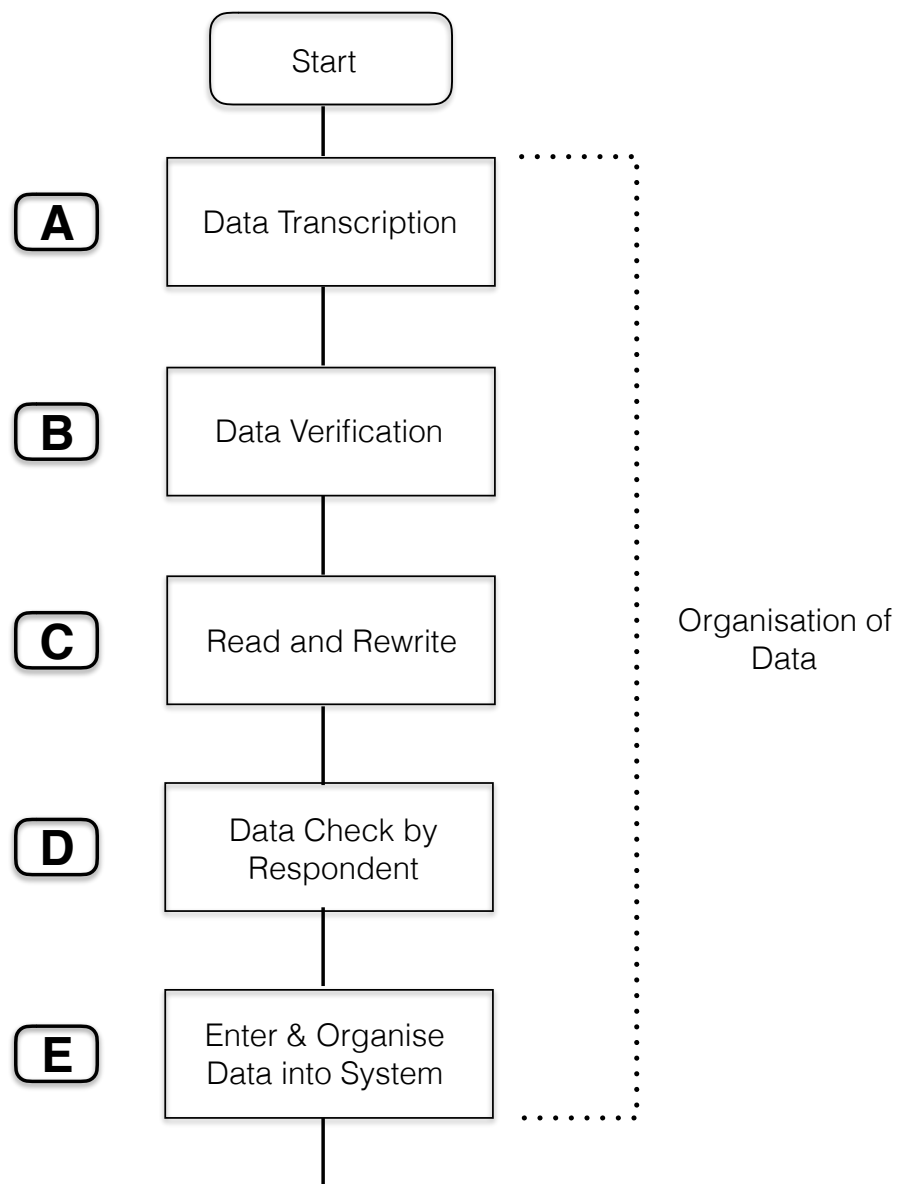


HUMAN & PRINTED DATA

DATA ANALYSIS

- ▶ Data collection & analysis an **iterative process**. Data collected categorised, coded, tabulated and analysed.
- ▶ Data **saturation & triangulation** take place in **sequence**. **Not too restrictive & confine**.
- ▶ Science depends on both historical & philosophical inquiries to **be understood within their social & intellectual contexts**. (Feyerabend, 2010; Mills, 1959)
- ▶ Guided by **McCormack's lenses of analysis** (McCormack, 2000a, 2000b; Dibley 2011) & **Emden's narrative analysis procedures** (Emden, 1998).
 - The lens of language
 - The lens of narrative processes
 - The lens of context
 - The lens of moments



