

## **Does Malaysia Practice National Human Resource Development?**

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*National Human Resource Development (NHRD) has been a critical national policy agenda in the development of recently developed countries. Malaysia as a progressing country implements key programs at national level as human capital development. Studying whether Malaysia has NHRD, understanding the nature of its NHRD, and defining Malaysia's NHRD can provide new insights to current literature on NHRD. This paper, thus investigated into understanding how Malaysia has adopted NHRD in its national policy planning context and then identified the meaning of Malaysia's NHRD. A qualitative research design, using grounded theory method was employed in this investigation. It was found that Malaysia's NHRD evolved gradually to Human Capital Development (HCD) as currently in use, from population management mainly to cater to economic purposes and to resolve its prolonged key challenge of sustaining national unity.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The meaning of HRD is unclear today even in spite of major efforts taken to define and describe its purpose, scope, major programs, expected benefits and targeted audience. The work of Lenard Nadler who was earlier credited for the construction of the term 'Human Resource Development' (HRD) in 1969 (Swanson, 2001) evidenced the confusions persisted in constructing HRD's meaning. McLean and McLean (2001) made effort to highlight the differences of the way that HRD has been defined in different country contexts in bringing a global definition of HRD. A main argument raised against traditional HRD was that it is limited to individual, the work team, the organization, or the work process (McLean, 2004). This view brought new insights in defining HRD and identifying its roles, process, beneficiaries, and outcomes. However, even before the emergence of new term 'national human resource development' (NHRD), some scholars had worked on national level HRD (Low, 1998; Cho and McLean, 2002; McLean, Bartlett and Cho 2003; Ashton, 2002). The highlighted need of bringing the level of analysis into HRD theory and practice (Garavan, McGuire & O'Donnell, (2004) was another strong evidence that support to challenge the traditional view of HRD and to define it in a broader manner at different levels. The reason is that if the levels of analysis differ there would be many a factor that drive and decide the nature of the phenomenon in question. Confirming this, Weick (1995) pointed out the importance of studying not only about the product but also about the context in which the product lives. Such important contextual factors, according to Lynham and Cunningham (2006) are: the political system (a democracy continuum of *new* to *establish*); the economic system (a free-market continuum of *conservative* to *liberal*); the social system (a developmental continuum of *fractured* to *integrate*); and the education system (a quality and access continuum of *elite* to *equal*). In the journey of NHRD research so far, the country case studies done in 2004 and 2006 have provided the basis for defining NHRD (by McLean,

2004; Lynham and Cunningham, 2004; Cooper, 2004; Yang, Zhang, and Zhang, 2004; Hasler, Thompson, and Schuler, 2006; Cox, Arkoubi and Estrada, 2006) and identifying the major models of NHRD, barriers to NHRD, attributes of excellent NHRD and outcomes of Excellent NHRD (Cho & McLean, 2004). In 2007, McLean's counter augments to support intergalactic HRD provided some critical dimensions that value more geocentric rather than ethnocentric, more flexible rather than static, more situational rather than absolute, more meso and macro rather than micro, and more general rather than specific approaches to HRD research (McLean, 2007) in defining and describing HRD more contingently. A notable work on debating over the NHRD research agenda could further shape the evolution of it (Wang and Swanson, 2008a; Wang, 2008; McLean, et.al., 2008). These initiatives had led to redefine the scope of HRD in a more specific manner by Wang and Sun (2009) equalizing HRD to workforce development and work place learning.

However, it is noteworthy of emerging research on human capital development (HCD) as national agenda in some countries. In China (Yang & Wang, 2009) human resource development and human capital development have been said indistinguishable. Singapore has interchangeably used the terms HCD and HRD (Osman-Gani & Chan, 2009). Even in the gulf countries, the case is similar like in Singapore (Achoui, 2009). Further, Achoui (2009) had used the term HD to picture the HRD in Saudi Arabia. Unlikely, in India, Rao and Varghese (2009) have seen HRD's outcomes as the contributions to HCD. On the other hand, HCD has been viewed as NHRD in some country contexts (Osman-Gani & Chan, 2009). With these latest developments, Wang and Sun (2009) had however equalized the term human capital to lifelong learning and human development differentiating them from HRD. Considering the very recent use of the terms such as HCD, HRD, and HD, Devadas & Silong (2010) claimed that mere use of these terms interchangeably or equally in practice and in research may lead to misuse of the terms and that they suggested to study on how such terms have been constructed in such different country contexts. However, so far, in the context of Malaysia, sufficient efforts have not been taken to identify what and how the terms such as HRD, HCD, and NHRD have been constructed. Therefore, this study will explore what Malaysia's HRD consist of, how it has been constructed and evolved at national level from the first Malaysia plan (1965) up to the start of the tenth Malaysia plan currently enforced with effect from 2011 until 2015. In line with the above purpose, this study was designed to answer the research questions of: What have been Malaysia's national challenges that pulled the HRD efforts at national level? What have been the key contents of Malaysia's national HRD? What has been the major focus of Malaysia's national HRD? And what have been the alternative terms used for Malaysia's HRD?