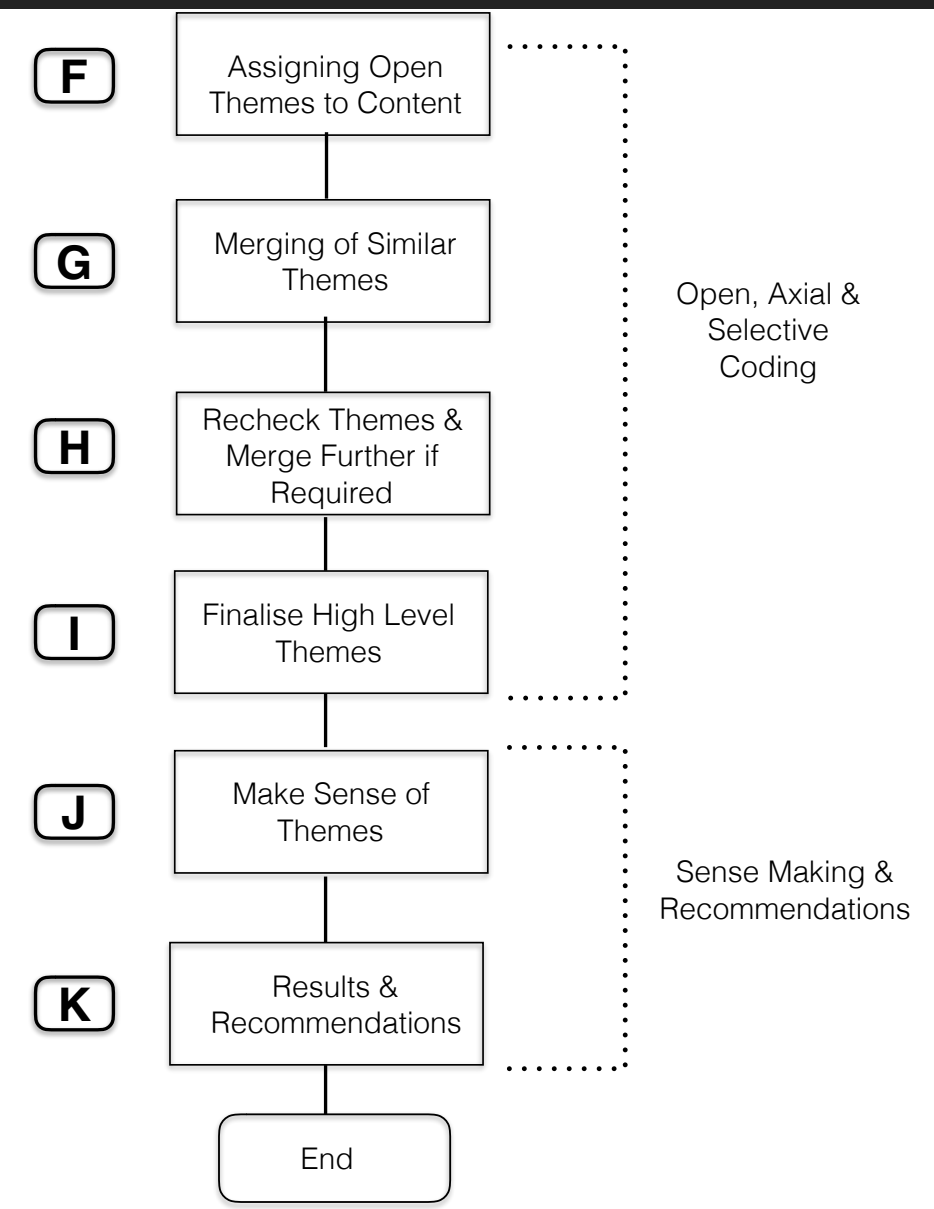


HUMAN AND PRINTED DATA

DATA ANALYSIS

- ▶ The **six stage process** of (1) biographical data, (2) thematic analysis, (3) re-construction of the case history or life as it was lived, (4) an analysis of individual texts, (5) a process of comparison between a narrative and life as lived, & (6) the formation of different types of narratives (Hunter, 2009; Rosenthal and Fisher-Rosenthal, 2004).
- ▶ Combine with **thematic, structural, interactional and performative analysis** (Reissman, 2005).
- ▶ The narrative data analysis processes used are:
 - **Biographical data analysis**
 - **Thematic analysis**
 - **Structural analysis**
 - **Individual text analysis**





CODING & ORGANISING IDEAS & CONCEPTS

DATA ANALYSIS

- ▶ Documents are saved using **Apple's Pages and Keynotes.**
- ▶ Coding conducted with **comments pane visible.**
- ▶ Coded with **specific KM terms** i.e K creation, K sharing, K retention, K loss, K application, K reuse, & K culture.
- ▶ Text coded by **meaning in the language used.**
 - * Written words & structure give certain ideas about the importance of certain things.
 - * The organisation studied has certain standard in writing, language & words being used. I.e engage to mean to understand & to work collaboratively together to achieve certain objectives.

CODING &
THEMES
DERIVED FROM
THE DATA ...

DATA ANALYSIS

Examples of Open Coding		
Open Code	Properties	Examples of Narratives
Importance of availability of knowledge, Importance of access to knowledge for talent development, Seeking behaviour, Knowledge worker, Learning resources	Eager to learn, Accepting challenge, Knowing lack of knowledge, Know where to find knowledge	I was working in Kota Baru, Kelantan where resources were very scarce. It was a challenge for me to do any kind of studies
Approach of KM Knowledge sharing Role of KMO Importance of key knowledge assets Knowledge works as work process	Know why to share, Knowledge behaviour, Know knowledge assets	One of the first few things that I did in the department was sharing of vital and important information relating the work that we used to do in my department, the Foreign Exchange Administration Department.

Examples of Open and Axial Coding	
OPEN CODE	AXIAL CODES
Importance of availability of knowledge, Importance of access to knowledge for talent development, Seeking behaviour, Knowledge worker, Learning resources,	Knowledge acquisition, sharing, seeking. Knowledge access, Learning and development
Approach of KM Knowledge sharing Role of KMO Importance of key knowledge assets Knowledge works as work process	Sharing, Knowledge behaviour, Knowledge process embedded

DATA ANALYSIS

CODING & THEMES DERIVED FROM THE DATA ...

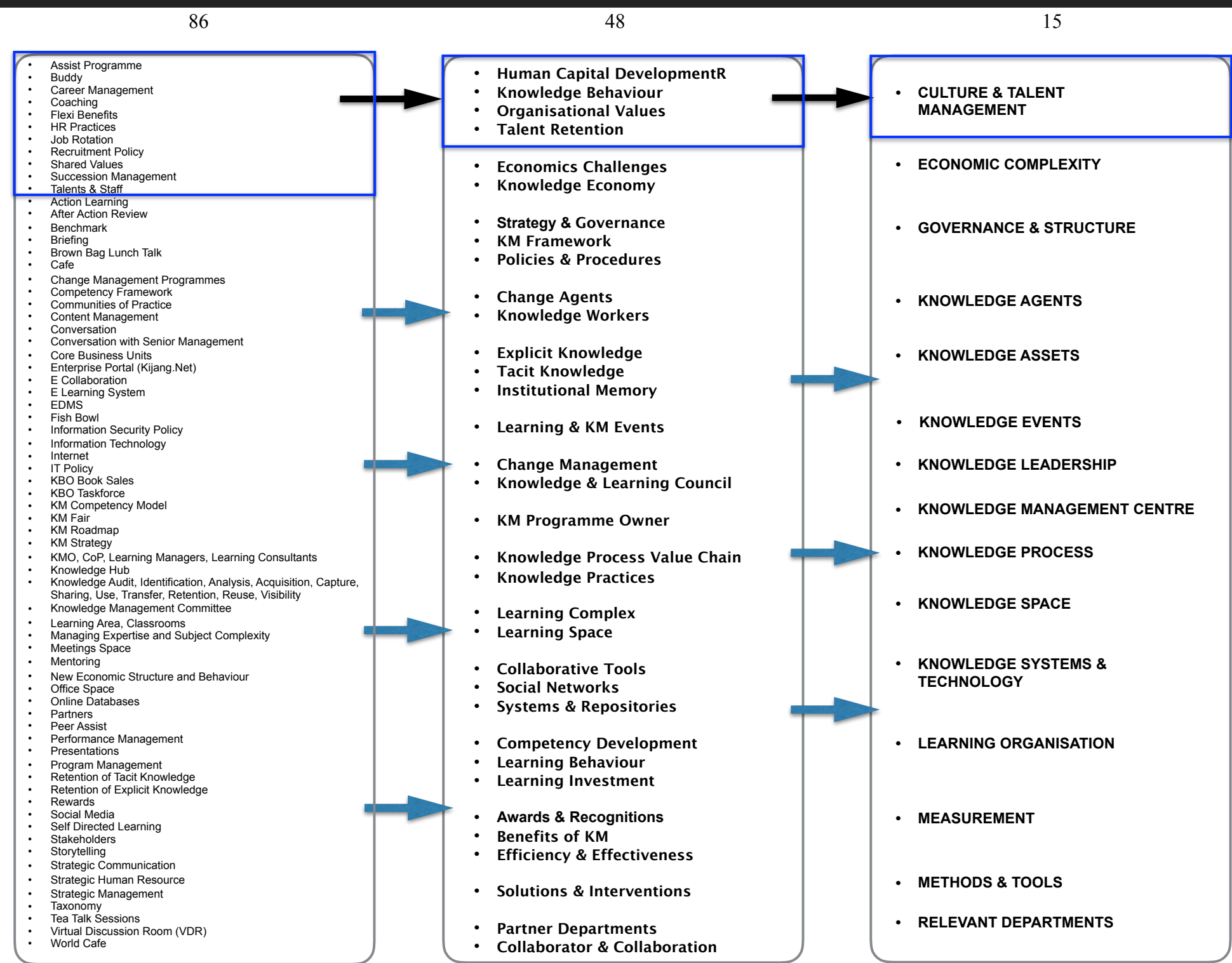


Figure 22: Derived Themes

VALIDITY & RELIABILITY

TRUSTWORTHY....