## **METHODOLOGY**

The best source of data for this study was Malaysia's five year- national plans and Ten year-national policies. This was confirmed by a preliminary interview conducted with the three staffs of the Human Capital Development division of Economic Planning Unit of Malaysia. Therefore, for this study, Malaysia's all national plans from 1965 until 2010 were collected as the prime data source. In order to answer the research questions, these data sources could provide all sufficient data to make a high level conceptualization for Malaysia's National HRD.

Data analysis was carried out using the grounded theory canon and procedures and that the main procedures used were coding and constant comparison. Coding was done paragraph basis and entire section or chapter basis as allowed by Strauss & Corbin, (1990). However, the selection of the sections, paragraphs and chapters of the documents were purely based on the authors' theoretical sensitivity' in generating required answers to the set research questions. Therefore, the study involved a bias towards the pre-determined research questions and the research plan designed in line with the research questions. Such an arrangement was prohibited by Glaser, (1992 and 1998). However, Strauss and Corbin (1998) allowed the researcher to do so. The main sections of national plans and national policies taken for the analysis were: the content pages; FORWARD; the very first chapters that describe the country's past performance, future prospects, plans' goals and objectives, and main challenges; and the chapters that described the human resource/manpower/workforce/human capital development and education and

training. In the Forward and the first pages of national plans, the term ‘human resource development’ had used and the key areas/efforts/strategies/trusts/initiatives were highlighted. Based, on this insight, authors then perused through the core chapters related to manpower/human resource/ or human capital development and education and training. A reference coding system was used to link the analysis to its original data sources that were mentioned just after the extracted data entered in the category map. This code is read as Plan number or policy name/Page number/Chapter number/Section or paragraph number (Pno/Pno/Cno/Sno). This reference code played as a method of verifying the validity of data and the research, and as an evidence of inductivity or grounding the analysis on its real data.

The coding process were targeted at extracting information from each five year plan and the main national policy frameworks under the main categories of national challenges, elements of national HRD, focus of national HRD, and the different terms used for national HRD. Each category was targeted to answer each research question. Therefore, the author wished to introduce the coding method used in this study as a ‘selective coding’ adopted in line with the pre-determined research questions and the research design. The results of the coding process were the development of sub categories and concepts to describe the pre-determined categories. Then the constant comparison began to integrate the categories that were separately coded under each plan and policy period. The comparison was done in two stages: to develop the final set of categories comparing all five year plans; and to develop the categories pertinent to the five year plans that were relate to each national policy. For an example, from second to fifth five year plans, the new economic policy was implemented and that the categories related to those plans were integrated together to identify the common set of categories to represent the new economic policy period.

The results were generated in individual plan basis, national policy basis, and finally for the whole planning period from 1965 until 2011. All the final results were presented based on the conceptualizations, the themes generated for categories and the identified patterns emerged with the cording and the constant comparison methods. For the coding process, a tool called ‘category map’ was used to help comparison, conceptualization, and theme building. Basically, two category maps were used; category map-five year plan; and the category map-national policy. The first one contained the data related to five year plans while the second one organized data related to national policies. Based on the category map-five year plans the constant comparison sheet for the whole planning period from 1965 to 2010 was developed. The purpose of this comparison was to generate the overall challenges that Malaysia faced in its all planning periods, to identify the elements or the contents, and the focus of its national HRD during the whole planning period, and finally to reveal the names averagely used for Malaysia’s national HRD.