- ▶ In qualitative research it is **quality** as defined by Stenbacka (2001), **rigour** as defined by Davies & Dodd (2002), & **trustworthiness** as defined by Lincoln & Guba (1985)
- ▶ Determined through the application of confirmability, credibility, dependability & transferability methods (Riege, 2003; Golafshani, 2003).



VALIDITY & RELIABILITY

ENSURING TRUSTWORTHINESS....



- ▶ The **researcher** is the **judge** (Gorman & Clayton, 1997).
- ▶ Data collection & analysis **plan to guide** the process.
- ▶ **Initial interview** conducted **followed by writing the narratives & getting feedback** from Mr A.
- ▶ Meeting **schedules organised** electronically & cancellation **updated immediately**.
- ▶ Documents analysed & pertinent points included in the narrative either as an **add-on points or questions** for Mr A to elaborate during the next meeting.
- ▶ The narratives was a **life narrative** with continuous improvement each week.
- ▶ The whole was an **iterative process**

An aerial photograph of a vast tea plantation in a valley. The tea bushes are arranged in neat, terraced rows across the rolling hillsides. In the center of the valley, a small village with several buildings and trees is visible. A winding road or path cuts through the tea fields on the right side of the image. The overall scene is lush and green, with the tea plantation dominating the landscape.

FINDINGS

Questions 1

Why
Organisation X
developed into a
KBO in the
context of its
business?

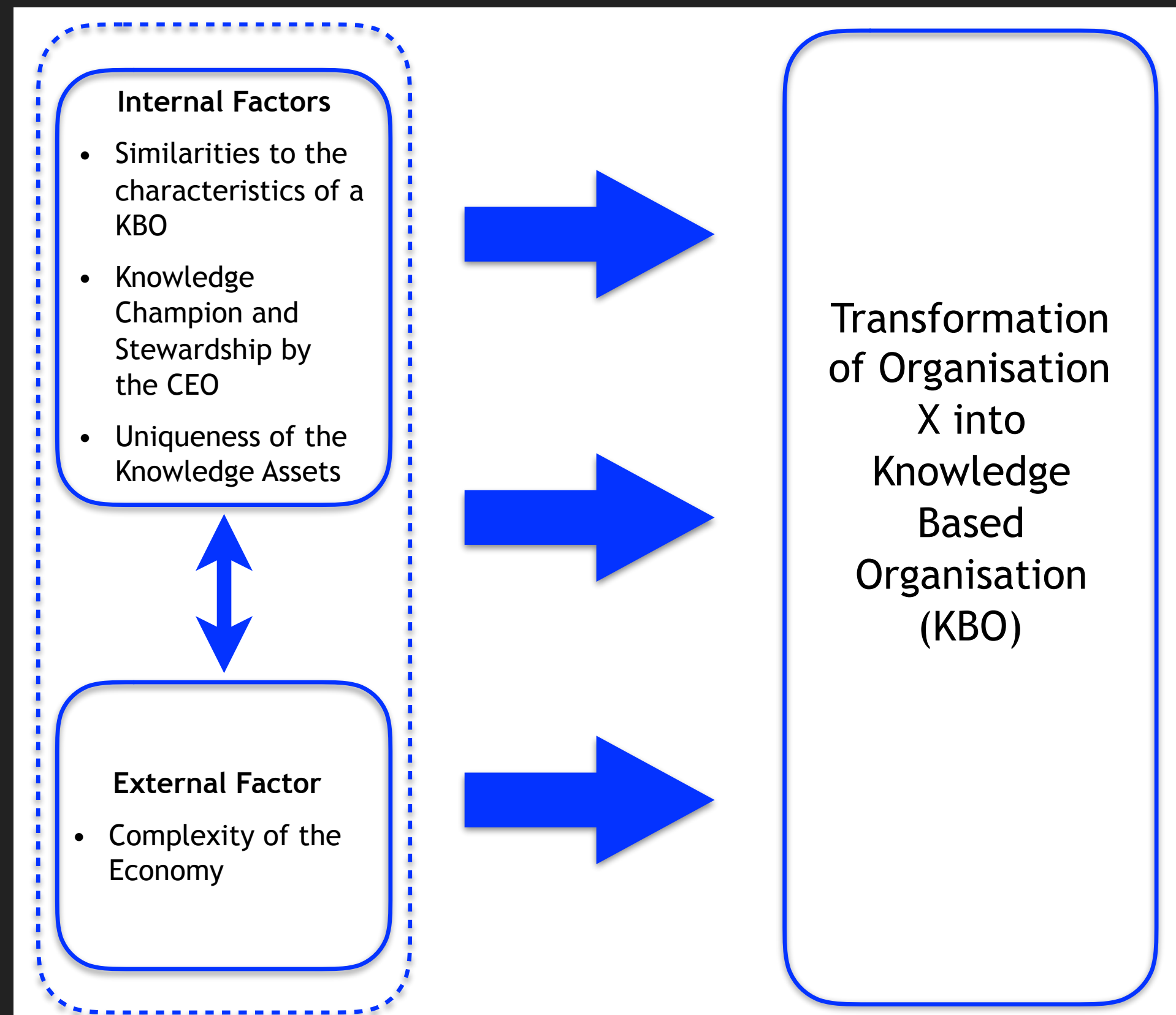


Figure 23 : Conceptual Framework for the Transformation of Organisation X into KBO

SIMILARITIES TO THE CHARACTERISTIC OF A KBO

- ▶ The KBO characteristics framework categorised as purpose, perspective, process, & place (Zack, 2003; Leon, 2013)
- ▶ Organisation X has shown to have the characteristics;

- ✓ **Purpose**

- Its roles & existence already been a KBO that relies heavily on knowledge as its core asset, & the ability of its knowledge workers.
- In 2000, strengthened the strategy by embarking on a holistic approach to be a better KBO through a strategic implementation of KM programme.

- ✓ **Perspective** - knowledge is considered in all aspects

- Management team as knowledge leaders, core values, flat organisational structure, learning organisation, leadership development programme, knowledge culture, & stakeholder focused

- ✓ **Process** - knowledge processes embedded & the importance of tacit knowledge

- ✓ **Place** - Collaborate with local & international stakeholders

Questions 1

Why Organisation X developed into a KBO in the context of its business?

Internal Factor





Questions 1

Why Organisation X developed into a KBO in the context of its business?

Internal Factor

KNOWLEDGE CHAMPION AND STEWARDSHIP BY THE CEO OF ORGANISATION X

- ▶ Historically, Organisation X's CEOs were **knowledge leaders**. Not only experts in their area, but also recognised internationally.
- ▶ The **CEO between the period of 2000 to 2016** is the focus of this research. The CEO's personality & character contributed;
 - ✓ Authoritative Economist
 - ✓ Collaboration
 - ✓ Connecting the Dots
 - ✓ Develop Others
 - ✓ Diversity
 - ✓ Excellent
 - ✓ Integrity
 - ✓ Knowledge Champion
 - ✓ Knowledge Seeker a& Reader
 - ✓ Recognised & Respected Leader
 - ✓ Story teller
 - ✓ Strategist a& Thinker



Why Organisation X developed into a KBO in the context of its business?

Internal Factor

This necessitates a business imperative for Organisation X as a KBO to be even better to always be in the state of readiness (Anderson & Anderson, 2001).

This is inline with the opinion of Dr Kuan-Tsae Huang (1998) where the business world is deluge with a lot of rapid changes in technology, methodology and concepts that necessitate businesses and organisations to work differently. Rapid changes that require rapid deployment and sharing of knowledge. This is only possible if businesses and organisations are KBOs that have an internal knowledge capabilities.

UNIQUENESS OF KNOWLEDGE ASSETS IN ORGANISATION X

- ▶ Knowledge assets - explicit & tacit knowledge.
- ▶ The only organisation in the country that has the expertise & knowledge in the subject matter
- ▶ Pushing the boundaries of knowledge beyond core areas, Containing the next beast
- ▶ Knowledge assets & knowledge economy - Strategic Knowledge Assets (SKAs)
- ▶ Developing & managing knowledge assets in human capital

These systems are strategically embedded in the work processes and are conforming to the findings of the research conducted by Niza Adila and Woods (2004)



Questions 1

Why Organisation X developed into a KBO in the context of its business?

External Factor

The economic patterns change with the global demand that necessitates the highest level of efficiency in managing the economy ([Organisation X's CEO], 2009a)

COMPLEXITY OF THE ECONOMY

- ▶ The subject domain **already complex**
- ▶ The interrelatedness of subjects & innovations requires the talents to be **more resilient & ever knowledgeable** with the core subjects
- ▶ The aftermath of the financial crisis in 1997 **transformed the configuration of the world economy** even more.
- ▶ **Strategic Focussed Organisation & Performance Driven Organisation**
- ▶ Changes the **pattern of global demand** & created development for a **strong regulatory regime** to address the complex financial risks in the economy.
- ▶ The regulatory regime requires **involvement of external parties**. Strong **cross-border arrangements & collaboration** has to be established
- ▶ The openness and interrelatedness of the economy is as such that any crisis happening in any part of the world will effect the country. Organisation X **need to be resilient** to these changes and **knowledge works are key** to the success.

Questions 2

How is the KBO programme strategically implemented in Organisation X?