## **MALAYSIA’S COUNTRY PROFILE IN BRIEF**

Malaysia’s historic, demographical, economical, social and global changes have been the pressures and imperatives for its national planning. Malaysia is a country with a land area of 328,550 Square kilometers (The World Bank, 2011) and is blessed with abundance of natural resources such as tin, petroleum, timber, copper, iron ore, natural gas and bauxite (Index Mundi (2011). This is a key reason for invading the lands of Malaysia which human habitation dates back 40000 years by Portugal in 1511, the Dutch in 1641 and then the British in 1786 until it obtained the independence in 1957 (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysia>). However, it was again invaded by the Japanese during the Second World War II for about three years raising ethnic tension and eventually a growth of nationalism (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysia>). Malaysia is a multi ethnic and multi cultural society where the Malays’ becomes the majority while the Chinese and Indians compose its total population with other non citizens such as foreign works who also have become a considerable factor today in Malaysia’s total population. Malaysia’s population had been increased from 9.411ML in 1965 (Malaysia, 1966) to 27.9 ML in 2009 (Malaysia, 2010). During the first Malaysia plan, the population growth was 3% (Malaysia, 1966) that was dropped to 1.6% at the end of the ninth Malaysia plan (Malaysia, 2010). In its total population, the labour force also increased from 2,312,000 in 1960 (Malaysia, 1966) to 12,061,100 in 2009 (Malaysia, 2010) while the unemployment rate was dropped from 6% in 1960 (Malaysia, 1966) to

3.7% in 2009 (Malaysia, 2010). In 1960s its population was composed by 54.7% of Malays, 34.25% of other indigenous people, 9% of Chinese, and 2.1% of Indians and others (Malaysia, 1966). By 2010 the same pattern seen in the composition of the population had continued. The Bumiputras were 67% while Chinese and Indians were 24.3% and 7.4% respectively. Others were 1.3% (Malaysia, 2010).

The economic changes were also significant during the whole planning period. The GDP was 7522 ML, with a growth rate of 5.8% in 1965 (Malaysia, 1966) while keeping a per capita income of \$917 in the same year (Malaysia, 1971). By 2010, its GDP was estimated to be 746,385 ML in 2010 while reporting an actual amount of 665,048 ML in 2009 (Malaysia, 2010). The economic growth was reported as 7.2% in 2010 (The World Bank, 2011) with a GNI per capita income of \$7900 (<http://data.worldbank.org/country/malaysia>) after a negative growth of 1.7% reported in 2009 (Malaysia, 2010). As a result of its economic performance, high level of poverty existed in both rural and urban areas in 1960s (Malaysia, 1966) was brought down to a minimum level by lowering the poverty head count ratio at national poverty line to 3.8% in 2009 (<http://data.worldbank.org/country/malaysia>). Importantly, the investment in education and training also increased dramatically from a percentage of 6.3 in 1960 (Malaysia, 1966) up to 23% of the 2011 budget allocations to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Human Resource (Dr. Mohad. Gazali Abas, Director of the Human Capital Development Section, Economic Planning Unit (EPU), Prime Minister's Office, pers. Comm. 14 June 2011) Simultaneously, the adult literacy rate went up in 2009 up to 92% (The World Bank, 2011). One evidence for Malaysia's structural change can be seen in its dramatic change in its main export items during the plan periods from rubber, tin, timber, iron ore, palm oil, pepper, and copra in 1960 (Malaysia, 1966) to liquefied natural gas (LNG), crude petroleum, palm oil, crude rubber, chemicals and chemical products, and optical and scientific equipment as well as rubber products in 2010. The imports were mainly represented by electrical and electronic products, machineries and appliances and parts, chemicals and chemical products, transport equipments, optical and scientific equipments, crude, petroleum, iron and steel products, and process food (MITI, 2010) unlike in 1960 during which food and food related products were mostly imported (Malaysia, 1966). Except these internal changes, the external shocks such as economic downturns, increase of international prices of key intermediately goods, socio-political change and instability in some countries, disasters and wars, technological advancements, and the change of global demand patterns were also key imperatives to Malaysia's national planning process in time to time.

## **NATIONAL POLICY AND NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK IN MALAYSIA**

Malaysia has been adopted a centralized planning system. After the first Malaysia plan, from 1966 to 1970, the New Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced targeting to achieve national unity by eliminating racial economic imbalances (Malaysia, 1971). Then the National Development Policy (NDP) was put in place in 1991 and ended in 2000 covering the sixth and seventh Malaysia plans to ensure political stability and national unity (Malaysia, 1991). National Mission Policy (NMP) was then replaced the NDP in 2001 until 2010 covering the eighth and ninth Malaysia plans establishing a united, progressive, prosperous Bangsa Malaysia and to be a fully developed nation (knowledge based society) by 2020 (Malaysia, 2001). The NDP and the NMP were continuations of the objectives of NEP considering the timely challenges after NEP. However, New Economic Model (NEM) was then laid down with effect from 2011 until 2020 to become a high income economy ensuring inclusiveness and sustainability and finally to enhance the quality of life of people (Malaysia, 2010). Table 1 shows the national policies and the related five year Malaysia plans.