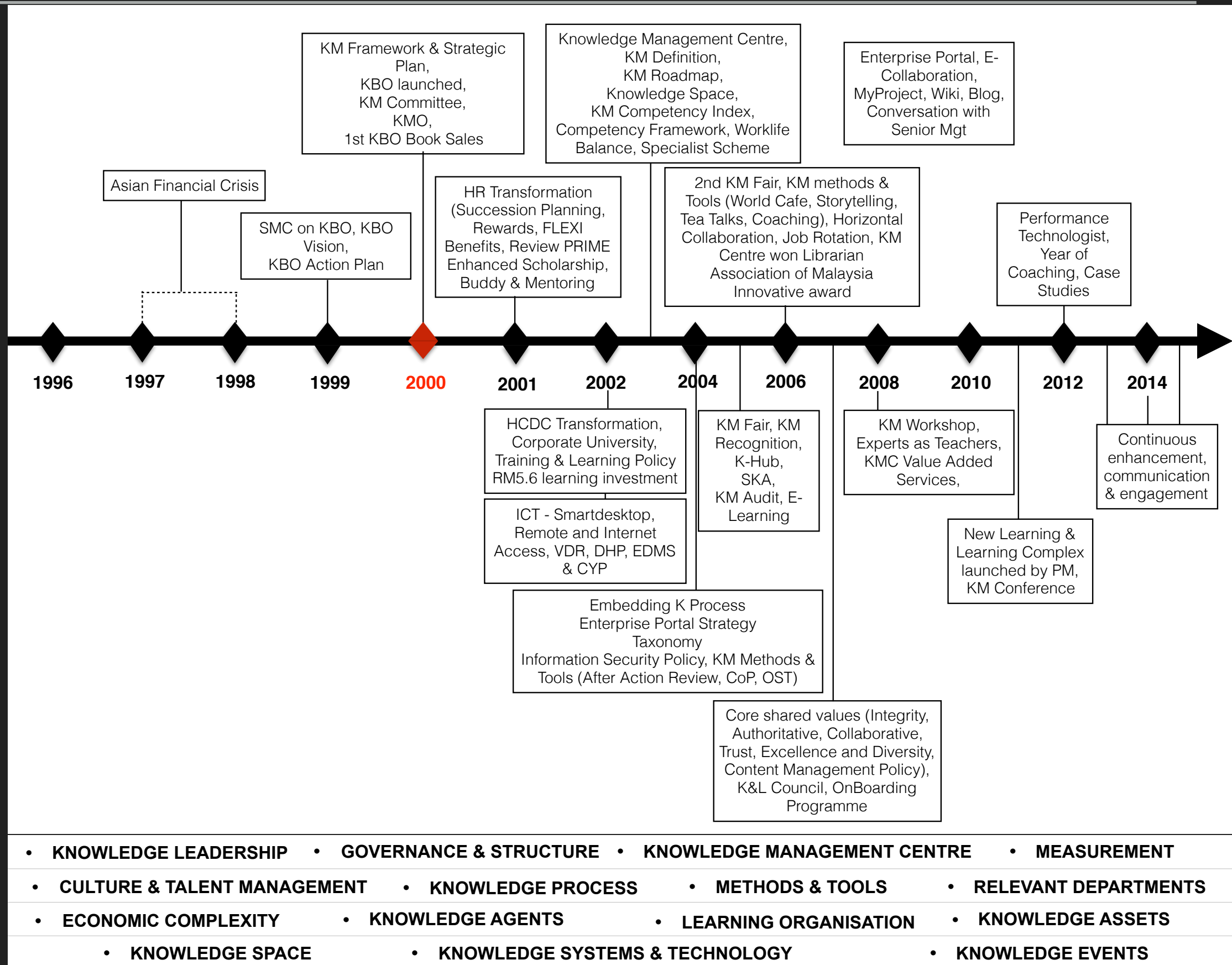


Figure 26 : Chronology of KBO programme



Questions 2

How is the KBO programme strategically implemented in Organisation X?

JOURNEY & THEMES

- ▶ The emerged themes although with slight variations seem to marry the common KM framework as discussed in the Chapter 2.
- ▶ **Knowledge Leadership** -The role of leaders in KM programmes, like KBO, had been well documented (APQC, 1996; Lee, 2004; Goh et al, 2006; Chin et al, 2007; Donate & Sanchez de Pablo, 2014)
- ▶ **Governance & Structure** - Kalsom et al (2004) reported the importance of governance & structure in their research findings that help in the implementation of KM in public-listed companies in Malaysia.
- ▶ **KMC** - an important transformation done as Organisation X sees the importance of a department or unit to spearhead the programme. Strategically to progress KM further with proper strategy, implementation structure and ownership.



Questions 2

How is the KBO programme strategically implemented in Organisation X?