**TABLE 1**  
**NATIONAL POLICIES AND NATIONAL PLANS**

Pri-NEP (1960-1970)	NEP (1971-1990)	NDP (1991-2000)	NMP (2001-2010)	NEM (from 2011-2020)
First Malaysia plan (66-70)	Second Malaysia plan (71-75) Third Malaysia Plan (76-80) Fourth Malaysia plan (81-85) Fifth Malaysia Plan (86-90)	Sixth Malaysia plan (91-95) Seventh Malaysia Plan (96-00)	Eighth Malaysia plan (01-05) Ninth Malaysia plan (06-10)	Tenth Malaysia Plan (11-15)

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Based on the coding and constant comparison processes, the findings have been presented in the proceeding sections.

#### **What have been Malaysia's National Challenges that Pulled the HRD Efforts at National Level?**

The national challenges of Malaysia have been analyzed in three different ways based on the category maps. First, the common themes for challenges uncouncted in each five year plan periods were identified (vertical conceptualization) resulting an identification of an overall core theme for Malaysia's national challenges faced during all its plans' period (a horizontal conceptualization). In this case, the specific challenges identified under each national plan were first listed down in the *category map-five year plans* and then common themes to represent each plan's specific challenges were developed leading to a core them to encompass the common themes developed for all plans (see Table 2). Secondly, these high level common themes for plans' challenges were crossed checked against the policy challenges recognized by Malaysia's key national policies (Pre-NEP, NEP, NDP, NVP and NEM). In this checking, first such specific policy challenges that were identified by each national policy were listed down in the *category map-national policies* and vertically integrated to form common themes resulting an identification of a core theme for national policy challenges representing all common themes developed under each policy (Table 3). This cross checking was a verification of conceptualizations (Common and core themes generated based on the five year plans) against such conceptualizations made based on the national policy data, while it strengthened the conceptual density.

**TABLE 2  
NATIONAL CHALLENGES OF MALAYSIA PLANS**

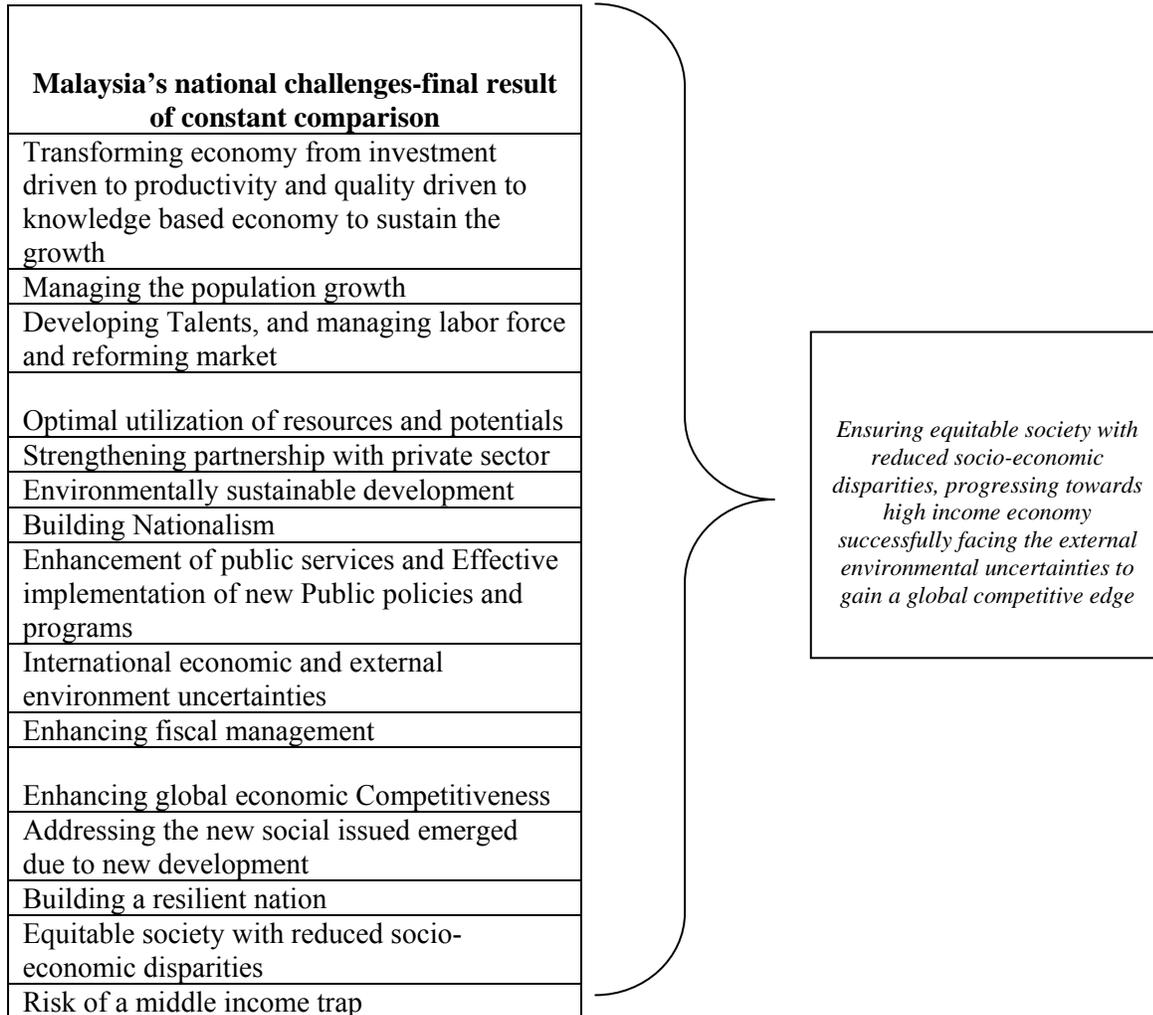
Category Name	Five Year National Plans										Overall theme for Malaysia's challenge from 1965-2015
	1MR-1965-1970	2MR-1971-1975	3MR-1976-1980	4MR-1981-1985	5MR-1986-1990	6MR-1991-1995	7MR-1996-2000	8MR-2001-2005	9MR-2006-2010	10MR-2011-2015	
Malaysia's national challenges	Economic restructuring and equitable income distribution	social integration and more equitable distribution of income and opportunities	Optimal utilization of resources and social restructuring	Social restructuring	Continuation of economic progress and labour force development	Continuation of growth momentum and balance development	Economic transformation for sustainable growth and balanced development	Sustainable growth and development towards a knowledge economy with equitable society	Regaining economic development by absorbing external shocks and reducing socio-economic disparities	Achieving a high income status without catching in the middle income trap in the face of dynamic and uncertain external environment	<i>Ensuring equitable, society with balanced development, progressing towards high income economy successfully facing the external environmental uncertainties in gaining economic power in Asia</i>

**TABLE 3**  
**MALAYSIA'S NATIONAL CHALLENGES AS PER THE NATIONAL POLICIES**

<b>Pri-NEP (57-70)-1 plan</b> Economic restructuring	<b>NEP (71-90) 2-5 plans</b> Economic progression and social restructuring for equitable society	<b>NDP (91-00)-6-7 plans</b> Balanced economic development for social equity	<b>NVP (01-10)-8-9 plans</b> Competitive economic development for equitable society to ensure national unity and social stability	<b>NEM (11- )- 10 plan</b> Progressing towards a high income economy resulting in inclusive society with social stability gaining a competitive edge in the globe facing to the external environmental uncertainties	<b>Nature of the overall policy challenges</b> <i>Ensuring national unity and inclusiveness with equitable society progressing towards high income economy successfully facing the external environmental uncertainties to gain a globally competitive edge</i>

Thirdly, the specific challenges listed in the category map-five year plan were constantly compared to generate an overall set of specific challenges that Malaysia had faced during its all plans' period. Again, by a vertical conceptualization of these specific challenges, a core theme for national challenges that Malaysia had faced during the course of its overall planning period (See Figure 1) was developed.

**FIGURE 1**  
**NATIONAL CHALLENGES OF MALAYSIA-RESULTS OF CONSTANT COMPARISON**



Comparing the core themes developed as in Table 4, now it is possible to conceptualize a higher level them for national challenges that Malaysia has ever been facing as ‘*Ensuring national unity and inclusiveness with equitable society progressing towards a high income economy successfully facing the external environmental uncertainties*’. It is therefore very clear that Malaysia’s national challenges are in three folds: ensuring national unity, inclusiveness and social stability; progressing towards a high income economy; and successfully facing external environmental uncertainties in becoming an emerging global leader in the globe.

**TABLE 4**  
**CONCEPTUALIZATION OF A CORE THEME FOR MALAYSIA’S NATIONAL CHALLENGE**

<b>Core theme based on national plans</b>	<b>Core themes based on national policies</b>	<b>Core theme derived from comparison</b>	<b>Core theme for Malaysia’s national challenge in all time</b>
<i>Ensuring equitable, society with balanced development, progressing towards high income economy successfully facing the external environmental uncertainties in gaining economic power in Asia</i>	<i>Ensuring national unity and inclusiveness with equitable society progressing towards high income economy successfully facing the external environmental uncertainties to gain a globally competitive edge</i>	<i>Ensuring equitable society with reduced socio-economic disparities, progressing towards high income economy successfully facing the external environmental uncertainties to gain a global competitive edge</i>	<b><i>Ensuring national unity and inclusiveness with equitable and stable society, progressing towards a high income economy successfully facing the external environmental uncertainties in gaining a competitive global edge</i></b>