JOURNEY & THEMES

- ▶ **Culture and Talent Management** - Goh et al (2006) concluded the **importance of cultural factors** in KM. One main component of the Organisation X's KM framework. People or staff is defined as **talent, knowledge worker**, that is strategically managed in tandem with the business plan of the organisation.
- ▶ **Learning Organisation** - As a learning organisation it will strive to be knowledgeable & be able to understand & plan for the continuous growth of the organisation (Argote, 2013; Argote & Miron-Spektor, 2011). Transformed HR & Training Depts into **Strategic Human Capital & Human Capital Development Centre**
- ▶ **Knowledge Systems and Technology** - Knowledge management systems (KMS), the technology & the discussion evolved around the process management of knowledge, institutional memory & information filtering (Borghoff & Pareschi, 1997; Zack, 1999a; Alavi & Leidner, 2001). The ultimate aim is that both technology & systems introduced have **improved the visibility of knowledge** in Organisation X
- ▶ **Relevant Departments** - The success of a KM programme is not the responsibility of one department or the management. The core departments are those responsible for organisational strategy, human resource & development, corporate communication, information technology, information management & the experts in the subject matter of Organisation X.



Questions 2

How is the KBO programme strategically implemented in Organisation X?

JOURNEY & THEMES

- ▶ **Development of Knowledge Space** - The knowledge space is **not specify as a room** as it can also be a small corner in an office or room. (Oldenburg, 1989; Nonaka & Konno, 1998; Curtis & Leon, 2002; Fisher, 2013). In 2003, redesigned the office space relevant for knowledge workers. **Open space** incorporating flexibility, efficiency, comfort & ergonomics. **Common spaces, lounges**, for small group discussions introduced in various locations with facilities that are conducive for teamwork & collaboration. KMC, Cafeteria, Langkawi Resort, & Sasana Kijang
- ▶ **Methods and Tools** - Technology-based **hard methods & tools** i.e VDR, KHub, EDMS, Social Media. **Soft methods & tools**, i.e AAR, Anecdote Circle, Community of Practice, Environmental Scanning, Experts Interviews, Fish Bowl, Future Backwards, Graphic Facilitation, Knowledge Audit & Mapping, Knowledge Fair, Mentoring & Coaching, OST, Peer Assist, Storytelling, Strategic Conversation, & World Cafe.



Questions 2

How is the KBO programme strategically implemented in Organisation X?

JOURNEY & THEMES

- ▶ **Measurement** - In 2003, **KM Measurement Framework & anecdotal** measures. KBO performance using four (4) criteria – Continuity & Stability, Competency & Productivity, Innovation & Responsiveness. in 2004, **Knowledge Audit & KM Competency Model** based on MAKE Award
- ▶ **Knowledge Agents** - an individual or group of individuals that perform a role as **catalyst, assistance, representative, negotiator, business manager, emissary, and envoy** that help in either to create awareness or implement any specific KBO initiatives. Agent K, KMO, Learning Manager & Consultant, Training & Administration Manager, CoPs,
- ▶ **Knowledge Events** - These events made up as one of the **important components in the knowledge ecosystem** of Organisation X. Events served as 1) **communication & awareness** channels, i.e launchings 2) opportunities for **better knowledge acquisition & sharing**, i.e K Fair, Tea Talks, 3) platform to **celebrate successes** as part of **change management** to encourage good knowledge behaviour & culture

An aerial photograph of a lush green valley. The foreground and middle ground are filled with terraced tea plantations, showing rows of tea bushes. In the center, a small village with several houses and trees is nestled in a valley. The background shows rolling hills and more tea plantations under a clear sky.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS



BENEFITS OF KM TO ORGANISATION X

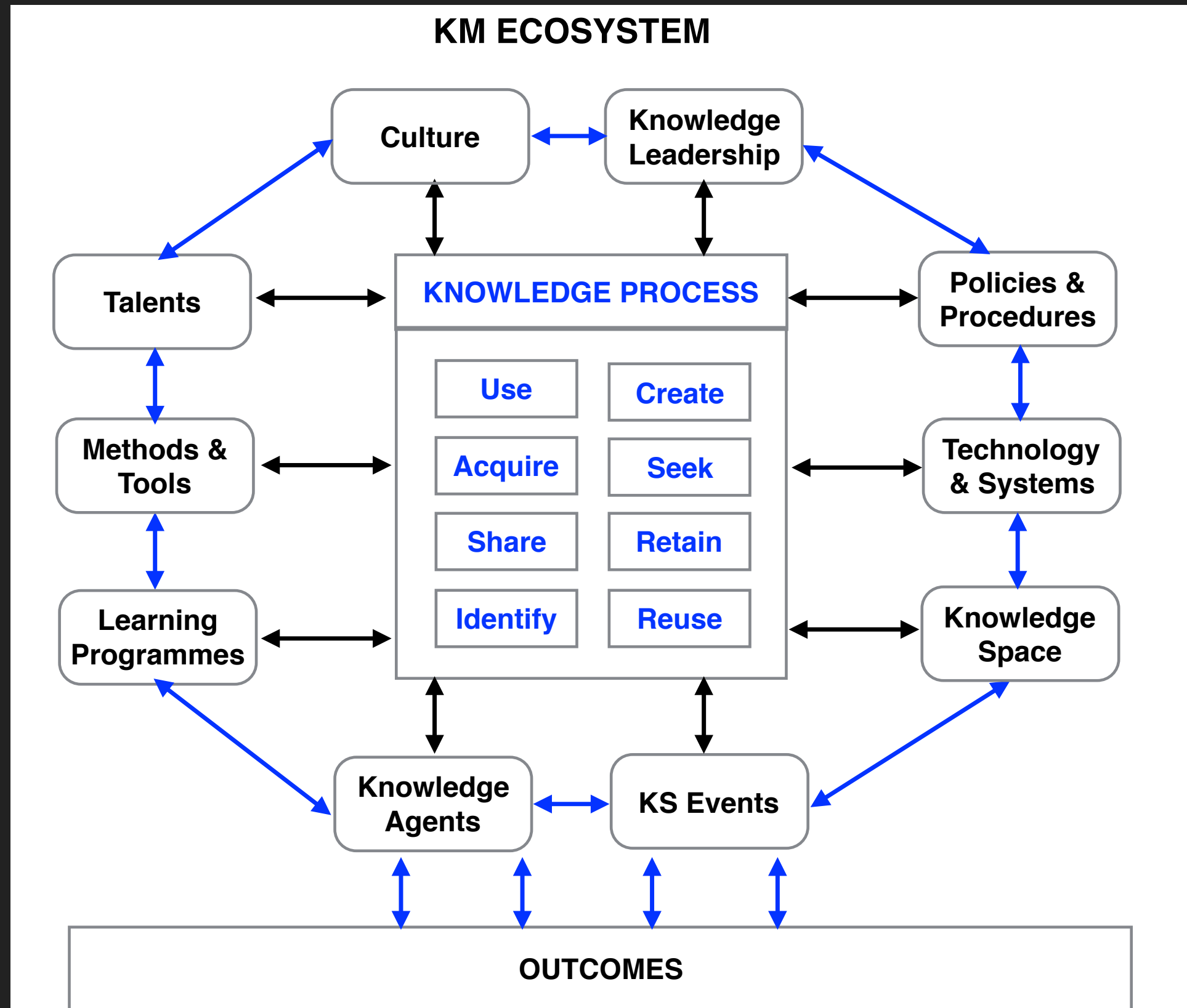
- ▶ **Business processes** improvement
- ▶ Increase in **talents satisfaction**
- ▶ Increase in **stakeholder satisfaction**
- ▶ Improvement in the area of **learning & growth**
- ▶ Positive **financial results**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Knowledge Ecosystem
- ▶ Understand what KM is & strategise & align to business goal
- ▶ Knowledge leadership from the top
- ▶ Intervention along the value chain
- ▶ Policies like content management & information Security policies to enhance knowledge sharing
- ▶ Not at the end
- ▶ Retention of tacit knowledge within individuals & social networks
- ▶ Knowledge process is not sequential
- ▶ New organisation leading with knowledge
- ▶ Knowledge space creates knowledge accidents

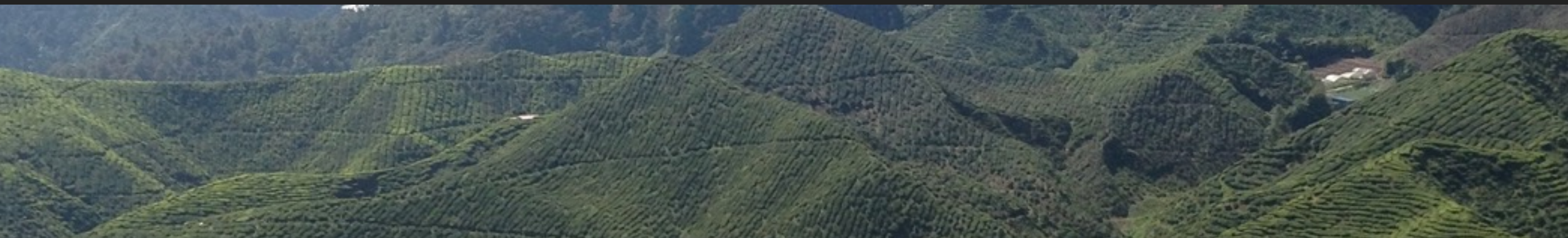
RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposed Framework for Nurturing KM Ecosystem



CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ The **intents & objectives** to explore & determine
- ▶ Organisation X has **the best experiences** to learn from
- ▶ Qualitative research methodology in the form of **case study research** as the most suitable framework and **narrative inquiry** as the main data gathering method
- ▶ The **roles of the researcher** are very important
- ▶ **Being honest** through out the research is the key to avoid biases.
- ▶ It is a **KM Ecosystem**



KM IN NARRATIVE

An aerial photograph of a vast tea plantation in a valley. The tea bushes are arranged in neat, terraced rows across the rolling hillsides. In the center of the valley, a small village with several buildings and trees is visible. A winding road or path cuts through the tea fields on the right side of the image. The overall scene is lush and green, with the tea plantation dominating the landscape.

THANK YOU