**What have been the Key Contents of Malaysia’s National HRD?**

In identifying the contents of Malaysia’s national HRD, again the two different ways were used based on the category maps. First, all the major elements/areas of HRD covered in the national plans were listed in the category map under each national plan. Then common themes that represent all such specific HRD areas covered in each plan were developed as in Table 5, resulting in a core theme for HRD content to include all such common themes. In this instance, the common themes generated under each plan were compared in developing the core theme for the content of Malaysia’s HRD (see Table 6). Secondly, the main HRD strategies highlighted in the national policies were listed under each policy. Then common themes for HRD’s content for each policy were generated that included all specific HRD strategies came under each national policy. By horizontally integrating these all common themes for HRD contents, a core theme for HRD content was then developed (see table 7).

**TABLE 5**  
**CONTENTS OF MALAYSIA'S NHRD**

Category name	Malaysia Plans									
	1MR-1965-1970	2MR-1971-1975	3MR-1976-1980	4MR-1981-1985	5MR-1986-1990	6MR-1991-1995	7MR-1996-2000	8MR-2001-2005	9MR-2006-2010	10MR-2011-2015
Elements of NHRD	Managing population, labour force and manpower development	Managing labour force, re-structuring labour market, and manpower development	Managing labour force, restructuring labour market, and developing skilled and knowledge manpower	Managing the labor force, restructuring labour market, and developing skilled and knowledge manpower	Human capital development education and skills training	Managing the Talent base and work force, Human capital development (education and skill training), and labour market reforms				

**TABLE 6**  
**ELEMENTS OF MALAYSIA'S HRD-CONSTANT COMPARISON RESULTS**

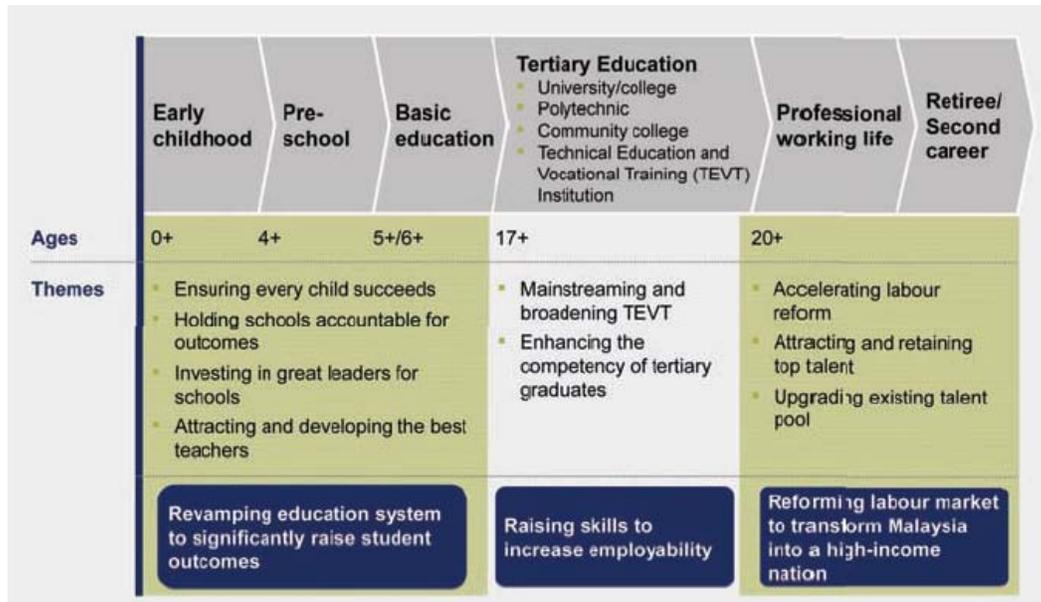
<b>Category Name</b>	<b>Comparison-1 (Plan 1 &amp; Plan 2)</b>	<b>Comparison-2 (Comparison 1+Plan 3)</b>	<b>Comp-3 (Comp 2+Plan 4)</b>	<b>Comp-4 (comp 3+Plan5)</b>	<b>Comp-5 (comp-4+ Plan 6)</b>	<b>Comp-6 (Comp 5+Plan7)</b>	<b>Comp-7 (Comp 6+Plan 8)</b>	<b>Com-8 (Com 7+Plan 9)</b>	<b>Comp-9 (Comp 8+Plan10)</b>
Elements of NHRD	Managing , population, labour force and manpower development	Managing , population, labour force and manpower development	Managing , population, labour force and manpower development	Managing , population, labour force and manpower development	Managing labour force, re-structuring labor market, and manpower development	Managing labour force, restructuring labour market, and developing skilled and knowledge manpower	Managing the workforce, restructuring labour market, and developing skilled and knowledge manpower	Managing the workforce, restructuring labour market, and Human capital development	Managing the Talent base and work force, Human capital development (education and skill training), and labour market reforms

**TABLE 7**  
**CONTENT OF MALAYSIA'S NATIONAL HRD DERIVED FROM NATIONAL POLICIES**

National policy	HRD strategies	Content of HRD
PRI-NEP	Employment generation To educate and train Malaysians to equip them for effective participation of economic and social development Lessen the rapid population growth and instituting an effective family planning	Managing population, labor force and manpower development
NEP	Creation of a strong demand for labor and wider job opportunities especially to youth of all races Overcoming rapid population growth	Managing population, labor force and manpower development
NDP	Promoting HRD including a creation of a productive and disciplined labour force and developing the necessary skills to meet the challenges in industrial development through a culture of merit and excellence without jeopardizing the restructuring objectives	Managing labour force, restructuring labour market, and developing skilled and knowledge manpower
NVP	Strengthening human resource development to produce a competent, productive and knowledgeable workforce	Managing work force, restructuring labour market and Human capital development-education and skills training
NEM	Developing a quality workforce and reducing dependency on foreign labor: by: Increasing local talent over time; Re-skilling the existing labor force; Retain and access global talent; Remove labor market distortions constraining wage growth; and reduce resilience on foreign labor	Developing a quality workforce and reducing dependency on foreign labor.
<b>Core themes generated for HRD content</b>		<b><i>Managing the work force, Talent &amp; Human capital development (education and skill training), and labour market reforms</i></b>

Comparing the core themes generated in national plan basis and national policy basis (Table 5, 6 & 7) for Malaysia's HRD content, it can be concluded that Malaysia's national HRD contains '*managing the work force, talent & human capital development (education and skill training), and labour market reforms*'. Notably, it has been a great concern to manage the population of the country through family planning programs during the New Economic Policy period until the fifth Malaysia plan (see HRD strategies of PRI-NEP and NEP). However, under the shift to the 'human capital development' view from the 9<sup>th</sup> plan, further elaborated in the tenth plan, also, Malaysia's HRD has again started to specifically cover the whole population integrating the whole education system to the workforce and the labor market as seen in figure 2.

**FIGURE 2  
INTEGRATED HUMAN CAPITAL AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT  
FRAMEWORK FOR MALAYSIA**



Source: Malaysia, 2010, p. 194

Differently, it is not considered the size of the population, instead, education and training to all (to the whole population) has been concerned as the tools to enhance the quality of the whole population in support of the management of the workforce and labor market reformations.

**What has been the Major Focus of Malaysia’s National HRD?**

The focus of Malaysia’s NHRD can be viewed by integrating the HRD strategies crafted in national policies that were organized into the category map-national policies and the HRD focus areas identified in the five year plans that were organized into the category map-five year plans as presented in table 8.

**TABLE 8**  
**FOCUS OF MALAYSIA'S NHRD IN NATIONAL POLICIES**

Category name	National policies					Core theme
	Pri-NEP (57-70)- 1 plan	NEP (71-90) - 2-5 plans	NDP (91-00)- 6-7 plans	NVP (01-10)- 8-9 plans	NEM (11- )- 10 plan	
<i>NHRD focus</i>	Matching labour/manpower demand with labour/manpower supply by increasing employment and reducing unemployment and population	Matching labour/manpower demand with labour/manpower supply by increasing employment and reducing unemployment and population growth	preparation of strong HR base for long term economic growth and global competition through enhanced education and training, and managing labor force and labor market restructuring	Focus on developing Competent, productive, disciplined, ethical and knowledgeable workforce through HCD in becoming a knowledge base economy and a developed nation	Focused on nurturing, attracting, and retaining a first-world talent base to be a high income nation	<i>Developing, maintaining and attracting a high quality human resource in order to fulfill the economic requirements in resolving the national challenge</i>

Based on the Table 8, the core theme that encompasses the focus of Malaysia's NHRD is on 'developing, maintaining a high quality human resource in order to fulfill the economic requirements in resolving the national challenges'. Further, a notable evolution can be identified in the focus on Malaysia's NHRD from 'quantity to quality' in HRD from a change of the focus from 'matching labor market demand and supply to 'talent development'. This approach has changed the HRD's focus from population to workforce and again workforce to population. However, in the early times it was the challenge to manage the size of the population through family planning initiatives, while the contemporary focus is to manage and develop the quality of the population through education and training and attracting and retaining the best talents while reducing unskilled foreign labor in the labor force to gain global economic competitiveness.

**What have been the Alternative Terms Used for Malaysia's HRD?**

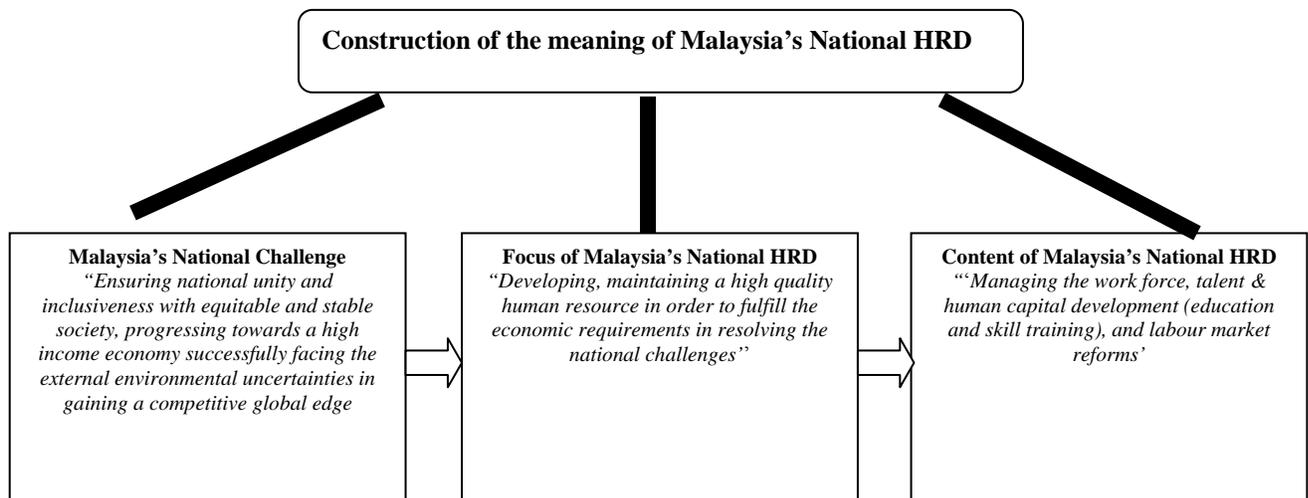
In all times even in the first Malaysia plan, the term Human Resource Development has been used to deal with human resource at national level. In each plan, the terms used for HRD is presented in table 9 based on the category map-five year plan.

In the national policies the term human resource development has been used commonly. Therefore, a differentiation based on the policies has not been presented. As per the conceptualizations made in table 8 it is clearly shown that the terms used for HRD is evolving from 'population, labor force and man power development' to 'human capital and talent development'. This also denotes the focus of Malaysia's HRD from 'managing quantity of human resource' to 'managing the quality of human resource'. Malaysia's National HRD is contemporarily expressed by the term 'Human Capital Development (HCD)' in a more general and broader manner since the ninth plan.

**The Meaning of Malaysia's National HRD**

From the above discussion, the construction of Malaysia's national HRD can be conceptualized as in Figure 3.

**FIGURE 3  
CONSTRUCTION OF MALAYSIA'S NHRD**



As depicted in figure 3, Malaysia's national human resource development is about 'managing its work force, developing talent and human capital, and concerning about labor market reforms to focus on the development and the maintenance of a high quality human resources in order to fulfill the economic expectations in the face of its key national challenges of ensuring national unity and inclusiveness with an equitable and stable society towards progressing a high income economy facing its external environment uncertainties in gaining a global competitive edge'.

## IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study constructed a meaning to Malaysia's national HRD by identifying its major contents/elements, its focus and the major national challenges in the context of its national policies and five year national plans. This construction is useful in many ways for the researchers and for the practitioners as such efforts to identify the meaning of Malaysia's national HRD has not been made here before through a formal investigation except some guess works. Hence, this study stimulates a series of studies to investigate planning and implementation of national HRD with its clarified focus and to identify the pressures and imperatives for them. Further, this discovery can greatly contribute to the NHRD research agenda in testifying the models that have already been developed based on the country case studies. On the other hand, defining Malaysia's NHRD is now possible while letting a high level comparison of Malaysia's NHRD with other countries in the region and in the world. Since now the focus of Malaysia's NHRD is cleared by this study, practitioners may use this to coordinate their national HRD efforts with more confidence of its final expectations and outcomes. Since this study was limited to the national policies and plans, the findings need to be verified by the views of the planners and the practitioners to enhance the theoretical validity of the conceptualizations.

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